

Recovery Efforts Underway Throughout Cuba After Passage of Hurricane Irma



Havana, September 12 (RHC)-- Restoring electrical service, reestablishing regular water supplies and reopening schools are priorities for Cuban authorities, according to officials at the seventh meeting of the National Defense Council for Disaster Reduction, held Monday in Havana.

During the meeting attended by local and national government leaders, a call was made for all of the country's forces to come together to return the nation to normal conditions as soon as possible.

Cuba's Electric Union has been working continuously to restore service, according to Yuri Camilo Villamonte, Deputy Minister of Energy and Mining, who explained that as a result of severe damage to the country's thermoelectric plants, it is still difficult to determine how much time will be required to fully restore service.

He did, however, report that service has been restored in most eastern provinces and activation of circuits in the west is beginning, with Havana, the capital, being prioritized.

Inés María Chapman, present of the National Institute of Water Resources, stated that although the system suffered damage, normalization of service is advancing, although this also depends on progress in restoring electrical service.

In provinces where electrical service remains interrupted, water is being made available with tanker trucks and some pumps operating with emergency fuel oil generators.

The moving of resources to the central region, where damage was severe, has begun, she reported, adding that seven tank trucks and several brigades are on hand there.

She noted that Havana faces other complications. The system is much larger and thus the workforce needed to complete repairs and tank truck deliveries is much greater. Nevertheless, in 72 hours, most of the problems have been resolved.

Ena Elsa Velázquez, minister of Education, reported that 1,400 facilities were affected by the storm, 500 in the capital. The clean-up process has begun, she said, and most schools will reopen later this week, depending on conditions in each area.

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