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Emergency appeal operation update

Guatemala: Floods

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Emergency appeal n° MDRGT003
GLIDE n° [TC-2011-000157-GTM](#)
Operation update n° 1
10 November 2011

Period covered by this Ops Update: 25
October to 4 November 2011.

Appeal target (current): 786,728 Swiss
francs

Appeal coverage: the appeal coverage
currently stands at 13 per cent based on
the total of in-kind donations and
registered pledges. Further contributions
are urgently needed to help the
Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC) meet the
immediate needs of the most vulnerable
affected by the floods.

[<Click here to go directly to the updated
donor response report, or here to link to
contact details >](#)

Appeal history:

- An [Emergency Appeal](#) was
launched on 26 October 2011 for
786,728 Swiss francs for 9 months to assist 1,500 families.
- 240,190 Swiss francs were initially allocated from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' (IFRC) [Disaster Relief Emergency Fund \(DREF\)](#) to support the National Society to respond.



*With the support of generous national donations, the Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC) has already reached 14,065 vulnerable persons with humanitarian relief.
Source: GRC*

Summary: The effects of Tropical Depression 12-E started to affect Guatemala on 13 October, and severe precipitations were felt for over a week causing flooding and landslides across the country. As the level of affectation became more evident, the Guatemalan government declared a State of Public Calamity on 16 October to progress the relief efforts. In response to the emergency situation, the Guatemalan Red Cross activated some 1,200 volunteers who supported the authorities in search, rescue, evacuation and first aid care. During the period covered by the current update, the National Society was able to reach 2,813 families with hygiene kits and food parcels with the support of national donations. Additionally, the procurement process of relief items for 800 families has been concluded. Additional distributions will be completed during this and the following week using the MEGA-V barcode distribution system developed in Haiti by the Mexican Red Cross and the IFRC.

Financial and in-kind donations are still urgently required to support the National Society's activities, particularly those aiming at preventing the further deterioration of the health and livelihoods of 1,500 of the most vulnerable families.

The situation

A broad area of low pressure, including the remnants of Tropical Depression 12-E that moved inland near the Mexican / Guatemalan border on 13 October, affected all of Central America with intense rainfall for over a week. Severe precipitations caused flooding and landslides in Guatemala, as the soil was already saturated and river levels were high as a result of previous rains. The Guatemalan government decreed a State of Public Calamity on 16 October, which facilitates the emergency response as well as restricting the freedom of movement and assembly for 30 days.

Current analysis indicates that the most vulnerable departments –based on previous levels of vulnerability combined with the effects of Tropical Depression 12-E— are Huehuetenango, San Marcos, Sololá, Retalhuleu, Suchitepéquez, Quetzaltenango, Totonicapán, Sacatepéquez, Chimaltenango, Quiché, Alta Verapaz, Baja Verapaz, Santa Rosa, Chiquimula, and Jalapa. Furthermore, departments in the north of the country and Guatemala Valley continue to be at risk of landslides and severe erosion as soils are heavily saturated.

More than 500,000 persons are affected across the country, of which 82,913 are severely affected. Official government figures from the National Coordinating Body for Risk Reduction (Coordinadora Nacional para la Reducción de Desastres - CONRED, Bulletin No. 2216) report that as of 25 October there were 13,693 persons still sheltered in 149 collective centres. The government has increased its efforts to ensure that these families are protected against forecast cold waves.

In the housing sector, authorities report 16,609 homes with minor damage, 5,571 with moderate damage, 753 with severe damage and 5,291 homes still at risk. In addition, the national road network is severely damaged, with estimates indicating 167 sections of roads affected and 9 destroyed, while 55 bridges are damaged and 30 are destroyed. In addition, 26 schools have incurred damages and classes were temporarily suspended.

Figures of damage to the agricultural sector continue to increase as assessments are carried out across the country. A press release from the government of Guatemala states on 4 November that the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación - MAGA) is estimating losses of over 521 million Quetzales (approximately 57.6 million Swiss francs) and 66,120 families affected as a result of crops lost. In this regard, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) launched a food security alert due to the effects of Tropical Depression 12-E in several countries of Central America, including Guatemala. The combined effects of losing family subsistence crops as well as a decrease in job opportunities in the sector of commercial crops could potentially bring forward the annual period of food shortage by one or two months. Families could face difficulties as early as March 2012.

