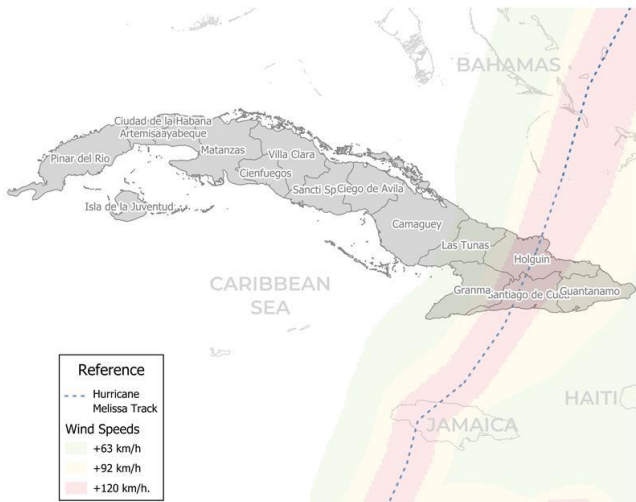




The Cuban Red Cross team is preparing the installation of a water purification plant at the San Luis hospital in Santiago de Cuba, where the drinking water supply was interrupted after Hurricane Melissa.

Appeal No: MDRCU013	IFRC Secretariat Funding requirements: CHF 18 million (increased from CHF 15 million) Federation Wide: CHF 19.5 million (increased from 16 million)	
Glide No: FL-2025-000201-CUB	People [affected/at risk]: 2.2 million potentially affected	People to be assisted: 100,000 people
DREF allocation: CHF 1 million	Appeal launched: 30 October 2025	Appeal ends: 31 October 2027
Appeal Revision	Revision #: 1	Date: 20/03/2026



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: NOAA, IFRC. Produced by IFRC Americas, HDCC, IM Team, October 2025.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Hurricane Melissa developed from a tropical wave on 25 October 2025 and rapidly intensified into a Category 5 storm, becoming one of the strongest hurricanes ever recorded in the Caribbean. After striking Jamaica, the hurricane made landfall in Santiago de Cuba on 29 October as a Category 3 storm, with sustained winds of 125 mph (195 km/h). The hurricane produced extreme rainfall, resulting in catastrophic flooding, landslides and other significant storm-surge impacts.

Despite extensive preparedness efforts by the Cuban authorities and the Cuban Red Cross (CRC), including the evacuation of approximately 735,000 people,¹ the hurricane caused severe damage to homes, schools, health facilities, water and electricity systems, crops, livestock, and fishing assets. The eastern provinces of Santiago de Cuba, Granma, and Holguín suffered the most extensive destruction, with more than 215,000 homes damaged, impacting approximately 645,000 people.² Although displacement decreased

over time, around 2,760 people were still displaced as of 17 December 2025.³

Recovery in these provinces is particularly challenging due to pre-existing vulnerabilities and the cumulative effect of prior disasters, such as Hurricane Oscar in 2024, combined with outbreaks of dengue, oropouche, and chikungunya. Heavy rains following the hurricane intensified mosquito proliferation, triggering further transmission and placing additional pressure on an already strained health system.

While the country is still addressing the direct impacts of Hurricane Melissa, the national situation has been worsened by extreme energy instability and limitations. Cuba is facing acute fuel shortages. This has resulted in nationwide electricity instability and prolonged blackouts lasting up to 20 hours per day in some provinces. During full nationwide grid collapses, such as the one reported on 16 March 2026, the impact extended to virtually the entire population of the country, affecting an estimated 10 million people.

Fuel scarcity has become the primary systemic shock driving deterioration across all sectors. Power cuts are severely affecting water pumping, sanitation systems, waste management and food distribution. More than 80 per cent of Cuba's water pumping equipment depends on electricity, and recurrent blackouts are severely disrupting access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene across the country. In addition, close to one million people depend on water tanker trucks, many of which are unable to operate consistently because of fuel shortages. Solid waste collection has collapsed due to the inability of vehicles to operate, creating serious public health and environmental risks. Agricultural production has declined sharply because of shortages of fuel and pesticides, with reports of produce spoiling in warehouses.

¹ OCHA, Plan of Action, 6 November 2025, <https://reliefweb.int/node/4185643>.

² IOM, Situation Report No. 13, 10 December 2025, <https://reliefweb.int/node/4190820>.

³ PAHO, Regional Situation Report – Hurricane Melissa, Sitrep No. 7, 27 January 2026, paho-regional-sitrepmelissa-v2.pdf.

