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# Information Bulletin no. 1

## Tropical Storm Eta

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

<b>Information Bulletin N° 1</b>	<b>Date of issue:</b> 4 November 2020
<b>Date of disaster:</b> Ongoing	<b>IFRC Focal Points:</b> <u>In Panama ARO:</u> Disaster Management Coordinator (Central America): Gonzalo Atxaerandio   <a href="mailto:gonzalo.atxaerandio@ifrc.org">gonzalo.atxaerandio@ifrc.org</a>  Daniel Arango, Disaster Management Coordinator; Hurricane Season, Preparedness & Response; <a href="mailto:daniel.arango@ifrc.org">daniel.arango@ifrc.org</a>
<b>IFRC Category allocated to the disaster:</b> Yellow. The decision to raise the Emergency Orange Category will be taken in the next 24 hours coordinated between the Americas Regional Officer and Geneva headquarters.	
<b>National Societies activated:</b> Nicaraguan Red Cross, Honduras Red Cross, Guatemalan Red Cross, Belize Red Cross, Salvadoran Red Cross, Costa Rica Red Cross, and Colombian Red Cross.	

*This bulletin is being issued for information only; it reflects the current situation and details available at this time.*

## HIGHLIGHTS

- As of Wednesday, 4 November, 7am EST, Eta is a tropical storm and will continue weakening over the next 48 hours or so, and the system should degenerate into remnant low tomorrow.
- Although it is weakening, Eta will continue to produce heavy rainfall and flooding over portions of Central America.
- According to the forecast, Eta is expected to move across the central portions of Honduras on Thursday morning. The system is forecast to emerge over the northwestern Caribbean Sea on Friday.
- [IFRC approved 439,928 Swiss francs \(CHF\) of DREF funds to the Nicaraguan Red Cross](#) to support 2,000 families affected (10,000 people) with their emergency needs.



*Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC) volunteers carrying out damage assessments in Managua, Nicaragua. Source: NRC, 4 November 2020.*

