

# INFORMATION BULLETIN



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 ISIDORE**

23 September 2002

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*This Information Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, and should the National Society request it, the Federation will consider international support.*

### ***The Situation***

Hurricane Isidore has passed over Cuba and subsequently entered the Gulf of Mexico, where it has made landfall over Mexico's Yucatan peninsula as a category 3 hurricane. Heavy rains have caused flooding, and up to 70,000 residents were evacuated on Sunday.

On Friday 20 September at 5 pm EDT hurricane Isidore made landfall over western Cuba as a Category 2 hurricane with maximum sustained winds near 100 mph / 160 kmh and tropical storm force winds extending outward up to 145 miles / 230 kms. The centre of the hurricane passed over La Fe, 40 miles (60km) east of the western tip of the island. Hurricane Isidore pounded western Cuba during the night and at 5am EDT on Saturday 21 September, the Government of Cuba down-graded its alert status to a tropical storm warning. All storm warnings for Cuba were subsequently discontinued at 11am EDT on Sunday 22 September.

Extremely heavy rainfall continues to batter south-western Cuba, with reports of over 25 inches (60cm) in the first 24 hours of the hurricane. The area is also experiencing serious flooding and coastal storm surges of 8-12 feet (2.5-3.75 metres) above normal tide level were noted, along with dangerous waves.

The most affected area has been the south-western tip of the island, in particular the province of Piñar del Rio and the Isle of Youth. Some 280,000 people have been evacuated, as well as thousands of head of cattle. There have been no reported casualties at this time.

Heavy rains and flooding have particularly affected the municipalities of San Juan y Martinez, Sandino and Guane, with reports of destroyed housing, roofs blown off, disrupted electricity supplies, and blocked roads. Access to the area remains difficult, as rains continue. In addition, to date, some 134 tobacco drying houses have been affected, damaging valuable tobacco stocks and at least 3,000 tons of citrus fruit are reported lost. On-going heavy rains and flooding have also been reported in the south-eastern provinces of Sancti-Spiritus, Cienfuegos and the Sierra Maestra.

## *Red Cross/Red Crescent Action*

- The Cuban Red Cross is working in close coordination with the national Civil Defense and is currently liaising with the authorities to assess damage. It is also establishing communication with its branches to assist in this process.
- The Santo Domingo Regional Delegation has been in close contact with the National Society throughout the storm and has also maintained regular contact with the Federation's pan-American disaster response unit (PADRU).
- The Federation's Regional disaster preparedness (DP) delegate has been in Cuba since Saturday 21 September and is working closely with the National Society to assess needs and determine action.
- Meanwhile, the Mexican Red Cross has mobilised its branches and volunteers, and basic relief goods were issued from its central warehouse to the Campeche branch. The Federation representative in Mexico City is maintaining close communication with the Regional Delegation in Guatemala, and with PADRU in Panama.

## *Needs*

Assessment of needs in Cuba will be on-going over the next 48-72 hours, as access to the most affected areas becomes possible. Based on a preliminary assessment, likely needs will include: hygiene kits, kitchen sets, bedding and zinc roofing sheets.

A further information bulletin will be issued as potential needs become clearer.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)

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*All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

*For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>*

*For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.*

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