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Information bulletin

Hispaniola and Cuba: Tropical Storm Isaac

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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**A beneficiary in Haiti receives a hygiene kit –
Source: IFRC**

The situation

Tropical Storm Isaac's centre passed over Haiti's southwest peninsula in the early morning of Saturday 25 August, approximately 80 kilometres west of Port-au-Prince. Since then torrential rains caused flooding and landslides in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. By 11:00 in the morning of the same day, Isaac made landfall in Cuba at Imías, Guantánamo province, with sustained winds of 95 km/h. It left the land five hours later at Guarda la Vaca, Holguin province, continuing its movement west-northwest towards Florida's keys and the Gulf of Mexico.

But even after the centre of the storm had passed the islands, the torrential rains associated with the system continued to fall for the two following days. It caused several floods and landslides, and affected homes, power lines, crops, as well as interrupting road connections.

As part of the Americas zone support for the coordination of Red Cross actions, the Disaster Response and Early Recovery Unit issued an orange alert on Wednesday, 22 August once the path of the storm became clearer. In addition to the coordination with the regional representation offices, Partner National Societies and PIRAC, disaster management delegates were deployed to Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti to support the National Societies' efforts. Finally, the zone communications unit established close communication with the affected countries' counterparts to ensure an adequate and timely flow of information.

In Haiti agriculture and livelihoods have been affected. Initial reports reveal that there has been an impact on agriculture as banana, coconut, avocado plantations were affected by flooding, while crops of oranges, beans and millet are compromised; many plantations have been lost in the Central Plateau. Severe damage to crops has also been reported in the south and southeast areas of country. Roads in several areas of the country were blocked by flooding, particularly in the southern coastal areas but work is being carried out and their use is restored in several places.

Haiti: A total of 165 camp areas have been affected in Port-au-Prince with a total number of 13,800 families affected. The confirmed fatalities from Tropical Storm Isaac throughout the country are of 5 people. Assessments are still continuing in some neighbourhoods and internally displaced camps in Port-au-Prince. To date, in Port-au-Prince, about 1,600 households have been registered as affected by floods in the area of the road "Route 9" (commune of Croix des Bouquets) including 250 families in the "Fondation Zanmi Timoun" IDP camp.

Dominican Republic: On Friday 24 August, 22 provinces were declared under red alert and 10 under yellow alert, but three days later three provinces were moved into the yellow alert, leaving 19 provinces still in red alert.

Overall, the most affected provinces are San Cristobal and San Pedro de Macoris where several collective centres have been opened. However some 80 communities are isolated as a result of the storm in the provinces of Azua (52 communities), Monte Plata (10 communities), Sánchez Ramírez (6 communities), San José de Ocoa(4 communities), while in Samaná, Pedernales, Duarte and Santo Domingo 2 communities are separated by the flooding in each one of these provinces.

On 27 August, 218 families were registered in official government shelters, while an additional 2,345 families were displaced, mostly as a prevention measure, and located in the homes of friends or relatives. Most of them are now returning to their homes. Preliminary figures from assessments report that 533 homes were flooded, while 280 had moderate damage and 55 were severely damaged. Thus far, there are no reports of deaths, injuries and missing people. No increases of diseases under surveillance have been reported. Although assessments are still ongoing, the southern provinces of Barahona, Bahoruco, Independencia and Pedernales seem to have incurred heavy losses in the agricultural sector.

Cuba: Official preliminary reports indicate that heavy rains fell over Guantánamo province where the storm made landfall, affecting several municipalities: Baracoa, with several coastal communities in low lying areas or with homes near rivers, Yateras, Maisi, Imías and San Antonio del Sur. This last municipality reports 33 homes affected in the community of Puriales de Caujeri where the Sabana la Mar river overflowed. Of these homes, 10 were completely destroyed and 23 partially damaged, while the potable water and the sewage systems were also damaged.

