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Information Bulletin

Americas: Weather Events

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Information Bulletin N° 1	Date of issue: 10 October 2018
Date of disaster: Ongoing since 5 October 2018	Point of contact (name and title): Felipe Del Cid: continental operations coordinator for the Americas region; felipe.delcid@ifrc.org
N° of National Societies currently involved in the operation (if available and relevant): Red Cross Movement actors currently involved in the operation: The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), American Red Cross, Costa Rican Red Cross, Honduran Red Cross, Nicaraguan Red Cross, Salvadoran Red Cross Society	
N° of other partner organizations involved in the operation (if available and relevant): Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and the United Nations system (United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs [UNOCHA], Pan American Health Organization [PAHO]), Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPM) in Trinidad and Tobago, Samaritan's Purse, the International Organization of Migration (IOM), Office of Disaster Management (ODM) in Dominica	

This bulletin is being issued for information only; it reflects the current situation and details available at this time.

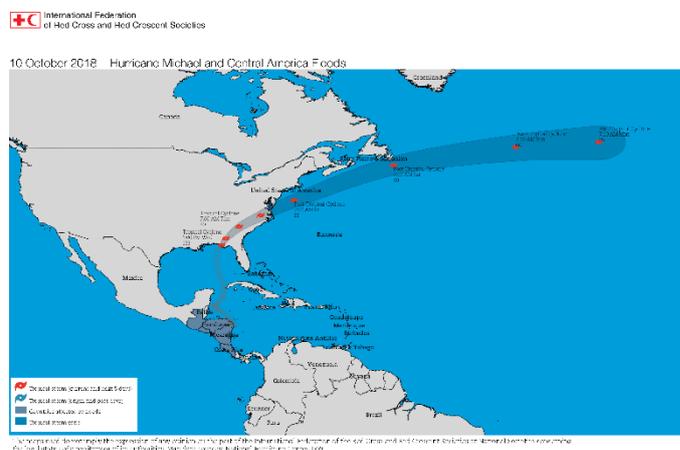
The situation

On 5 October 2018, a low-pressure system developed over Central America and began inundating the region with heavy rainfall. The low-pressure system later converted into Hurricane Michael, which is now threatening the southern coastal regions of the United States of America.

Hurricane Michael

According to the United States of America's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s National Hurricane Centre (NHC), **Hurricane Michael's** eye was located near latitude 29.4 North, longitude 86.0 West at 1100 AM Atlantic Standard Time (AST) (1500 UTC). Michael is moving toward the north-northeast near 14 mph (22 km/h). A turn toward the north-east is expected this afternoon or tonight (10 October 2018). A motion toward the north-east at a faster forward speed is forecast on Thursday, 11 October through Friday night (12 October). On the forecast track, Michael's core is expected to move ashore along the Florida Panhandle early this afternoon, move north-eastward across the south-eastern United States tonight and Thursday and then move off the Mid-Atlantic coast away from the United States on Friday.

Data from NOAA and Air Force Reserve Hurricane Hunter aircraft indicate that maximum sustained winds are near 145 mph (230 km/h) with higher gusts. Michael is an extremely dangerous category 4 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. Some strengthening is still possible before landfall. After landfall, Michael should



weaken as it crosses the south-eastern United States. Michael is forecast to become a post-tropical cyclone on Friday, and strengthening is forecast as the system moves over the western Atlantic.

Hurricane-force winds extend outward up to 45 miles (75 km) from the centre and tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 175 miles (280 km). A private weather station at Bald Point, Florida, recently reported a sustained wind of 54 mph (87 km/h), with a gust to 61 mph (98 km/h). A wind gust to 46 mph (74 km/h) was recently reported inland at Tallahassee, Florida.

The latest minimum central pressure based on data from the reconnaissance aircraft is 928 mb (27.41 inches).

Cuba:

A total of 300 people had to be evacuated to the homes of neighbours or relatives in the province of Pinar del Río (municipalities of Sandino and San Juan following the passage of Michael; additionally, a high percentage of this province is without electricity and Michael damaged the roofs of some homes.

In the province of Artemisa, particularly in the areas of Playa de Majana and the towns of Cajío and Guanímar, which are prone to coastal flooding, evacuations of people are being carried out; however, the number of evacuees is currently unknown.

