

Response to Hurricane Matthew: Cuba

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This report is produced by the Office of the Resident Coordinator. It covers the period from the 20.00 pm on October 4th to 21.00 pm on October 5th. The next report will be issued on or around 06/10.

Highlights

- The powerful Hurricane Matthew directly impacted Cuba during eight hours from late afternoon on October 4th until the early morning of October 5th, with a strength of category 4 hurricane according to the Saffir-Simpson scale.
- Currently the hurricane is still affecting the central and eastern provinces, causing strong rainfall. Winds are reaching tropical-storm force and gusts could even be stronger.
- No casualties have been reported.
- Severe socioeconomic damage has been reported in the provinces of Guantánamo and Holguín, the most affected by Hurricane Matthew. Nearly 90 % of the houses in Baracoa have been damaged.
- Five municipalities in the province of Guantánamo remain isolated.
- The Cuban Civil Defense has started assessing damage and needs.



Source: Radio Baracoa/Miguel Ángel Sánchez



1,079,000
people protected

176,000
people isolated in
the province of
Guantánamo

5,560
health units are
ready for the
response

Situation overview

The eye of Hurricane Matthew - a category 4 hurricane according to the Saffir-Simpsons scale - left Cuba at 2:00am (local time) this Wednesday October 5th, after directly affecting the far eastern part of Cuba during more than 8 hours with winds of 200-250 km/hr and even stronger gusts. The hurricane entered the Cuban territory at Punta Caleta in Guantánamo, crossed overland for 27km, and left the island at Bahía de Mata in that same province.

*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, CMKS; 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.

The media reports a lot of damages on roads and roofs as well as to electrical, commercial, touristic and telecommunication infrastructures in the provinces of Guantanamo and Holguin - the provinces that have been affected the most.

Hurricane Matthew caused strong storm surges, coastal inundations, and a rise in sea-levels of three to four meters in both provinces. Waves of up to 6 to 8 meters high have been recorded in Baracoa (Guantanamo). In the province of Guantanamo, the municipalities of San Antonio del Sur, Imías, Baracoa, and Maisí remain isolated.

The Cuban Civil Defense has declared the start of the "Recovery Phase" for the provinces of Guantanamo and Holguin and a return to normality for the rest of the country.

Even though the impact of hurricane-strength winds has diminished, Cuba is still being influenced by meteorological phenomenon. Heavy and intense rainfalls associated with the hurricane are being reported in the eastern provinces which could reach the northern part of the central provinces according to the forecasts of Cuba's Meteorology Institute.

So far, there are no reports of dramatic cumulative amounts of rain. However, the eastern provinces (specially the municipalities of Caibarién, Cienfuegos, La Sierpe and Ciro Redondo) have benefited the most from the heavy rainfalls, considering the current period of drought.

According to the Cuban Civil Defense, Cuba is currently evaluating the magnitude of the damages in every affected area. This process is done through methodologies compliant with international standard. The preliminary reports about the damages are expected to be completed towards the end of Wednesday October 5th.

Humanitarian Response

National authorities

President Raul Castro, who is also in charge of the National Defence Council, flew to the Eastern regions of the country last Saturday, accompanied by senior government officials. On Wednesday morning, the delegation was near the areas affected by Hurricane Matthew.

On Wednesday, 5 October, the Civil Defence issued a "Recovery Phase" in the provinces of Guantanamo and Holguin, while the rest of the country returned to normal.

The Cuban Civil Defence stated that 1,079,000 people living in vulnerable areas or in precarious housing conditions have been protected as of Tuesday, 4 October. Out of these, 944,000, more than 93%, were relocated to homes of relatives, friends or neighbours. The remaining nearly 135,000 people were settled in protection centres and government institutions.

The Civil Defence has started a preliminary assessment of damage caused by Hurricane Matthew.

Sectors



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Damages:

- The aqueduct in Baracoa was closed as a precautionary measure. The Rio Miel aqueduct is still working, supplying water to the hospital until river flow is sufficiently high.

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aqueduct closed as a preventive measure

Response:

- In Guantanamo, the public water supply for the recovery period is guaranteed through water tanks and fuel. Local authorities began stocking these commodities several days in advance of the hurricane.
- Supplies for potable water and staple food were maintained throughout all Eastern provinces, in compliance with measures aimed at reducing vulnerability and risk.



Food Security and Nutrition

Damages:

- The main livelihoods in Baracoa municipality were severely affected. In particular, coconut and cocoa plantations were destroyed.
- The main bakery in Baracoa municipality was destroyed.
- Food losses are expected, as several counterpart warehouses suffered damage in Baracoa municipality.

