



CUBA ENTERS NEW HURRICANE SEASON AMID CRITICAL CONDITIONS OF FOOD INSECURITY, BLACKOUTS, AND HYGIENIC-SANITARY RISK

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Food Monitor Program warns that the start of the 2026 hurricane season finds Cuba in a situation of extreme vulnerability. Atlantic activity heightens social and health risks for the Cuban population, already exposed to undernourishment, prolonged blackouts, accumulated garbage, fuel shortages, irregular water supply, arboviruses, and the persistent collapse of public sanitation services in the face of these disasters.

Pre-existing conditions ahead of the 2026 hurricane season

The National Food Security Survey “There Is Hunger in Cuba 2025” identified a sustained deterioration in food conditions, extreme pressure on household income, problems accessing safe drinking water, blackouts, and food loss due to lack of refrigeration, all of which increase the vulnerability of Cuban households to meteorological events:

- 33.9% report recent hunger
- 80.4% state that blackouts affected their ability to cook
- 48.3% lost food due to lack of refrigeration
- 81.3% must boil or chlorinate water before consuming it
- 43.3% receive water every three days or less frequently
- 61.6% have at least one household member over the age of 60

Food Monitor Program has also documented the deterioration of urban sanitation in relation to leaks, accumulated garbage, and the contamination of food environments. During the summer months, this context worsens amid outbreaks and circulation of dengue, chikungunya, Oropouche, and other febrile syndromes. These conditions become more serious during hurricane season, when heavy rainfall can mobilize waste and contaminate water sources or domestic spaces.

Emergency and risks in the second half of 2026

During a hurricane emergency, households need storable food, safe water, medicine, cooking resources, electricity, transportation, and access to information. In the current context, the Cuban population lacks the economic and logistical capacity to build reserves. Blackouts affect the refrigeration of food and medicine, water pumping, the functioning of health centers, the charging of mobile phones, household lighting, and access to alerts and

information. In the event of a storm or hurricane, power outages will be sustained and will hinder subsequent recovery.

Fuel shortages also limit the mobility of ambulances, garbage collection trucks, evacuation vehicles, food transport, water distribution, electrical repair brigades, and sanitation teams. This directly affects the response capacity of Civil Defense and municipal services before, during, and after a meteorological event. The implementation of civil protection protocols depends on material resources. Transportation, fuel, food for evacuees, drinking water, hygienic conditions in protection centers, communications, and operational personnel are essential elements. In the current scenario, most of these resources face severe limitations. One example is that Cuba has accumulated up to 20,000 tons of donated food that have not been distributed due to fuel shortages. The existence of stalled humanitarian aid at the start of hurricane season reveals significant logistical problems, not only in mobility but also in territorial coordination.

Additionally, during the rainy season, accumulated garbage in the country's streets becomes another sanitary risk factor. Waste is dragged by water currents, blocks drains and drainage systems, contaminates stagnant water, mixes with sewage, and can enter homes during floods. This situation increases exposure to diarrheal diseases, skin infections, leptospirosis, respiratory conditions, and vector proliferation.

Food Monitor Program calls for preventive actions to be prioritized before the increase in rainfall and the peak of cyclonic activity expected in August, September, and October. Urgent measures include garbage collection in flood-prone and densely populated areas; the cleaning of drains and drainage systems; the immediate distribution of food aid and nutritional supplements; guaranteed fuel supplies for essential services; the reinforcement of water pumping and purification; and the preparation of evacuation centers with hygienic conditions, food, and basic medicines.

These activities cannot fall solely on Cuban civil society, which is deeply constrained by lack of resources and absence of autonomous management. Domestic channels of solidarity and international humanitarian aid do not represent a sustainable solution to the country's current precarity. Food Monitor Program therefore appeals to governmental responsibility and transparent administration in order to confront the challenges of the coming months and provide necessary support to millions of Cuban families, whose vulnerability has increased in recent years.