

# ***CUBA: HURRICANE IRENE***

*18 April, 2000*

*appeal no. 27/99*

*situation report no. 01 - Final Report*

*period covered: 02 November, 1999 - 2 March 2000*

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*The Cuban Red Cross completed distribution of water tanks, and personal and household hygiene items to 3,000 evacuee families two months after Hurricane Irene struck. Because of the low response to the appeal it was not able to carry out the distribution of house repair items or undertake the scheduled reinforcement of its disaster response capacity.*

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## ***The context***

Hurricane Irene, classified as a category 1 hurricane, crossed Cuba on 14 October with winds of up to 120 kilometres per hour. In its wake it produced torrential rain and caused flooding along the coastal areas in western Cuba. Of the country's 14 provinces, 8 were affected: Havana city, Havana province, Cienfuegos, Pinar del Río, Sancti Spíritus, Villa Clara, Matanzas, and the special municipality of Isla de la Juventud.

A total of 228,067 people had to be evacuated; 26,923 were housed in temporary shelters and the rest with relatives and friends. Altogether, 28,066 houses were damaged, of which 730 were completely destroyed.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent action***

The International Federation launched an Emergency Appeal, in preliminary form on 20 October, 1999 and updated on 2 November, for a total of CHF 1,160,000 in cash or in kind, to assist 3,000 families (12,000 people) affected by Hurricane Irene and living in temporary shelters, for three months.

This was a three-phase appeal:

1. A first emergency phase, to supply hygiene items, household goods, water purification tablets, and water containers to the homeless living in shelters.
2. A second rehabilitation phase, to assist 200 families whose houses had suffered structural damage, providing wood, nails and roof tiles.
3. A third phase, to improve the response capacity of the National Society in the event of future disasters, especially in terms of radio communications, data processing equipment, general relief supplies, and visibility.

In response to the appeal, a total of CHF 217,498 was received. The funds received covered the first phase only, and it was not possible to implement phases 2 and 3.

### **Participation of the Cuban Red Cross**

The Cuban Red Cross mobilised 4,512 volunteers in the affected areas, who participated in:

- Evacuation and relief (Red Cross volunteers helped the Civil Defence evacuate 228,067 people in high-risk areas, and take 26,923 of them to temporary shelters)
- Providing care in evacuation centres
- Rescuing people in hard-to-reach homes
- Providing first aid to injured and sick people
- Distributing food and medical supplies
- Systematic education of the population on procedures to be followed in case of a disaster
- Collaborating with blood banks
- Collaborating with local authorities in assessing damage and needs, and assisting the population in rehabilitation work.

To implement the plan of action, a co-ordination group was created with members of the National Society and the assistance of the Disaster Preparedness Delegate of the International Federation's Caribbean Regional Delegation in Santo Domingo.

## ***The operation***

The emergency phase of the operation, which started on 15 November, consisted of supplying the 3,000 targeted families with hygiene materials and water containers.

After assessing the regions affected by Hurricane Irene, the Cuban Red Cross, with the assistance of a Disaster Preparedness delegate of the International Federation's Caribbean Regional Delegation, the following goals were established for the entire relief operation:

- To support and assist local authorities in the evacuation process during the emergency phase.
- To provide medical assistance and first aid to the injured and sick living in temporary shelters.
- To guarantee safe water distribution to families living in shelters and to the affected communities.
- To avoid epidemic outbreaks.
- To guarantee the provision of personal and household hygiene articles.
- To provide basic relief equipment to volunteers and branches of the National Society.
- To improve the levels of relationship and co-ordination with the different bodies and institutions of the Civil Defence.
- To co-ordinate with governmental organisations and NGOs the provision of the necessary resources for implementing the emergency programme, in order to avoid duplication of efforts.

- To enhance the image of the Cuban Red Cross and to increase the satisfaction of volunteers, general population, and government authorities.

**Supply of relief materials to 3,000 families (12,000 people)**

Once suppliers were identified, it was decided that the purchase of all goods for the emergency phase would be done domestically.

Items purchased -- type, quantity, and price -- are listed below:

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>QUANTITY</b>	<b>UNIT PRICE USD</b>	<b>TOTAL VALUE USD</b>
Plastic water tanks (220 litres)	3 000	27.96	83 880.00
Bath soap	45 000	0.18	8 100.00
Laundry Soap	45 000	0.25	11 250.00
Detergent	8 592	1.25	10 740.00
Toilet paper	15 000	0.20	3 000.00
Tooth paste	6 000	0.75	4 500.00
Tooth brush	12 000	0.25	3 000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>124 390.00</b>

Detailed use of resources by provinces:

<b>Province</b>	<b>Plastic containers</b>	<b>Bath Soap</b>	<b>Laundry Soap</b>	<b>Detergent</b>	<b>Toilet Paper</b>	<b>Tooth paste</b>	<b>Tooth brush</b>
Havana	500	7500	7500	1435	2500	1000	2000
Havana C.	1175	17 625	17 625	3348	5870	2350	4700
Matanzas	325	4875	4875	926	1630	650	1300
V. Clara	600	9000	9000	1733	3000	1200	2400
S. Spíritus	400	6000	6000	1150	2000	800	1600
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3000</b>	<b>45000</b>	<b>45000</b>	<b>8592</b>	<b>15000</b>	<b>6000</b>	<b>12000</b>

Transportation of all goods towards the affected provinces began the second half of November and the process was concluded in December.

These materials benefited 3,000 families from 70 communities in 14 municipalities of the provinces of: Matanzas, Villa Clara, Havana City, Havana, and Sancti Spiritus.

	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>No. of Families</b>	<b>No. of beneficiaries</b>	<b>No. of volunteers</b>
<b>Havana</b>	3	3	500	1,925	50
<b>Havana City</b>	4	18	1,175	5,098	200

<b>Matanzas</b>	1	10	325	1,058	70
<b>Villa Clara</b>	3	34	600	1,664	300
<b>Sancti Spiritus</b>	3	5	400	2,280	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>720</b>

**Needs Assessment**

Cuban Red Cross experts and volunteers were responsible for assessing the damage and analysing the needs of the communities affected by Hurricane Irene with the assistance of the Disaster Preparedness Delegate from the Caribbean Regional Delegation, through interviews with local authorities and members of the community. They were able to identify that the main damage was to houses and building structures, especially to roofs. Also, many people, despite precautions taken, lost their personal belongings and household appliances. Red Cross evaluators established an urgent need for hygiene supplies during visits to the temporary shelters for evacuees.

***External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media***

Before, during, and after Hurricane Irene, the Cuban Red Cross maintained close communications and co-ordination of its work with government authorities, especially the Civil Defence, as well as with the International Federation's Caribbean Regional Delegation.

When implementing the census of the affected population, close co-ordination was maintained with local government agencies and organisations, who offered their co-operation and facilitated the work. In addition, working relations were also maintained with the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Foreign Investment and Economic Collaboration for designing the Relief Plan of Action as well as for the field work.

***Contributions***

See Annex 1 for details. The balance remaining is being returned to DREF.

***Conclusions***

The creation of a workforce with personnel from the Cuban Red Cross and counselling from the Regional Delegation of the Federation, which offered its technical support and collaboration, made it possible to incorporate knowledge, procedures and working methods.

Co-ordination and co-operation were further strengthened between the Cuban Red Cross and governmental bodies and other organisations, which facilitated damage assessment, implementation of censuses of affected populations, as well as covering the costs of transportation, rent of storage space and fuel to transport the relief goods.

Peter Rees-Gildea  
Director

Santiago Gil  
Director

Operations Funding and  
Reporting Department

Americas Department

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