

# EMERGENCY APPEAL



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

## BAHAMAS, CUBA AND MEXICO: HURRICANE WILMA

Appeal no. 05EA024  
26 October 2005

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 EMERGENCY APPEAL SEEKS CHF 1,918,000 (USD 1,498,000 OR EUR 1,237,000) IN CASH, KIND, OR SERVICES TO ASSIST 14,000 FAMILIES (70,000 BENEFICIARIES) FOR 6 MONTHS**

*(please click here to go directly to the attached Appeal budget)*

**CHF 220,000 (USD 170,276 or EUR 142,497) has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to begin relief operations in response to the hurricane. Unearmarked funds to reimburse the DREF are encouraged.**

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org> For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

## Bahamas, Cuba and Mexico: Hurricane Wilma; Appeal no. 05EA024

### The situation

Hurricane Wilma, the 12<sup>th</sup> hurricane and 21<sup>st</sup> named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, battered Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, Cuba, the state of Florida in the United States, and the Bahamas between 20 and 24 October, causing widespread destruction. Wilma first formed as a tropical depression on 15 October in the southeast of Jamaica. The storm brought heavy rains and flooding to the Cayman Islands, Haiti, Honduras and Jamaica as it moved towards Mexico. The category four storm first came ashore on the Yucatan Peninsula on Friday, 21 October, bringing winds of up to 225 km/h (140 mph). The slow moving storm remained over the area for two days, killing at least six people. The somewhat weakened storm then moved back out into the Gulf of Mexico, heading towards Florida. The storm regained strength over the warm waters of the Caribbean, lashing Cuba with its outer rain bands, before slamming into Florida as a category three storm. By Monday afternoon, the hurricane had moved out into the Atlantic Ocean, causing heavy rains and flooding in the Bahamas. The hurricane is now heading north through the Atlantic Ocean and is not expected to make landfall again. In total, at least 25 people were killed during Wilma's march across the Caribbean: 11 in Haiti, 1 in Jamaica, 6 in Mexico, 6 in Florida and 1 in the Bahamas.

Hurricane Wilma has virtually decimated the Mexican resort town of Cancun and the island of Cozumel, destroying hotels and homes and littering the streets with debris. It is estimated that approximately 60 percent of the 80,000 residents of Cozumel have been affected. Cancun's airport was shut down on Friday and tens of thousands of tourists not able to leave were evacuated from hotels along the coast to shelters. Shelter conditions are reported to be deteriorating as there is no electricity and little food and water. Prior to the hurricane, Mexican officials had declared a state of emergency in 18 municipalities in the state of Yucatan and 5 municipalities in the state of Quintana Roo. With this measure, the Revolving Natural Disasters Fund (FONDEN) was activated for the immediate relief of the affected population in both states. Emergency teams are just now beginning to reach the affected areas, but access is difficult due to flooding and debris in the roads. The security situation in the area is also unstable as there have been reports of looting and rioting. Mexican security forces are in the area to restore order.



Debris lies on a street after Hurricane Wilma hit the Mexican Caribbean island of Cozumel.  
*Photo courtesy of REUTERS*



Cuban rescue workers ride a boat through the flooded streets of Havana.  
*Photo courtesy of REUTERS*

Although Cuba was spared a direct hit as the storm stayed north of the country on its way towards Florida, Wilma lashed the capital city of Havana on Sunday with 138 km/h (86 mph) winds, bringing heavy rains and flooding. Flood waters of up to six feet were reported in some parts of the city. Authorities had previously cut off electricity in the city to prevent electrical accidents, leaving the city's 2 million residents without power. Storm surges forced the evacuation of the town of Santa Fe, south of Havana. Almost 800,000 people were evacuated from high risk areas and the provinces of Pinar del Rio, Habana, Guantanamo, Santiago, Granma and Holguin, as well as the city of Havana, are on alert. Although most of the people evacuated are staying with family members, 71,000 people are in 1,325 emergency shelters that have been opened in the country. According to preliminary damage reports, approximately 5,000 homes have been damaged, primarily as a result of sea surges and flooding. The government has also opened 755 food distribution centres to serve the affected population. The most affected provinces are

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Granma, Santiago, Guantanamo, Camaguey, Cienfuegos, Pinar del Rio and Sancti Spiritus, primarily in coastal communities. No deaths have been reported as a result of Hurricane Wilma in Cuba.