For the time being, there is a response with local resources and a good response from the government, which has followed up on its national response plan, as well as the fulfillment of its alert and evacuation phases.



Members of the Salvadorian Red Cross Society respond to flooding in El Salvador. Source: SRCS

Flooding and Mudslides in Central America

Torrential downpours from two low-pressure systems along Central America and the Caribbean resulted in flash floods and mudslides across Central America. As of early Wednesday, 10 October, at least 13 deaths have been reported (6 in Honduras, 4 in Nicaragua, 2 in El Salvador, 1 in Costa Rica) and thousands of people have been evacuated, the Associated Press reports.

Additionally, as Hurricane Michael moved towards the US' Gulf Coast from the coast of Honduras over the weekend, a counter-clockwise flow of air around low-pressure systems brought a moist flow of Pacific air inland over Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, bringing 48-hour rainfall amounts in excess of 10 inches (25cm) to some areas. This low-pressure system continued to bring heavy rains to portions of the Pacific coasts of El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras through Monday, 8 October, bringing dangerous flash flooding and mudslides¹. Alerts are still in effect in Central America due to ongoing precipitation of up to 300 to 400 mm. Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala have all issued emergency alerts.

¹ ACT Alliance report published on ReliefWeb, 08/10/18. <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/central-america-floods-and-landslides>

Watches and Warnings

HURRICANE MICHAEL

Storm Surge Watch	* Anclote River Florida to Anna Maria Island Florida, including Tampa Bay * Ocracoke Inlet North Carolina to Duck North Carolina
Storm Surge Warning	* Okaloosa/Walton County Line Florida to Anclote River Florida
Tropical Storm Watch	* Chassahowitzka to Anna Maria Island Florida, including Tampa Bay
Tropical Storm Warning	* Alabama/Florida border to the Mississippi/Alabama border * Suwanee River Florida to Chassahowitzka Florida * North of Fernandina Beach Florida to Duck North Carolina * Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds
Hurricane Warning	* Alabama/Florida border to Suwanee River Florida

FLOODING AND MUDSLIDES IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Yellow Alert	* El Salvador: 31 Municipalities (29 in the Coastal Region) * Guatemala: National level alert * Nicaragua: National level alert
Red Alert	* Costa Rica: 3 districts in Puntarenas (Cobano, Lepanto and Paquera del Cantón) * Honduras: 3 departments (Francisco Morazán, Choluteca and Valle)

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

National Societies actions



United States of America

HURRICANE MICHAEL

Context	American Red Cross (AMCROSS) actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael is bringing 140 mph winds, up to a foot of rain and a storm surge as high as 13 feet to some areas of Florida, Georgia and Alabama. Officials are predicting prolonged power outages. The storm is also forecast to drop heavy rain later this week in the Carolinas where people are still struggling with the aftermath of Hurricane Florence. More than 375,000 people are under evacuation orders and many schools and colleges are closed along with airports and ports. Michael made landfall near Mexico Beach, Florida, around 1:30 p.m. CDT, with maximum sustained winds of 155 mph and a minimum pressure of 919 millibars This is the first Category 4 or stronger hurricane that has made landfall in the Florida Panhandle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are more than 500 trained disaster workers on their way to the region to join the AMCROSS volunteers already in place in the three states AMCROSS pre-positioned enough shelter supplies, including cots and blankets, to be able to support some 15,000 people after landfall AMCROSS is working with partners to prepare for serving tens of thousands of meals per day once the storm passes AMCROSS is mobilizing additional relief supplies, vehicles and other equipment to help people in the affected areas if needed Since 9 October 2018, more than 3.6 million weather alerts have been issued through AMCROSS web applications, allowing people to make informed and lifesaving decisions Tuesday night (9 October 2018), approximately 4,000 people stayed in nearly

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catastrophic storm surge and destructive winds will occur near the landfall in the Florida Panhandle. • Over a million power outages will occur not just near the coast, but also inland after landfall² | <p>70 AMCROSS and community evacuation centres across Florida, Georgia and Alabama</p> |
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Cuba

