

CENTRAL AMERICA: FLOODS AND LANDSLIDES

15 September 1999

Information Bulletin N° 01

The Disaster

Since Saturday, 11 September, severe rains and storms in Central America have caused flooding and landslides, resulting in destroyed homes and crops in many communities. People have been evacuated to prevent casualties.

- { In Costa Rica, the Costa Rican Red Cross (CRCS) has activated emergency plans to respond to the threat to lives of many people in various regions of the country.
- { El Salvador has evacuated people from homes and relocated them to shelters.
- { Nicaragua is one of the most severely affected countries, and the Nicaraguan Red Cross has evacuated approximately 500 people from the Cepas community in Villa Nueva, Department of Chinandega, west of Managua. With many houses completely flooded as a consequence of the torrential rains, volunteer rescue workers assisted people to find shelter on higher and more secure ground. A number of families still retain fresh memories of the hardships posed by Hurricane Mitch, with the loss of their crops. In August, the Red Cross had distributed seed grain to harvest in the next season, but the current floods have again swept away the crops.

Current situation

In El Salvador, the overflowing Lempa and Paz rivers have affected several communities in the Usulután and San Vicente Departments, particularly Rancho Grande and Taura in San Vicente. Preliminary information provided by the National Emergency Committee reports 2,500 inhabitants have evacuated their houses and moved to a shelter in San Marcos Lempa. Crops have been damaged as well. The National Emergency Committee has issued an alert to the inhabitants of the affected or likely to be affected areas.

In Nicaragua, 63 evacuated families are temporarily sheltered in the local pre-school and in a nearby farm.

In Costa Rica's Central Pacific and South Regions, the overflowing Paquita, Pirris, Narango and Saavedre rivers necessitated the evacuation of 51 persons. As a result of landslides, some communication problems have been reported. The rains continue throughout the region.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The National Societies of the affected countries, particularly the Salvadorean Red Cross, have been using their own funds to cover the needs of this emergency. The Federation's DPP delegate in Guatemala is in permanent contact with the National Societies, providing advice and assisting as necessary.

The Salvadorean Red Cross Society evacuated a total of 1,363 persons in 16 communities, and has distributed food for 200 families, as well as blankets, mattresses, plastic covers for shelter, and milk for children. The National Society provided 14 vehicles to assist in the evacuation.

In Nicaragua, the evacuation was carried out with vehicles provided by the Red Cross. The Nicaraguan Red Cross distributed 150 personal hygiene kits, 300 blankets, 400 water containers (with water), 40 bags of clothes, plastic pails, 15 hammocks and each family also received 2 bags of rice, sugar and beans.

In the Guanacaste region of Costa Rica, the Red Cross coordinated the evacuation of 135 people to 5 shelters. In Santa Rosa, one house was completely destroyed, and two others seriously damaged. Other communities in Santa Cruz have reported overflows from the nearby rivers. The CRRS is continuing to carry out evacuations and to evaluate damage in the affected areas.

Needs

No international assistance has been requested at the moment.

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