Wilma battered Florida for about six hours on Monday, causing at least six deaths and widespread flooding and damage. The storm made landfall in the early morning as a powerful category 3 hurricane. As Wilma moved across Florida, it was downgraded to a category 2 storm. By just after noon, the storm's centre was back over the Atlantic, where it regained strength to category 3 status. Although there were fears that many people had ignored the evacuation orders issued for much of southern Florida, more than 33,000 people were reportedly staying in shelters. At least 3.2 million people were left without electricity. Some 3,000 National Guardsmen have been mobilized to respond to the hurricane, and another 3,000 have been placed on alert.

Wilma was a category 3 hurricane when it struck the islands of the Bahamas on 24 October, with maximum sustained winds of 120 miles per hour, moderate rains but with a storm surge of about 10-15 feet. At least one person, a child, has died in the floods. Although it was forecasted that the Central and Northern islands would be affected, namely North Andros, Bimini, Berry Islands, Abaco, New Providence and Grand Bahama, it was Grand Bahama and Bimini which received the brunt of the hurricane, with Abaco, New Providence and Berry Islands receiving minor damages mostly to trees and utility poles. There has been large scale flooding as a result of sea surges, which has washed away a number of homes, and it is estimated that some 800 people are currently staying in shelters. The island of Grand Bahamas suffered the most serious damages; the population of Grand Bahama is 47,000 and more than 7,000 persons have been affected. Furthermore, Grand Bahama has the largest number of vulnerable people who had not fully recovered from hurricanes Frances and Jeanne in September 2004. The communities of Eight Mile Rock, Hepburn Town, Hunters, Martin Town and Pinder's Point have suffered major destruction to homes and utilities due to a sea surge of approximately 15 to 20 ft. More than 1,000 persons have been evacuated to shelters in Freeport. Electricity and telephone services have been disrupted in most of Grand Bahama. The island of Bimini, which has a population of 1,717, suffered significant damages to homes, trees and utility poles due to heavy rains and sea surge. Most of the residents who had moved to shelters have now returned to their homes.

Prior to hitting Mexico, rains associated with Wilma caused flooding in Belize, the Cayman Islands, Haiti, Honduras and Jamaica. The situation in these countries is now largely under control.

**The needs****Immediate needs:**

In the Bahamas, the greatest needs are for shelter and food and non-food items, particularly jerry cans, kitchen sets, mosquito nets and hygiene kits. As a large number of homes and roofs have been destroyed, there is an urgent need for plastic sheeting. In addition, there is a significant need to restore water and telephone services, which is being addressed by the Bahamian government.

In Cuba, the Cuban Red Cross is attending to the immediate needs of the people housed in shelters, providing assistance in first aid and family linking. As many people have lost all their belongings in the floods, there will also be a need for kitchen set and hygiene kits. In addition, given damage to roofs, zinc sheeting is required to replace or repair roofs ripped away by the hurricane.

In Mexico, the immediate needs are for temporary shelter, hygiene supplies, kitchen sets, food and water. As people begin to return home, there is also a need for plastic sheeting, and mosquito nets, particularly as some people remain destitute from Hurricane Emily, which affected the Yucatan Peninsula in July 2005. There is also a need for generators as it is expected to take weeks, possibly months in some areas, to restore electrical services.

**Longer-term needs:**

Given the devastating effects of Hurricanes Emily and Stan in Mexico, the fact that Cuba is still recovering from Hurricanes Charley and Ivan, which hit the country in 2004 and the island of Grand Bahama has a large number of vulnerable people who have not fully recovered from hurricanes Frances and Jeanne which hit the Caribbean in September 2004, there is an important need for psychosocial support for vulnerable families. The results of on-

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going needs assessments will provide further indications as to longer-term needs, and which may form the basis for a revised appeal.

### Coordination

The Panama Regional Delegation and the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU), are maintaining contact with the National Societies affected by Hurricane Wilma in order to coordinate an effective response. PADRU has several disaster management delegates working in the field already as part of the response to Hurricane Stan, which hit Central America last week. PADRU is in contact with the delegates of several Participating National Societies, including PIRAC (French Red Cross disaster-response platform in the region) to coordinate response initiatives. PADRU is also maintaining contact with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the region. The Mexican Red Cross is working in close collaboration with the governmental authorities including the civil protection with regard to the relief efforts. The Cuban Red Cross is liaising with governmental authorities in the evacuation of those at risk and in the undertaking of assessments. The Bahamas Red Cross is working closely with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Ministry of Social Development in order to identify needs and to ensure that assistance is provided in a coordinated and efficient manner.

