

Response to Hurricane Matthew: Cuba

Situation Report No. 1. Office of the Resident Coordinator

(al 03 10 2016)



This report is produced by the Office of the Resident Coordinator. The next report will be issued on or around 04/10.

Highlights

- Matthew, a category 4 hurricane in the Saffir-Simpson Scale, will strike the Eastern region of Cuba on October 4th. The greatest damages are expected to happen in the provinces of Guantánamo and Santiago de Cuba.
- On October 3rd, heavy storm surges began to affect the southern shores of the Eastern provinces and tropical storm-force winds will begin to impact the region during the night.
- The national authorities declared the Hurricane Alert Phase in the provinces of Camagüey, Las Tunas, Holguín, Granma, Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo, with a combined population of 4,7 million people.
- It is estimated that 900,000 people are being evacuated to specially prepared protection centres or to the homes of neighbours or relatives. Of the 900,000 people, 317,000 have already been protected.



977,000

people evacuated

3

communities
isolated due to sea
penetration

53 %

of all the Cuban
educational
institutions have
temporarily
suspended
educational activities.

50,897

livestock has been
relocated

4,161

health units have
been prepared

Situation overview

The strong storm surges brought on by hurricane Matthew - category 4 on the Saffir-Simpson scale - have started to affect the southern coast of Cuba's Eastern provinces this October 3rd. With sustained winds of 220 km/hr, the hurricane moves along the Caribbean waters under favorable atmospheric conditions that could contribute to its strengthening. Given its speed, it is estimated that it will hit Cuba in the course of the afternoon on October 4th, directly affecting the country during 36 hours approximately.

The Forecast Center of the Meteorological Institute (Insmet for its Spanish acronym) predicts that the island will start to experience tropical storm winds by this evening and that there is a risk of coastal flooding in the entire South-

*Note: All the information in this report has been taken from Cuban official media (TV, radio, and press) and statements from Cuban authorities. Sources: Newspapers Granma, Juventud Rebelde, Periódico 26, Ahora Sierra Maestra y Adelante. Radio stations: Radio Rebelde, Radio Habana Cuba, Radio Angulo, Radio Mambí; Press agencies: Prensa Latina (PL) y Agencia Cubana de Noticias (ACN); Web sites: Cubadebate. Supplementary data has been taken from the National Statistics Office website.

Eastern region with waves of up to 9 or 10 meters on the Northern coast of the province of Guantanamo. This meteorological phenomenon brings winds of hurricane strength up to 55km from its epicenter and tropical storm winds up to 295km from the center.

The Cuban Civil Defense declared a “Hurricane Alert Phase” in the provinces of Camagüey, Las Tunas, Holguín, Granma, Santiago de Cuba and Guantanamo affecting a total of 4,7 million people. The Civil Defense has also declared an “Information Phase” for the central provinces of Cienfuegos, Villa Clara, Sancti Spiritus, and Ciego de Ávila, and has asked the rest of the population to stay up to date and follow instructions from local authorities. The security plans include the evacuation of vulnerable populations that reside in coastal areas, isolated rural communities, and in unsafe housing. Available data suggests that over 900.000 people will be relocated to special premises prepared for that purpose or to the homes of neighbors and relatives.

The National Institute for Hydraulic Resources reports low water levels in the reservoirs of the provinces that are under the Hurricane Alert Phase, and they have taken surveillance measures in light of the heavy rainfalls linked to hurricane Matthew. Institutions, organizations, and economic entities are implementing measures of the disaster mitigation plans at the provincial and local level, including the protection of economic and patrimonial goods.

Humanitarian Response

National authorities

The Cuban Civil Defense issued its first briefing on Hurricane Matthew on September 30th, decreeing the Informative Phase for six Eastern Cuban provinces and announcing the activation of provincial and municipal Defense Councils in those territories.

Raúl Castro, President of the Council of State and of the Council of Ministers as well as of the National Defense Council, started a tour around the provinces of Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo on October 1st in order to supervise the implementation of plans for disaster preparedness, reduction of vulnerabilities and information to the population. The Ministers of Transportation, Energy and Mines, Construction, Communications, Agriculture and Domestic Trade, the President of the Institute for Water Resources, the First Vice-Minister of Public Health and the Vice-Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces are also taking part in the tour.

