

# OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## CUBA: HURRICANE CHARLEY

24 January 2005

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

### In Brief

**Request for Assistance No. 20/2004; Operations Update no. 1; Period covered: 8 September 2004 to 20 January 2005; Coverage of Request for Assistance: 9.1%; ([click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List, also available on the website](#)).**

#### History of Request for Assistance:

- Launched on 8 September 2004 for CHF 2,419,000 (USD 1,905,168 or EUR 1,576,163) for 6 months to assist 25,000 beneficiaries (5,000 families).
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 100,000

**Outstanding needs: CHF 1,994,363 (USD 1,744,351 or EUR 1,319,617)**

**Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Caribbean: Hurricane Ivan Emergency Appeal (21/2004)**

**Operational Summary:** Efforts to assist beneficiaries affected by Hurricane Charley have focused mainly on the distribution of zinc sheeting. Thus far, three shipments have arrived in Cuba with 13,351 zinc sheets, 133 boxes of nails and 20 generators. These items have all been distributed to beneficiaries in the country and approximately 45 percent have already been installed in affected homes. In addition, 20 generators have been distributed to branches of the Cuban Red Cross (CRC) to strengthen the response capacity of the National Society. Activities under this Request for Assistance have been limited by a serious lack of funding, as only 9.1 percent of the total requested amount has been received. Additional funds are urgently needed to ensure that the needs of beneficiaries affected by Hurricane Charley are sufficiently met.

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

## Background

On 13 August 2004, Cuba was severely impacted by the passage of Hurricane Charley which hit at 12.15 hours in the region of Punta Cayama, between Guanimar and El Cajío, on the south coast of the Province of La Habana. Hurricane Charley, a category 3 storm, hit the Provinces of Ciudad de la Habana and La Habana with fierce winds of 170 kph and squalls of over 200 kph. The passage of the storm resulted in flooding of low-lying areas of the south coast, in particular in the Province of La Habana. In anticipation of the storm, the Civil Defence ensured evacuation of 215,532 people from high-risk areas, of whom 35,794 took refuge in temporary shelters, whilst the remainder stayed with families and friends. As a result of the passage of Hurricane Charley, over 70,000 homes incurred damage and thousands of hectares of crops were spoiled. Early reports indicate that around 8,000 trees were uprooted and 95 per cent of sugarcane, bean and banana crops have been seriously affected. The electricity, water and telephone networks were also severely affected. In addition, in the two Provinces, 798 schools and 312 health centres were damaged.

Incoming damage reports indicate that the Province of La Habana was the most severely affected by the Hurricane. Red Cross volunteers continue to assist those who were evacuated, of whom 852 remained in shelters as of 25 August. The Cuban authorities undertook preventive measures to avoid the outbreak of disease, given the damage to health centres. Red Cross volunteers worked to support these government initiatives. In the Province of Pinar del Río, telephone communication was interrupted over an eleven day period, although, overall, the Province was less affected by the passage of the Hurricane.

## Operational developments

Immediately following the impact of Hurricane Charley, delegates from the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Lima Regional Delegation were deployed to Cuba. These delegates worked with personnel from the Cuban Red Cross on damage and needs assessments, beneficiary surveys and on the design of a communications strategy for the operation. Damage and needs assessments and a beneficiary survey were carried out in coordination with state and local authorities. The National Society also participated in evacuation efforts, provided care to families staying in temporary shelters, provided first aid to sick and injured persons and provided psychosocial support to persons affected by the Hurricane. In addition, the CRC distributed food to beneficiaries and informed the affected population about rules of conduct to be observed in these circumstances.



A total of 13,351 zinc sheets have been distributed to 338 families in Cuba to date, providing much needed shelter assistance.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact

### Shelter

**Objective 1: 5,000 beneficiary families (25,000 people) will be able to return to their homes as a result of the replacement or repair of damaged roofs.**

### Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

Through PADRU, the following shipments were sent to Cuba:

- One shipment was sent on 30 October 2004 and arrived in the CRC warehouse on 29 November 2004 carrying 20 generators and one box of accessories for the generators.
- One shipment was sent on 21 October 2004 and arrived in the CRC warehouse on 7 December 2004 carrying 3,351 0.27 mm zinc sheets and 1,732 0.31 mm zinc sheets.

