

# 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

## JAMAICA, CUBA, CAYMAN ISLANDS: HURRICANE

11 August 2004

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

**This Information Bulletin (no. 01/2004) is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.**

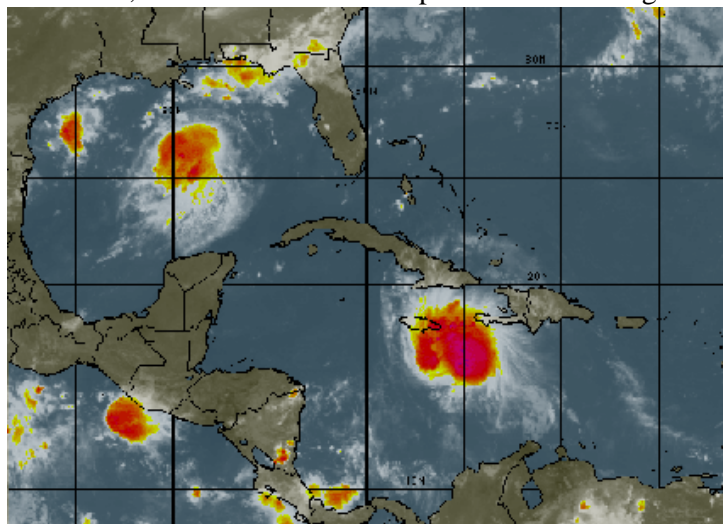
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### The Situation

Tropical Storm Charley was upgraded to a Category 1 hurricane on Wednesday as it traveled through the Caribbean, towards Jamaica. A tropical storm warning and a hurricane watch are in effect for Jamaica. Hurricane



watches are also in effect for the Cayman Islands and several provinces in western Cuba: Pinar del Rio, La Habana, Ciudad de la Habana, Matanzas and the Isle of Youth. A hurricane watch means that hurricane conditions are possible within the watch area, generally within 36 hours.

The hurricane was moving northwest through the Caribbean Sea and was expected to pass just south of the southern coast of Jamaica late Wednesday. This is expected to bring tropical storm force rains to the island, as well as high tides, accompanied by large waves. Similar conditions are expected in the Cayman Islands, located northwest of Jamaica. Hurricane Charley is then expected to pass over western Cuba, bringing heavy rains and high

A satellite image showing Hurricane Charley as it moves across the Caribbean Sea towards Jamaica. Further north is Tropical Storm Bonnie, which is threatening the southern United States.

winds, before moving further north to the Florida panhandle in the United States.

Offices, businesses and public transportation have been closed in Jamaica, and Air Jamaica, British Airways and American Airlines have cancelled all flights. In addition, several cruise ships have altered their routes to avoid the path of the hurricane. Rains have been falling in Jamaica since midday Wednesday and there have been reports of mudslides in the eastern parish of St. Thomas. However, there have been no reports of damage as yet.

## **Red Cross and Red Crescent action**

The Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU), the Panama Regional Delegation and the Port of Spain Sub Regional Office are monitoring the development of this hurricane and are maintaining constant contact with the National Societies and Overseas Branches located in and around the path of the storm to verify that preparations are being made and to offer support where necessary. As these countries are regularly affected by the annual Caribbean hurricane season, contingency plans are already in place and shelters are ready to receive beneficiaries should the need arise. Red Cross disaster management personnel throughout Central America and the region are awaiting further developments.

### *Jamaica*

The Jamaica Red Cross (JRC) opened the Emergency Operation Centre on Wednesday morning following a meeting with the National Emergency Management Office (NEMO). During the meeting it was decided to open the Emergency Operation Centre and to put Red Cross branches on alert, principally those located in the high risk areas in the eastern part of the island. There are three JRC community disaster response teams (CDRT) in the area who were trained through the current DIPECHO-funded community-based disaster preparedness project and are available to respond to the emergency. Branches throughout the country are providing information to the National Society headquarters every hour.

In addition to the areas in the east of the country, the Red Cross is carefully monitoring six locations in the parish of Kingston because of the tendency for floods in the region; two near the coast and four in the Jamaican capital city of Kingston.

As the storm conditions grew worse and the tropical storm was upgraded to a hurricane, the JRC sent home all non-essential personnel and opened up shelters in the affected areas. The management of shelters in Jamaica is the responsibility of the JRC and these shelters are being managed by JRC personnel.

### *Cuba*

The Cuban Red Cross is on alert in the west of the country, in particular in the province of Pinar del Rio. Evacuation routes are being planned for tourists in the area, who will be taken to safer areas. Precautions are also being taken in low-lying areas that are prone to flooding. As the storm is currently off the coast of Jamaica, the Cuban Red Cross is waiting to see how the storm develops as it moves further northward.

### *Cayman Islands*

Should the need arise, the Red Cross shelter will be the first shelter to open in George Town and will be able to hold 70 people. Other designated shelters will open should the need arise. Further actions on the part of the Red Cross in the Cayman Islands will depend on the decisions that come out of the meeting of the National Hurricane Committee that was scheduled for late Wednesday.

*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.*

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