As part of the Hurricane Alert Phase:

- Over 977,000 people in all of Cuba’s Eastern region are being evacuated as they live in vulnerable zones and in precarious circumstances
- Evacuated people in eastern Cuba can be disaggregated as follows:
 - In Guantánamo, 179,000 people from areas prone to landslide and flooding are being relocated to state evacuation centers or safe housing from relatives or neighbors;
 - In Santiago de Cuba, about 252,000 people were relocated. According to the Provincial Defense Council, only ceiling panels will resist towards strong winds brought by hurricane Matthew;
 - In Las Tunas, relocation is in place since 01 October for over 230,000 people (including 7,100 priority families living in temporary facilities). These people will move to one of the 235 evacuation centers or relatives/neighbors’ housing;
 - In Granma, evacuation was conducted for over 19,000 people in the municipalities of Bayamo, Cauto Cristo and Rio Cauto;
 - In Holguin, over 47,600 people are being relocated to safe facilities;
 - In Camaguey, more than 249,400 people need to be relocated in the event of an emergency

Sectors



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Response:

- Tanker trucks have been mobilized to secure safe water distribution in the Eastern provinces, especially Guantánamo, where floods are expected to affect the quality of drinking water.
- National authorities are cleaning drains and sewers, collecting disposals and generally sanitizing the cities. They are also increasing the vigilance of dams.
- Provision of drinking water to the population has been strengthened so it can be collected in households in the greatest amount possible and in safe conditions.
- All provinces have activated their hydrographic surveillance systems, in order to determine the amount and availability of safe water and the mechanisms of providing it to the population. In the last few days, the national authorities have extended the times of pumping and have prepared the use of tanker trucks in the eventuality that the main dams become contaminated.
- In the province of Granma, the national authorities are working on the availability of tanker trucks to ensure the supply of safe water for the population before, during and after the impact of Hurricane Matthew. Inés María Chapman, President of the Hydraulic Resources National Institute, directed the activation of 30 teams responsible of the distribution of 15 liters per inhabitant after the meteorological event. Other tasks in this province have included the cleaning of drains and sewers, and the verification of dams and communications in every system unit.



Food Safety and Nutrition

Response:

50,897

livestock have been relocated

Measures to ensure food accessibility:

- Priority has been given to the sale of products as part of the canasta familiar “family food basket” that is currently being distributed. In Guantánamo, opening hours have been extended to 10:00pm. In the province of Camagüey, stores in CUP and CUC have been instructed to extend their opening hours as well in order to ensure that citizens can buy and stock food for several days.
- The safeguarding of foods in warehouses and processing centers has been made a priority. Products stored in warehouses with lightweight roofs have been relocated to safer and more resilient buildings.
- Several types of fuel for cooking purposes have been put up for sale. Liquid gas is also available in a regulated way.
- Evacuation centers are being prepared. The quantity of food and other resources needed for evacuated people is constantly being monitored and updated.
- Bread, cookies, and other dry products are being produced.
- The province of Ciego de Ávila has sent 400 tons of plantains, large numbers of papayas and avocados to the provinces of Santiago de Cuba and Holguín. Ciego de Ávila is able to keep on providing help in the days to come according to the scope and scale of the damages that the hurricane could cause.
- In the province of Guantánamo is quickly and efficiently transporting 800 tons of rice from the puerto de Boquerón to several wholesale warehouses in the country.
- The WFP has a reserve of 1600 metric tons of food (rice and beans) to be distributed to the population in case of an emergency. The WFP is currently negotiating their support with the government through other types of food such as Corn Soya Blended/Super Cereal (CSB) and Micronutrient Powder (MNP).
- On a regional level, the WFP has a stock of 30 metric tons of high-energy cookies for its possible distribution during the aftermath of hurricane Matthew in Cuba and Haiti.

Measures for the protection of plantations, produce, and agricultural supplies:

- The provincial defense councils have ordered the harvesting of produce its immediate sale to the general population.
- In Santiago de Cuba, soy and flour production is being safeguarded for its use in several processed products.

- Cattle has been evacuated to safety. In Guantanamo, 19 240 cows, 1 132 horses, 5 350 sheep and 175 buffaloes have been relocated. Las Tunas has evacuated over 25,000 livestock.
- Growing houses, wind mills, irrigation machines, as well as agricultural machines are being secured.
- FAO is currently in close contact with its headquarters and negotiating with their national counterparts, in order to stay up to date with their needs and be able to provide a quick and efficient response.



