

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

HONDURAS: FLOODS

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The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 180 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

This document is being issued

for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

The Situation

Heavy rains that whipped the northwest region of Honduras on September 14 and 15 caused the River Ulúa to rise at a rate of 25 to 50 centimetres per hour. At its peak, the river level reached 5.92 metres, 3.12 metres higher than the normal level of 2.80 metres.

According to the National Meteorological Unit, a cold front in the Gulf of Mexico contributed to intense rains. The National Meteorological Society is also predicting a harsh winter of heavy rains for the area between September 15 and October 15.

The flooding and rains caused serious damage to the country's infrastructure and to the agricultural and fishing sectors. The heaviest losses were recorded in plantain, corn and sugarcane crops in the province of Cortés. According to preliminary evaluations, some 50 farmers were seriously affected and there was damage to approximately 120 acres of farmland in this region.

The floods also damaged the infrastructure of the province of Copán, where the rains eroded the foundations of a bridge that crosses the Gualzana River in the municipality of Veracruz. This damage is currently seriously affecting the commercial sector because the bridge is part of a vital trade route used to transport perishable goods for sale in Guatemala and El Salvador. In addition, communication to the regions of Lempira and Ocotepeque has been cut off.

The municipal and community committees acted quickly during the time of emergency and, although weather conditions in Honduras have changed for the time being, remain on alert so as to be ready to act in the event of future flooding, particularly in the areas of Pimienta, Potrerillos, Villanueva and El Progreso. Furthermore, relief volunteers in the central and southern regions are on alert in case a state of emergency is declared in these areas.

It is important to note that, according to authorities of the Emergency Committee, although the winter season has only just begun, an increased public awareness of the importance of prevention and early warning has been observed. This is reflected in a smaller number of evacuees as compared to other emergencies in previous years.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Honduran Red Cross activated its National Intervention Teams (NITs) in the northwest region of the country. On the basis of branch contingency plans, the following activities were carried out:

Santa Rosa De Copan in the Department of Copán

Honduran Red Cross volunteers evacuated five families living on the banks of the Sal stream. These people were initially sheltered by the local branch of the Red Cross, where they were provided with food and psycho-social support. Later, with the coordination of the national emergency body, COPECO, they were transferred to a temporary shelter. Here, they received food from COPECO, and clothing and blankets will be provided by the Honduran Red Cross.

Pimienta, Department of Cortés

Volunteers of the Honduran Red Cross evacuated five families and placed them in the homes of other family members or friends. Relief volunteers from the Potrerillos branch of the Honduran Red Cross evacuated nine other families from the rural area of Vista del Puente by boat. The 30 members of these families were then transported to a safe location.

San Manuel, Department of Cortés

Because of its geographic location, this branch of the Honduran Red Cross served as the monitoring centre to track the rise in the levels of the rivers Ulúa, Humuya and Blanco for other Red Cross branches located further downstream.

Progreso, Department of Yoro

This branch has been in full coordination with the Municipal Emergency Committee since the alert was issued for the rising levels of the River Ulúa. The volunteers in this area enacted early warning procedures among the workers of the surrounding banana plantations so that they were able to take the necessary precautions.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

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