

MINOR EMERGENCY



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 DENNIS

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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

CHF 250,000 (USD 192,535 OR EUR 161,175) HAS BEEN ALLOCATED FROM THE FEDERATION'S DISASTER RELIEF EMERGENCY FUND (DREF) TO RESPOND TO THIS YEAR'S HURRICANE SEASON. DREF FUNDING WILL BE USED AS APPROPRIATE FOR POTENTIAL OPERATIONS IN THE WAKE OF HURRICANE DENNIS.

UN earmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

For information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- In the Cayman Islands: Mrs. Jondo Malafa Obi, Director, Cayman Islands Red Cross; phone (1 345) 917 2345
- In Cuba: Cuban Red Cross, Dr. Luis Foyo Ceballos, Executive President; email crsn@infomed.sld.cu; phone (1 537) 269 0100
- In Haiti: Haitian National Red Cross Society, Dr. Michaèle Amédée Gédéon, President, Port-au-Prince; email croroha@haitworld.co, phone (509) 510-9813, fax (509) 223-1054
- In Jamaica: Ms. Yvonne Clarke, Director General ; email yvonneclarke@jamaicaredcross.or, phone (1 876) 984 786, fax; (1 876) 984 8272
- In Panama: Nelson Castaño, Pan American Disaster Response Unit; e-mail ifrcpa07@ifrc.or, phone (507) 316-1001, fax (507) 316-1082
- In Geneva: Luis Luna, Americas Department ; e-mail luis.luna@ifrc.org, phone (41 22) 730 4274, fax (41 22) 733 0395

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The situation

Hurricane Dennis, now a category four storm, is currently passing over east-central Cuba, 95 miles east-southeast of Havana. Dennis' centre is expected to reach the island's north-central coast this evening, 8 July. A hurricane warning remains in effect for Cuban provinces of Havana, Matanzas, Villa Clara, Cienfuegos, Sancti Spiritus, Ciego

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de Avila, Camaguey, Las Tunas, Granma, Santiago de Cuba, Holguin and Guantanamo. A hurricane watch remains in effect for the Isle of youth and the province of Pinar del Rio. Winds are blowing at 215 km/h (135 mph) and extend 100 km (65m).

The storm's outer rain-bands have battered the southern coast of Haiti, causing rivers to overflow and roads to be flooded. A team from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has reported that Dennis has caused flooding in Les Cayes and Grand Anse in the country's southern region. Coastal villages have been evacuated. Reuters is reporting that 18 have died as a result of the storm. About 254 people are believed to be in shelters in Les Cayes, 100 in shelters in Port-Salut, and 300 in Grand Anse. The PAHO/UNDP team reports that 17 houses have been destroyed and 16 have been heavily damaged. The hospital in Les Cayes is flooded but continues to treat patients. One of the main bridges in Petit Goaves, in the southern part of the country, has collapsed, completely blocking access. The collapse is the cause of several of the deaths being reported.

Jamaica is experiencing mudslides from the heavy rains, and residents of low lying areas as well as coastal towns – where a large part of the population lives - have been advised to seek higher ground. Dennis has caused flooding in 28 communities, primarily in St. Thomas and parts of St. Catherine and St. Andrew. The Norman Manley Highway is impassable. The community of Seaforth in St. Thomas has experienced major flooding and people will require evacuation. The Rio Cobre has overflowed its bank and is rising. Approximately 65 shelters are open with nearly 2,000 occupants. The residents of Portland Cottage, Clarendon – who were seriously affected by Hurricane Ivan in 2004 – have adhered to warnings and have gone to shelters. A banana plantation in Durham Gap, in the Blue Mountain Range, has been destroyed. There are also concerns that other plantations in the parish of St. Mary may be affected. According to the Jamaican Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM), there is one unconfirmed reported death in Seaforth, St. Thomas. Search and rescue operations are now being attempted in the following sections of the island, which are currently experiencing flooding: Seaforth and Lloyds in St. Thomas; and Village, Gordon Town, Bull Bay and Hope River in St. Andrew. Shelter occupants in Bull Bay are being taken to St. Benedicts in Harbour View, Kingston due to rising waters. Hospitals are accepting mainly emergency cases at this time.

