

## After the disasters: government presents damage report



*The Farola was completed in 1965 (source: [Lagaly de \(Sigi Knoll\)/Commons/CC BY-SA 3.0](#))*

The mountain road “[La Farola](#)”, which [connects](#) the remote city of Baracoa with Guantánamo, is considered one of the seven wonders of Cuban engineering. Now, for the first time since its completion 59 years ago, it is undergoing major repairs, [as reported](#) by the local newspaper “Venceremos”. The reason for this is the severe damage caused by [Hurricane Oscar](#). However, the road was in need of repair for some time.

As the deputy governor of Guantánamo, Carlos Martínez Turro, explained, the hurricane, the subsequent rainfall, and the heavy traffic to Baracoa have taken a toll on the structure of the pass road. Numerous landslides and subsidence of the roadway have required the rapid intervention of construction workers from several provinces in the country to maintain traffic at a rudimentary level. Now a long-term solution is needed.

### **Complex damage assessment**

Experts from the engineering and planning firm Vértice in Holguín are currently working on a precise inventory of the damage and other problems that have accumulated over time on the road in order to plan the next steps. Some of these measures are “complex” due to the extent of the damage, the steep terrain, and the technical means required, the newspaper reports.

The renewal of the road requires 40 trucks, bulldozers, and other construction equipment, which are mainly shut down due to a lack of tires, batteries, and lubricants. Support from the central government has been requested for this, Martínez said. After the repair, the maximum weight of the vehicles is also to be permanently limited.

The current inventory is not expected to take longer than a month. In the meantime, work will begin on the less complex sections, such as Cagüeybaje, for which a project already exists. The provincial road construction authority is acting as the investor for the general overhaul. And there is more good news: after the restoration, La Farola will, for the first time in a long while, receive its own maintenance brigade.

### **Cuba's most famous mountain pass**

The La Farola viaduct took just 20 months to build, from April 1964 to December 1965. It made it possible to reach Baracoa, the first historical capital of Cuba, easily by land from Guantánamo for the first time in its history. Before that, Baracoa was only accessible via a long, still unsurfaced route to Holguín and by sea.

Today, around 96 percent of people traveling to or from Baracoa use the Farola. 83 percent of goods traffic to Baracoa is transported by road, which underlines its enormous economic and social importance. ([Cubaheute](#))