Infrastructures and Basic Services Rehabilitation

Damages:

- In Santiago de Cuba, 8,100 people (48% of whom are women, according to the 2014 National Statistical Annuary) remained isolated since last Sunday due to sea penetration in the communities of Uvero, La Magdalena, and La Plata (coastal municipality of Guama).
- The Army is mobilizing commodities from the National Reserve, as emergency response measures in Eastern Cuba.
- Pruning of tree branches is in place throughout the eastern regions to avoid human losses, damages to electrical grid and prevent obstruction to overland routes.
- Cleaning of drainages is also in place to limit obstructions that lead to flooding.
- Periodical monitoring of: i. water reservoirs and hydraulic infrastructure to prevent flooding; ii. conditions of electricity generators and availability of fuel; iii. Telecommunications.
- Works are in place throughout the eastern provinces to strengthen housing roofs, remove billboards, traffic signals and traffic lights.
- In Guantanamo, a network of radio-amateurs was mobilized, as damages in telecommunications are expected to occur.
- Technical check-ups of electrical generators were completed throughout the eastern provinces. This equipment will provide a rapid response in case of damages to the national electrical grid. In Holguin, 700 electricity generators were checked and distributed throughout the province. These items are key in securing basic services to the population. Moreover, the photovoltaic park located in Jiguani (Granma province) will ensure energetic continuity in the event of an emergency.
- In Camaguey, 46 electricity generators are available for water-pumping and supply to the population;
- Technical teams of the State Electrical Company from western and central Cuba were deployed near the eastern regions. This will guarantee a faster response in the event of an emergency. The team will fix damages in the most affected areas.
- Unnecessary displacements of persons and vehicles were strongly discouraged throughout the Eastern region.
- All water reservoirs are working at 49% of their capacities in all eastern provinces. This could prevent potential floods as Matthew advances.
- Declogging works were carried out in Guantanamo in the surroundings of 73 bridges, to ensure continuity of connections in the event of strong rains.
- UNDP has an emergency contingency stock of 9,070 tarps, which can be provided to the Government. These commodities are currently stored in warehouses located in Holguin and Las Tunas.

977,000

people relocated in the Cuban Eastern region



Health

Response:

- In order to face the consequences of Hurricane Matthew, hygienic, epidemiological and care services have been prepared in provinces at risk.
- Family practitioners have been instructed to remain in their communities and prepare the minimum necessary equipment to provide emergency assistance to the population.
- The Ministry of Public Health has established operational authorities at provincial and municipal level.
- Essential medicines and hypochlorite for water purification have been prepositioned in provinces at risk.

4,161

health units have been prepared

The following have been identified in the Hurricane Alert Phase

Province	Hospitals	Polyclinic	Family Doctor Office
Guantanamo	4	23	660
Santiago de Cuba	14	29	1274
Holguin	11	35	1266
Granma	10	23	961



Education

Response:

- Under the Hurricane Alert Phase, it has been established that all educational institutions will temporarily suspend all educational activities until the current alert phase is lifted. Students staying at boarding schools and residences, including university students, have been sent home; over 4000 students of the Universidad de Oriente in Santiago de Cuba have left the premises.
- Infrastructure and equipment of educational institutions have been secured during the weekend until 12:00pm today.
- The interruption of the academic cycle has affected 1,025,911 students under 18 years old, residing in the affected Eastern provinces - amounting to 21,6% of the total population of those provinces. A total of 5696 educational institutions, a 53% of all the educational institutions in Cuba, have applied these measures.
- Certain schools have been habilitated to act as evacuation center during times of crisis.

53 %

of all the Cuban educational institutions have temporarily suspended educational activities.