Household food preparation and preservation have become increasingly difficult, leading to worsening nutrition and food insecurity.

Health service continuity is also severely affected. Power instability puts at risk neonatal and intensive care units, dialysis services, radiotherapy, and cold chain systems essential for vaccines and temperature-sensitive medicines. An estimated 96,387 people – including over 11,000 children – are on surgical waiting lists, with non-urgent surgeries suspended due to power constraints. Approximately 30,000 children risk delayed vaccinations, while 32,000 pregnant women

face growing challenges in accessing essential diagnostic care. The inability to move health personnel further restricts service availability.⁴

Cuba now faces a complex, multi-layered situation where the impacts of Hurricane Melissa intersect with disease outbreaks. Essential services such as water, health, food systems, sanitation, and emergency response capacity, are under severe strain. Without urgent support, these compounding pressures risk further deterioration in living conditions, heightened vulnerability, and significant barriers to recovery for millions of people.

EMERGENCY APPEAL REVISION

Since Hurricane Melissa made landfall, the Cuban Red Cross (CRC) mobilised 4,115 volunteers in support of the operation, 1,115 of whom remain active across distributions and psychosocial activities. In shelter, 500 households have received essential relief items, including tarpaulins, shelter toolkits, kitchen kits, and solar lamps, alongside information on safe shelter practices. In WASH, 500 families have received hygiene kits and hygiene-promotion messaging, while community health and vector-control activities have reached 1,316 people. On MHPSS, 2,642 people have received psychosocial support services, and 463 staff and volunteers have been trained in Psychological First Aid (PFA) and community-based health and first aid (CBHFA) to sustain and expand this capacity in affected communities. Across all sectors, the operation has directly reached 4,696 people to date. For further reference, [Operations Update 1](#) and [Operations Update 2](#) may be consulted.

The rapidly evolving fuel and electricity limitations in Cuba have significantly affected the operational environment of the Appeal as the needs of people recovering from Hurricane Melissa cannot be separated from the wider impacts generated by Cuba's severe shortage of fuel and energy. Communities are not only dealing with the destruction caused by the hurricane, but are also facing daily pressures linked to limited access to healthcare, food, water, safe environments, and communication. To ensure an effective and realistic response, hurricane recovery efforts will be complemented by targeted actions that address the ongoing energy and fuel constraints. As much of the operation depends on electricity and fuel, the Appeal requires adjustments to safeguard operational continuity and ensure that essential activities can be carried out under current conditions.

This means that an additional CHF 3 million will be allocated to strengthen operational capacity at priority Cuban Red Cross branches and selected Ministry of Public Health facilities. These adaptations aim to protect minimum operational continuity by reducing dependency on grid power and fuel, facilitating the dispatch of humanitarian consignments, supporting solid-waste management in affected municipalities, and exploring mechanisms to ensure the CRC's humanitarian mobility during acute fuel shortages.

⁴⁴ Granma, Más pacientes y familias que sufren: un objetivo del cerco energético a Cuba, 11 March 2026, <https://www.granma.cu/cuba/2026-03-10/mas-pacientes->

[y-familias-que-sufren-un-objetivo-del-cerco-energetico-a-cuba-10-03-2026-10-03-38](https://www.granma.cu/cuba/2026-03-10/mas-pacientes-y-familias-que-sufren-un-objetivo-del-cerco-energetico-a-cuba-10-03-2026-10-03-38).

While the overall objectives of the Appeal remain unchanged, the revised approach and budget ensure that the response remains feasible under the current challenges.

TARGETING

This Emergency Appeal will continue targeting 100,000 people (30,000 households) in communities affected by Hurricane Melissa, with the response taking place amid nationwide fuel and electricity shortages that are deepening humanitarian needs and directly affecting the continuity of operations.

The impacts of Hurricane Melissa mainly concentrated in the southeast, entering through Granma, Santiago de Cuba; and exiting through Banes, Holguín province. According to the Cuban Civil Defence, the most affected provinces include Guantánamo, Santiago de Cuba, Granma, Holguín, Las Tunas, Camagüey, Sancti Spíritus, and Ciego de Ávila.

The Cuban Red Cross (CRC) will continue to prioritise assistance to households whose homes have been damaged or destroyed and to families with heightened vulnerability, including single-parent households, households caring for dependent older adults or people with disabilities, and families with children under five and/or pregnant women. These targeting criteria ensure that assistance addresses the most urgent shelter, health, and protection risks, and that support remains equitable and needs based.