Other communities have suffered moderate flooding with some bridges affected. In Granma province, some communities in the mountain areas of Guisa and Cabezada de Rio Cauto are still cut off due to overflowing rivers. In Holguín province the most affected regions are the municipalities of Gibara and Banes.

As local authorities continue to carry out assessments, emergency phases were changed, with the most affected eastern provinces declared in the recovery phase, while the central provinces up to Matanzas have returned to normal phase.

As of 26 August, the government reported that over 45,000 persons had been assisted to leave their homes as a preventive measure to ensure their protection. These persons received the assistance of governmental authorities, the Cuban Red Cross and other organizations.

Province	Persons protected			Persons that had returned to their homes	Relocated tourists
	Total	In collective centres	With family and friends		
Guantánamo	6600	32	2600	2100	0
Santiago de	0	0	0	0	0

Cuba					
Granma	370	151	219	0	0
Holguín	27759	458	20321	6961	19
Las Tunas	7859	397	7462	0	0
Camagüey	2908	52	2856	3432	0
TOTAL	45496	1090	33458	12493	19

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Haiti

The Haitian Red Cross opened its Emergency Operation Centre, which was active 24 hours prior to the onset of the emergency, with personnel from the National Society and the IFRC rotating. By Friday, 24 August, the National Society had already mobilized 2,341 volunteers.

In preparation for the incoming storm, preventive evacuations started on the afternoon of Friday, 24 August, for the 390,256 people currently living in camps. The evacuations were complemented with volunteers providing psychosocial support and preventive awareness about the tropical storm. In addition, preparedness messages were provided through Radyo Kwa Rouj (Radio Red Cross) and messages through cell-phones, and 157 community health workers (*Relais Communautaires*) that stayed in their camps continued with the sensitization activities. Overall, 2,400 of the most vulnerable people were evacuated from 14 camps in Port-au-Prince.

Once the storm passed, the Movement partners coordinated the deployment of damage and needs assessment teams to camps in Port-au-Prince and to below areas under the lead of the Haitian Red Cross

Movement partner	Areas assessed by 27 August 2012 by the Movement partners
Haitian RC	Areas of Nord-Ouest, Haut Plateau (Rival and Pandiassou)
IFRC	Areas of Gonaives, Hinche, Saint Marc
AmCross	3 teams with 3 cars with supervisors to Canaan, Cite Soleil, La Refuge camps
Spanish RC	Area of Leogane
Norwegian RC	Petit Goave, Les Cayes, Gand Goave
Canadian RC	Marigot
French RC	Delmas camps, Croix-des-Bouquets, Artibonite

Relief distributions are targeting people who have lost their shelters and who have no access to clean drinking water.

The following distributions had been carried out to assist those affected as of 26 August:

Area	Families	Relief items	Distributed by
Rue Admirale	12	Shelter, Hygiene kits and 60 aquatabs	Haitian RC, IFRC
Les Cayes	43	43 hygiene kits, 90 blankets and 432 bars of soap	HRC with support from the Norwegian Red Cross
Bonnefil	2	hygiene kits, 2 blankets, shelter kits	HRC with support of French RC
Accra Sud	1	shelter kit	HRC with support of French RC
Bonnefil	100	2 tarps per family	HRC with support of French RC
ACFA	160	2 tarps per family	HRC with support of French RC
Bill Gates	15	2 tarps per family	HRC with support of French RC
ACFA	127	2 tarps per family, shelter tools and wood	HRC with support of French RC
Mais Gaté 8	12	shelter box	HRC with support of French RC
Bonnefil and Bill Gates	total of 11	supported with reconstruction of shelter	HRC with support of French RC
Base Pompier	150 persons	Water trucking to reservoir	Haitian RC
Lycée Croix des Bouquets	350 persons	Water trucking to reservoir	Haitian RC
Lycée Cite Soleil	177 persons	Water trucking to reservoir	Haitian RC

