



Situation after the passage of Hurricane Rafael through the province of Mayabeque. November 2024.

Appeal: MDRCU011	Country: Cuba	Hazard: Cyclone	Type of DREF: Response
Crisis Category: Orange	Event Onset: Sudden	DREF Allocation: CHF 978,788	
Glide Number: TC-2024-000203-CUB	People Affected: 4,000,000 people	People Targeted: 10,000 people	
Operation Start Date: 22-11-2024	Operation Timeframe: 6 months	Operation End Date: 31-05-2025	DREF Published: 22-11-2024

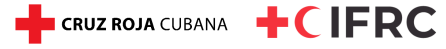
Targeted Areas: **Artemisa, Ciudad de la Habana, Mayabeque**

Description of the Event

Date of event

06-11-2024

HURRICANES OSCAR AND RAFAEL 2024 | CUBA



- Affected areas**
- Capital City
 - Prioritized zones
 - Hurricane Rafael
 - Hurricane Oscar



The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities. Sources: Cuban Red Cross, IFRC. Produced by IFRC Americas, HDCC, IM Team.

Map of areas affected by hurricanes Rafael and Oscar, and areas targeted by Cuban Red Cross in response to the impact of Hurricane Rafael. Source: IFRC.

What happened, where and when?

Hurricane Rafael was a historic storm, tied with 1985's Hurricane Kate as the strongest November tropical cyclone on record in the Gulf of Mexico. As the seventeenth named storm, eleventh hurricane, and fifth major hurricane of the 2024 Atlantic hurricane season, Rafael formed on 4 November 2024, from an area of low pressure associated with a Central American gyre. Over the next two days, the system steadily organized, intensifying into a hurricane early on 6 November as it tracked northwest toward Cuba.

Given the hurricane's rapid development and projected path, the Cuban National Civil Defense issued Informative Note No. 4 on 5 November, placing the provinces of Sancti Spiritus, Cienfuegos, Villa Clara, Matanzas, Mayabeque, Havana, Artemisa, Pinar del Río, and the Isla de la Juventud under an Alarm Phase starting at 06:00 hours. This declaration enabled the activation of national disaster response protocols, including mass evacuations and resource mobilization. The Cuban Red Cross (CRC) activated its action plan in line with the national disaster response framework, mobilizing resources and personnel across the identified territories.

On 6 November 2024, Hurricane Rafael made landfall at Playa Majana, Artemisa Province, at 16:15 hours as a Category 2 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale. It had maximum sustained winds of 185 km/h, moving northwest through Artemisa at a forward speed of 22 km/h, bringing heavy rain, strong winds, and widespread flooding.

By 20:00 hours, the hurricane exited Artemisa at Bahía de Cabañas, approximately 25 km west of Mariel, with sustained winds of 170 km/h and higher gusts. Maintaining its northwest trajectory, it caused significant impacts across La Habana, Mayabeque, and Villa Clara, including severe damage to housing, infrastructure, and agriculture.

Although early warning systems and preparedness efforts helped reduce potential casualties, Rafael's unprecedented strength and speed



inflicted widespread destruction in several provinces in western Cuba, including Artemisa, La Habana, Mayabeque, Matanzas, Pinar del Rio, and Isla de la Juventud.



Cuban Red Cross branch affected in Mayabeque.



Affectation in Artemisa.

Scope and Scale

Hurricane Rafael, a Category 2 storm on the Saffir-Simpson scale, struck western Cuba in November 2024, causing widespread damage across several provinces. The storm's trajectory and strength led to significant impacts on infrastructure, agriculture, and housing, particularly in areas that are both highly populated and vulnerable due to their geographic location or the state of their infrastructure.

According to the Spanish news agency EFE, hurricane Rafael affected more than four million people, including over two million in Havana, representing another blow to a country already struggling with a severe economic and energy crisis. Furthermore, the results of preliminary rapid assessments indicate the following affectation per province:

Artemisa:

In Artemisa, the storm caused extensive damage to housing, with approximately 19,498 homes affected. The most severe damage was to the structural integrity of homes, with many suffering partial collapses and total roof loss. The public health infrastructure was hit hard, with nearly all hospitals and some polyclinics affected. Additionally, around 40 educational institutions, primarily damaged in terms of their roofs, were impacted. A total of 174 commercial establishments, including 74 warehouses and production facilities, were affected, as well as significant public spaces such as the Artemisa Stadium.

The Mariel Special Development Zone also suffered considerable damage, with the Mariel Container Terminal being one of the most severely impacted facilities.

Mayabeque:

Seven municipalities in Mayabeque were notably affected by the storm, including Quivicán, Batabanó, Bejucal, and Melena del Sur. Agriculture was the hardest hit, with crops such as bananas, cassava, and rice suffering extensive damage. About 1,568 homes were significantly impacted, and around 20 educational institutions and parts of the public health infrastructure were damaged, particularly their roofs. Flooding in Batabanó was moderate, but the storm had a severe impact on the local fishing industry.

La Habana:

La Habana saw damage to 1,812 homes. Over 71 educational centers were affected, along with all health institutions in some capacity. The primary damage came from the downing of over 495 utility poles and more than 100 transformers, which caused major disruptions to electricity and telephone services. The city's manufactured gas infrastructure was also damaged, and some elevated water tanks were affected. The municipalities most impacted included Boyeros, La Lisa, Playa, Plaza, Centro Habana, and La Habana Vieja.

Isla de la Juventud:

The damage in Isla de la Juventud was more localized, affecting agriculture, housing, and some state infrastructure. The electricity sector also suffered, with broken lines due to fallen trees.

Rest of the country:

Across Cuba, the hurricane's impact led to the disconnection of the National Electricity System (SEN), requiring emergency measures to

maintain basic services. The restoration of power will be slow due to pre-existing issues with generation capacity, which were exacerbated by previous storms. With forecasts for continued rainfall in the region, the situation could become even more complex, leading to a scenario of overlapping crises and hampering both relief efforts and the necessary work to restore normalcy in affected communities.

