



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 28 January to 13:00 of 29 January (local time)

Overview

- A tornado struck Havana on 29 January 2019, registering as an EF4* with wind gusts that reached 300 km/h, which are higher wind speeds than those of a category 4 hurricane in the Saffir-Simpson scale.
- Four people are reported dead and 195 injured.
- 1,238 houses are affected, with 123 completely collapsed and 224 who lost their roofs.
- 11 health facilities were affected, 46 schools have varying degrees of damages. Some 21 day care centers were also affected
- 220,000 people remain affected by damages to power services.
- The most complex situation is at the Hijas de Galicia maternity hospital, where 196 patients were evacuated.

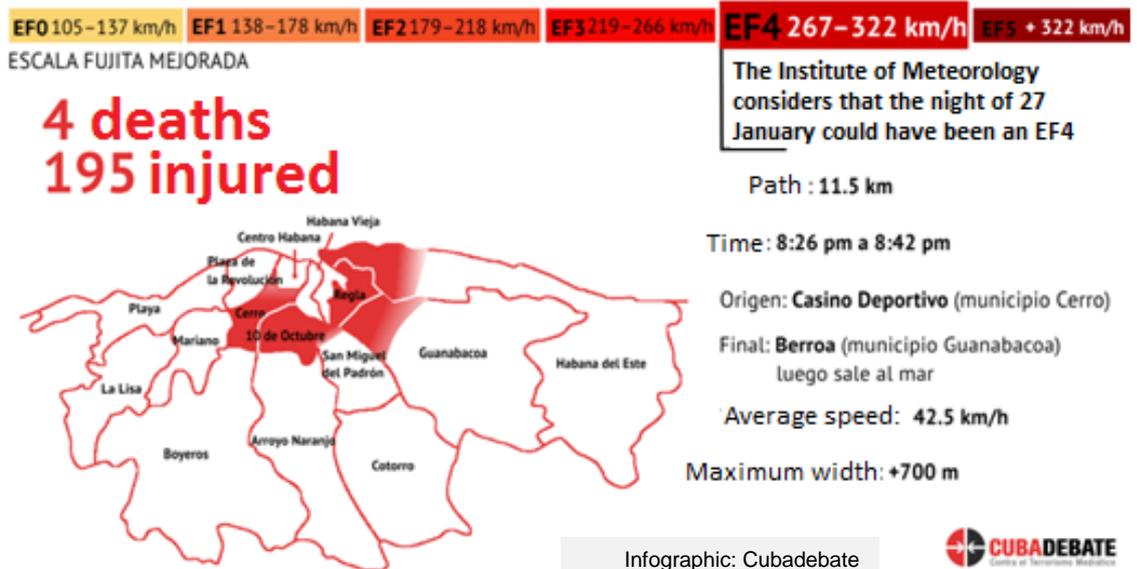


Foto: Cubana News Agency

+220,000
 people without
 electrical power

300km/h
 wind gusts
 speed

+1.230
 affected
 houses



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, Ahora Sierra Maestra and Adelante. Radio: Radio Rebelde, Radio Habana Cuba, Radio Angulo, Radio Mambi, Radio CMKS; Press agencies: Prensa Latina (PL) and Agencia Cubana de Noticias (ACN); Websites: Cubadebate. Additional data taken from the official website of the National Statistics and Information Office.

Situation Overview

The extreme weather event happened between 8:30 and 9:00 p.m. on Sunday 27 January, 2019. According to data from the Institute of Meteorology, the tornado reached a speed of 42.6 Km/h with winds of 300 Km/h.

The tornado moved in an east-northeast direction, crossing the municipalities of Cerro, 10 de Octubre, Guanabacoa, San Miguel del Padrón and Regla. This trajectory lasted for around 16 minutes. Initially, the tornado had a width of 500 meters, but subsequently increased to 1,000 meters wide, with a length of 11.5 kms.