In camp "Enfrasa" 645 families were also supported with shelter tool kits (including 2 tarpaulins each) and hygiene kits. Distribution was carried out for 872 families in "Automeca" and for 168 families in "Sanatorium"

IDPs camps. In La Piste Jean Marie Vincent camp (JMV), the HRC and IFRC team have distributed 20,000 aquatabs

Today, 28 August, the National Society planned to distribute items for 1,568 families in camps as follows:

1. Area of Route 9: aquatabs
2. Camp *Fondation Zanmi Timoun*, route 9: shelter kits and hygiene kits
3. Damien: shelter kits and cleaning kits

In order to contain the possible risk of a surge in cholera cases and other infectious diseases, the Haitian Red Cross and Movement partners are increasing their prevention activities, including surveillance and sensitization of the population by volunteers trained in Community Based Health and First Aid and Epidemic Control for Volunteers. Also, coordination is ongoing to clean solid waste in camps and to conduct chlorination of common sources of drinking water. A total of 41 Hygiene promotion volunteers and 157 community-based volunteers will also distribute Aquatabs with messages on their appropriate use in some 19 camps.

The 179 volunteers of the Haitian Red Cross trained psychological first aid and psycho-education activities facilitation have continued to be very active after the evacuations and passage of the storm. They have provided assistance to 322 individuals, including children, in La Piste JMV camp, as well as over 150 persons in Les Cayes, La Gonave, and Nippes. In addition, volunteers helped by community members have been facilitating activities for children in the Lycee Alexy of Jeremy (Grande Anse) where over 500 people, including 283 children, took refuge. Finally, trained volunteers have also joined the assessment teams in Petit Goave.

Chlorination is being carried out in the camps below together with the HRC:

- IFRC camps: Automeca Henfrasa (HRC-IFRC), Delmas – 89 Lindor 2/Terrain St Gilles (HRC-IFRC), Village Montre ville prolongée vers Silo, Camp CINEAS - rue charbonnière prolongée, JMV Block 6 and 7
- British Red Cross (BRC)-IFRC camp: Parc Jean Marie Vincent
- IFRC camps: Delmas 31, Rue des Nimes, Sinai

Other agencies are also performing chlorination in their respective camps.

Protection and violence: The Haitian Red Cross disaster risk management coordinator has received minimal reports of unaccompanied children and violence related to the aftermath of Tropical Storm Isaac countrywide. The IFRC has included protection in its emergency relief assessments carried out in the 51 camps. Reports coming back from deployed Emergency Response Teams to date show no signs of unusual or increased levels of violence, but the IFRC will continue its assessments in this regard.

Dominican Republic

The Dominican Red Cross has mobilized their volunteers in support of the most vulnerable. Together with the Prevention, Mitigation and Response Committees from the different municipalities, the National Society has been working in the following areas:

1. Response: Assisting in preventive evacuations, search and rescue, opening of shelters, removing fallen trees and objects. In addition, teams from the National Society continue to carry out damage and needs assessments in the affected communities.
2. Health: health teams have been mobilized to support the Ministry of Public Health and are maintaining epidemiological surveillance and completing educational talks in shelters about health promotion and disease prevention -with an emphasis on cholera. All the activities are being completed in coordination with the local public health authorities.
3. Water and Sanitation: teams have been mobilized at national level to evaluate the water systems and availability of potable water. They are also assessing conditions in collective centres and keeping the population informed of how to prevent diseases both at home and in the shelters. In complement, the Dominican Red Cross has prepositioned all their water & sanitation teams, which are currently supporting the affected communities with 530 gallon water storage tanks that are being filled with potable water by government agencies.

Cuba

Cuba:

The Disaster Management Team of the Cuban Red Cross headquarters was activated to coordinate actions in its auxiliary role to the government. Similarly, all branches at the provincial, municipal and local level recalled their volunteers and activated their Operations and Response Teams (Grupo de Operaciones y Socorro, GOS).