In terms of infrastructure, preliminary damage assessments indicate at least 23,465 houses impacted, including:

Artemisa: 19,498 houses

La Habana: 1,812 houses

Granma: 335 houses

Mayabeque: 1,586 houses

Santiago de Cuba: 234 houses

Vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, children, and people with disabilities, were disproportionately affected by Hurricane Rafael, facing difficulties in accessing shelters and relief services. Many were displaced, and children lost their education due to damaged schools. The storm's impacts on agriculture, housing, and infrastructure further exposed the vulnerability of communities, especially in rural areas and urban centers with inadequate housing. These challenges, compounded by existing vulnerabilities, highlight the need for improved disaster preparedness and resilience. The scale of the damage underscores the importance of long-term disaster risk reduction strategies to better equip communities for future hazards.

Source Information

Source Name	Source Link
1. Granma	https://www.granma.cu/cuba/2024-11-08/asi-quedo-el-occidente-de-cuba-tras-el-paso-del-huracan-rafael-todos-los-detalles
2. United Nations	https://reliefweb.int/report/cuba/response-hurricanes-rafael-oscar-situation-report-no-06-resident-coordinators-office-11-november-2024
3. EFE	https://efe.com/mundo/2024-11-08/azote-del-huracan-rafael-en-cuba/

Previous Operations

Has a similar event affected the same area(s) in the last 3 years?	Yes
Did it affect the same population group?	No
Did the National Society respond?	-
Did the National Society request funding form DREF for that event(s)	-
If yes, please specify which operation	-

If you have answered yes to all questions above, justify why the use of DREF for a recurrent event, or how this event should not be considered recurrent:

-

Lessons learned:

The use of DREF for Hurricane Rafael should not be considered a response to a recurrent event because this hurricane had distinct characteristics—such as its trajectory, rainfall levels, wind speeds, and movement patterns—that set it apart from previous events. Furthermore, it impacted regions with vastly different geographical features, resulting in unique effects on the affected populations. In general, Hurricane Rafael and other events, like Hurricane Oscar, should be treated as independent occurrences that require



tailored approaches and interventions.

Furthermore, the Cuban Red Cross (CRC) has implemented multiple emergency operations in response to the impact of hurricanes, and key lessons from these operations have been considered during the development of this application, including:

DREF operations in Cuba have frequently encountered logistical challenges, particularly in supply chain management—from procurement to rapid in-country mobilization. To address this, a two-phase logistical strategy was introduced during the recent DREF Operation (MDRCU010), significantly improving response times. Building on this success, a similar two-phase strategy is proposed for the current operation:

1. Air transport for low-volume, high-priority items via charter flights to meet immediate needs.
2. Maritime transport for bulkier items, such as mattresses and water tanks, to ensure cost-effective delivery.

This dual strategy balances cost efficiency with timely delivery, enhancing the overall response.

The Emergency Appeal launched in response to the impact of Hurricane Ian in 2022, which devastated Pinar del Rio, highlighted the importance of timely resource allocation and pre-positioning supplies to optimize response efforts. These practices have been integrated into the current plan of action to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness.

Additionally, community accountability has also emerged as a cornerstone of CRC operations. Integrating feedback from affected populations strengthens outreach and ensures that response activities align closely with community needs. This participatory approach has fostered trust and improved the relevance of interventions.

The Cuban Red Cross has made a concerted effort to develop broader and longer-term recovery strategies during emergency response operations. These strategies have provided valuable longer-term support to affected communities in their recovery from the aftermath of hurricanes, and in addressing broader disaster risk reduction issues. The inclusion of an early recovery component in the CRC plan of action has been a significant step towards promoting and developing new skill sets within the Cuban Red Cross regional branches, which will be key in providing integral response. These operations have served to strengthen links between the Cuban Red Cross' national headquarters and the provincial and municipal branches, improving internal relations and transferring capacity in the technical and operational roles of emergency management. Although the operation has officially ended, the Cuban Red Cross continues its work in responding to community needs and addressing broader disaster risk reduction issues, highlighting areas for future emergency response operations.

Finally, areas for further capacity building have been identified, including strengthening communication and organizational development, enhancing youth engagement and volunteer management, developing procurement procedures, reinforcing the coordination between national headquarters and regional branches.

By addressing these lessons, the Cuban Red Cross continues to refine its emergency response capacity, ensuring it remains robust and adaptive to future challenges.

Current National Society Actions

Start date of National Society actions

04-11-2024

Health

- Support to the Cuban Fire Brigade, in Rescue and Rescue actions and application of First Aid in the Fire Command.
- Support in Health Care Centres and evacuation of patients in Hospitals.
- Habana Vieja Municipality: Check-up and evacuation of 16 pregnant women, attention to 2 injured people.
- Centro Habana Municipality: Transfer of 2 pregnant women to the Gonzáles Coro Hospital.
- Marianao Municipality: Support to the Juan Manuel Márquez Hospital, with the internal transfer of 6 patients and to the Clinical Hospital of 26 in the Guard Corps, with the transfer of 8 patients
- Plaza de la Revolución: Transfer of 10 bedridden patients to the Polyclinic, 3 infants