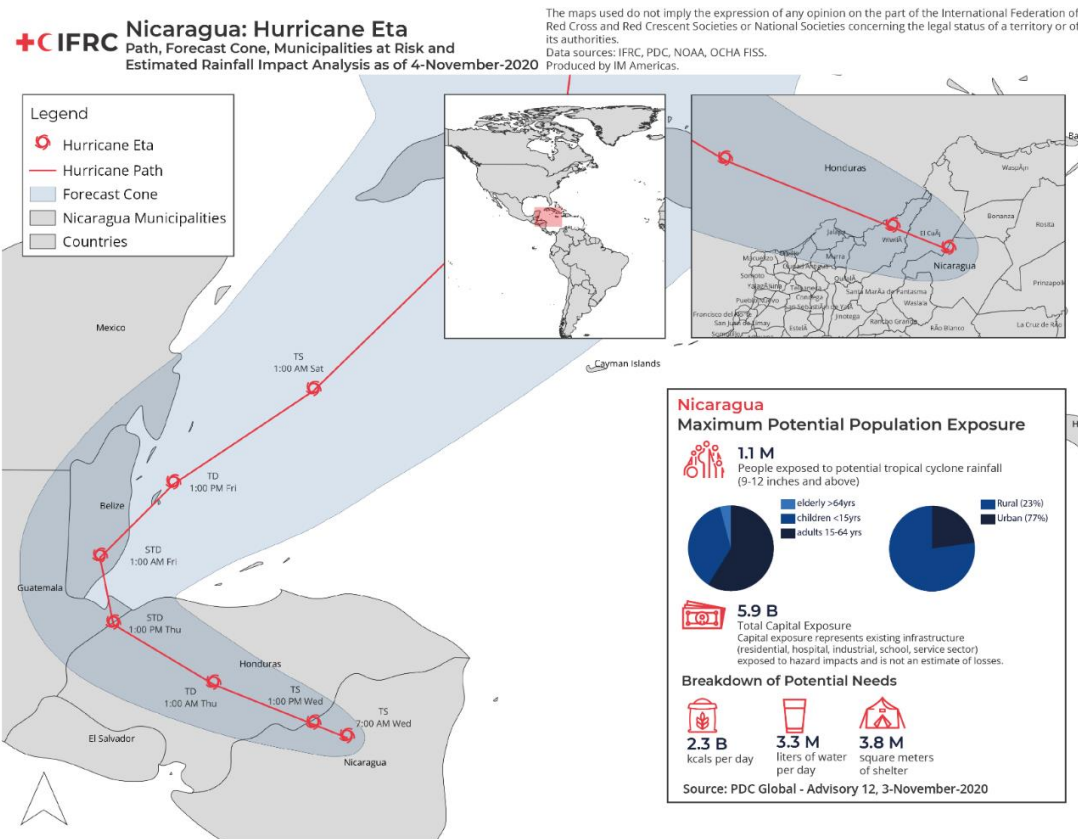
# CONTEXT

## Hurricane Eta

The National Center for Atmospheric, Oceanographic, and Seismic Studies (Cenaos) of Copeco reported that Hurricane Eta degraded early this on November 4 to a Tropical Storm. The hurricane warning continues for sectors of the coast of Nicaragua, the border of Honduras/Nicaragua Sandy Bay and the surveillance of Tropical Storm of the northeast coast of Honduras from Punta Patuca, to the border Honduras/ Nicaragua, this means that conditions with winds over 175 Km/h are probable in the areas in mention within the next 06 hours, with waves that could reach between 4 to 7 feet high. Intermittent rains are predicted, accompanied by isolated electrical activity, with accumulations of 120 and 140 millimetres, with maximums of 150 to 200 in the mountains.<sup>1</sup>

Heavy rainfall from Eta will lead to catastrophic, life-threatening flash flooding and river flooding across portions of Central America, along with landslides in areas of higher terrain. Flash and river flooding are also possible across Jamaica, southeast Mexico, the Cayman Islands, and western Cuba.

# DAMAGE ASSESSMENT AND RESPONSE



## Nicaragua

The National Government has informed that basic services are being restored in Bilwi, and there is a clean-up operation ongoing. 1,500 families from the Triangulo Minero have been evacuated, while communities from the north and the southern Caribbean are returning to their homes. There are reports of floodings in Rivas, and some rivers in Managua are also increasing their streams. The localities of Rivas en Esteli are under alert, and very close attention is being given to respond in case of an emergency. The situation in Bilwi is still uncertain, and the National Society has faced problems entering the area, given the obstruction of roads and limited transportation.

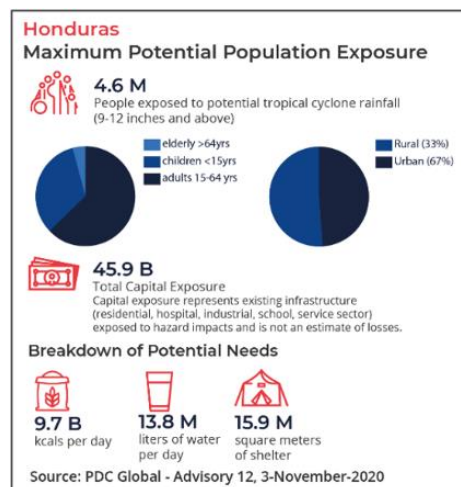
Nicaraguan Red Cross Damage and Needs Assessment (DANA) teams attempt to reach the area.









[IFRC approved 439,928 Swiss francs \(CHF\) of DREF funds to the Nicaraguan Red Cross](#) to support 2,000 families affected (10,000 people) with their emergency needs in the areas of Shelter, Livelihoods, Health, WASH, and Protection, Gender and Inclusion.