Logistics

Damages:

- Cancellation of all flights to the areas at risk (Santiago de Cuba, Holguin, Camaguey, Guantanamo, Moa, Baracoa, Manzanillo, Bayamo and Las Tunas). The Cuban Civil Aviation has also suspended all flights to Port-Au-Prince (Haiti); Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic); Fort-de-France (Martinica); Pointe-a-Pitre (Guadalupe); and Caracas (Venezuela). At the same time, flights from Madrid scheduled to land at Santiago de Cuba will go through some modifications. The same procedures apply to flights from Buenos Aires to Cayo Coco. All measures will be implemented until further notice.
- All railway connections between Havana and the Eastern provinces (Santiago de Cuba, Granma y Guantánamo) were suspended. Connections between Santiago de Cuba and Santa Clara will also be cancelled starting from Monday, October 3rd.
- Bus routes from the capital to the other eastern provinces have also been suspended.
- In Santiago de Cuba, sea penetration is already affecting the communities of Uvero, La Magdalena and La Plata in the coastal municipality of Guamá. As a main result, these communities are currently isolated.
- In Guantanamo, the dam "Faustino Perez" is already working at 89 percent of its capacities. Hence, there is a high risk of shedding in the event of heavy rains brought by Hurricane Matthew. Local authorities from Hydraulic Resources recommend extreme caution when crossing rivers and low water bridges.

3

communities isolated due to sea penetration

Response:

- The Government is adopting measures to protect antennas and satellites. In Guantanamo, local authorities have started to temporarily dismantle the satellite dishes in the three main telecommunication centers, to avoid potential damages brought by strong winds. Moreover, teams of electrical engineers were deployed in the area of the "La Farola" viaduct, which is the main access route to Baracoa and is particularly prone to landslides and collapses. These teams will work to limit the impact of these climate hazards on telecommunications. Similar measures are being implemented in other difficult-to-access areas in the province of Guantanamo, such as Maisi, Yateras, San Antonio del Sur and Imias.
- Authorities from the Port "Guillermón Moncada" in Santiago de Cuba have adopted measures to protect commodities currently stored in warehouses. They are also providing instructions regarding shelter points for small and medium ships. At the same time, cargo ships will be informed about when leaving the bay to

seek offshore protection. Moreover, the port authorities are temporarily dismantling the light towers provided by WFP after Hurricane Sandy, to prevent damages.

- All provinces are implementing measures to protect commodities stored in warehouses or relocating them to safer areas;
- WFP has a contingency stock of warehouses in Panama, which could be available to support the Government's logistical capacities in the event of an emergency response.

General Coordination

The Resident Coordinator is maintaining close contact with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Investment, the main counterpart of the United Nations System (UNS) in Cuba, and with the country's civil defense.

The UN Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) is monitoring the situation closely. The agencies are in constant contact with their focal point ministries. OCHA's personnel is expected to arrive to Cuba tomorrow in order to help with the UNS's preparation of the response actions. The UNS in Cuba has finalized the first draft of the response plan based on its experience during hurricane Sandy in 2012.

In addition to this Situation Report, the Resident Coordinator's Office is sending a daily press review to the international partners that include the latest news about the preparation and response actions to hurricane Matthew.

Crisis background

On October 25th, 2012, the Eastern region of Cuba was crossed from south to north by Sandy, a category 2 hurricane in the Saffir-Simpson Scale. More than 3 million people in the provinces of Santiago de Cuba, Holguín and Guantánamo were affected by the hurricane. Its impact caused 11 casualties and 255,000 households were affected -31,353 of them completely destroyed-, as well as 721 centers of the public health system and 1,693 schools. There were major damages in the social and economic infrastructures too, including the agriculture sector. In Santiago de Cuba, 171,380 households were damaged; 11,800 partial collapses and 8,800 total collapses still remain unresolved.

For further information, please contact:

Myrta Kaulard, Resident Coordinator, UN System in Cuba, myrta.kaulard@one.un.org, Tel: +53 7 204 1492

Liudmila Curbelo, Coordination Officer, UN System in Cuba, liudmila.curbelo@one.un.org, Tel: +53 7 204 1513

For further information, please visit: www.unocha.org, www.reliefweb.int, www.redhum.org, www.onu.org.cu.

For further information, please visit:

Instituto de Meteorología de Cuba: <http://www.met.inf.cu>

Granma: <http://www.granma.cu>

Juventud Rebelde: <http://www.juventudrebelde.cu/>

Agencia Cubana de Noticias: <http://www.acn.cu/>

Cubadebate: <http://www.cubadebate.cu>

To be added to or removed from the distribution list, please write to: liudmila.curbelo@one.un.org