- One shipment was sent on 21 October 2004 and arrived in the CRC warehouses in the affected areas on 18 December 2004 carrying 4,134 zinc sheets and 67 boxes of roofing nails.
- One shipment was sent on 21 October 2004 and arrived in the CRC warehouses in the affected areas on 4 January 2005 carrying 4,134 zinc sheets and 66 boxes of roofing nails.

Given the results of ongoing needs assessments, families in the municipality of Alquizar have been added to group of beneficiaries targeted for this component of the Request for Assistance. To date, only 338 families (1,200 beneficiaries) have received roofing materials. Additional support for this relief operation is needed to ensure that the needs of all the most seriously affected beneficiaries are met.

To date, zinc sheeting has been distributed as follows:

La Habana Province—Municipality of Guira de Melena (32,000 inhabitants)

Community	Sheets delivered	Number of families	Total beneficiaries	Roofs completed
Ubaldo Díaz	1,698	40	137	10
Niceto Pérez	1,086	28	113	6
Vivian Alonso	1,006	29	87	6
Cajío	947	27	100	8
Gabriel	1,011	37	130	--
Junco	1,010	29	106	6
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>6,758</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>36</b>

La Habana Province—Municipality of Alquizar (29,000 inhabitants)

6,593 zinc sheets have been distributed.

In addition to the zinc sheeting that is being distributed to beneficiaries, the Cuban Red Cross is providing support to beneficiaries who have been unable to return to their homes. To date, a total of 432 people remain in shelters and are receiving assistance from the authorities and from the Cuban Red Cross, which has been supporting the shelters. Other beneficiaries who were staying in shelters have returned to their homes as their needs have been attended to, in some cases through their own resources and in other cases with the help of government authorities and other organizations.

**Impact**

The Cuban Red Cross, through its activities in the area of shelter, has been able to alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable. A total of 13,351 zinc sheets have been distributed to beneficiaries; 190 roofs have been repaired in the municipality of Guira de Melena, and 148 roofs have been repaired in the municipality of Alquizar. Both beneficiaries and government authorities have expressed their appreciation for the work that the CRC has carried out in response to the disaster.



Through the efforts of the Cuban Red Cross, families were able to move back into their houses, which had been seriously damaged by Hurricane Charley.

### Constraints

There were some initial difficulties regarding the supply of wood for the installation of zinc sheeting on the part of the local authorities. The collaboration of the International Relations Directorate of the Habana Provincial Assembly was requested by the government for the supply of wood materials and this constraint is now being overcome. The lack of funding continues to be a problem for the development of activities in this area.

### Emergency Relief (Non-food items)

#### **Objective 1: 5,000 beneficiary families (25,000 people) will have benefited from the distribution of non-food items .**

This objective seeks to provide non-food relief items to vulnerable beneficiaries that lost all their belongings as a result of the hurricane. Items to be distributed are as follows: sheets, towels, mattresses, kitchen kits and kerosene stoves which will help people resume their normal lives. Unfortunately, no distributions have been carried out to date because of a lack of funding for this emergency operation.

### Strengthening of response capacities

#### **Objective 1: Both Cuban Red Cross branches in the Province of La Habana and the targeted communities will have been strengthened.**

#### **Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)**

A total of 20 generators have been distributed to and installed in the following branches of the Cuban Red Cross:

<b>Community</b>	<b>Generators</b>
Pinar del Rio	2
Santiago de Cuba	3
La Habana	1
Villa Clara	1
Granma	2
Sancti Spiritus	1
Guantánamo	1
Camagüey	2
Cienfuegos	1
Holguín	3
Ciego de Ávila	1
CRC headquarters	1
Held in reserve	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

Volunteers from the affected provinces who are assisting with the Hurricane Charley relief operation have also been provided with t-shirts with the Red Cross logo.

In addition, transportation of relief items from the ports to the Red Cross warehouses and from the warehouses to the communities in the affected areas has been carried out with the assistance of state authorities, further strengthening the relationship between the Cuban Red Cross and the Cuban government.

### Impact

The capacity of the Cuban Red Cross to respond to emergency situations has been strengthened through the distribution of generators as they allow the CRC to continue to provide essential services despite electricity outages.