### Red Cross Action to date

On Friday, 21 October, two PADRU disaster management delegates travelled to Mexico City to provide support to the Mexican Red Cross relief department. The two delegates are currently in Cozumel working together with the Mexican Red Cross and taking part in damage and needs assessments.



The Mexican Red Cross has begun distributions of food and water. Distributions are taking place on a large scale and are expected to continue for at least two more weeks.

The Mexican Red Cross has begun distributions of contributions received nationally of food and water, having negotiated for 10 Aero Mexico flights to ship food and bottled water from the capital. Distributions are taking place on a large scale and are expected to continue for at least two more weeks in Cancún, Puerto Maderos, Isla de Mujeres, Playa del Carmen and Cozumel. The National Society is using seven trailers with a 40 tonne capacity, which each carries sufficient relief goods for some 2,400 families. Branch teams are delivering basic first aid and basic health care services, conducting rescue activities and continue to evacuate people to shelters. The Red Cross branch in Cancun benefits from 55 volunteers, Playa del Carmen 20 volunteers and Cozumel 5 volunteers. In addition, psychosocial support teams are currently being mobilized to the field from the capital.

On Tuesday, 25 October, relief assistance shipped by air from the Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit reached Merida airport; these relief goods comprising 1,000 hygiene kits, 2,000 plastic sheets and 1,000 kitchen sets will benefit 1,000 families and will be sent by road from Merida airport and distributed over a two day period. A further flight is scheduled for Thursday, 27 October and will carry 5,000 hygiene kits donated by American Red Cross, 1,000 additional hygiene kits, 397 kitchen kits, 1,500 mosquito nets and 2 gas generators for use in the response operation.

The Cuban Red Cross has mobilized 5,381 volunteers in the affected regions in order to participate in the evacuation of those in high-risk areas, to work in temporary shelters, to provide psychosocial support and to assist with family linking and tracing. In addition, specialized search and rescue teams are working together with affected communities and are assisting with evacuation.

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The President and Director General of the Bahamas Red Cross, together with a number of volunteers travelled immediately to Grand Bahama and Bimini in order to begin damage and needs assessments.

### **The proposed operation**

#### **Objectives and activities planned**

##### **Emergency relief (food and non-food)**

**Objective:** 14,000 families (70,000 people) affected by the floods will have benefited from the distribution of food and non-food relief items (1,000 families in the Bahamas with food and non-food items, and 3,000 families in Cuba and 10,000 families in Mexico with non-food items) in order to help them to recover from the effects of the floods.

##### **Activities planned to reach this objective:**

The Cuban Red Cross will distribute food and non-food relief items, and the Bahamas and Mexican Red Cross Societies will distribute non food relief items to families who are staying in shelters, with friends or neighbours, or whose homes have been destroyed or damaged and whose personal possessions have been lost. Beneficiary selection will prioritize vulnerable female heads of households and households with children, disabled persons or senior citizens. The following relief items will be distributed in each country:

##### ***Bahamas***

- Food
- Hygiene kits
- Kitchen sets
- Mosquito nets
- Jerry cans
- Plastic sheeting

##### ***Cuba:***

- Kitchen sets
- Hygiene kits
- Roofing kits (including zinc sheeting, nails & tools)

##### ***Mexico***

- Plastic sheeting
- Kitchen sets
- Hygiene kits
- Mosquito nets
- Jerry cans

##### **Psychosocial support**

**Objective 1:** Vulnerable families in the Bahamas, Cuba and Mexico who have been adversely affected by the hurricane will have benefited from the provision of psychosocial support in order to help them return to their normal patterns of life.

##### **Activities planned to reach this objective:**

The Bahamas, Cuban and Mexican Red Cross Societies will provide psychosocial support to those affected by the storm in order to help people return to their normal lives. The focus for this assistance will be on those most seriously affected by the hurricane, particularly those staying in temporary shelters.

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### Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – Principles and priorities

- Relief activities being carried out are based on the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
- Beneficiary selection criteria focus on the vulnerability of those affected.
- Relief operations are conducted with respect for the culture of the beneficiaries, ensuring gender sensitivity and prioritizing assistance to children and the elderly.
- Activities are based on the SPHERE Project humanitarian charter and the code of conduct for emergency response.
- Transparency is ensured through the production of regular reports and news bulletins.
- All objectives put forward in the appeal are in line with Strategy 2010, as well as the Strategy for the Movement and the Principles and Rules of the Movement.
- Lessons learned during the hurricane operations carried out in 2004 will be taken into account in the implementation of the response to Hurricane Wilma.

