

# ***CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: HURRICANE ALBERTO, TROPICAL STORMS AND SEISMIC ACTIVITY***

*9 August 2000*

## ***Information Bulletin N° 1***

### ***The Disaster***

In the last few days, several tropical disturbances have been developing in the Caribbean and Central America Regions.

There are three notable disturbances in the Atlantic that the Federation has been monitoring closely. The first is a tropical wave moving north of the Caribbean islands. The second system is a weak surface disturbance east of Florida that is moving towards the southwest. Another tropical wave is moving across the Yucatan Peninsula and into the gulf of Mexico.

For the North Atlantic, Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, the National Hurricane center is continuing to issue warnings on Hurricane "Alberto" located about 1,125 Miles East of the Leeward islands. "Alberto" is currently a Category I Hurricane but has shown signs of weakening. It is moving slightly away from the Caribbean Antilles land masses though not with the comfortable margin originally anticipated. However it still has the potential to re-intensify and will be closely monitored over the next few days. The tropical wave moving across the Yucatan peninsula is producing numerous thunderstorms over Yucatan, Belize and northern Guatemala and is expected to emerge over the bay of Campeche.

A tropical wave is producing showers and thunderstorms east of the Turks and Caicos islands and the southern Bahamas.

In the North Pacific, storm Gilma is located about 580 miles southwest of Cabo San Lucas, Mexico producing thunderstorm activity, but at this time is not viewed as a threat.

Equally significant and of growing concern to the Federation Disaster Response monitors, is the continuous seismic activity experienced in the region over the last month. The latest tremors reported were in Guatemala on 2 August, of 4.2 degrees in the Richter scale on the Pacific coast of the country, and in Panama on 27 July, a tremor of 5.1 degrees which produced also a tidal wave that killed two people and damaged dozens of houses and buildings in two cities as well as three fishing ports on the Pacific Coast.

In Guatemala, Pacaya Volcano, located 20 kms from the capital city showed increased activity today with another “Stromboli” type eruption that is expelling ash, gases and lava. Activity has been ongoing throughout the past week. CONRED, the National Disaster agency, is maintaining a “Yellow” Alert.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

The Senior Disaster Response Officer in Guatemala is in regular communication with the Regional Delegations in the Caribbean and Guatemala. In consultation with their counterpart networks in the National Societies of the region, the Regional DPP and Information delegates are following events. A particularly close watch is being maintained on Hurricane “Alberto” .

With the arrival of “Alberto”, the start of the 2000 Hurricane season coincides with a series of specialized Disaster Response workshops being sponsored by the Federation in the Central America and Caribbean. These are designed to raise awareness and readiness for any major event that might occur, as well as to provide updated training and practice in disaster response. As part of the Federation/ICRC/National Society Meeting scheduled to take place in St. Lucia on 27 August, a Disaster Response workshop will cover many of the latest Federation initiatives and training models, including early warning and vulnerability mechanisms, FACT and ERU teams, the SPHERE Project, Regional Intervention Teams and the Assessment and Appeal process.

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