	and 2 pregnant women to the González Coro Hospital. To the Calixto García 2 evacuees, to the Hogar de Ancianos Aneiro Subirot 22 elderly adults.
Protection, Gender And Inclusion	-Support given to 11 protection centers with 26 volunteers. - 70 Restoring Family Links (RFL) brigades mobilized with 101 volunteer working diligently in the field and in the Protection Centers.
Coordination	The Operations and Relief Groups have been supporting the Defense Councils in the evacuation of families. Additionally, they assist the Cuban Fire Department in search and rescue operations and provide both physical and psychological first aid to the families of victims and affected individuals. A total of 31,075 people have been evacuated by Cuban Red Cross volunteers. Of these, 4,679 people are currently housed in Protection Centers, receiving support from volunteers, while 26,396 individuals have taken refuge with family and friends.
National Society Readiness	The Cuban Red Cross mobilized 1,842 volunteers from the Operations and Relief Groups, RFL, Shelter Support, Psychological Support, and Amateur Radio groups. Additionally, 83 salaried staff members from the Cuban Red Cross were involved. Mayabeque: - Municipality of Batabano: Evacuation process and transfer of bedridden patients to evacuation centres. Rescue actions in a landslide with trapped people. - Municipality of Güines: GEOS support in the Fire Brigade Command, with rescue actions; as well as support to the Municipality of Batabano. Matanzas: - GEOS Matanzas: Rescue actions in the Community of Alacranes with 8 people evacuated. Cienfuegos: - Abreu Municipality: One case of internal RFL, where a family is located in different shelters. - Cruces Municipality: Support in Evacuation Centres. Villa Clara: - Encrucijada Municipality: Evacuation process in the El Santo Community. Sancti Spiritus: -GEOS Sancti Spiritus: Support in the evacuation in the communities of Tuna de Zaza and Médano.
Activation Of Contingency Plans	The Cuban Red Cross activated its Disaster Risk Reduction Plan to address hydrometeorological events at both the National and Territorial levels.

IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat	The IFRC Americas Regional Office and Country Cluster Delegation for Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic are collaborating closely with the Cuban Red Cross through technical support for the development of this DREF Application and coordination with PNSs and donors for potential support. This effort included the visit of the CCD Program and Operations Coordinator and the ARO Communications Coordinator to assist in formulating the DREF and documenting the emergency response.
Participating National Societies	Exchange of preliminary damage and National Society actions information with Canadian Red Cross, Italian Red Cross and Netherlands Red Cross.



ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

Meeting with the ICRC regional delegation based in Venezuela, responsible for overseeing ICRC activities in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and CARICOM member states (excluding Haiti), at the Cuban Red Cross headquarters, for the exchange of information about the possible operation and willingness to support the National Society during the emergency.

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	Yes
National authorities	<p>National authorities prioritize actions for the restoration of the National Electric System for critical services, including water supply, and for the population. Additionally, state agencies and the entire population have been called to accelerate sanitation efforts.</p> <p>The National Defense Council met on 8 November 2024, to analyze the preliminary assessment of the damages caused by Hurricane Rafael's impact and the measures being taken for recovery in the most affected areas, with an emphasis on electricity services, water pumping, distribution of basic food supplies, and crop harvesting.</p> <p>During the Disaster Situation, the National Defense Council adopts general provisions that are mandatory, according to the demands of the situation. These provisions align with special legislation and previously approved measures and plans. To address various situations in different regions of the country, Regional, Provincial, and Municipal Defense Councils are activated, in accordance with Cuba's organizational structure.</p> <p>These councils implement the Disaster Risk Reduction Plans, which include various stages and phases designed to mitigate the effects of the disaster.</p> <p>In this context, the Institute of Meteorology (INSMET), under the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment (CITMA), is responsible for directing meteorological activities in Cuba. Its main mission is to provide reliable, authorized, and timely meteorological and climatic information, with the goal of safeguarding human life and reducing material losses from natural meteorological disasters, directly contributing to community well-being and the country's sustainable development.</p> <p>A Central Commission, sent by the government, is conducting a detailed assessment of damages in key sectors such as housing, agriculture, and other affected areas. The Ministry of Public Health, has reinforced Medical Brigades in the territories most severely impacted by the disaster.</p>
UN or other actors	<p>The United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office in Cuba has published Situation Report No. 06 on the response to Hurricanes Oscar and Rafael, as well as recent seismic events in the eastern region. The UN has launched an expanded action plan to address the compounded impacts of these disasters, allocating the maximum permissible amount from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), totaling \$6 million. This allocation represents approximately 10% of the total funding required for the action plan.</p> <p>The UN's efforts are concentrated on supporting the recovery of damaged infrastructure and providing food and medical assistance to the vulnerable communities, particularly those in areas that are difficult to access due to flooding and landslides. In collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, the UN is working to mitigate health risks associated with the floods, such as the increase in vector-borne diseases. The United Nations System has emphasized the importance of swiftly mobilizing resources to prevent a further deterioration of living conditions in the most impacted areas. This report highlights the UN's commitment to continuously monitor and respond effectively to this emergency.</p>



The Cuban Red Cross's response will complement these efforts by focusing on areas and populations that may not be fully addressed by the UN or national authorities. While the UN is prioritizing large-scale infrastructure recovery and health interventions, the Cuban Red Cross will emphasize community-level engagement, including tailored support for vulnerable groups through its networks and partnerships with local organizations such as the Federation of Cuban Women and associations for people with disabilities. This approach will ensure that grassroots needs are addressed in a coordinated manner, avoiding overlap with larger initiatives.

Moreover, the Cuban Red Cross will work closely with local Risk Reduction Management Centers and Civil Defense to align its activities with national priorities. These efforts will prioritize building community resilience through targeted workshops, such as those on safe roofing, and delivering essential non-food items to meet immediate household needs. By maintaining consistent communication with the UN and other actors, the Cuban Red Cross will ensure its interventions fill critical gaps, particularly in underserved areas, while adhering to quality and dignity standards.

In addition to the UN's efforts, other actors have stepped in to support the recovery process:

Canada: The Canadian government has announced a donation of \$400,000 to assist with water, sanitation, hygiene services, and relief supplies for affected communities.

Mexico: The Mexican company Richmeat has contributed 100 tons of meat to support the nutritional needs of families impacted by the hurricane.

UNICEF: UNICEF has dispatched a shipment of 1,498 kilograms of medical supplies to address health concerns in the aftermath of the hurricane.

World Food Programme (WFP): WFP has committed to providing technical equipment and food modules to support recovery efforts.

Cuban Expatriate Communities: Cuban communities abroad have organized to send essential supplies and financial assistance to aid in the recovery process.

These collaborative efforts aim to address immediate needs and support the long-term recovery of the regions most affected by Hurricane Rafael. The Cuban Red Cross will remain committed to complementing these initiatives, ensuring a harmonized response that addresses unmet needs and avoids duplication of efforts.

