

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: TROPICAL DEPRESSION 02 November 2001

Information Bulletin N° 1/01

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

The Situation

As of Sunday, 28 October, a cold front travelling across the Atlantic coast towards the Gulf of Honduras, together with the formation of a tropical depression, has resulted in heavy rainfall throughout Honduras. On 30 October, the Permanent Contingency Commission (COPECO), of which the Honduran Red Cross (HRC) is a member, declared a red alert throughout the country in view of the imminent rise of the level of rivers, particularly the Chamelecón in the department of Cortés and the Aguán and El Lean in the departments of Atlántida, Colón and Yoro. COPECO urged the population living in low-lying areas near river beds to take appropriate preventive measures. An emergency situation was declared in the departments of Cortés, Colón, Atlántida, Yoro and Santa Bárbara where flooding has occurred since Sunday last, affecting particularly the towns of La Lima and La Ceiba. It is estimated that some 4,000 people at risk were evacuated from their homes and on 30 October, the majority remained along the sides of roads where improvised shelter of plastic sheeting had been set up until such time as waters subside.

Initial information from government sources provided on 30 October, indicated that, to date, one person had died, seven had disappeared and some 25,000 people had been affected by the flooding. At least three bridges and a school had been destroyed and other bridges and schools had incurred damage.

According to news sources, the tropical depression also caused flooding on Nicaragua's Caribbean coast as torrential rain cut off the main port on the coast, Puerto Cabezas; no loss of life has been reported.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

Through its branches in the north of the country, the Honduran Red Cross continues to monitor the situation. On the night of 28 October, evacuations took place in San Manuel, Cortés, and in the city of El Progreso in Yoro. Branches in La Ceiba, La Lima, La Esperanza and Potrerillos

immediately mobilised 76 volunteers under the supervision of six trained national intervention team (NIT) members. The volunteers assisted with evacuation of families at risk: 1,558 in La Lima, 300 in La Ceiba and a further 85 in Potrerillos. Representatives of the HRC branches are working in coordination with the municipal emergency committees to assist those evacuated. As the organization responsible for distributing humanitarian aid provided by the government, the Honduran Red Cross gave out 1,000 food rations and plastic sheeting; in addition, 200 blankets and 200 jerry cans provided by the HRC were distributed.

Information received on the morning of 31 October from the branches of La Ceiba, Copan y Copan Ruinas, La Lima, La Esperanza and Potrerillos states that in La Ceiba river levels are dropping and that families are beginning to return to their homes, whilst in La Lima and Potrerillos, 1,558 families and 85 families respectively, remain in temporary shelter. In La Esperanza, strong winds tore roofs from houses and in Copan y Copan Ruinas, the temperature has dropped sharply and there are also high winds.

Since meteorologists are predicting that the situation could worsen in the next few days, with the possibility that the depression could develop into a tropical storm, the Honduran Red Cross will continue to monitor the situation.

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

For further details please contact :

- *The Honduran Red Cross in Tegucigalpa Phone (504) 237 88 76 Fax (504) 237 96 71 email honducruz@datum.hn*
- *Olaug Bergseth, Desk Officer for Central America, Phone 41 22 730 45 35; Fax 41 22 733 0395; email bergseth@ifrc.org*

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

Peter Rees-Gildea
Head, a.i.
Relationship Management Department

Santiago Gil
Head
Americas Department

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