



EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT

Celebrating the past, Embracing the Future.

P. O. Box 1093, Castries

Saint Lucia, West Indies
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Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court Statement on the Passage of Hurricane Irma

On the evening of 5th September 2017 and well into the following day, Hurricane Irma with winds over 180 mph moved over the Leeward Islands. Three of the Court's Member States and Territories, namely, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda and the Territory of the Virgin Islands were severely impacted by the passage of this catastrophic hurricane, in addition to St. Kitts and Nevis which also reported some damage.

On the island of Barbuda, 95% of the buildings were destroyed and the island is almost uninhabitable. Details of the damage and destruction on the Virgin Islands and Anguilla are still being assessed and remain inconclusive; however, from all accounts these Territories have been dealt a devastating blow by Hurricane Irma, resulting in the death of at least four (4) persons in the Virgin Islands. The islands largely remain without electricity and other essential services. Communication is extremely difficult and many parts of the Virgin Islands in particular are cut off from the rest of the world.

Her Ladyship the Hon. Dame Janice M. Pereira DBE, Chief Justice, Judges, Masters and administrative and support staff of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (ECSC) expresses heartfelt condolences to the loved ones of those who lost their lives. The ECSC stands in solidarity with the people of Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, St. Kitts and Nevis and the Virgin Islands and is committed to providing its full support in their recovery and rehabilitation efforts. No effort will be spared in lending a helping hand in ensuring that these Member States and Territories rebuild and that normalcy returns to the lives of their people.

The courts in Antigua and St. Kitts and Nevis were spared major damage and are open for business. However, at this time, the courts in Anguilla and the Virgin Islands are closed. Judges, and court staff have been displaced and the court buildings have been badly damaged in these Territories. Currently, an assessment is being undertaken by court officials in Anguilla and the Virgin Islands on the state of their courts' infrastructure and facilities with a view to determining dates for the reopening of the courts. As expected in these circumstances, the courts in Anguilla and the Virgin Islands will not operate at the level they did before the hurricane for some time. Nonetheless, the ECSC remains committed to the administration of justice in these Territories and is making every effort to ensure the speedy resumption of the hearing of matters as well as providing immediate interim arrangements to facilitate the hearing of urgent applications and trials from these Territories.



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Further updates on the situation in Anguilla and the Territory of the Virgin Islands will be provided via the Court's Website and in the print and electronic media as soon as more information becomes available to the ECSC.

11th September 2017