The selection process is coordinated by CRC municipal and provincial branches in close collaboration with government counterparts, Civil Defence Councils, and civil society organisations. Community engagement and accountability mechanisms (clear eligibility information, accessible feedback and complaints channels, and transparent communication of decisions) will guide implementation so that assistance reaches those most in need and is adjusted based on verified assessments and community input.

In this response, the Cuban Red Cross will continue to reach affected communities across multiple sectors, prioritising lifesaving assistance and supporting early recovery. Sector-specific targets are summarised in the table below:

Sector	People Targeted
Shelter and Household Items	100,000
Health (including MHPSS and Community Health)	96,000
Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)	100,000
Protection, CEA, and Inclusion	15,000
Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)	15,000

PLANNED OPERATIONS

Through this Emergency Appeal, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) aims to continue supporting the Cuban Red Cross in the response to Hurricane Melissa, aggravated by extreme fuel and energy constraints and epidemiological outbreaks. The IFRC's response strategy contributes to emergency aid and early recovery efforts, focusing on the following areas:

Integrated assistance

(Shelter, Livelihoods)

Under this sector, the operation will continue ensuring safe shelter, restore essential household items, and support climate-resilient reconstruction. In the first phase of the response, priority was given to urgent needs by distributing emergency shelter toolkits and key items such as mattresses, blankets, kitchen sets, and solar lamps, enabling affected families to stabilise living conditions and protect their homes while immediate hazards are addressed. A recovery assessment will begin alongside relief work to inform medium- to long-term needs, including reconstruction, the recovery of livelihoods affected by damage to productive assets and income sources, and the promotion of climate-resilient practices. As conditions allow and reconstruction progresses, the operation will shift toward Build Back Better approaches, providing roofing kits to families, as well as tool kits and technical guidance to communities to strengthen the safety and resilience of repaired homes. Local builders and volunteers will be trained in safe and climate-resilient construction practices, while community awareness sessions will be delivered in coordination with local authorities to promote durable, risk-informed shelter solutions.



Shelter interventions incorporate Green Response principles, emphasising the use of local, sustainable materials and solar-powered lighting solutions. Community brigades support roof repair activities in prioritised areas, helping expand local implementation capacity and facilitate timely assistance to affected households. The operation also promotes environmentally responsible waste management and debris recycling.

Health and Care, including Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

(Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, Community Health)



Health and WASH activities are focused on preventing and reducing morbidity and mortality linked to the impacts of Hurricane Melissa and the concurrent public-health risks exacerbated by nationwide fuel shortages and unreliable electricity supply.



Health actions aim to strengthen the capacity of volunteers and communities to provide lifesaving assistance and psychosocial support. Volunteers are receiving training in first aid, psychosocial support, and community-based approaches, while community sessions will help expand knowledge and preparedness in the most affected areas. Local Red Cross branches will be equipped with first aid and bleeding-control kits to ensure rapid response capacity, alongside health-promotion campaigns to raise awareness of disease prevention and well-being.

To support the continuity of essential health services, the operation will provide medicines and supplies and install alternative energy sources, including solar

panels and generators, in priority health facilities. Photovoltaic equipment will be installed in selected health facilities in hurricane-affected provinces.

In addition, community-based support teams will be established, composed of volunteers with basic technical skills to repair low-complexity equipment and provide fast technical services at local health facilities. Community health promoters will also be trained to reinforce health education, support early identification, and provide an initial response.

As a complementary measure, community pharmacies will be set up in selected Cuban Red Cross branches to improve timely access to essential medicines. To support safe and appropriate use of medication, WhatsApp information channels will be created to provide guidance and reduce the risks of self-medication.

WASH interventions will safeguard access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene by distributing household water-treatment kits and storage containers, promoting water-safety and hygiene practices, and coordinating the cleaning and rehabilitation of community water systems, wells, and tanks with local water authorities. Hygiene kits (soap, detergent, sanitary materials) will be distributed to the most affected households. Vector-control measures, such as community clean-ups, waste collection, and targeted spraying in high-risk areas, will be implemented alongside preventive communication.

Given the collapse of urban sanitation services due to fuel shortages, the operation will also strengthen environmental health by deploying community cleaning brigades in addition to procuring two electric solid-waste collection trucks for prioritised municipalities. These measures will support waste collection, reduce environmental health risks, and contribute to preventing secondary disease outbreaks.

