

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Central America: Tropical Storm Matthew

Information bulletin n° 1

GLIDE Nos:

[TC-2010-000188-NIC](#)

[TC-2010-000188-HND](#)

24 September 2010

This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Central American National Societies and Belize Red Cross Society which are likely to be affected by Tropical Storm Matthew, with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), have determined that external assistance is not required at present, and are therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time.

Once Tropical Storm Matthew hits the region, the need for assistance will be assessed and further information will be provided.

[<click here for detailed contact information>](#)



The severe rains and overflowing of the Xolotlán lake and the Tipitapa river in Nicaragua have flooded the streets in the municipality of Tipitapa, Nicaragua. Source: La Prensa/G. Flores

The Situation

According to information received from the National Hurricane Centre, on 23 September at 14.45 hours, Tropical Depression no.15 became Tropical Storm Matthew, and during the afternoon of 24 September was located 45 km south, south-east of Cabo de Gracias a Dios on the border between Nicaragua and Honduras. Currently the storm has sustained wind speeds of 85km/h and is taking a westward course towards the Honduran and Nicaraguan Caribbean coastline. By the time the storm reaches the Honduran territory there is the likelihood that it will become a tropical depression once again and will continue on a course towards Guatemala and Belize.

It is anticipated that when Tropical Storm Matthew hits the extreme eastern point of Honduras and northern Nicaragua, there will be torrential rainfall, strong winds and possible landslides, impacting populations in these regions. Meteorological experts predict that the storm could result in flooding and landslides on the Caribbean coast of Honduras, Guatemala and the north of Nicaragua, with potential heavy rain in the Pacific regions of El Salvador.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Nicaragua:

A tropical storm advisory is in place for the northern border of Limón to Puerto Cabezas and a yellow alert has been declared in the autonomous regions of the Caribbean and a green alert for the rest of the country. Thirty two collective centres (16 private and 16 public) have been activated and 8,900 people have been evacuated from 8 communities by Nicaraguan Red Cross volunteers who are also supporting further evacuations that will be carried out in Cayos Miskitos, Sandy Bay, Waspan, Bismuna and Kiwas.

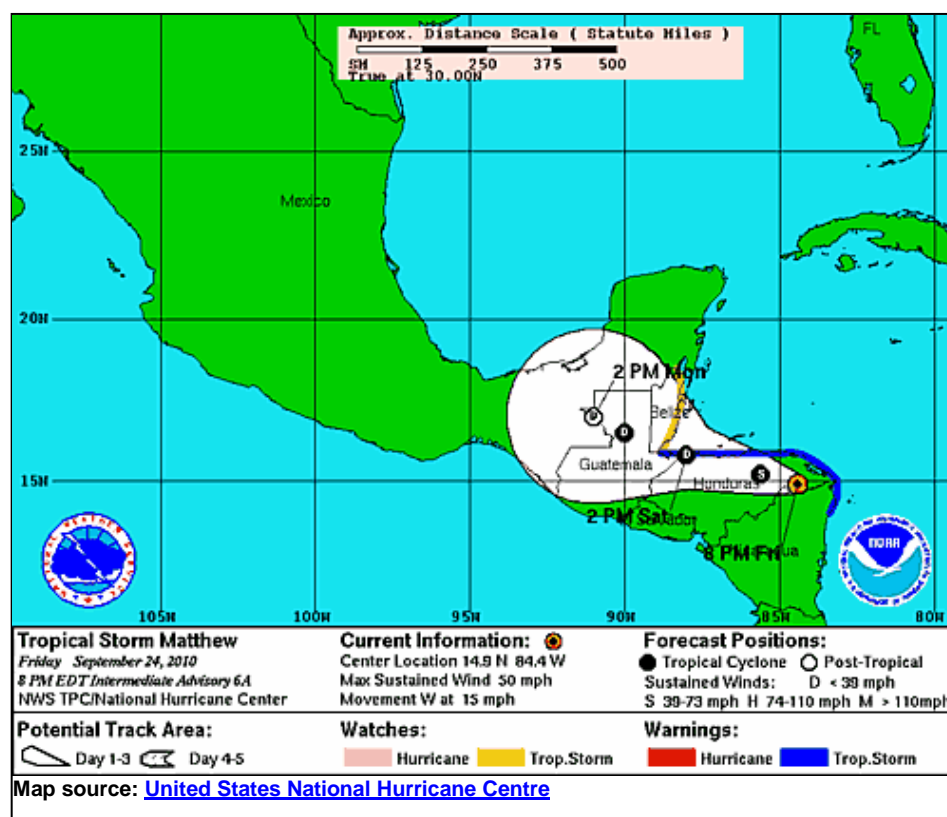
Honduras:

The Honduran Permanent Contingency Commission (Comisión Permanente de Contingencias- COPECO) has declared a green alert and yellow alert for the Ulúa River shores. It is expected that the storm will reach the Honduran coast on Saturday, 25 September affecting the offshore islands. It is then expected to move towards to the Gulf of Fonseca, generating rain in the eastern, western, southern and central areas of the country with depths of up to 80 to 100 millimetres in the mountainous zones. Given that the soil is already saturated as a result of Tropical Storm Agatha, the effects of flooding could be exacerbated.