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key crops in the municipality of Baracoa severely affected

Response:

- WFP is designing an emergency response to support the Government's efforts to assist the most affected populations. Consultations are in place with counterparts to determine the extent and modalities of the potential operation. During the initial response, WFP would use its emergency contingency stock (1,606 mt of beans and rice) already in the country.
- WFP is mobilizing additional resources for an emergency response.
- FAO continues liaising with its Headquarters and national counterparts to provide a rapid response following the impacts of the hurricane, including prompt livelihood recovery in rural communities.



Infrastructure and Basic Services Rehabilitation

Damages:

- More than 176,000 people are currently isolated due to coastal inundation and landslides in five municipalities in the southern coast of Guantánamo (Baracoa, Imías, Maisí, Yateras and San Antonio del Sur).

More than
176,000

people isolated in the province of Guantánamo

Provinces	Municipalities	People under 18 years of age		People over 18 years of age		TOTAL
		Men	Women	Men	Women	
Guantánamo	Baracoa	9,508	9,032	31,566	31,192	81,298
	Imías	2,742	2,672	8,166	7,683	21,263
	San Antonio del Sur	3,494	3,314	9,904	9,134	25,846
	Maisí	3,787	3,545	11,252	9,967	28,551
	Yateras	2,719	2,474	7,287	6,798	19,278
Total		22,250	21,037	68,175	64,774	176,236

- Thus far, Baracoa, Imías and Maisí are the municipalities reporting the most significant damage. According to reports from national and local media, the most severe damage is occurring in Baracoa:
 - Considerable damage to housing, primarily to roofs and structures. Most of the damage reported is on housing with weaker roofs.
 - Interruption of communication services due to the severing of optical fibre and damage to power lines.
 - Nearly all power lines have been affected. National authorities have reported that collapsed trees and electric poles are interrupting the normal use of access roads.

- Damage has been reported in buildings near the city's breakwater; a medical supply warehouse; the local TV and radio station headquarters; the La Rusa, El Castillo, La Habana and Río Miel 2 (currently under construction) hotels, and all public parks.
 - Heavy rains and heavy seas have caused flooding in all territories, as river mouths have been blocked.
- The municipality of Imías has become isolated due to the collapse of a bridge. The same thing happened in Yateras due to a landslide in Loma de la Sierra.
 - The Cultural Heritage National Council reported that no major damages had affected patrimonial assets. In Baracoa, however, damages to the Municipal Museum Fuerte Matachín and La Farola viaduct (a national monument) have been reported.

Response:

- Labour brigades with more than 800 electric workers and operators from the Central and Western provinces and a further 100 from the Cuban Telecommunications Company are heading to the Eastern region to support recovery services.
- Electrical transformers, post, cables and other electric devices have been transferred to Baracoa in order to create the necessary conditions for the recovery phase.
- The Army, firefighters and the Ministry of Interior are readying their respective actions for immediate response. In Baracoa, a firefighters' brigade rescued a family and relocated it to a safe house during Hurricane Matthew.
- The UNDP has activated its emergency funding mechanism (100,000.00 USD). This funding will be used to support coordination and immediate response priorities. The UNDP has also contacted their regional and global networks specialized in early recovery.
- The UNDP has offered its stock of 9,000 tarps. More needs are expected, like plastic tanks, kitchen kits, mattresses and construction materials for roofs and houses.
- The UNDP is getting ready to support early recovery.



Health

Damages:

- Damage is reported in the municipalities of Maisí, Imías, Baracoa and San Antonio del Sur (province of Guantánamo) and Moa (province of Holguín). The public health system is securing medical and assistance services.
- Damage at Turey's medical supply warehouse, located in the municipality of Baracoa (province of Guantánamo).

Response:

- The Ministry of Public Health, under the leadership of the Cuban Civil Defense, has established provincial and national operational command posts.
- Hygienic, epidemiological and assistance services are ready in the affected provinces.
- The 5,560 family doctor offices have been instructed to have emergency supplies at hand and remain open in order to assist the population in case of emergencies.
- Basic medicines and hypochlorite to disinfect water have been supplied on affected provinces.
- More than 30 medical and surgical teams with critical care and other specialists have been deployed to areas that are difficult to reach or that could potentially become isolated with the passing of Hurricane Matthew.
- Hospital beds have been freed to prioritize potential hurricane victims.
- The needs of diabetics and pregnant women have been met in the Eastern provinces and are being monitored.
- Monitoring of personal hygiene, water and food is underway.
- All family doctors remain at their Popular Councils. Some doctors' offices are working as evacuation centers.
- People are being told to monitor possible fevers and stomach problems and are recommended to go immediately to a doctor's office if such conditions are present.
- The Pan-American Health Organization is coordinating and has close daily contact with the Director of the Emergency and Disaster Response Division of the Ministry of Public Health, as well as with the Cuban Civil Defense.