Are there major coordination mechanism in place?

The National Society, in its auxiliary role, has actively participated in various meetings with the National Civil Defense Staff to coordinate on-the-ground actions in case of emergency, as well as to identify and implement the necessary preventive activities, considering the changes in meteorological forecasts. The response is coordinated through the National Civil Defense System, which provides structured spaces for coordination in which the Cuban Red Cross participates regularly. During these meetings, each actor outlines their planned sectoral response to avoid duplication of activities and ensure complementarity.

In accordance with Directive No. 1 of 2022 from the President of the National Council of the Republic of Cuba, Temporary Working Groups have been established to evaluate and analyze the damages. Based on these evaluations, tasks are assigned to the Central State Administration Bodies and auxiliary institutions like the Cuban Red Cross. These Temporary Working Groups coordinate their activities with representatives at the national, provincial, municipal, and Popular Council levels, ensuring a comprehensive and efficient response to emergencies.

Furthermore, United Nations agencies, by mandate, focus on sectors that do not fall under the Cuban Red Cross's scope of work, such as agriculture, food security, infrastructure, restoration of basic services, and sexual and reproductive health, among others. This clear delineation of responsibilities ensures that the Cuban Red Cross can concentrate on its core areas of intervention while complementing the broader national and international response efforts.



Needs (Gaps) Identified



Shelter Housing And Settlements

Hurricane Rafael has created significant needs and gaps in the housing sector in the affected provinces, particularly in Artemisa, La Habana and Mayabeque. More than 23,000 homes are reported to have suffered severe damage, including partial or total loss of roofs, leaving many families without a safe place to live. The strong winds and heavy rains have also caused damage to government infrastructure, including warehouses, shops and pharmacies.

Needs identified in the aftermath of Hurricane Oscar include lack of adequate materials for the immediate reconstruction of damaged homes, particularly in the hardest hit and most inaccessible areas, complicating repair efforts. In addition, the capacity of transitional shelters to accommodate all displaced families for an extended period is limited, increasing the vulnerability of these people, especially in the face of further adverse weather conditions. Finally, there is a lack of economic and logistical resources, which is slowing efforts to carry out necessary repairs quickly and efficiently, delaying the return to normalcy for many affected families.

Key shelter needs include:

- Temporary shelter: Thousands of people will need to be relocated to shelters or temporary housing due to the collapse of their homes.
- Building materials: There is an urgent need for materials such as zinc sheeting, lumber, and other supplies to repair or rebuild damaged roofs and structures.
- Support for displaced families: Immediate assistance is needed for evacuees, especially those staying in evacuation centers or with family and friends.



Livelihoods And Basic Needs

Hurricane Rafael has caused extensive damage to livelihoods and basic needs, particularly in agriculture and related sectors, severely impacting the food security and economic stability of affected communities. Artemisa and Mayabeque provinces, known as major agricultural producers for Cuba, have experienced widespread losses in crops, livestock, and essential infrastructure, creating a critical need for immediate and long-term recovery efforts.

In Artemisa, damage assessments indicate catastrophic impacts on key crops. Over 9,000 hectares of bananas need replanting, and more than 7,000 hectares of cassava have been affected, along with significant losses in sweet potato, beans, vegetables, and fruit. Coffee production has also been devastated, with damage reported to over half of the planted hectares and the loss of approximately 1,800 cans of drip coffee. Similarly, the province has experienced losses in tobacco cultivation, although seedbeds were safeguarded. The destruction of agricultural infrastructure compounds these losses, including damage to 43 irrigation machines, 8 out of 38 crop houses at Ceiba citrus company, and the cassava flour factory, which lost its roof.

Livestock sectors have also been hard-hit. Poultry farms and 16 pig sector units in Artemisa and Mayabeque suffered structural damage, especially to their roofs, jeopardizing production and animal welfare. The fishing industry has faced disruptions, while impacts on warehouses and technological facilities further complicate recovery.

Mayabeque has similarly suffered widespread agricultural losses, particularly in crops such as bananas, cassava, and rice. Damage to retail and distribution networks in both provinces has disrupted food supply chains, aggravating challenges in accessing essential goods.

The municipalities of Güira de Melena and Alquizar in Artemisa, key agricultural hubs for the entire country, were particularly affected. Losses in these areas threaten not only local livelihoods but also the national food supply, emphasizing the urgent need for coordinated recovery efforts. These efforts must prioritize replanting affected crops, repairing irrigation systems, and restoring agricultural infrastructure to ensure future harvests and stabilize food availability. Additionally, specialized support for poultry and pig farming is essential to mitigate the long-term economic impact on these vital sectors.



Health

The health needs of the population affected by Hurricane Rafael are significant, stemming largely from water contamination and the resulting spread of communicable diseases. These include diarrheal diseases, skin infections, acute and chronic respiratory illnesses, vector-borne diseases, and arboviruses. The lack of access to safe drinking water has not only affected human health but also impacted



livestock, compounding existing health challenges.

Flooding has also destroyed essential household items, leaving families without necessities critical to daily well-being. This has heightened the need for health promotion activities and immediate access to safe drinking water to reduce the risks of disease outbreaks and safeguard the population's health.

To address these challenges, the following priorities are identified:

- Health and Hygiene Promotion: Engaging trained personnel to carry out health promotion and hygiene education activities to mitigate risks associated with waterborne and communicable diseases.
- Provision of Basic Health Services: Establishing or supporting health brigades equipped with medical supplies, first aid resources, and training in water sanitation and hygiene practices.
- Access to Essential Supplies: Supplying mosquito nets, protective equipment, and biomedical resources to reduce exposure to disease and support ongoing health initiatives.

Furthermore, the psychological impact of the disaster has been profound for both affected populations and volunteers. Physical symptoms such as fatigue, nausea, headaches, and gastrointestinal issues have been reported, while emotional effects include anxiety, depression, burnout, and PTSD. The severity of these effects varies based on individual vulnerability, social support systems, and the duration of the crisis.