Protection and Prevention

(Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI), Community Engagement and Accountability, Environmental Sustainability, Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery)

The response integrates cross-cutting approaches to ensure that assistance is impartial, accessible, and informed by community feedback. Two-way information, communication, and feedback channels will enable timely adjustments to activities in line with community priorities. Special attention is being given to the safety and inclusion of women, children, older people, and persons with disabilities, with a focus on preventing secondary harm, reinforcing trust and accountability, and upholding dignity, participation, and equitable access, particularly in collective settings.

The CRC bases its response on strong community engagement, using meetings, focus groups, and key-informant consultations to ensure meaningful participation and real-time understanding of community needs. Trained volunteers collect and document questions, suggestions, and complaints, systematically analysing and using this feedback to adjust activities. Clear information and feedback channels, such as radio messaging, notice boards, hotlines, and community assemblies, will be implemented and promoted, supported by culturally adapted and accessible communication materials. The CRC will ensure accountability by informing communities how their feedback shapes decisions and by closing the loop through transparent follow-up and communication.



Protection, gender, and inclusion (PGI), standards are applied across sectors by promoting gender balance within volunteer teams and prioritising at-risk groups, including persons with disabilities, older people, and women-headed households. The response ensures safe, dignified conditions in collective centres and organise services and referral pathways, where relevant, to safeguard protection and facilitate access to assistance. These measures mitigate protection risks while promoting equitable participation and outcomes for all.

In terms of environmental sustainability, risk reduction, and climate adaptation and recovery, the operation promotes practices that minimise environmental impact and build resilience to future shocks. This includes integrating risk-sensitive planning, strengthening early-warning and preparedness capacities, and supporting climate-smart measures that protect critical services and livelihoods. Recovery efforts will prioritise locally appropriate solutions that restore essential services, reduce exposure to hazards, and enhance the ability of communities to anticipate, absorb, and adapt to climate-related risks over time.

Enabling approaches

The sectors outlined above will be supported and enhanced by the following enabling approaches:

Coordination and partnerships



The operation is being implemented in close coordination with national and local authorities, inter-agency mechanisms, and Movement partners, ensuring alignment with national response plans and complementarity of efforts. Continuous liaison with municipal platforms, sectoral ministries, and humanitarian coordination bodies supports information-sharing to avoid duplication and enable evidence-based prioritisation. Engagement with United Nations and regional mechanisms ensures coherence with the wider response architecture and allow technical harmonisation, so that the operation contributes to a coordinated and efficient humanitarian approach that maximises collective impact.

IFRC Secretariat services



The IFRC Secretariat accompanies the National Society throughout the operation, providing technical guidance, operational oversight, surge support, and compliance services to ensure principled, accountable, and efficient assistance in line with Emergency Appeal procedures, fiduciary standards, and safeguarding requirements.

The IFRC Latin Caribbean Country Cluster Delegation leads strategic coordination, operational prioritisation, and decision-making during the response, aligning operational needs, resource mobilisation, technical support, and regional coordination, while promptly addressing challenges, managing risks, and engaging key Movement partners to ensure operational continuity and quality.

The IFRC manages supply-chain operations, from procurement to arrival in-country. Given Cuba's operational constraints, where imports and transport limitations increase logistics costs, the Secretariat is applying cost-control measures and transparent reporting to maintain efficiency and predictability.

Global and regional teams will support planning and implementation across PMER, information management, CEA, PGI, logistics, communications, and humanitarian diplomacy, and will facilitate engagement with interested Participating National Societies. These services ensure the response remains accountable and procedurally sound, with timely technical inputs applied throughout the operation cycle.

National Society Strengthening

To ensure timely, safe and accountable implementation of the operation, the Cuban Red Cross will strengthen its operational capacity across staffing, logistics, systems, and volunteer support. In Cuba's current context of fuel scarcity and electricity instability, these measures are essential to maintain response readiness and sustain the continuity of the Appeal.

The operation will reinforce the National Society's technical and operational capacities by training volunteers in National Intervention Team skills and conducting a lessons-learned workshop during the response. Communication and visibility will be enhanced through upgraded equipment, and improved connectivity and branch digitalisation to support efficient information management, reporting, and operational follow-up.

To maintain operational continuity, backup energy systems will be installed in CRC branches, and fleet capacity will be reinforced through the acquisition, maintenance, and repair of vehicles and necessary spare parts. In response to the current energy context, the operation will also procure one electric vehicle and three electric tricycles for the National Society to support supervision, coordination, monitoring, and light transport needs in prioritised branches and operational areas. Volunteer safety and readiness will be strengthened by procuring personal protective and rescue equipment together with insurance and support for deployment.