<sup>1</sup> COPECO-Honduras. Actualización: Huracán Eta se degrada a Tormenta Tropical. 4 November 2020.

## Honduras

On 4 November, a Red Alert was decreed for all 18 departments in Honduras. The Honduran Red Cross (HRC) has activated its Strategic Monitoring Centers and local councils (branches) at the national level, and it is integrated into the worktables of Municipal Emergency Committee (CODEM) and Permanent Contingency Commission (COPECO) in the councils. Specialized HRC volunteers are monitoring river levels and high-risk areas. HRC has reviewed its inventory and activated its institutional response teams. HRC is providing evacuation, rescue, and pre-hospital care and psychosocial support services to people affected. Field activities and projects are on hold until the emergency passes. Discussions have been held with the IFRC Emergency and Crisis team, and a request for DREF funding is being evaluated.



	 Affected	 Deaths	 Evacuated	 Authorized Collective Centres	 People in Collective Centres	 Affected houses	 Damaged houses	 Isolated communities
<b>Honduras</b>	<b>2,885</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2,027</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>38</b>

Source: COPECO. Situation Update. 4 November 2020.

## Guatemala

The Government of Guatemala maintains the national red alert to prepare response mechanisms to the impact of Eta. National Coordinator for Disaster Reduction (CONRED) maintains Rains' active protocol in the Republic of Guatemala 2020 that incorporates the Operational Protocol for Depressions and Tropical Storms, Hurricanes. Departmental and municipal authorities are monitoring and coordinating actions from the Emergency Operations Centers -COE's. The Humanitarian Country Team maintains coordination with the CONRED Authorities to support the humanitarian needs that are generated at the national level.

The Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC) delegations are monitoring at the local level with the municipal and departmental authorities to implement response actions. In GRC's social networks, prevention and protection measures are disclosed to the population and recommendations to avoid risks during the impact of this tropical storm. At the local level, families affected by floods have been assisted in evacuating to a safe area, this due to the rains generated by the cold front that affects Guatemala. Since yesterday afternoon, the cold front that caused an increase in wind speed, rain, and low temperatures in various sectors of the East and North of the country. Volunteers from GRC have carried out various humanitarian actions in areas of high vulnerability in the departments of Alta Verapaz, Baja Verapaz, and Izabal due to the rains and strong winds that have affected these localities. Seven evacuation services were coordinated with Local authorities of Alta Verapaz from an area of high vulnerability.

## Belize

On November 3, the National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO) issued Advisory #3, stating that a flood watch affects the entire country with concerns for Cayo, Belize, Stann Creek, and Toledo districts. So far, no damages have been reported. There have been constant light rains with gusty winds and rains from Belize city to the south. Reports have been received that Macal is breaking its banks and so Mopan will be flooded. Both watercourses discharge into the Belize River, so those communities downstream are at an increased risk for flooding. NEMO is monitoring over 14 rivers from Temash deep south to the Belize River, which are likely to flood severely. Shelters have been opened in the Cayo, Stan Creek, and Toledo areas. NEMO has indicated that they may need the Belize Red Cross (BRC) support to evacuate and assist persons in the shelters. US SouthCom, British High, UN Partners, and the Mexican Embassy are being notified about potential floods. All national rescue agencies and NEMO first responders are on standby. The BRC is in contact with NEMO for updates, and CDRTS are on alert as they may be called upon to support national efforts.

## El Salvador

The General Directorate of Civil Protection declared a Red Alert throughout the National Territory on November 3. The Salvadoran Red Cross issued an institutional orange alert, which puts in place response teams, personnel, and vehicles to the impacted areas. It is also preparing its volunteers to support DANA, evacuations, and search and rescue. It also has personnel specialized in Flood Rescue Techniques and rescue units, already waiting for the evolution to deploy to communities at risk. Until November 4, has supported the evacuation of 12 families in the municipality of La Union, department of La Union, as a precaution.