To address these mental health challenges, it is crucial to ensure the availability of psychosocial support services, focusing on both volunteers and community members. Adequate preparation, including trained personnel and necessary equipment, is essential to provide a timely and effective response to emerging health challenges in the affected areas.



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Hurricane Rafael has caused significant disruptions to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) systems in the affected regions of Artemisa, La Habana and Mayabeque. Heavy rains and widespread flooding have contaminated numerous drinking water sources, making access to safe water increasingly difficult and exposing communities to waterborne diseases such as diarrhea and gastrointestinal infections. Contamination has altered the physical, chemical, and microbiological quality of water, posing immediate health risks to the population.

The damage to water abstraction and treatment facilities, along with distribution networks, has been compounded by power outages at pumping stations, further disrupting drinking water supplies. In response, authorities have deployed tanker trucks to distribute water to households, health centers, food distribution networks, and other critical facilities. However, this is a temporary measure, highlighting the urgent need to restore and rebuild water systems to ensure long-term access to safe drinking water.

The loss of essential household items due to flooding has further heightened the vulnerability of affected communities. Many households now lack basic hygiene products such as soap, disinfectants, and sanitary items, which are critical for maintaining hygiene and preventing the spread of diseases. In this context, the distribution of hygiene kits has become a key intervention to help individuals and families meet their hygiene needs under challenging conditions.

Initial assessments underscore the urgency of addressing both water supply and quality issues while ensuring the provision of essential hygiene supplies to mitigate public health risks. The destruction of household assets and the compromised living environments pose ongoing challenges to maintaining hygiene and overall well-being. Addressing these interrelated issues requires a coordinated approach that prioritizes immediate access to safe water and hygiene resources while supporting the recovery and resilience of WASH systems in the affected regions.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

Hurricane Rafael has underscored the critical need to prioritize the protection, gender, and inclusion (PGI) of vulnerable populations, including women, children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly, who face heightened risks during and after natural disasters. Addressing these needs requires targeted interventions to ensure their safety, well-being, and equitable access to resources.

Key protection, gender and inclusion needs include:

Improving infrastructure: The destruction of homes and public buildings -such as schools and health centers- requires urgent repairs. This infrastructure is critical not only for the physical protection of individuals, but also for providing safe spaces for women, especially the vulnerable. Strengthening these structures is essential to ensure that all sectors of the population are included in the recovery efforts.



Support for women and children: It is critical to ensure that displaced families, especially those headed by women, have access to safe shelter that is tailored to their needs. In disaster situations, women and children are at higher risk of gender-based violence, so it is essential to prioritize protection when allocating resources and creating safe spaces.

Access to basic services: Restoring basic services such as drinking water, electricity and sanitation is key not only to recovery, but also to preventing health risks in affected areas. In addition, repairing education and health infrastructure will facilitate access to essential services for children and other vulnerable groups as soon as possible.



Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery

Early warning systems are critical to disaster management, especially in situations like those caused by Hurricane Rafael. Although alerts were issued to warn communities of the impending threat, power problems prevented many of these messages from reaching people in a timely and effective manner, as radio receivers and cell phones are difficult to charge during power outages.

This lack of adequate and stable communication can lead to an inadequate response to emergencies, putting lives and safety at risk. It is therefore essential to improve the early warning infrastructure and ensure that warnings can be issued even during power outages.

Increasing the response capacity of personnel, both in terms of equipment and knowledge, is also critical to ensuring that communities are prepared and can respond appropriately to future threats.

In addition, the lack of visibility and lack of personal protective equipment for volunteers compromised both the safety and effectiveness of rescue operations in flooded areas and negatively impacted community confidence in the Red Cross.

This situation underscores the urgent need to improve the visibility of volunteers and to provide them with adequate equipment, such as waterproof coats, rubber boots, thermal suits, water helmets, headlamps, batteries, portable generators and first aid kits, to ensure that they can work safely in any environment.

It is also critical to promote community empowerment and early recovery as key steps in building greater resilience to future disasters.



Environment Sustainability

The main challenge is the lack of access to clean and resilient energy sources in the Cuban Red Cross branches and headquarters and during the delivery of response operations. The prolonged interruption of electricity supply due to damage to transmission lines has directly impacted the branches' ability to coordinate humanitarian aid and provide essential services to affected communities.

Two main gaps have been identified:

The first one is the reliance on traditional energy sources and infrastructure, which are highly vulnerable to damage caused by disasters. The Red Cross branches, especially in rural or remote areas, face challenges in maintaining their operations without a stable energy source, putting the continuity of their services during emergencies at risk.

The second is the lack of energy storage devices to navigate the increasingly frequent power outages. Due to the unilateral coercive measures affecting Cuba, the country's energetic matrix is on the limit, leading to power outages up to seven days long. In this context, the Cuban Red Cross faces severe difficulties safely storing food and medicine, providing urgent medical assistance in critical situations, and communicating with branches, IFRC delegations, and key humanitarian stakeholders. Transition to renewable energy is urgent not only for environmental but for operational reasons.

Any identified gaps/limitations in the assessment

The development of damage assessments and needs analysis has had many limitations and delays due to the simultaneous occurrence of different events that have led to slow data collection. The occurrence of two hurricanes, two earthquakes and an energy and fuel crisis throughout the country have left all the provinces of the country cut off from each other and this has made the flow of information very difficult.

Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

Through this DREF operation, the Cuban Red Cross aims to implement actions to reach 3,000 families (10,000 people) and assist the vulnerable populations affected by Hurricane Rafael in November 2024 in the provinces of Artemisa, La Habana and Mayabeque for an initial period of 6 months.

Operation strategy rationale

The development of this DREF Action Plan is based on the data collected through the Initial Damage Assessments and Needs Analysis currently being conducted by the Government of Cuba, coordinated through the National Defense Council. The three provinces most affected by heavy rains—Artemisa, La Habana and Mayabeque- have been prioritized in this intervention. In these regions, significant losses have been identified, including damage to homes, loss of personal belongings, loss of livelihoods and difficulties in accessing basic resources such as potable water. This information is complemented by data provided by provincial and municipal Red Cross branches in the affected areas, secondary government reports, and reports from Cuban Civil Defense and the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office in Cuba.