5,560

health units are ready
for the response

30

medical and surgical
brigades have been
deployed to affected
areas

- The United Nations Population Fund is in contact with the Programme for Maternal and Child Care (PAMI, per its Spanish acronym) of the Ministry of Public Health, to offer its support in the eventuality of the hurricane's impact and is monitoring all available information regarding maternal health, obstetrics, and sexual and reproductive health education in emergency situations.

Potential needs identified in conjunction with national authorities (quantities and positions should be specified in the next few hours):

- Access to safe water to prevent outbreaks of gastrointestinal diseases:
 - Tablets of hypochlorite of 1 L and 5 L for personal and family use
 - Tablets of hypochlorite of 10 L and 50 L for health institutions use
- Action against vectors and management of diseases caused by arboviruses:
 - Inputs for action against vectors (larvicides and adulticides)
 - Reagents for diagnosis (CHK, DENG, VZKA)
 - Means to support risk communication campaigns
- Recovery of damages to stock and infrastructures
 - Disposable materials
 - Laboratory reagents
 - Water pumps
 - Portable generators
 - Support to reconstruction, when necessary

General picture of affected municipalities

Municipalities (province)	Hospitals	Polyclinics	CMF	Population		Elderly people
				Women	Men	
Maisí (Guantánamo)	0	1	40	13495	15071	4350
Imías (Guantánamo)	0	1	27	10334	10932	3107
Baracoa (Guantánamo)	1	3	85	40509	41312	14525
San Antonio del Sur (Guantánamo)	0	2	42	12425	13375	3812
Moa (Holguín)	1	2	74	37 824	37 378	9 595
Sagua de Tanamo (Holguín)	1	2	69	nd	nd	nd

Source: Administration Files and Primary Attention Health Department. Ministry for Public Health

Education

Damages:

- There is no specific data on damages to infrastructure and educational institutions.
- It is estimated that 230 schools and over 14 day care centres were impacted by Matthew in the four most affected municipalities of Guantánamo.
- The population of those in school under 18 years of age in the aforementioned municipalities comprises 37,263 children and adolescents.
- Educational activities in Camagüey, Las Tunas, Holguín, Granma, Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo remain temporarily suspended.

Response:

- The Ministry of Education is conducting a preliminary damage assessment of the affected provinces.

Around 230
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municipalities of
Guantánamo



Logistics

Damages:

- The Provincial Defence Council in Guantanamo announced that road connections between Guantanamo and the affected municipalities of Baracoa, Imias, Maisi, Yateras and San Antonio del Sur are interrupted. Therefore, any emergency response assistance should be provided through air services.
- Damages were registered to the La Farola viaduct, the main access route to Baracoa, as well as to the control tower and runway of Baracoa's airport.
- Serious damage was reported to the roof of counterpart warehouse "614" in the El Turey Area, Baracoa. As the roof was torn off, the food stored inside got wet. Authorities are currently assessing the quantity of food that was damaged.

100%

of the assistance to four municipalities should be provided through air services

Response:

- WFP is in consultations with local authorities to determine the conditions of the Port of Baracoa and warehouses in the affected areas. This information will be used to explore potential support scenarios

General Coordination

A UN Team is monitoring the information reported on local and national press about the impact of Hurricane Matthew. This information is reflected in this Situation Report.

This afternoon, a meeting between the United Nations System (UNS) and the donor community took place. The UNS presented a preliminary assessment of the situation based on information published in the press; main damages caused by the hurricane, disaggregated by sector and per territory; UNS presence in affected areas, and details of a first potential response. Exchanges were carried regarding possible response for the following sectors: health; infrastructure rehabilitation; food security and nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene; education, and logistics.

UN Agencies, in close consultation with national authorities, will start formulating a Cash Grant request form, an immediate response action plan to Hurricane Matthew, as well as a CERF proposal. Immediate response mechanisms of each agency have already been activated.

Crisis background

Eastern Cuba started to feel the impact of Hurricane Matthew the morning of October 4th. The eye of the hurricane reached Cuban territory at 18:30 (local time) accompanied by heavy rainfall, strong winds and coastal inundation. The Cuban Civil Defense declared a Hurricane Alert Phase due to the threat of coastal flooding for the shores of northern municipalities of the central provinces of Ciego de Ávila, Santi Spiritus and Villa Clara as well as for the northern coast of the province of Matanzas.

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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/>

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