In relation to the health sector, a number of health centres were affected in Petén and Alta Verapaz, which are departments with a high concentration of Kekchi indigenous population. As of 25 October, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Support has assisted 3,250 persons with health care in collective centres. There is ongoing monitoring for the increase of respiratory, gastrointestinal, dermatological diseases and dengue as well as possible negative psychological effects.

Although the weather has improved during the reporting period, governmental authorities continue to monitor five rivers: Paz in Jutiapa, Polochic in Alta Verapaz, and Machaquilá, La Pasión and San Pedro in Petén.

Coordination and partnerships

At the national level, the Guatemalan Red Cross actively coordinates with the Executive Secretariat of CONRED, through the inter-institutional linkages which provide information to CONRED's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). In addition, the National Society maintains coordination with the Humanitarian Network of Guatemala, which includes international organizations and UN system agencies, to ensure an integrated response and avoid duplication of efforts as well as reach solutions to common challenges. The Humanitarian Network has designated lead agencies for the different technical sectors as follows:

- Coordination – OCHA and the Humanitarian Network
- Health – Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)
- Water and Sanitation – United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The intervention will be focused on the cleaning of wells and latrines.

- Food – World Food Program (WFP)
- Collective Centres – International Organization for Migration (IOM). It is currently focusing on prevention of violence against women and reduction of vector-related health risks.
- Education – Plan International
- Early Recovery – United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- Livelihoods – Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)



A Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member, a delegate and 12 volunteers from the Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC) distributed barcode tickets to selected families in Retalhuleu. Source: GRC

National Society Capacity Building: for the first time since its development in the Haiti operation, the MEGA-V relief distribution and reporting system will be implemented in Guatemala. The capacity of the Guatemalan Red Cross to carry out quick and efficient distributions will therefore be strengthened with the use of this technology. Currently, one Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member and a relief coordinator who has worked in the Haiti earthquake response operation, both from the Mexican Red Cross, have been deployed to train volunteers in the use of the MEGA-V system.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Overview

Since the onset of the emergency on 12 October and the declaration of a red institutional alert, the GRC activated some 1,200 volunteers to support the humanitarian response efforts. A collection centre was opened in the headquarters, and with the support of a successful fund-raising campaign, the National Society has been able to reach 2,813 families (14,065 persons) with hygiene kits and food items.

In addition, the GRC concluded the procurement process of relief items for the first 800 families to be supported by the Emergency Appeal. These items will be distributed in Retalhuleu no later than 11 November with the use of the MEGA-V barcode distribution system. Moreover, the

Guatemalan Red Cross and the IFRC's Regional Logistic Unit are coordinating with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to facilitate the delivery of non-food relief items for 700 families coming from the regional warehouse in Panama.

Several Partner National Societies (PNS) are also supporting the relief efforts of the Guatemalan Red Cross. The Spanish Red Cross and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) will assist the National Society to reach an additional 1,200 families with relief items. Furthermore, the Norwegian Red Cross is supporting the mobilization of water plants and sanitation equipment into affected communities. While the Netherlands Red Cross has applied for funds from the European Commission's department of Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) to further support the distribution of relief items to 700 families, as well as activities in the sector of water and sanitation and early recovery. Finally, the Canadian Red Cross has supported the deployment of the RIT member assisting with the coordination of the emergency response.

Progress towards outcomes

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Outcome: The immediate needs of 1,500 families affected by Tropical Depression 12-E are met through the distribution of food items and non-food items.

