

## Reconstruction in Guantánamo is making slow progress



*Destroyed houses on the beach at Imías, which was particularly hard hit (AI-scaled) (source: [Cubadebate](#))*

After the devastating passage of Hurricane Oscar on 20 October, the Cuban province of Guantánamo is struggling to return to normality. Despite initial progress, the road ahead is likely to take even longer, reports the news portal [Cubadebate](#).

A major success occurred earlier this week when the initially cut-off villages of Imías and San Antonio del Sur were reopened to land access. Bulldozers had to clear away debris and fallen trees for days. Although Baracoa was always accessible by land, the important access road from the south, the Farola, is still not passable. The heavy rains of the past few days have made the work even more difficult.

According to a preliminary report by the Cuban civil defence, a total of 10,500 buildings in the province have been damaged. Structural damage has also been identified in 500 public buildings. To date, 140 schools have been repaired, so that they can resume operations next week. In all four severely affected towns, Imías, San Antonio del Sur, Baracoa, and Maísi, schools should be able to start next Monday.

The power supply continues to pose major problems. Broken power lines and damaged power poles have led to a disruption in supply over and above [the nationwide blackout](#) that plunged the country into darkness shortly before the storm. In Imías, 47 per cent of households currently have electricity again. In Baracoa, the supply rate is 63 per cent, but in the urban area, 98 per cent of households already have electricity again. In Maísi, 72 per cent of households are being supplied, while in San Antonio del Sur, 97 per cent of electricity

customers are already back on the grid. Overall, 67 per cent of customers in the province are currently being served.

In Guantánamo, water is available to 63 per cent of the population, although five pumping systems are damaged and over 20 are not working due to power outages. In affected areas, water is transported by truck and bottled water is distributed. The distribution of more than 6,800 mattresses is also being organised.

Meanwhile, the director of the Institute of Meteorology, Dr. Celso Pazos Alberdi, warned of new low-pressure areas in the southwest of the Caribbean, which could lead to further precipitation. ([Cubaheute](#))