

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Caribbean: Hurricane Paloma

Information bulletin n° 1
7 November 2008

This bulletin is being issued for information only. Hurricane Paloma has become a category one hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale and it is headed towards the Cayman Islands and Cuba.

The Overseas Branch of the British Red Cross in Cayman Islands and the Cuban Red Cross with the support of the International Federation, have determined that external assistance is not required, and is therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time.

[<click here for detailed contact information>](#)



A three day track forecast cone for Hurricane Paloma.
Source: National Hurricane Centre

The Situation

According to the National Hurricane Centre (NHC), tropical storm Paloma became a category one hurricane on 7 November 2008 and it is expected to become a category two or possibly a category three hurricane by Saturday, 8 November.

A hurricane warning has been issued for the **Cayman Islands** and a hurricane watch was issued by the **Cuban** government in several provinces including Sancti Spiritus, Ciego de Avila, Camaguey, Las Tunas and Granma. NHC also advises other countries such as **Jamaica** and **Bahamas** to closely monitor Paloma.

The centre of hurricane Paloma is located approximately 135 kilometres south-southwest of Grand Cayman and about 395 kilometres west of Montego Bay, Jamaica. Paloma is moving north at a speed of 130km/per hour and this motion it is expected to continue throughout the day (7 November). Forecasts indicate the centre of Paloma will pass near the Cayman Islands early on 8 November. Hurricane force winds extend outward up to 30 km and maximum sustained winds will reach 80 miles per hour. Paloma might produce total rainfall accumulations of five to ten inches over the Cayman Islands.

Paloma has been affecting the Cayman Islands over the last few days with five-day continuous rain which have caused the grounds to be heavily saturated. Additional flights were scheduled to evacuate people on time. Government offices have closed with only few key personnel remaining. The National Emergency Operations

Centre (NEOC) has held coordination meetings and more information and decisions will be available as the situation progresses.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

In **Cayman Islands**, a Red Cross shelter was opened due to the heavy and continuous rainfall. A disaster management volunteer from Grand Cayman will be positioned in Cayman Brac to lend support to the local branch. First aiders have been notified and pre-assigned to respective shelters as they will also be opened by 7 November. Stocks have been checked in the Grand Cayman warehouse.

The International Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) based in Panama and the Regional Representatives in Trinidad and Tobago have been coordinating early response activities with the Overseas Branch of the British Red Cross in Cayman Islands and the Bahamas Red Cross Society. A conference call was held between the British Red Cross, the Overseas Branch of the British Red Cross in Cayman Islands and the International Federation to coordinate early relief activities. The International Federation is on stand-by to support the British Red Cross as they will be leading any support if needed.

PADRU has emitted an alert for a Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member to be deployed immediately to Cayman Islands.

Additionally, the Regional Representative in Dominican Republic has been in constant communication with the Cuban Red Cross to discuss early preparation and emergency response activities.

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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