

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

CARIBBEAN - HURRICANE LILI

8 October 2002

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Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 30,000

This Information Bulletin is for information only. The Federation will launch an international emergency appeal for this operation shortly.

The Situation

Hurricane Lili passed over south-western Cuba, in the province of Pinar del Rio, on 1 October, following closely in the track of Hurricane Isidore which had already brought severe flooding to the area less than two weeks earlier. Officials have reported one casualty.

Preliminary assessments undertaken by the Government of Cuba and the Cuban Red Cross indicate considerable damage to housing, already weakened by the passing of Hurricane Isidore. In total, the number of houses that have been reported damaged to date is 50,788 - with structural damage to over 33,133 houses and 17,655 homes with damaged roofs. The worst affected areas are in the south-west, particularly the province of Pinar del Rio and the Isle of Youth, with a total of 47,950 houses partially or totally destroyed. In Pinar del Rio, 22 out of 54 health post were damaged. Other affected provinces include Guantanamo, Santiago and Granma with a total of 1,364 houses damaged.

High storm surges caused extensive flooding, including in areas previously considered safe. More than 300,000 persons have been evacuated, with 480 official shelters in use.

Electricity supply in the province of Pinar del Rio was disrupted severely. Up to 60% of the population in affected areas have lost their normal water supply due to damages to electricity supply and aquaducts. Drinking water and purification drops are being distributed, but shortages of storage tanks and buckets limit access. Communications remain difficult, with some areas still inaccessible.

The hurricane has also caused severe damages to infrastructure and the agriculture. Nearly half of the tobacco plantations in the province of Pinar del Rio have been damaged. Rice and food stocks have also been affected.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

- A total of 7,300 Cuban Red Cross volunteers were activated previous to and during the first hours of the emergency. The Cuban Red Cross assisted with evacuations and search and rescue operations, and provided on-going psychological assistance and first aid services. Currently, 2,518 volunteers are still active, 1,027 of them working in the 480 temporary shelters.
- In addition, 121 Red Cross disaster intervention groups were also activated.
- Damage assessment is continuing, in close coordination with government authorities, although access to the worst affected areas in the south-west is still difficult due to road closures and to a lack of radio-communications infrastructure.
- **The Federation Regional Delegation in Santo Domingo** continues to monitor the situation closely and is in communication with all affected areas. The Regional Information Delegate from Santo Domingo as well as a Disaster Management Delegate from the Pan-American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) in Panama are in Cuba to support the assessment and follow-up tasks of the Cuban Red Cross as necessary. With the support of the Federation Delegates a Plan of Action has been developed, which will be the basis for an international emergency appeal.

Needs

A Federation international emergency appeal is being finalised, based on the Cuban Red Cross Plan of Action. Priority needs, as assessed by the Cuban Red Cross, are for:

1. Roofing material, such as zinc roofing sheets, nails, and wood, for 1000 families.
2. Household items such as mattresses, beds and bed sheets, kitchen sets, hygiene kits, jerry cans and clothing, for 500 families.
3. Other items including electrical plants, rechargeable lamps, flashlights with batteries, tents, waterproof boots, and funds to assist with transportation and on-going operational needs.

For a full description of the National Society profiles, see www.ifrc.org

For further details please contact :

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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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