

## THE HURRICANE

In my last reflection of Tuesday afternoon, August 29, when hurricane Gustav unexpectedly formed and started to threaten our country on the same day when our Olympic delegation returned, I wrote: "We are lucky to have a Revolution! It is a fact that nobody will be neglected...Our strong, forceful and farsighted Civil Defense protects our people...The growing frequency and intensity of these natural phenomena show that the climate is changing due to the action of man. The current times demand ever increasing dedication, steadiness and conscience. We don't mind if the opportunists and traitors also benefit even if they do not make any contribution to the safety and wellbeing of our people."

I know of the colossal efforts that the Revolution has to make after the national territory is hit by a hurricane. I could add that Cuba counts with keen and persevering scientists such as José Rubiera.

Hundreds of millions of working hours are lost in a brief period of time when the wind gusts beat directly against economic and social centers in broad areas of the national territory. Endless rains accompany these natural phenomena. Rivers overflow and sweep away with anything they find in their path and flood extensive areas. Thousands of facilities that produce vegetables, milk, eggs, poultry meat and pork, as well as sophisticated irrigation systems, are seriously damaged; tens of thousands of hectares of sugarcane, food grains, cereals and fruit trees ready for harvest are lost; schools, polyclinics, entertainment and cultural centers, private housing, roofs, factories, warehouses, highways and bridges are all damaged by the winds and the rain. This time those winds and rains affected all provinces in a greater or lesser degree, since the hurricane made its way through the seas nearby the southern part of the country and moved across the westernmost province. Its eye's radius was 30 kilometers in length, and strong winds blew over a diameter of more than 450 kilometers.

Nothing is as devastating as the damage and destruction left behind by a hurricane. Hundreds of thousands of compatriots mobilize and work very hard during the passing of the hurricane and afterwards during the recovery stage. Reserves are reduced or depleted. Today, more than ever, the damages caused on food supplies are costly and significant. But this is our country; this is our rightful place in this planet, and we have to develop and defend it.

The task we have ahead requires time and expertise. The true Cuba and its noble people, which have been ready to share with others its knowledge and even part of its resources including its own blood, were not built overnight. That is why it has been an invincible adversary in confronting the powerful empire that has tried all of its weapons against our country.

But there is hardly any information to the world about Cuba's merits and its extraordinary struggle.

Two days ago, on Friday 29, none of the eleven cables published by the international press on Cuba referred to the hurricane that was approaching our island or the intensive efforts made by our Civil Defense, with the generous support of millions of Cuban families led by a courageous political vanguard.

One of the cables published by the German news agency DPA read:

"Popular Cuban Actor Arrives in Miami: 'I left because I grew tired.'"

Then it adds that a well-known Cuban television actor, Yamil Jaled, had left Cuba for Miami to reunite with his Cuban American wife, according to a local newspaper.

It also adds that Jaled featured in very popular TV series, theatre plays and movies, including some

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Published on FIDEL Soldier of Ideas (<http://www.comandanteenjefe.com>)

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blockbusters produced in France and Italy. Jaled graduated as a performing actor at the Highest Art Institute (ISA) in 1997 and started to work as a professional actor in the Rita Montaner theatre group, but one year later he started to work in television.

Afterwards the cable goes on to explain that he is 31 years old and profusely describes his artistic qualities and his triumphant journey through television, thus echoing a Yankee newspaper destined to launch a media warfare and campaigns against Cuba. We, Cubans, could add: What patriot! What democratic! What brilliant example is this prototype that they presenting to us! This is the way in which they disseminate throughout the world information about a guy far less known and important than hurricane Gustav.

They want to turn him into a sacred cow. The deepest convictions, which have successfully resisted the trials of time and the upheavals of life, can not be acquired on a single day. Before that, it is necessary to surmount many trends that we all bear in our inner self.

I do not hate other human beings, but I hate vanity, egocentricity, selfishness, arrogance, smugness, the absence of ethics and other tendencies human beings are born with. Only education and the example set by those who excel in their battle to be better, will succeed and influence all of us. It is necessary to make a minimal philosophical approach on the need to be modest.

There are sacred cows who intend to put our Five Heroes, who were brutally separated from their homeland and their closest relatives, on a level with the mercenaries who have been justly punished for committing treachery and were never submitted to personal and inhuman outrage.

What I explain in this reflection reaffirms one conviction that I would like to convey to my compatriots, that only the just ideas defended with courage, dignity and firmness will prevail.

**Fidel Castro Ruz**

**August 31, 2008**

**7:32 p.m.**

**Date:**

31/08/2008

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**Source URL:** <http://www.comandanteenjefe.com/en/articulos/hurricane>