Based on figures from the national assessments, and in coordination with the Cuban authorities, the Cuban Red Cross is planning to reach 3,000 families (10,000 people) across the three hardest-hit provinces. The focus will be on shelter, water, sanitation, and hygiene, Disaster Risk Reduction, Protection, Gender and Inclusion and Community, Engagement and Accountability.

SHELTER:

The Cuban Red Cross aims to reach 2,000 families (6,666 people) through the implementation of shelter-related activities, including the distribution of 2,000 double mattresses, 2,000 kitchen sets, 4,000 solar lamps, and 4,000 mosquito nets. Additionally, 3 community provincial workshops on safe roofing (1 per affected province) will be conducted.

Historically, cyclones have significantly impacted Cuban housing, often causing extensive damage to roofs and leading to the loss of personal belongings and household items due to severe winds and associated flooding. To address these recurring issues and support "build back better" efforts, the intervention includes community safe roofing workshop with a focus on the PASSA methodology (Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness). This workshop aims to strengthen community resilience by promoting safer roofing practices and empowering local stakeholders involved in construction and reconstruction efforts.

The workshop will bring together not only community members but also housing and construction technicians who are directly involved in rebuilding processes. The goal is to transfer knowledge and skills for constructing more resilient roofs that can better withstand future extreme weather events. A national-level safe roofing workshop will be conducted as a "training of trainers," involving various community actors such as volunteers, housing technicians, roofing brigades, and community members. This training will be followed by replicas in the three selected provinces, enabling the dissemination of practical and useful information to approximately 1,000 people on establishing safe roofs at the community level.

Additionally, previously trained Cuban Red Cross volunteers, equipped with expertise in these methodologies from past operations, will support the roofing brigades that will assist in the installation of roofs provided by the Cuban government and external actors such as UNDP. For urban and rural areas facing systemic shelter issues, it is highly recommended to carry out PASSA (Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness) training with the National Society and the affected population. PASSA ensures that communities understand the risks and identify the best solutions to improve housing conditions and prevent future hurricane damage.

By focusing on education, capacity building, and community engagement, these workshops contribute to "build back better" efforts by ensuring that reconstruction practices integrate resilience and safety principles. While the workshops do not provide materials for housing repairs, they equip participants with the technical know-how to apply safer construction techniques, fostering sustainable recovery and reducing vulnerability to future disasters.

WATER SANITATION & HYGIENE (WASH):

Taking into account the health risks associated with this event, a strategy will be developed hand in hand with PROSALUD Cuba, a governmental institution in charge of health promotion, in order to carry out health and hygiene promotion campaigns in the affected provinces. Through the alliance with PROSALUD, which allows to have a greater reach, this DREF aims to reach 10,000 people who will benefit from health and hygiene promotion activities.

In addition, 2,000 families (6,666 people) will be reached with the distribution of 2,000 hygiene kits, 500 menstrual hygiene kits, and aqua tabs for water purification, as well as 2,000 33 liter water tanks aimed at supporting current challenges related to access and use of water.



PROTECTION, GENDER AND INCLUSION (PGI):

As a cross-cutting sector, the National Society seeks to strengthen its staff and volunteers in protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, ensuring the implementation of the minimum requirements at the operational level. Awareness-raising campaigns will also be conducted at the community level, alongside an analysis of the needs of the migrant population identified in the areas of intervention.

The operation will guarantee an adequate response to meet the needs of the target groups. To ensure that this operation meets standards of quality and dignity, a program of communications and accountability to the community will be implemented, guaranteeing the involvement of beneficiaries in the quality of the assistance provided. Additionally, the accompaniment of the ARO's PGI coordinator will facilitate the implementation of a Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) workshop. This will ensure that staff and volunteers receive expert guidance and training to effectively integrate PGI principles throughout the operation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (CEA):

In all activities, the National Society prioritizes community participation and accountability. This includes implementing feedback mechanisms and creating a continuous cycle of community feedback review.

This approach is applied across all areas of the National Society's work and is overseen by the National Communications Department, ensuring community inclusion in every phase of the process. This includes key message dissemination, satisfaction surveys, and community feedback mechanisms to improve and strengthen future interventions.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION:

With a view to building resilience in affected communities and supporting their early recovery, the Cuban Red Cross seeks to implement an Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (EVCA) and a rapid environmental analysis through the NEAT+ tool in three communities. These assessments will inform the development of community resilience plans and family Disaster Risk Management plans, integrating climate and environmental considerations.

Based on the results of these resilience assessments, gaps and basic actions will be identified. The Cuban Red Cross will focus on the formulation of climate-smart micro-projects and the identification of seed funding opportunities to enable communities to address some of the identified gaps and take initial steps toward building resilience. This approach ensures that these actions are sustainable and driven by local needs and leadership.

To ensure a smooth transition from the DREF operation, an exit/transition strategy will be developed. This strategy will link the outcomes of the EVCA and resilience assessments to the formulation of long-term projects and programs. Additionally, the identified seed funding will support the resilience-building phase, bridging the gap between emergency response and sustainable development.

This integrated approach will not only provide immediate benefits but also serve as a foundation for the Cuban Red Cross to establish future long-term initiatives that strengthen community resilience to climate and environmental challenges.

NATIONAL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT:

The Cuban Red Cross, under Directive 001 issued by the Cuban government, participates in all emergency response and preparedness activities in the Republic of Cuba, offering a large number of volunteers trained in various areas. Considering local limitations—ranging from market shortages to difficulties in acquiring products abroad—volunteers often carry out their tasks without adequate equipment or visibility elements. These elements are vital for gaining acceptance and recognition, as well as ensuring optimal conditions for humanitarian work. This DREF seeks to support the National Society in the acquisition of replacement equipment for the Emergency Operations Groups (GEOS) deployed during the emergency.