Outputs	Activities planned
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1,500 families (7,500 people) receive food parcels and blankets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop beneficiary selection and registration system to deliver intended assistance. • Procure locally humanitarian relief items. • Distribute food parcels (1 time distribution for all target families) • Distribute 5 blankets per family (based on an average family of five members) <p>Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distributions.</p>
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Progress: Thus far, the Guatemalan Red Cross has reached 2,813 families (14,065 persons) with relief items to preserve their immediate physical wellbeing. Although detailed registration of distribution is still ongoing, during the very first days of the emergency, National Society volunteers distributed 1,994 hygiene kits in Santa Rosa, Petén, Mazatenango, Retalhuleu, Coatepeque, Tecún Umán and Quetzaltenango. The collection centre in the GRC headquarters recorded the following distributions from 15 to 29 October:

Date	No. Families	Items
15-10-11	15	Food parcels
17-10-11	2	Food parcels
19-10-11	780	Food parcel and medicines
20-10-11	193	Food parcels, cleaning kits, drinking water
22-10-11	70	Food parcels, drinking water
24-10-11	100	Food parcels, hygiene kits, drinking water
28-10-11	406	Food parcels, hygiene kits (from UNFPA ¹)
29-10-11	189	Food parcels, hygiene kits (from UNFPA)

On 31 October a RIT member and a delegate from the Mexican Red Cross arrived in Guatemala to support and train the National Society in the use of the new MEGA-V bar code system. This system, developed and implemented by the Mexican Red Cross and the IFRC in Haiti, will be used for the first time in Guatemala and should significantly expedite distributions. The RIT member, IFRC delegate from the Mexican Red Cross and 12 GRC volunteers were deployed to the Retalhuleu department to register in the database the first 800 families that will be reached. As a result, the system will be used to reach affected families in the following municipalities:

Municipality	No families	No. of communities
San Andres Villa Seca	449	5
Retalhuleu	198	5
Champerico	158	2
Total	805	12

The 805 families selected —the first to be assisted through the emergency appeal— have received a ticket with a personalized bar code that will be used during the distribution (between 9 to 14 November). As more funds become available, the National Society will be able to expand their reach to 300 families in the Petén department, 200 in Santo Tomás de Castilla (Izabal department) and 200 in Cobán (Alta Verapaz department), as originally proposed in the Plan of Action.

¹ United Nations Population Fund

Emergency health	
Outcome: the health risks in the emergency affected population are reduced in the medium and long term through a strategy based on a community health approach.	
Outputs	Activities planned
<p>Rapid Health Assessments (RHA) are carried out to understand the health situation and immediate risks.</p> <p>Affected population has access to first aid services.</p> <p>At least 80 per cent of the population targeted in the emergency appeal are reached with epidemic prevention and control measures.</p> <p>HIV and AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) prevention and essential management is provided to 2,500 persons.</p> <p>At least 60 per cent of the population targeted in the emergency appeal are reached with psychosocial support.</p> <p>Emergency health interventions are linked to longer-term community health programmes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the development and maintenance of inter-institutional coordination. • Assess the health situation within the affected population in coordination with the Ministry of Health. • Review and update inventories of equipment and medical supplies. • Distribute fully equipped first aid kits to 10 branches. • Provide first aid care to the affected population. • Distribution of mosquito nets to 1,500 families. • Carry out a workshop for target families focusing on the appropriate use and care of mosquito nets. • Train health National Intervention Teams through the Epidemic Control for Volunteers (ECV) tool kit. • Implement educational activities to prevent health risks in communities. • Conduct preventive actions to raise awareness at the level of collective centres and communities on STDs, HIV and AIDS, family planning and counselling. • Distribute condoms in collective centres and to the affected communities. • Carry out voluntary HIV counselling and testing. • Train GRC volunteers in community based psychosocial support and psychological first aid. • Provide psychosocial support to targeted affected groups in communities and collective centres. • Monitor, evaluate and provide reporting on activities. • Conduct community-based health first aid training for volunteers (CBHFA) • Implement educational activities to promote behavioural change related to health care for the communities.

Progress: More detailed assessments are ongoing for the planning of activities in the area of emergency health in the coming days. Further discussions are being held to determine actions to be taken under this appeal as more funds become available.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion	
Outcome: The risk of waterborne and water related diseases is reduced through the provision of safe water, adequate sanitation as well as hygiene promotion within the population affected by Tropical Depression E-12.	
Outputs	Activities planned
<p>1,500 families have access to safe water (through water filters and water treatment plants).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the existing coverage of water supply and select the most vulnerable families in coordination with the established national mechanism. • Distribute safe water to 600 families in collective centres and affected communities through water treatment plants. • Clean affected wells.