## Costa Rica

Due to the saturation of the soils, the level of affectations, and the continuity of the rains during this night and dawn, the National Commission of Emergencies has raised to red alert 5 cantons: Nicoya, Nandayure, Hojancha of Guanacaste and Corredores and Coto Brus of South Pacific. The Costa Rican Red Cross has activated its response teams and is providing evacuation and volunteer mobilization services.

## Colombia

Hurricane Eta has caused flooding after its passage through Colombia, affecting mainly the departments of Magdalena (9,321 families), Bolivar (543 families), and Atlantico (96 families), according to information from the National Disaster Risk Management Unit (UNGRD). A Unified Command Post has been established in Magdalena to coordinate response actions by the authorities and continue assessments in other communities and monitor the situation. The Colombian Red Cross Society is maintaining coordination and monitoring with its branches. It is also supporting evaluations and first aid in the departments of San Andres Isla, Magdalena, and Bolivar.

## RED CROSS MOVEMENT COORDINATION

The Red Cross Movement has been very active since the beginning of the emergency, participating in regional coordination meeting called by the IFRC. Partners National Societies (PNS) and the International Committee of the Red Cross are actively sharing information with National Societies, the IFRC and counterparts in their respective headquarters. PNS with Central America presence have put at disposal vehicles and human resources working in development projects in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.

In the COVID-19 context, the localization approach, and the use of local resources are essential. To this end, the Canadian Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross, German Red Cross, Italian Red Cross are ready to support the NS and IFRC actions in the country. Other PNS has been in close communication with the Americas Regional Office and participating in the coordination meetings and information sharing.

## IFRC ACTIONS

The Americas Regional Office has established coordination and constant communications with the National Societies of Colombia, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Belize. Also, collaboration is ongoing with Country Cluster Support Teams (CCSTs) in Central America, Port of Spain, and Geneva headquarters. The Regional Logistics Unit has been activated to support the NSs with relief items, including pre-position stock in Central American. Information on the existing stock has been updated. Our coordination also includes Red Cross Movement partners (ICRC, PNSs) who have taken part in two coordination meetings.

As part of our Information Management and dissemination, ARO activated its Regional virtual Emergency Operations Center (EOC), prepared this information bulletin, and issued a press release. Key messages have been produced. The [GO IFRC Platform for emergencies](#) is centralizing all information on Hurricane Eta. The IFRC Americas Regional Office (ARO) will keep the same link for upcoming tropical storms.

AROs Regional Disaster Management Coordinators are on standby and monitoring potential or remote support for multiples countries. In addition to existing staff, Regional Surge Alert has been issued. Regional Surge personal could be deployed for field or remote support upon request from NS. Applications are being reviewed. The Standard Operating Procedures are guiding all the response and the recommendations and guidelines included in the Regional Contingency Plan. An institutional yellow alert issued. This alert Responds to a localized emergency covering a small area or number of beneficiaries.

The IFRC is actively working and coordinating with regional coordination mechanism such as CEPREDENAC (Regional coordination platform in Central America) and OCHA for sharing information about the Red Cross actions and to enhance the cooperation between humanitarian actors responding to the emergency in Central America.

#### IFRC Resources

- [GO Platform](#) is constantly updated. Check future [Field Reports](#) from National Societies for updates.
- [Emergency page in GO](#)
- Regional [Preparedness dashboard](#)
- [Hurricane monitoring Dashboard.](#)
- [2020 Regional Contingency Plan](#)
- [Twitter IFRC Americas](#)

#### Other Resources

- [OCHA's 345W Platform with pre-positioned resources to date.](#)
- [Hurricane Eta in ReliefWeb.](#)
- [Collaborative spreadsheet for damage assessment \(in progress\).](#)
- [Copernicus' Emergency Management Service for satellite imagery.](#)

## Contact information

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

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#### How we work

All IFRC 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 Humanitarian 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.