Context	Cuban Red Cross Society (CRC) actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 86% of Pinar del Río is without electricity. • Posts felled by the fury of the wind, trees on the lines and broken circuits caused a blackout from Tuesday, 9 October; brigades from Pinar del Río and other provinces are working to restore power • 180 dwellings affected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 CRC volunteers have been mobilized, as well as resources from the National Society to support the affected provinces, mainly in the western zone of the island

FLOODING AND MUDSLIDES IN CENTRAL AMERICA



Costa Rica

Context	Costa Rican Red Cross (CRRC) actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the National Emergency Commission (CNE) in Costa Rica, 125,190 people are affected, and 2,793 people are in 28 collective centres • The province of Puntarenas has been most affected by the emergency • 1 fatality has been reported in Costa Rica because of the emergency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As weather has improved, humanitarian action from CRRC has intensified • Evaluations are being conducted with headquarters staff and branch staff. First reports are expected within the next few hours. • Search and rescue teams are maintained, as well as pre-hospital • The GO Platform will be updated • A Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) funding request will be made for care in two focus areas: Livelihoods (cash-based intervention [CBI]) and water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH)



El Salvador

Context	Salvadorian Red Cross Society (SRCS) actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The eastern part of the country has been most effected by the emergency, with two collective centres currently open • 2 fatalities have been reported in El Salvador because of the emergency • The National Direction of Civil Protection activated the National emergency operations centre (EOC), the Sectorial Technical Commissions, and requested the Maritime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SRCC is closely monitoring the situation • The SRCS will upload a GO Platform field report in the next few hours • Damage Analysis and Needs Assessment (DANA) teams are assessing the damage

² "Hurricane Michael Has Made Landfall Near Mexico Beach, Florida; Life-Threatening Storm Surge, Catastrophic Winds Continue". Weather.com. 10 October 2018. <https://weather.com/storms/hurricane/news/2018-10-10-hurricane-michael-cat4-historic-landfall-gulf-coast-florida>.

and Port Authority, and the Port Captains to restrict the departures of small and medium draft vessels



Honduras

Context

- According to information gathered by the Honduras Permanent Commission on Contingencies (COPECO) and HRC, 1,419 families (6,948 people) were affected, 787 families (3,019 people) were evacuated, and 736 families (2,746 people) were given temporary housing
- 6 fatalities are reported in the Honduras because of the emergency

Honduran Red Cross (HRC) actions

- The HRC is currently in contact with the IFRC
- The HRC is continuously monitoring the situation
- Holding coordination meetings partners



Nicaragua

Context

- According to the Nicaraguan National System for Prevention, Mitigation, and Disaster (SINAPRED), 13,000 people are affected and 2,880 are in collective centres
- According to information shared by the NRC and information provided through GO, 4,625 people have been affected in 388 homes
- 4 fatalities are reported in Nicaragua because of the emergency

Nicaragua Red Cross (NRC) actions

- The NRC's national headquarters' EOC remains active and is monitoring the situation
- The NRC has issued three Situation Reports.
- 233 active volunteers at the national level are monitoring the situation
- The NRC is sending updates through social networks
- NRC officials were interviewed through local tv channels and gave recommendations for a response
- The National Society has also been in continuous communication with SINAPRED authorities.
- A network of NRC Communicators is actively monitoring the event
- A field report has been placed on the GO Platform
- Due to the country and National Society context, the possibility of a DREF is being evaluated. A decision will be based on damage assessments and reports. The NRC is awaiting a call for coordination between the Regional Intervention Team (RIT) and NRC management teams based on the assessments

IFRC actions



Actions

- The IFRC's Regional Office for the Americas (ARO) closely monitoring the situation
- RIT information and availability to be deployed has been shared
- Coordination between the IFRC's Disaster and Crisis Department and country clusters
- Continuous monitoring by the regional disaster management (DM) coordinators and the country clusters
- Contact with IFRC offices in Honduras and Haiti regarding potential DREF requests
- Sending of informational messages by the DM focal points
- Development of an informational bulletin
- Issuance of a press release
- Development of a Dashboard for monitoring and impact assessment purposes (if required)

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

In Geneva:

- Carmen Ferrer, Operational Support Disaster and Crisis (Prevention, Response and Recovery); email: carmen.ferrer@ifrc.org

In IFRC Regional Office for the Americas:

- Inigo Barrena, disaster response and crisis and early recovery head; email: ci.barrena@ifrc.org
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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.



The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.