Given the severe fuel shortages, the operation includes the procurement, transport, and storage of fuel to enable the movement of supplies from entry points to distribution sites. Preparedness will be further strengthened through the pre-positioning of essential shelter and WASH kits.

In addition, to strengthen the operational capacity of the CRC under ongoing fuel constraints, the operation will procure and deploy electric tricycles for the CRC's operational use, allocating one to each provincial branch involved in the response and one to CRC Headquarters. This measure aims to ensure minimum mobility for staff and volunteers, enabling them to maintain essential movements required for coordination, supervision, implementation of activities, and administrative functions, thereby supporting the day-to-day operational continuity of the National Society.

Monitoring and follow-up visits will be conducted regularly to ensure quality implementation, transparency, and continuous learning throughout the operation.

The planned response reflects the current situation and is based on the information available at the time of this Revised Emergency Appeal launch. Details of the operation will be updated through the Operational Updates. The Operational Strategy and Operational Updates will also provide further details on the Federation-wide approach, which includes the response activities of all contributing Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, and the Federation-wide funding requirements.



RED CROSS RED CRESCENT FOOTPRINT IN COUNTRY

Cuban Red Cross



Core areas of operation



Number of staff:	393
Number of volunteers:	39,648
Number of branches:	183

The Cuban Red Cross is a humanitarian organisation and auxiliary to the public authorities, officially recognised in 1919, and a member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Operating under its legal mandate as part of the national civil defence system, the organisation works closely with the Ministry of Public Health to support preparedness and response to emergencies across the country.

The Cuban Red Cross's response to Hurricane Melissa will focus on traditional humanitarian relief as well as their mandate in health-related interventions. The National Society provides rescue services, restores contact between family members, and offers first aid and psychosocial support immediately after disasters.

IFRC Membership coordination

The IFRC provides ongoing support and collaboration through global, regional, and delegation teams. There are no Participating National Societies present in Cuba, and the IFRC continues to strengthen unified planning processes and promote the membership's Way of Working. The IFRC also facilitates dialogue to support a collaborative process focused on the National Society's strategic priorities and shared management of international cooperation.

Technical focal points from the Regional Office for the Americas and the Country Cluster Delegation for Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic engage in dialogue and peer-to-peer exchange to ensure active planning and implementation of strategic priorities and enablers.

The National Society has a strong presence, with volunteers and branches capable of providing immediate assistance to affected communities, including search and rescue, first aid, psychosocial support, and the restoration of family links. Over the past decade, the Cuban Red Cross has responded to several major hurricanes, including support for 7,000 families after Hurricane Sandy (2012), 22,191 people after Hurricane Ian (2022), and thousands more during Hurricanes Oscar and Rafael in 2024. These responses have been coordinated with local authorities and supported by the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF).

In addition to disaster response, the Cuban Red Cross promotes community preparedness and safety, carrying out water safety campaigns and preventive inspections in public pools, rivers, and beaches.

The IFRC continues to support the Cuban Red Cross through National Society Development initiatives, including the Organisational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) and the Branch Organisational Capacity Assessment (BOCAC). Plans for 2026 include a review of the volunteer policy and continued logistical support to ensure access to essential goods and materials, from vehicles and spare parts to hygiene kits and communication supplies, amid national shortages.

The Latin Caribbean Country Cluster Delegation has actively engaged with Participating National Societies interested in supporting the operation. This has included technical and programmatic follow-up, guidance on potential contributions, and assistance to ensure alignment with the Cuban Red Cross's strategic priorities. These efforts have strengthened coordination, improved dialogue with Movement partners, and promoted more coherent and complementary cooperation.

Red Cross Red Crescent Movement coordination

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) works with the Cuban Red Cross on initiatives to advance work in international humanitarian law and restoring family links. The ICRC and the IFRC maintain close collaboration through their respective regional offices.

External coordination

The IFRC provides technical supports to the Cuban Red Cross for its engagement and leadership within the national response coordination. The Cuban Red Cross is in close collaboration with the United Nations System, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator and the UNETE technical emergency group, with the support of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and in conjunction with national authorities, has activated its Anticipatory Action mechanism in order to proactively mobilise assistance to those affected in the areas most impacted by the hurricane.

The Cuban Red Cross also coordinates closely with authorities at both the national and local levels through Cuba's civil defence structure and works in tandem with the Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP) and its health services to support surveillance and referrals, continuity of primary care and MHPSS, and the distribution of medicines, medical supplies to priority facilities.

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