

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 Overseas Branch of the British Red Cross; phone (1 345) 917-2345
- In Cuba: Dr. Luis Foyo Ceballos, Executive President, Cuban Red Cross; email crsn@infomed.sld.cu, phone (1 537) 269-0100
- In Haiti: Dr. Michaèle Amédée Gédéon, President, Haitian National Red Cross Society, Port-au-Prince; email croroha@haitiworld.co, phone (509) 510-9813, fax (509) 223-1054
- In Jamaica: Ms. Yvonne Clarke, Director General, Jamaica Red Cross; email yvonneclarke@jamaicaredcross.org, phone (1 876) 984-7860, fax (1 876) 984-8272
- In Panama: Nelson Castaño, Head of Pan American Disaster Response Unit; email ifrcpa07@ifrc.org, phone (507) 316-1001, fax (507) 316-1082
- In Geneva: Luis Luna, Federation Regional Officer, Americas Department, Geneva; email luis.luna@ifrc.org, phone (41 22) 730-4274, fax (41 22) 733-0392

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, the first major hurricane of the 2004 Atlantic hurricane season, caused at least 20 deaths in the Caribbean before weakening to a tropical storm over the southern United States. The storm's outer rain-bands 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) reported that Dennis 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. The Haitian government has allocated five million gourdes (USD 123,653) towards the relief effort.

Hurricane Dennis struck Jamaica on Thursday, 7 July, as it strengthened to a category three hurricane. The storm brought hurricane force winds that extended outward from the centre up to 50 miles. Although wind damage was not intense, the system brought substantial flooding causing severe mudslides. Residents of low lying areas as well as coastal towns – where a large part of the population lives – were advised to seek higher ground. The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) confirmed that approximately 8,000 persons were affected in Jamaica, and this number is expected to rise as assessments continue. Persons were moved to shelters, mostly in the north eastern section of the country. In St. Thomas, main roads remain impassable and several communities have been cut-off. Many persons are unable to return home as their homes were either washed away or the water has not yet begun to recede. The main bridge to Port Antonio, Portland has been destroyed while St. Mary is said to have experienced substantial agricultural damage. The parishes of St. Thomas, St. Mary and Portland appear to be the areas that have sustained the greatest impact though effects of Dennis were felt in other parishes across the island. Some businesses in Jamaica have now returned to their normal functions and there are no major reports of power outages. There is however a temporary loss of water in some areas and the National Water Commission confirmed that just less than 30 percent of supply systems were not operating at normal capacity. Nearly all public hospitals, according to the Ministry of Health, will resume normal operations on Monday, 11 July.

Hurricane Dennis, at that time a category four hurricane, pounded Cuba for ten hours on Friday, 8 July before heading back into the Gulf of Mexico and moving towards the United States. Hurricane Dennis left ten people dead across the country and destroyed thousands of houses in the provinces of Habana, Camaguey, Ciego de Ávila, Tunas, Santiago de Cuba, Matanzas, Sancti Espíritus and Guatanamo. In total, more than 1,400,000 people were evacuated, including tourists, 196,000 of which were moved to emergency shelters. Once the hurricane had passed over Cuba, national authorities, together with the Civil Defence and the Cuban Red Cross began conducting damage and needs assessments. While evaluation teams are still collecting data from throughout the country, the Cuban Civil Defence Agency is currently estimating that some eight million people were affected by the hurricane and some 40,000 homes were damaged or destroyed. The high winds and heavy rains also cut water and electrical services in the affected parts of the country. Crews are currently working to restore these services.

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) was placed on alert and several Red Cross disaster management personnel were deployed to the countries affected by the hurricane.

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 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

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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.

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 also deployed 25 first aid volunteers together with ambulances to cover the medical needs of affected areas.

Leading up to the hurricane, the Jamaica Red Cross was placed on alert and shelters were opened. In addition to registering arrivals in shelters, JRC volunteers assisted in the preparation of meals and supplied blankets to people seeking refuge. Red Cross teams are out in the field conducting assessments through the JRC Branch network. In some parishes the damage and needs assessments are being conducted through a collaborative effort with other member agencies of the Parish Disaster Committees. The Jamaica Red Cross (JRC) has put together a plan of action that includes providing food and non-food relief items to 1,000 families, providing psychosocial support to beneficiaries in shelters and others who have been affected by Dennis, and improving the Red Cross' visibility through media and public relations activities.

PADRU and the Federation's Sub Regional Office in Trinidad and Tobago have been in constant communication with the Jamaica Red Cross. A plane has been loaded with plastic sheeting, blankets, kitchen and hygiene kits and other items. A container of relief goods is also being sent by ocean freight to the Jamaica Red Cross to support their relief effort.

The Cayman Islands Overseas Branch of the British Red Cross opened a shelter in each district and 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) mobilized 300 volunteers, who are working in the 800 shelters set up around the country. The CRC branches 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 Cuban Red Cross is currently carrying out damage and needs assessments together with the national authorities and the Civil Defence Agency.

The needs

Damage and needs assessments are continuing to be carried out in the countries affected by Hurricane Dennis. At this time, there are needs in food and non-food relief items, temporary shelter materials and psychosocial support. These needs are being addressed by the National Societies, with the support of the Pan American Disaster Response Unit and the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund.

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). In Cuba, the Cuban Red Cross is working closely with the government and the national Civil Defence Agency.

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. CHF 150,000 has been allocated to the Hurricane Dennis relief effort as follows:

CHF 70,000	Air shipment of supplies to Jamaica
CHF 10,000	Shipment of container to Jamaica, including blankets
CHF 5,000	Damage and needs assessment in Haiti
CHF 15,000	Operational expenses

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