

# Hurricane Irma and the UK's Caribbean tax havens

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Hurricane Irma is [continuing to batter the Caribbean](#). At a human level there can only be concern for all those affected, and a desire that all that can be done to restore normal life in the places impacted will happen.

But the Caribbean is not a politics free zone, and nor is Hurricane Irma. I will leave aside the obvious global warming issues and the politics of that. I will mention instead that many of the places affected are tax havens. And many of them are British.

I sincerely hope that the UK government does supply all the assistance required to these places, as they will also do to those other places without such support. But I make the point that if we are to honour our responsibilities, then so should they. The British Caribbean tax havens can only exist because of the guarantee that the UK supplies, the legal system that the UK supplies and the regulation that we support. There is a cost to that. We will bear ours, but it's not unreasonable to expect that those places who need us to do so respond in kind. That means they deliver accounts on public record, registers of beneficial ownership of companies and trusts for all to inspect and new regimes of transparency in all that they do.

And for those who think this isn't the time to ask I would point out that even neoliberals think that the role of government is to act as a back stop. When the governments of the UK's Caribbean tax havens rely on us to take that role then now is precisely the time to remind them of their reciprocal responsibilities, whilst continuing to supply all the support that is needed.

*Note: This blog has been referenced, and largely reproduced, [in The Guardian this morning](#).*