

# Cuba - Tornado and High-Intensity Local Storm Situation Report No. 01 from the Office of the Resident Coordinator

(28 January 2019)



This report has been prepared by the Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System in Cuba. It covers the period from 20:00 of 27th January to 13:00 of 28th January (local time).

## Summary

- A high-intensity storm and a severe tornado affected several municipalities of La Havana this past Sunday.
- Preliminary figures report three deaths and 172 injured, seven of them were surgically treated.
- A total of 125 houses were partially and totally collapsed, six health facilities and 13 education centres suffered damages. Telephone poles and trees also fell over.
- An estimated of half a million people were affected in the municipalities where the tornado struck.
- The Institute of Meteorology indicated that the storm brought winds comparable to an intense hurricane with wind gusts that exceeded 110 km/h.



Source: Periódico Juventud Rebelde

**+500.000**  
people in  
municipalities  
affected by the  
tornado

**+110km/h**  
wind gusts

**+125**  
collapsed  
houses  
reported



Source: Radio Reloj

Note: All the information has been sourced from Cuba official press (TV, radio and press) and from statements by the Cuban authorities. Sources: Granma Newspaper, Juventud Rebelde, Newspaper 26. Radio: Radio Rebelde, Radio Habana Cuba, Radio Angulo, Radio Mambí, Radio CMKS; Press agencies: Prensa Latina (PL) and Agencia Cubana de Noticias (ACN); Websites: Cubadebate. Additional data from the official website of the National Statistics and Information Office.

## Overview of the Situation

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On Sunday night, a high-intensity storm and severe tornado caused structural damage to properties located in several municipalities of the capital, including the area of Regla, Guanabacoa, 10 de Octubre, eastern Havana, San Miguel del Padrón and Cerro with a population of more than half a million inhabitants.

Sources from the National Institute of Meteorology stated that the tornado was associated with an intense and brief phenomenon of wind gusts of high intensity, heavy rains, and high swells that caused penetrations of the sea in low zones of the capital's coastline.

The reported winds exceeded the 80 km/h and while the northern coast experienced extreme gusts of up to 110 km/h, comparable with that of an intense hurricane.

Preliminary figures reported three deaths and 172 people injured, seven of them were surgically treated. 125 collapsed houses were reported – including total and partial collapses – potable water storage tank breakdowns, fallen electrical and telephone poles and damages in six health facilities and 13 educational centers. The 10 de Octubre "Hijas de Galicia" maternal and children hospital suffered heavy damage, all the patients and their babies were evacuated

Electrical sub-stations were affected in Regla, Guanabacoa and the local area of Alamar, of which, depend on pumped potable water. The main problem currently is the aqueducts.

According to the information from the forecasting centre at the Institute of Meteorology, a complex meteorological situation continues in the western section of Cuba, where strong showers and thunderstorms are expected. Heavy swells on the north western coast could continue with light coastal flooding that will decrease during the day.

## Humanitarian Response

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### National Authorities

The Cuban President and province authorities toured the affected areas, taking measures to compensate for the damages in the shortest term.

An extraordinary session of the Council of Ministers was held at 6:30am this Monday, to devise recovery strategies in the shortest possible time. Subsequently, the Provincial Defense Council of Havana was activated at 8:00am.

Authorities in the capital indicated that the recovery work is already under way, responding the damage caused.

The Government of the municipality Diez de Octubre reported that 18 trucks and three loaders have been collecting and removing debris early in the morning with dozens of workers involved.

The Municipal Housing Directorate with the guidance of the National Housing Directorate of the Ministry of Construction, is surveying and classifying damages, (i.e., total/partial housing collapses, total/partial roof collapses).

### United Nations System

The United Nations team in Cuba maintains close communication with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment, main counterpart of the United Nations System (UNS) in the country. The UNS is closely monitoring the situation to activate the rapid response mechanisms to support the national authorities if required.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is in close contact with the Office of the Resident Coordinator.

The United Nations System has experience with urban resilience, management of collapsed structures and debris and supporting the Health, Food Security and Education sectors in emergencies.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) pre-positioned 9,499 tarpaulins for roofs, which have been made available to national authorities if necessary. In addition, the World Food Program (WFP) pre-positioned 1,606 MT of food for these types of emergencies. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has 10 liters collapsible tanks, early childhood kits and school materials prepositioned to support the Education sector.

**For more information, please contact:**

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For more national information, please visit:

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

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

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

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

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