<p>1,500 families receive hygiene kits and jerry cans.</p> <p>At least 80 per cent of the population targeted in the emergency operation are reached with hygiene promotion and sanitation activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procure and distribute hygiene kits, jerry cans and water filters. • Conduct hygiene promotion talks to affected families. • Conduct vector control activities (for dengue and malaria) to targeted affected groups in communities. • Conduct monitoring and evaluation of activities.
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Progress: The National Society has finished the local procurement process of items for the first 800 families, including hygiene kits and jerry cans. As mentioned previously, these items will be distributed by 14 November in the department of Retalhuleu. The National Society has also mobilized their mobile water treatment plants to some of the most affected communities, and more details on the assistance provided will be provided in the next operations update.

Further hygiene promotion and sanitation activities will be developed as more funds become available to ensure that health risks do not increase as families return to their communities.

In addition, with the support of the Norwegian Red Cross, water plants and sanitation equipment have been installed in the departments of Izabal (specifically Puerto Barrios), Retalhuleu and Quetzaltenango (Coatepeque municipality).

Logistics

<p>Outcome: The local logistics capacity of the Guatemalan Red Cross to respond is strengthened with technical support for procurement and distribution.</p>	
<p>Outputs</p>	<p>Activities planned</p>
<p>Enhanced logistics capacity is achieved and technical support facilitates the procurement and distribution of relief items.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase mosquito nets and non-food items from the Regional Logistics Unit (RLU) as required. • Provide technical support during the local procurement processes. • Maintain stock levels in the El Salvador sub-regional warehouse to meet required demand in the region.

Progress: In support of the emergency operation, the IFRC's Regional Logistic Unit (RLU) has launched a mobilization table for in-kind donations, and is currently in the process of delivering 700 hygiene kits, 3,500 blankets, 4,500 mosquito nets and 2,100 jerry cans. The National Society and the IFRC are coordinating with the ICRC to facilitate the introduction of relief items through customs.

Early Recovery

<p>Outcome: Contribute to the early recovery of 500 families who have lost their livelihoods as a result of the floods.</p>	
<p>Outputs</p>	<p>Activities planned</p>
<p>500 families receive technical and material support to recover their agricultural production.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and develop a technical assessment and intervention strategy in prioritized affected areas. • Establish mutual collaboration agreements with national institutions (agricultural associations and/or non-governmental organizations). • Establishment of a livelihoods cash transfer system. • Provide technical support. • Conduct monitoring and evaluation activities.

Progress: As mentioned previously, the government estimates agricultural losses of over 521 million Quetzals (approximately 57.6 million Swiss francs) and 66,120 families affected due to the loss of crops. Furthermore, humanitarian agencies are concerned with regard to food security in Guatemala and the possibility that families could confront food shortages by March 2012. Therefore, financial donations are still required to support the National Society's livelihoods activities designed to assist 500 of the hardest-hit families with a cash-transfer system. The cash will offer the possibility of purchasing tools, seeds and other basic items that a family needs to

recover, along with providing funds for food. Staff from the Americas zone's Pan-American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) will provide technical assistance for the design of the programme.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

In response to the emergency situation in the country and with the aim to support the successful fund-raising campaign, the Guatemalan Red Cross has conducted numerous interviews with print media, television and radio. The National Society's web site was rehabilitated and it is currently sharing all pertinent information regarding the operation (See <http://www.cruzroja.org.gt/>). Thus far, the communications department has published press releases and has facilitated media visits to the collection centre located in their headquarters. The department has also coordinated visibility campaigns at strategic points across the country, including the use of banners and presence at two presidential press conferences. Spokespersons have been communicating with beneficiaries and media in different affected areas through the branches of the GRC. However, the National Society will require continued support through the emergency appeal to ensure a steady flow of information, particularly with equipment and human resources as the communication department is currently operating with one staff member and one volunteer. Additionally, visibility materials for the volunteers working to provide humanitarian assistance will be needed to highlight their role in the response efforts.

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 \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#) and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) 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.

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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.
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