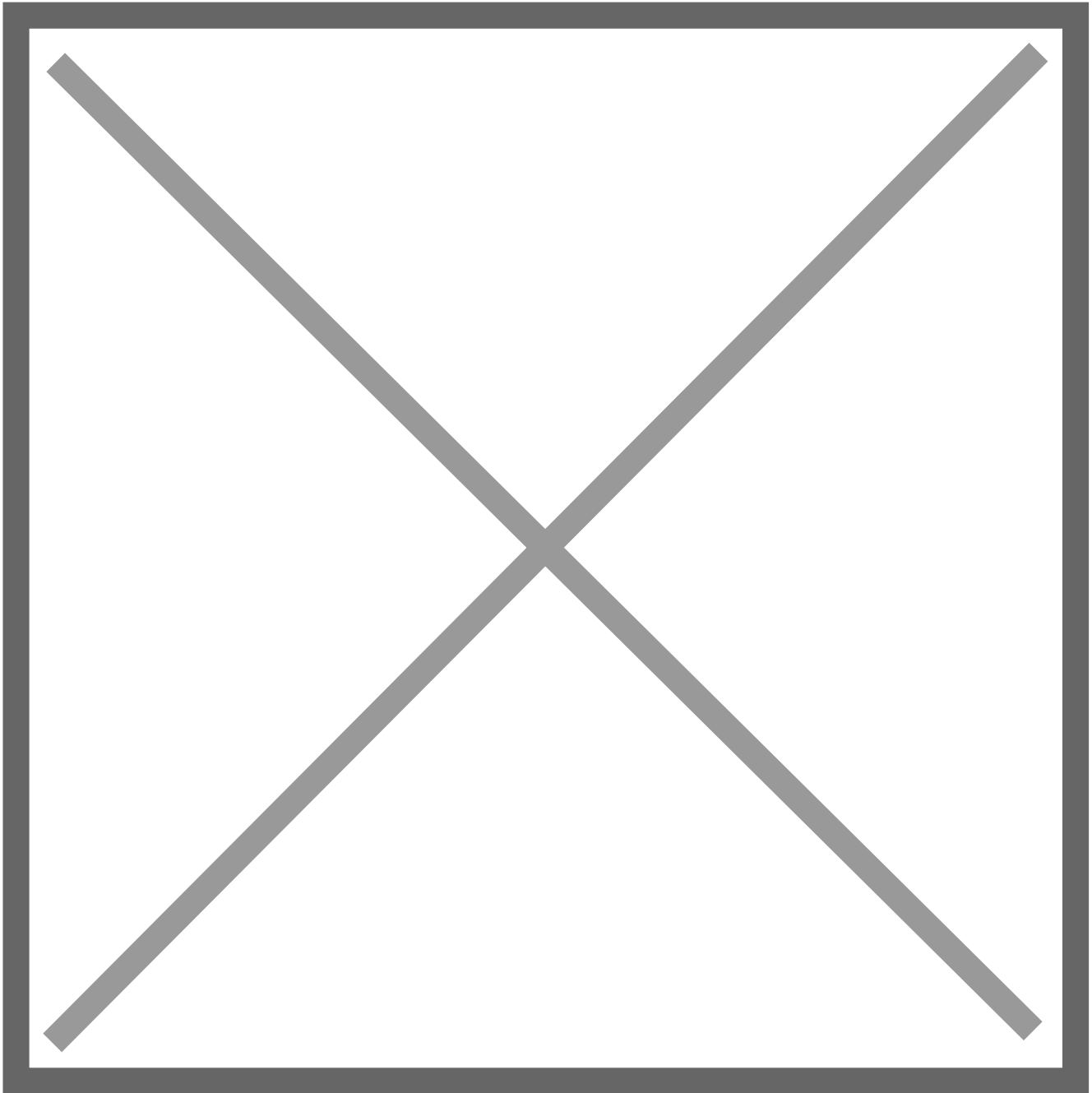




Members of a flotilla that departed from Mexico, together with local port workers, unload humanitarian aid upon their arrival to Havana's bay March 24, 2026. Catholic Relief Services, the humanitarian and development agency of the U.S. Catholic bishops, has received \$60 million from the U.S. State Department to expand humanitarian assistance to vulnerable families across Cuba. (OSV News/Reuters/Jorge Luis Banos)

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Baltimore — July 22, 2026

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Catholic Relief Services is welcoming federal support that will help "significantly expand" humanitarian aid to Cuba, as the Caribbean nation battles multiple crises.

CRS, the humanitarian and development agency of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, announced July 21 that it had received a \$60 million award from the U.S. Department of State.

The agency said the funding will enable it to partner with Caritas Cuba — which, like CRS, is part of Caritas Internationalis, the Catholic Church's global humanitarian network — to provide "emergency food and hygiene supplies to nearly 200,000 households, or more than half a million people," across Cuba.

The award will also allow the two agencies to distribute "essential household items — including mattresses and blankets — to another 7,000 people who need them," said CRS in its news release.

In a separate media note released the same day, the State Department said two of its officials had joined CRS staff in Miami July 21 "to send off the first flight of humanitarian relief" under Secretary of State Marco Rubio's \$100 million commitment in aid to the Cuban people.

The State Department said the flight contained "pre-packaged food and hygiene kits for up to 700 Cuban families," with the items set to be delivered by CRS "in partnership with the Catholic Church and Caritas Cuba on the ground."

"The direct delivery of humanitarian commodities by local parish representatives in the island will ensure critical U.S. assistance reaches everyday Cubans in need, without any opportunity for regime diversion or theft," said the State Department.

CRS said the new funding from the State Department "builds on" an "ongoing emergency response" launched by its team and its Caritas Cuba partners in the wake of 2025's Hurricane Melissa.

That storm's "impact on infrastructure and essential services was widespread," according to a July 1 situation update from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

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The IFRC said that storm recovery "has been particularly challenging due to pre-existing structural vulnerabilities and the cumulative effects of prior disasters," such as the 2024 Hurricanes Oscar and Rafael, "from which many communities had not yet fully recovered."

"Cuba has faced four consecutive years of significant shocks without a sustained recovery window, contributing to a marked deterioration in socioeconomic conditions," said the IFRC.

Disease, along with infant and maternal mortality, has risen on the island, while food, water, healthcare, electricity and fuel resources have plunged. A 2026 U.S. blockade on oil imports to Cuba has intensified the crisis.

CRS said in its July 21 press release that "families across the island continue to struggle with worsening food insecurity and hunger, prolonged fuel shortages and limited access to basic services."

Sean Callahan, the agency's president and CEO, said families in Cuba face "growing hardship as they struggle to put food on the table, access clean water and meet other basic needs."

The new funding, said Callahan, will allow CRS and Caritas Cuba "to significantly expand humanitarian assistance through the Catholic Church's trusted network, reaching vulnerable families with the help they urgently need."