

HUMANITARIAN UPDATE REPORT 4 - NOVEMBER 8, 2016

HURRICANE MATTHEW RESPONSE: CUBA

Dear friends,

It is hard to imagine the damage inflicted by a Category 4 monster hurricane like Matthew. Shearing 150 mph winds lasting for hours and rotating in all directions, combined with strong rains and flooding, leave few things intact in eastern Cuba.

Reports from the impacted zone show the catastrophic damage spread over 1,000 square miles, with weaker homes obliterated and well-built structures severely damaged, suffering roof losses and some exterior walls. In agriculture, everything has been lost until land can recover and some crops can be replanted.

This dramatic situation continues to be aggravated by the hurricane aftermath: difficult access to isolated communities, food shortages, health problems caused by contaminated water, slow government assistance and the scarce humanitarian aid.

THE CRISIS – SOME HIGHLIGHTS

- Eastern Cuba – Guantanamo & Holguin Provinces:
 - **\$5 billion-plus in damage:** losses in housing, agriculture, aqueducts, roads, bridges, power lines and communication networks.
 - **65,112 lost acres** of agricultural production.
 - **180,000 people** still isolated with no access to food, clean water and electricity.
 - **3 Hospitals** and **13 Health Clinics** are damaged.
 - **308 schools** and **8 daycares centers** are severely damaged.
 - **Over 9,000 homes** are destroyed and **30,000** are severely damaged.
 - **87 Christian churches** damaged.
- Baracoa:
 - Mass devastation with \$1.7 billion of agricultural losses.
 - Eleven journalists were arrested for trying to report on the hurricane Matthew damages.
 - High concentration of people for buying food.
- Yateras:
 - Reports show that most of the victims lost their animals and crops as a result of flooding, “We are starving”, they said.
 - The waters of Tao River overflowed causing more than eight meters of height and devastating the houses.

HURRICANE MATTHEW IN CUBA, October 4-5, 2016



MATTHEW'S PATH OF DESTRUCTION



Advocating for Faith and Freedoms in Cuba

- Maisi:
 - 12,207 acres of coffee plantations destroyed.
 - 80% of residents are Christian evangelicals. They are asking their brothers from other areas to help them with food supplies.
 - Most of the neighbors are refugees in caves and in shelters.



INTERVENTIONS - OUR RESPONSE

Evangelical leaders in Cuba are struggling to keep the flow of food and other humanitarian aid moving. It takes four hours to drive over mountains and broken bridges from Santiago to the disaster zone in the eastern cities of Baracoa and Maisi. There are no gas stations, so they have to bring their own cans of gasoline to reload on the way there and back!

With help like yours we are paying for fuel to get the trucks into the zone, serving hot meals in community kitchens, and sending containers of donated dehydrated meal food packs, water purification tablets, and hygiene kits as fast as we can. See a video of the disaster zone at www.echocuba.org.

OUR PLEDGE TO YOU

For nearly 23 years, EchoCuba has organized and partnered with networks of churches in Cuba to meet the physical, spiritual, and development needs of local communities. We are working with the network of local church partners to serve fellow Cuban brothers and sisters. Our response will include:

- Provide dehydrated rice & soy meal packs, together with hot meals from locally purchased nutritional food.
- Help rebuild hundreds of homes and more than 87 church buildings that have suffered severe or total damage.
- Assist with repairs of pastor's homes and churches with roof repair materials such as zinc panels.
- Provide Chlorine or purification tablets for safe water and hygiene kits.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Funding is needed mostly for shipping and logistics of relief supplies from the U.S., and to buy & distribute local food to the vulnerable people in eastern Cuba.

Gifts designated for "Hurricane Matthew" will be used in full (100 %) to assist those affected by this hurricane until the response is complete.

Thank you for your compassion, and we greatly appreciate your support!