The National Society also participated in inter-institutional meetings to coordinate the implementation of the Hurricane Contingency Plan and reviewed their Disaster Risk Reduction plan. Permanent coordination was established with Civil Defence and other response agencies, while meetings were held with the country coordinator of the United Nations and the representative of the World Food Programme. Members of the branches were also present in the Provincial and Municipal Defence Councils.

As part of their functions, the Cuban Red Cross created key informative messages to the population in affected areas about preventive hygienic measures; volunteers trained in shelter management activated their provincial radio communications services. Additionally, they participated in the preventive mobilization of 7,574 persons located in vulnerable regions, focusing their attention on pregnant women, the elderly, children, and persons with disabilities. Volunteers also provided psychosocial support and educational message on preventive health and hygiene.

In total, over 1,800 volunteers were activated to support preventive and response measures:

Province	Activated municipalities	Operations and Response teams (provincial, municipal, local)		Volunteers in shelters	Total
		No. of teams	No of volunteers		
Guantánamo	8	9	131	-	131
Stgo. de Cuba	9	10	202	2	204
Granma	4	5	145	31	176
Holguín	7	35	442	118	560
Las Tunas	7	30	188	79	267
Camagüey	7	8	90	-	150
Central provinces	10	22	278	16	316
TOTAL	52	119	1476	246	1804

With the declaration of the recovery phase, the Cuban Red Cross will intensify the community health actions that were ongoing before the passage of Tropical Storm Isaac. Volunteers will support vector control activities to contain the increase of mosquito breeding grounds and will continue with hygiene promotion actions. The goal is to ensure the understanding of the risks present in the most affected communities that may not have adequate equipment for water storage and its chlorination.

Monitoring of the situation continues from the zone office and on the ground in Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti given the potential for further rainfall, associated flooding and health risks.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **In Haiti:** Marco La Pietra, DRM Technical Advisor for the Haitian Red Cross; email: Marco.lapietra@ifrc.org; m.lapietra@croixrouge.ht
Chantal Pitaud, Haitian Red Cross National DRM Coordinator: email: c.pitaud@croixrouge.ht
- Alexandre Claudon, country representative; email alexandre.claudon@ifrc.org
- Anna Beloff, disaster management delegate; email: annamaija.beloff@ifrc.org.

- **In the Dominican Republic:** Arq. Gustavo Lara Tapia, director general, Dominican Red Cross, phone: +809.334.4545, Fax +809.238.5252; email: gustavo.lara@cruzroja.org.do
- Sergio Rafael Vargas Puente, national director of emergencies and relief, Dominican Red Cross, phone: +809.334.4545, Fax +809.238.5252; email: sergio.vargas@cruzroja.org.do
- Felipe del Cid, surge capacity delegate; email: felipe,delcid@ifrc.org

- **In Cuba:** Dr. Luis Foyo Ceballos, Secretary General of the Cuban Red Cross; phone: (537) 306-1055; email: crsn@infomed.sld.cu
Lucia Lasso, reporting officer, email: lucia.lasso@ifrc.org

- **IFRC regional representation for the Latin Caribbean:** Joe Lugo, regional organizational development coordinator, email: joe.lugo@ifrc.org

- **IFRC Americas zone office in Panama:** phone: + 507.317.3050
 - Benoit Porte, acting coordinator of the Disaster Response and Early Recovery Unit; email: benoit.porte@ifrc.org
 - **Regional Logistics Unit (RLU):**
 - Douglas Baquero, regional logistics coordinator; email: douglas.baquero@ifrc.org
 - **For Resource Mobilization and Pledges:**
 - Sandra Lombardo; resource mobilization officer: email: sandra.lombardo@ifrc.org; phone: (507) 317 3050; and fax: (507) 317 1304.
 -
 - **For Performance and Accountability (planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting enquiries)**
 - Jane Grimshaw; PMER manager; email: jane.grimshaw@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.

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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.
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