The Honduran Red Cross' Emergency Operations Centre has been activated, alerts have been issued, the ambulance service has been activated and branches are constantly monitoring vulnerable communities. In addition, two RIT and NIT members from the National Society have been activated to respond. The first rains are affecting the Honduran department of Gracias a Dios, which is inhabited by Miskito indigenous tribes.

Guatemala:

In Guatemala, The meteorological institute is predicting increased levels of waves on the Pacific coast this weekend. Communities in Zacapa, Petén and Alta Verapaz have issued an alert given the possibility of flooding and the National Coordinating Body for Disaster Reduction (CONRED) has issued an orange alert. The Guatemalan Red Cross has activated its emergency operations centre and put together a plan of action, mobilized personnel and designated a technical committee.



Costa Rica:

Yellow and green alerts were declared by the government and the Costa Rican Red Cross. It is expected that indirect effects will be felt as of the afternoon of 24 September, in particular in the Pacific where torrential rain is expected. Heavy rain is also expected in the Central Valley where historically at-risk populations are to be found. The National Emergency Commission is mobilizing teams including relief officers, technical personnel, volunteers, vehicles in order to ensure monitoring of river basins and areas which are usually flooded during heavy rain.

El Salvador:

In El Salvador, flooding and landslides are anticipated as well as the possible loss of crops. It is expected that as many as 200,000 families could be affected. The Salvadoran Red Cross Society is preparing its NIT

teams both in the mountainous regions and in the centre of the country, and the Red Cross branches are ensuring constant monitoring of the situation.

Mexico:

The Mexican Red Cross will be constantly monitoring the situation over the weekend and has 45 volunteers who are working in relief efforts and are currently on alert. In the state of Veracruz 260 tonnes of humanitarian aid were sent previously as a result of Hurricane Karl.

Belize:

Heavy rains are beginning in southern Belize as Tropical Storm Matthew approaches. The storm is expected to make landfall on Sunday and the main concern according to the National Emergency Management Organization is the possibility of heavy rains in southern Belize. If any flooding occurs, this will take place early next week. The Belize Red Cross Society has 25 NIT members in the Toledo district, where the storm is expected to make landfall. The National Society has also pre-positioned non-food items for 100 families in the district in addition to items for 500 more families in the Belize district. The National Emergency Management Organization has been informing the population through continual updates on flood risks, storm shelters and agencies providing assistance, including the Red Cross.

The Pan-American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Regional Representations of Central America and Mexico and the Caribbean are in close coordination with the Nicaraguan Red Cross, the Honduran Red Cross, the Guatemalan Red Cross, the Costa Rican Red Cross, the Salvadoran Red Cross Society, the Mexican Red Cross and the Belize Red Cross Society. In the morning of 24 September, a teleconference was held with the National Societies, PADRU, the Regional Representations and PNS including the American Red Cross, the Netherlands Red Cross, the Norwegian Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross.

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **In Port of Spain:** Tanya Wood; Regional Representative for the Caribbean; phone: (1 868) 628 2439; email: tanya.wood@ifrc.org
- **In Costa Rica:** Fabricio López; Regional Representative for Central America and Mexico; phone: (506) 222 64 092; email: fabricio.lopez@ifrc.org
- **In Panama:** Francisco Maldonado; Acting Coordinator of the Pan American Disaster Response (PADRU), phone: (507) 316 1001; fax: (507) 316 1082; email: francisco.maldonado@ifrc.org
- **In Panama:** Ghotai Ghazialam; PADRU Disaster Management Delegate; phone: (507) 316 1001; fax: (507) 316 1082; email: ghotai.ghazialam@ifrc.org
- **In Panama:** Chiran Livera, PADRU Disaster Management Delegate; phone: (507) 316 1001; fax: (507) 316 1082; email: chiran.livera@ifrc.org
- **In Panama:** Nelson Castaño, Disaster Risk Management Coordinator, phone: (507) 380-0250, email: nelson.castano@ifrc.org
- **In Geneva:** Pablo Medina, Pablo Medina, Operations Coordinator; phone: (41) 79 2173376; fax: (41) 22 730 0395; and email: pablo.medina@ifrc.org;

[*Click here to return to the title page*](#)