## Objective 2: To further the community-based disaster preparedness programme in the Province of La Habana.

### Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

The Cuban Red Cross' disaster preparedness programme is currently being implemented and plans have been drawn up to publish the Community Disaster and Emergency Guide and the Facilitators' Manual. It is planned to train Red Cross community facilitators who will work with the communities in the areas of risk mitigation and disaster preparedness. Mitigation information and education will be provided to families in order that they are in a position to make their roofing more resistant to hurricane-force winds. In addition, work is being done by national health authorities and the Cuban Red Cross to promote health and hygiene measures. These efforts have ensured that there were no outbreaks of disease following the hurricane.



### Impact

Community disaster preparedness guarantees that the population will be prepared and be familiar with their own vulnerabilities. These efforts will help reduce the damage caused by any subsequent disaster that may affect these communities.

### Constraints

The amount of available educational materials is limited, which makes it difficult to reach all of the affected communities with awareness raising activities.

Both Cuban Red Cross and the targeted communities will have been strengthened through this emergency operation, making them even better prepared for the next emergency.

### Federation Coordination

The Cuban Red Cross is working in close coordination with the government authorities and other State bodies which make up the civil defence system. The Cuban Red Cross headquarters is ensuring close liaison with its provincial and municipal branches. Beneficiary criteria amongst vulnerable groups in areas prone to risk have been defined in coordination with local authorities. Logistics support for transportation of relief goods, as well as training of facilitators in the repair and installation of roofs is being provided by the Cuban Red Cross, with support from governmental authorities.

### Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and initiatives

- Assistance to beneficiaries is carried out in accordance with the principle of humanity, ensuring humanitarian aid reaches those most in need.
- Distributions of relief goods take place fully in accordance with the SPHERE standards.

### National Society Capacity Building

The Cuban Red Cross has wide experience in disaster response and has a significant body of volunteers. In the wake of Hurricanes Lili and Isidore, the Cuban Red Cross undertook a similar operation in late 2002 whereby 1,000 families were assisted through the provision of zinc sheeting and nails enabling them to repair or reconstruct roofs. Furthermore, 500 families were assisted with the provision of toilets and clean water supplies with an emphasis on the promotion of health education. In addition, 500 families were provided with basic relief items and household goods through the Japanese Red Cross Society funded container project which involves pre-positioned containers of relief items placed in strategic areas for use in times of disasters. Through its response to Hurricane Charley, the Cuban Red Cross has further developed its recognition amongst government authorities and institutions in the country. Most importantly, the image of the Red Cross has been promoted among the beneficiaries of this operation, who have expressed their gratitude for the assistance received.

**Communications – Advocacy and Public Information**

The Cuban Red Cross has undertaken a number of activities to ensure that the general public, other organizations and members of the Movement are kept informed of the work that the CRC is carrying out in the areas affected by Hurricane Charley. The “Friends of the Red Cross” network of journalists that often works with the CRC, as well as all CRC volunteers who were trained through the long distance learning course in communications, were activated following the disaster, as stipulated in the National Society’s information contingency plan. Three articles for the Red Cross bulletin were drawn up by members of the journalists’ network in the provinces of Pinar del Rio, Granma and Cienfuegos and have been received in the National Society headquarters. Articles detailing the Red Cross response to the disaster were also published in the local newspapers, “El Habanero” and “Tribuna de la Habana,” and an archive of photographs has been created which documents the activities of the CRC. In addition, interviews with directors of the CRC about the Red Cross intervention were broadcast on the following radio stations: COCO, Radio Cadena Habana, Radio Habana Cuba and Radio Reloj.

[Contributions list below; click here to return to the title page.](#)

# Cuba: request for assistance, hurricane Charley

ANNEX 1

No.20/2004

## PLEDGES RECEIVED

09/08/2005

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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### CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->					<b>TOTAL COVERAGE</b>	
					<b>2,419,000</b>	<b>9.1%</b>
GREAT BRITAIN - RC		15,000	GBP	32,715	15.10.04	
JAPANESE - RC		62,900	USD	79,537	16.09.04	
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		350,000	NOK	64,925	22.09.04	
SWEDISH - GOVT		250,000	SEK	41,875	15.09.04	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				219,052	CHF	9.1%

### KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0	CHF	0.0%

### ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	