Though Hurricane Dennis is beginning to move away from Jamaica precautions are still being taken throughout the night by citizens across the island as Jamaica continues to experience heavy rainfall. The Jamaica Red Cross states that 760 people have been moved to shelters, mostly in the south-central part of the island. Air Jamaica has resumed its flights in and out of Jamaica but has cancelled today's flights to Havana, Cuba and Grand Cayman.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action taken so far

The Federation has regular communication with the Red Cross Societies affected by Dennis, to ensure continued monitoring of the storm's development and effects, as well as effective preparedness and response measures. The Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) is prepared and capable to respond to the needs of 10,000 families with materials such as plastic sheeting, hygiene kits, kitchen kits, and jerry cans, as well as provide equipment for water treatment and purification. In addition, a number of Red Cross disaster management personnel in the region are on standby awaiting further developments.

As part of the pre-positioning strategy, a Federation disaster management delegate from PADRU arrived in Haiti on 6 July to support both the Haitian National Red Cross Society (HNRCS) and the Federation delegation. In preparation for the storm's passage through Haiti, the HNRCS has established a crisis management unit. The unit is being supported by personnel from the Federation, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the American Red Cross, the Canadian Cross, the French Red Cross, and the Spanish Red Cross. The unit will support the affected regional and local HNRCS branches in responding to the needs of those affected and will develop appropriate plans of action, as needed. It had been determined that the HNRCS would lead a rapid assessment and evaluation mission including HNRCS members, Federation staff, and Partner National society delegates to those areas of the south-eastern region that have been affected by Dennis including Jacmel, Les Cayes, Jérémie and Anse-à-Veaux. Assessment teams have not yet been able to access all of the affected areas due to the flooding of roads and bridges and the assessment has now been put on hold in anticipation of the findings of an aerial survey by the UN which took place today, 8 July.

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The Haitian National Red Cross Society has mobilized around 500 volunteers through eight local branches in affected areas. The HNRCS volunteers have helped to evacuate people to shelters, primarily in schools and universities. The HNRCS is also deploying 25 first aid volunteers together with ambulances to cover the medical needs of affected areas. In the southern part of the peninsula, seven schools and three universities have been identified as possible shelters.

The Jamaica Red Cross (JRC) is preparing to preposition stock amongst its 13 branches, as necessary. Jamaica Red Cross disaster mental health personnel are on standby to provide psychosocial support to shelter occupants and response personnel. JRC volunteers are also managing several shelters across the island. In addition to registering arrivals, volunteers are assisting in the preparation of meals and have supplied blankets to people seeking refuge in the shelters. Additional assessment teams will be deployed to assist the community disaster response teams (CDRT) in St. Thomas, as soon as roads are cleared National Intervention Team members are also available to provide support. Red Cross volunteers have also evacuated eight people, including an infant, from Sydenham, a community in St. Catherine.

The Cayman Islands Overseas Branch of the British Red Cross has opened a shelter in each district and has alerted 110 volunteers to prepare for assisting with disaster response. The Cayman Islands Overseas Branch is awaiting the arrival of a container of relief supplies this week from the British Red Cross, with hygiene kits, baby parcels and buckets. Two more containers of supplies are scheduled to arrive within the month.

In Cuba, the Cuban Red Cross (CRC) has mobilized 300 volunteers, who are working in the 800 shelters set up around the country. The CRC branches have activated a disaster and information contingency plan and have already put into place the mobilization and community organization aspects of the plan. A Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member from Colombia who is working with the Cuban Red Cross and members of the Costa Rican Red Cross and of the Red Cross Society of Panama are currently in Cuba for a training exercise, and therefore are in a position to assist the Cuban Red Cross, as required.

The needs

Given the current situation, it can be assumed that the short term needs for the countries affected will be for evacuation and rescue, the provision of food and non-food supplies, and temporary shelter materials. Given that the area is already affected by flooding, it is likely that in the mid to long term there will be a need to address safe water and basic sanitation issues. Since flood waters may temporarily contaminate wells and other ground water supplies, as well as damage latrines, the distribution of information on personal hygiene and safe water may be needed to prevent the spread of waterborne diseases.

Coordination

The Jamaica Red Cross is in radio communication with the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) and a Jamaica Red Cross representative is at the Emergency Operations Centre. In Haiti, the crisis management unit of the Haitian National Red Cross Society is being reinforced by members of the Federation, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the French Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross, the Spanish Red Cross, and the American Red Cross. The HNRCS and the Federation are participating in daily coordination meetings with various national and international organizations held at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Budget outline

The CHF 250,000 released from DREF funds for the 2005 hurricane season are vital in order to ensure preparedness measures and to facilitate an immediate response in the event of an emergency situation; donors are encouraged to reimburse DREF funding.

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