The phenomenon was rated as a category EF-4 tornado, according with the Fujita Scale. Material damages are mostly concentrated in five municipalities: Cerro, 10 de Octubre, Regla, Guanabacoa and San Miguel del Padrón.

So far, four deaths have been reported. Some 195 people were injured and taken to different hospitals in Havana, according to the Minister of Public Health, José Ángel Portal Miranda.

To date, 1,238 homes are reported to have been affected; 123 are totally collapsed and 625 are partially collapsed; 224 have completely lost their roof and 124 suffered partial roof loss. Additionally, 11 health institutions and 46 schools suffered varying degrees of damage. Some 21 daycare centers, two sports centers, and two student residences were also affected. There are reports that 110 water reservoir tanks were contaminated. Interruptions to electric services continue to affect 220,000 people.

The most complex situation is at the Hijas de Galicia maternity hospital in the municipality of 10 de Octubre, where 196 patients were evacuated. Eighteen patients have already returned to their homes; the rest of the evacuees were taken to eight health institutions, including newborns requiring more extensive care.

The areas most affected by the tornado are without the basic electricity, water, gas or telephone services. Issues with the electric service is expected to be solved next by 31 January. The damages are concentrated mainly in the electrical networks' transmission and distribution. To date, the impact to telecommunications services are affecting more than 13,000 telephone lines.

In the agriculture sector, the greatest impact has been to tobacco production in the Pinar municipalities of San Juan and San Luis, which were affected by the severe storm that came along with the tornado. The extent of the damages in different cropland areas affected by the storm has yet to be determined.

Three mills were affected in the province of Havana, according to Iris Quiñones Rojas, Minister of Food Industry in Cuba. Additionally, 36 bakeries were affected as a result of the lack of electricity.

Land, rail and maritime transport remain affected. Railways were affected by empty containers rolling over and being dragged, which interrupted traffic on main roads. The railway's central line in the Taino engine factory (San Miguel del Padrón) suffered considerable impact. Transcarga marine port cargo warehouses were also damaged. The Antillana de Acero de Cuba steelworking center, an important center for economic activity, lost its roof.

Humanitarian Response

National Authorities

Miguel Díaz-Canel, President of Cuba, along with province authorities, toured the affected areas to determine the necessary measures required to mitigate the effects of the tornado's damage.

At 08:00 on 28 January, another Cabinet Council meeting was held to assess the progress of recovery actions in La Havana, where it was agreed to scale-up public response efforts.

President Díaz-Canel also indicated that once the losses were accounted for, the necessary resources would be immediately distributed to the population through various established mechanisms.

Classes are scheduled to restart on 29 January in all educational centers. Authorities are looking for different alternatives so that the regular activities are not affected.

Some 23 tents were set up to sell light meals, bread, sweets and other foods at controlled prices in affected areas.

Electric services are expected to be solved by 7 February, according to the Minister of Energy and Minery, Raúl García Barreiro. Damages are concentrated mainly in electrical networks' transmission and distribution. The substations of Berroa and Guanabacoa continue to be affected.

Antonio Rodríguez Rodríguez, President of the National Institute of Hydraulic Resources, stated that several water supply pipes were delivered to affected areas. Tanks for storing water in various affected areas have also been sourced to facilitate access to clean water in affected communities.

Juan Montalvo, Vice-President of the Province Administrative Council, stated that the evaluation of the housing sector, which is considered to be the most affected, a top priority.

United Nations System

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

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

The UNS has experience in international relief actions to increase urban resilience, management of collapsed structures and debris, as well as support the Health, Food Security and Education sectors during emergencies.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) pre-positioned 9,499 tarpaulins for roofs, which have been made available to national authorities if necessary. The World Food Program (WFP) has pre-positioned 1,606 MT of food for this type of emergency. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has 10-liters collapsible tanks, early childhood kits and school materials also pre-positioned to support the education sector.

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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>