Targeting Strategy

Who will be targeted through this operation?

Through this intervention, the Cuban Red Cross aims to reach at least 3,000 families (10,000 people) across various sectors, prioritizing vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. To achieve this, the National Society will collaborate with the Risk Reduction Management Centers (CGRR) of local governments and Civil Defense, as well as with the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) and the associations for people with disabilities (ACLIFIM, ANCI, ANSOC).

Targeting and Sectoral Distribution Details:

- WASH Sector: A total of 2,000 families will receive hygiene kits, menstrual hygiene kits, aqua tabs (180,000 tablets), and 33-liter water tanks. These families have been identified based on specific needs such as access to clean water and hygiene resources, in coordination with local authorities and technical guidance from Civil Defense and CGRR.



- Shelter Sector: Another 2,000 families will receive shelter-related items, including mattresses, kitchen sets, 4,000 solar lamps (two per family), and 4,000 mosquito nets (two per family). These items are targeted at households whose homes were most affected, identified through damage assessments conducted with local partners.

While overlap can happen between families targeted in the WASH and shelter sectors, this will depend on a vulnerability and needs assessment to ensure the most critical needs are met equitably. For instance, households classified as highly vulnerable or having multiple sectoral needs (e.g., lacking both adequate shelter and access to clean water) may receive support in both sectors. These criteria will be refined in collaboration with local authorities and sectoral experts to avoid duplication and maximize the impact of the intervention.

It is important to note that, according to the 2012 National Population and Housing Census of Cuba, the average Cuban household consists of 3.3 people. This figure has been used to estimate the number of individuals to be reached through this response.

Protection, Gender and Inclusion strategy:

The National Society's coordination with local associations will be critical in identifying and addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, ensuring that the intervention is inclusive and responsive to gender dynamics and the needs of people with disabilities. Special attention will be given to ensuring equitable distribution of resources and engaging community representatives to validate the targeting process.

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

The following vulnerability criteria are proposed for the selection of families to be reached with emergency response inputs in the different intervention areas.

- Families with total or partial loss of housing and personal belongings.
- Families with children and/or older adults
- Families with persons with disabilities
- Single women with children.

Total Targeted Population

Women	3,818	Rural	25%
Girls (under 18)	3,636	Urban	75%
Men	1,636	People with disabilities (estimated)	5%
Boys (under 18)	910		
Total targeted population	10,000		

Risk and Security Considerations

Please indicate about potential operation risk for this operations and mitigation actions

Risk	Mitigation action
Delays in receiving humanitarian aid items	Immediate involvement of Logistics in the procurement/supply movement strategy to meet established operational deadlines and usage of charter flight to advance a first phase of humanitarian aid.
New rains or storms hamper operational logistics	Follow-up activities by identifying possible immediate actions to be taken.
Energy Crisis	Support to HQ and main affected branches with energy backup systems in order to guarantee their operability.



Difficulty in coordination	Strengthen liaison with government agencies by establishing effective communication channels. Cross-checking information collected with data from secondary sources.
Fuel Scarcity	Coordination with local authorities for the supply of fuel to ensure the implementation of CRC operations.

Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation

To ensure the safety and security of all personnel and volunteers involved in this operation, several measures will be implemented, including:

- All personnel and volunteers will complete the security necessary training.
- Proper briefing will be conducted for all personnel before any mission.
- Post-mission debriefings will be mandatory, including the presence of a psychosocial support officer to address mental health needs.

Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?

No

Planned Intervention



Shelter Housing And Settlements

Budget: CHF 524,491

Targeted Persons: 6,666

Indicators

Title	Target
# of families receiving relief and shelter support	2,000
# of community provincial workshop on safe roofing developed	3

Priority Actions

- Procurement and distribution of 2,000 double mattresses.
- Procurement and distribution of 2,000 kitchen sets.
- Procurement and distribution of 4,000 solar lamps.
- Procurement and distribution of 4,000 mosquito nets.
- Conduct 3 community provincial workshops on safe roofing (1 per affected province).



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Budget: CHF 288,509

Targeted Persons: 10,000

Indicators

Title	Target
# of families reached with hygiene kits	2,000

# of families reached with 33-litre water tanks	2,000
# of people sensitized through hygiene promotion campaigns	10,000
# of women reached with menstrual hygiene kits	500
# of liters of purified water through aquatabs	1,800,000

Priority Actions

- Procurement and distribution of 2,000 water tanks (33 gallons)
- Procurement and distribution of 2,000 hygiene kits
- Procurement and distribution of 500 menstrual hygiene kits
- Procurement and distribution of 180,000 aqua tabs
- Conduct 3 hygiene promotion campaigns in the targeted provinces.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

Budget: CHF 6,390

Targeted Persons: 6,666

Indicators

Title	Target
# of people receiving information on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA))	6,666
# of branches strengthening their capacities in PSEA (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse)	3

Priority Actions

- Community Awareness Raising on PSEA (printing of materials)
- PSEA training for volunteers



Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery

Budget: CHF 17,093

Targeted Persons: 0

Indicators

Title	Target
# of EVCA conducted	3
# of microprojects formulated and implemented	3

Priority Actions

- Conduct EVCA in 3 communities
- Develop 3 Early Recovery Micro-projects linked to EVCA diagnosis





Community Engagement And Accountability

Budget: CHF 4,473

Targeted Persons: 10,000

Indicators

Title	Target
% of people satisfied with a dignified and quality distribution	90
# of people reached through dignified and quality dissemination of key messages	10,000
# of feedback boxes/mechanisms established in the branches	3

Priority Actions

- Post-distribution follow-up surveys
- Dissemination of key messages
- Design and printing of materials
- Establishment of a community feedback mechanism through suggestion boxes



Secretariat Services

Budget: CHF 15,975

Targeted Persons: 0

Indicators

Title	Target
# of monitoring visits carried out	6
# of ARO visits carried out	2

Priority Actions

- Conduct 6 monitoring visits and monitor National Society strengthening
- Conduct 2 ARO visits to the field
- Accompaniment of ARO's PGI coordinator to facilitate the PGI workshop