### Communications – Advocacy and Public information

Through continued public and media relations it is hoped that the public will develop a better understanding of the mission of the National Societies in the affected countries and the activities Red Cross undertakes in serving humanity. As members of the International Federation, the Bahamas, Cuban and Mexican Red Cross Societies seek to promote the Fundamental Principles in all activities and subsequently facilitate additional visibility of the Movement as a whole. In Cuba, the “Friends of the Red Cross” network of journalists that often works with the Cuban Red Cross, as well as all Red Cross volunteers who were trained through the long distance learning course in communications, will assist with visibility. The National Societies and the Federation will ensure coverage of the emergency operation and news articles and photographs will be published on the Federation’s web site at [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org).

### Capacity of the National Societies

The *Bahamas Red Cross Society* has experience in hurricane response as a result of Hurricanes Andrew in 1992, Erin in 1995, Lili in 1996 and Michelle in 2001, and the preparedness and response capacities of the National Society are constantly being improved. The Bahamas Red Cross Society most recently carried out an effective emergency operation in response to Hurricane Jeanne in 2004, which damaged hundreds of homes on several islands in the country. Following the emergency phase of the operation, a shelter management course was carried out and national intervention teams were established and trained.

The *Cuban Red Cross* includes 14 provincial and 169 municipal branches throughout the country. The Cuban Red Cross has wide experience in disaster response and has a significant body of volunteers. The National Society works closely with several government ministries and also maintains close interaction with the popular assemblies at the provincial and municipal levels. The Cuban Red Cross has significant experience in hurricane relief operations, having successfully implemented relief operations in 2002 and 2003 following Hurricanes Lili and Isidore and in 2004 following Hurricanes Charley and Ivan.

The *Mexican Red Cross* has 449 branches; pre-hospital care is the principal service offered by the Mexican Red Cross which has 127 schools for technicians in medical emergencies to train people for this countrywide service. The Mexican Red Cross is currently engaged in a recovery operation following the passage of Hurricane Stan in early October.

### Capacity of the Federation

The Federation’s PADRU has a number of experienced disaster management delegates who have been monitoring the development of the hurricane in the region. Two disaster management delegates from PADRU were deployed to Mexico to support the relief activities carried out by the National Society. Further mobilization of PADRU staff for this emergency will be agreed in consultation with the National Societies concerned. Additional support is also being provided by the Panama Regional Delegation, the Regional Finance Unit, and the Regional Reporting Unit, all located in Panama.

**Bahamas, Cuba and Mexico: Hurricane Wilma; Appeal no. 05EA024****Monitoring and evaluation**

The National Societies will ensure regular monitoring of the implementation of the operation, with the support of the Federation. Regular reports on the operation will be published on the Federation's web site and news articles will be issued.

**Budget summary**

See Annex 1 for details.

Susan Johnson  
Director  
National Society and Field Support Division

Markku Niskala  
Secretary General

**[Budget is attached below; please click here to return to the title page and contact information](#)**

**BUDGET SUMMARY**

APPEAL No. 05EA024

**Mexico, Cuba, Bahamas - Hurricane Wilma**

TYPE	VALUE
<b>RELIEF NEEDS</b>	<b>IN CHF</b>
Shelter & constructions	416,000
Clothing & textiles	59,000
Food	300,000
Utensils & tools (kitchen sets, jerry cans)	277,000
Other relief supplies (hygiene kits)	398,000
<b>TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS</b>	<b>1,450,000</b>
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<b><u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u></b>	
Computers & telecom. equipment	6,000
<b><u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u></b>	
Programme support (6.5% of total)	125,000
<b><u>TRANSPORT STORAGE &amp; VEHICLE COSTS</u></b>	
Distribution and storage	77,000
Transport and vehicle costs	158,000
<b><u>PERSONNEL</u></b>	
Expatriate staff	15,000
National & regional staff	45,000
<b><u>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; GENERAL SERVICES</u></b>	
Travel & related expenses	14,000
Information expenses	4,000
Administrative & general expenses	24,000
<b>TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS</b>	<b>468,000</b>
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<b>TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES</b>	<b>1,918,000</b>
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<b>LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)</b>	<b>0</b>
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<b>NET REQUEST</b>	<b>1,918,000</b>
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