National Society Strengthening

Budget: CHF 121,857

Targeted Persons: 0

Indicators

Title	Target
# of volunteers receiving rescue equipment	180



# of lessons learned workshop	1
# of bleeding control kits for branches and HQ	50
# of CRC vehicles repaired	5

Priority Actions

- Replenishment of PPE for Specialized Operations Groups (waterproof coating, neoprene suits for water rescue, water shoes neoprene, rubber boots, water rescue helmets, life vests, AA rechargeable batteries, frontal waterproof lanterns)
- Replenishment of 10 first Responder backboard with Head Bed and Spider Straps
- Procurement of 50 bleeding control kits
- Procurement of telephone cards for HQ and branches
- Procurement of alternative energy tools for HQ and branches
- Procurement of 5 repairing kits for NS vehicles
- Procurement of prepaid Fuel cards for NS fleet and transport between provinces
- Procurement of 16m2 tents
- Conduct 1 Lessons learned workshop by the end of the operation
- Procurement of rescue whistles

About Support Services

How many staff and volunteers will be involved in this operation. Briefly describe their role.

1,200 volunteers will be mobilized in the field for the various activities, along with 80 staff from national technical areas to support the operations. During the DREF operation, 180 volunteers will participate in distributions and hygiene promotion, in addition to the technical areas of the National Society.

If there is procurement, will it be done by National Society or IFRC?

Coordination has been maintained with the Regional Logistics Unit since the beginning of the DREF formulation to ensure that all the articles, items, kits, etc., included in the action plan can be delivered taking into account the time taken by the shipping companies and the time the Cuban Government grants import permits. The above taking into account that all purchasing processes will be done through the IFRC and following all the processes and protocols.

Based on recent operational experiences in Cuba, it has been observed that humanitarian goods typically take 1.5 to 3 months to reach the intended beneficiaries from the moment the Logistic requisition is submitted for processing. Air Freight is being considered in order to mitigate long times of delivery by sea.

How will this operation be monitored?

This operation will be monitored through coordination between the Cuban Red Cross (CRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). A continuous monitoring system will be implemented, focused on the constant collection of data regarding the activities and outcomes of the operation. The CRC will be responsible for gathering information in the field, while the IFRC will provide technical support to ensure that the data is used effectively in decision-making.

The monitoring system will be based on predefined indicators and direct feedback from the target communities. Periodic meetings will be held to ensure the operation aligns with the established objectives and that resources are being utilized efficiently.

The IFRC will conduct eight monitoring visits in coordination with the Cuban Red Cross. These visits will leverage the latest monitoring systems and best practices from previous operations to strengthen the CRC's Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER) capacities. By combining frequent local monitoring with strategic regional support, this operation will ensure efficient implementation, alignment with objectives, and effective resource use.

Particularly, the Country Cluster Delegation (CCD) will conduct six monitoring visits (one per month) to oversee the implementation of activities and collect data on both indicator achievements and financial resource execution. These visits will ensure consistent follow-up



and operational accountability.

In addition, two monitoring visits from the Americas Regional Office (ARO) will focus on providing technical support for specific components of the operation. These visits will include expertise in areas such as Communications for the development of the communication strategy and CEA (Community Engagement and Accountability) and PGI (Protection, Gender, and Inclusion) to facilitate workshops and other related activities. These visits will complement the efforts of the IFRC Delegation by focusing on targeted technical needs, ensuring the integration of cross-cutting themes and enhancing the overall quality of the response.

Please briefly explain the National Societies communication strategy for this operation

The Cuban Red Cross (CRC) communication strategy will focus on documenting and broadly disseminating the response activities, their impact on the community, and the coordination with key stakeholders. Both press and digital media, including social networks, will be utilized to ensure a steady flow of information about the operation's progress. However, given the connectivity and energy access issues in the country, formats will be adapted to the resources and capacities available.

In terms of support from the Secretariat, the Communications Unit will continue to provide technical assistance and training to the Cuban Red Cross to enhance and adapt its communication strategies in line with the operation's needs and the working context. This includes close coordination with the Cuban Red Cross and the Civil Defense Council (CCD), ensuring key information is communicated consistently, accurately, and timely, as well as coordination with the international press.

This support from the Secretariat will include the collection of photos and videos, the development of impact stories, reputational crisis management, and crisis communication training for local teams and the newly established communications unit of the CRC. The roles involved in this strategy include the National Society's communications team, the IFRC Regional Communications Manager, and CCD representatives. They will work together to ensure the operation's visibility, strengthen community trust in the response, advocate for humanitarian assistance in sanctioned countries, and demonstrate the IFRC's capacity to deliver it.



Budget Overview



DREF OPERATION

MDRCU011 - Cuban Red Cross
Cuba: Hurricane Rafael

Operating Budget

Planned Operations	840,956
Shelter and Basic Household Items	524,491
Livelihoods	0
Multi-purpose Cash	0
Health	0
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	288,509
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	6,390
Education	0
Migration	0
Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	17,093
Community Engagement and Accountability	4,473
Environmental Sustainability	0
Enabling Approaches	137,832
Coordination and Partnerships	0
Secretariat Services	15,975
National Society Strengthening	121,857
TOTAL BUDGET	978,788

all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)



Contact Information

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

National Society contact: Dr. Carlos Ricardo Perez, Secretary General, carlperez@infomed.sld.cu

IFRC Appeal Manager: Elias Ghanem, Head of Delegation, elias.ghanem@ifrc.org

IFRC Project Manager: Nicolas Segura, Coordinator, Disaster Risk Management, nicolas.segura@ifrc.org

IFRC focal point for the emergency: Nicolas Segura, Disaster Risk Management Coordinator, nicolas.segura@ifrc.org

Media Contact: Susana Arroyo, Manager, Regional Communications, susana.arroyo@ifrc.org

[Click here for the reference](#)

