

OPERATIONS UPDATE



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

CENTRAL AMERICA, MEXICO AND HAITI: FLOODS FROM HURRICANE STAN

14 October 2005

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

In Brief

Appeal No. 05EA021; Operations Update no. 02; Period covered: 9 to 14 October 2005; Appeal coverage: (the current Appeal coverage stands at approximately 117 per cent; however, the Appeal and related budget are currently under revision).

Appeal history:

- Launched on 7 October 2005 CHF 1,568,000 (USD 1,230,694 OR EUR 1,012,648) for 6 months to assist 10,250 families (51,250 beneficiaries). *Note: The number of beneficiary families being targeted is currently being reviewed as new plans of action are being developed.*
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 250,000.

Outstanding needs: N/A

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: El Salvador: Floods and Volcanic Activity (Appeal 05EA020); Haiti: Floods (Appeal 22/2004); Central America: Annual Appeal (Appeal 05AA043); Pan American Disaster Response Unit: Annual Appeal (Appeal 05AA040)

Operational Summary: *Damage and needs assessments are on-going in the field and the scale of the disaster in Guatemala, in particular, continues to unfold. It is estimated at present that over 205,000 people are affected in the southern coastal area and the Altiplano region, losing houses, possessions and livelihoods. The Costa Rican, Guatemalan, Honduran, Mexican, Nicaraguan and Haitian Red Cross Societies are working untiringly to respond to the disaster and are striving to reach the most affected communities, many of which remain isolated. As a result, the overall damage and needs are yet unknown. The Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) has deployed two disaster management staff and a water and sanitation expert who are working with two Field Assessment and Coordination team (FACT) members in Guatemala, together with two Regional Intervention Team members, in support of the National Society staff. The National Societies, in particular the Guatemalan Red Cross, are reviewing their plans of action and the number of beneficiary families targeted. As a result, a revised appeal including a more extensive rehabilitation component will be issued shortly. Belize is no longer included in the current appeal since it appears that flooding has not been sufficiently serious to warrant an international appeal.*

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Background

Hurricane Stan, the 18th named storm of the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season, first formed as a tropical depression off the east coast of Mexico's Yucatan peninsula. This quickly strengthened to a tropical storm, bringing heavy rains to Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and south eastern Mexico. As the storm moved back over the Gulf of Mexico, it strengthened to a category one hurricane just before coming ashore in the Mexican state of Veracruz. The storm system also brought heavy rains to Haiti, specifically in the communities of Artbonite. The death toll in the region currently stands at 747, but that number is expected to rise.

Costa Rica

Since Monday, 19 September, heavy rains in Costa Rica have caused flooding of major rivers and landslides. Some 2,000 people have been affected in the following cantons of the **Provinces of San José**: Vásquez de Coronado, Dota, Tarrazú, León Cortés, Acosta, Tibás and Pérez Zeledón; **Puntarenas**: Osa, Aguirre, Parrita, Garabito, Buenos Aires, Golfito, Esparza and Puntarenas; **Alajuela**: San Carlos, Upala, Alajuela and Valverde Vega; **Guanacaste**: Nandayure, Hojanca, Nicoya, Santa Cruz, Abangares, Bagaces and Carrillo; **Cartago**: Turrialba and **Heredia**: Heredia and Sarapiquí. At least one death has been attributed to the floods. As a result, over 1,500 people have been obliged to evacuate their homes and are currently accommodated in 24 shelters or in the houses of family and neighbours. To date, 607 houses have been reported as damaged by the rains, water and electricity supply has been affected in some areas, 48 bridges, 4 dikes and 28 sewerage systems have been damaged, over 100 roads have been waterlogged and there has been damage to crops. The area of Quepos in the Province of Puntarenas has been particularly badly hit by the flooding. On Tuesday, 27 September, the Costa Rican president, Abel Pacheco, declared a state of emergency and the National Emergency Commission issued a red alert on 5 October in several cantons of the Province of Guanacaste in the north.

Guatemala

Five straight days of rains brought on by Hurricane Stan have caused flooding and landslides in Guatemala, seriously affecting some 205,769 people in the departments of Santa Rosa, Jutiapa, Sacatepéquez, Escuintla, Chimaltenango, Quetzaltenango Sololá, San Marcos, Totonicapán, Retalhuleu, Suchitepéquez, Huehuetenango. To date, there are 652 confirmed deaths, but this number could rise as high as 2,000 as entire communities were engulfed by landslides. Efforts to determine the number of dead and missing have been hindered by rain as floods and landslides have wiped out roads, making it difficult for rescue teams to reach the affected areas. Government officials have said that continuing to search for bodies in these areas is too risky and have called for a number of communities to be declared mass graves. According to the Guatemalan Red Cross, 5,352 houses have been damaged and some 120,075 people are being housed in 453 emergency shelters. Volunteer fire-fighters have evacuated more than 6 thousand residents in the departments of San Marcos, Jalapa, Sololá, Santa Rosa, Huehuetenango, Jutiapa, Sacatepéquez, Escuintla and Retalhuleu. Crops of sugar cane in the coastal areas and maize and beans in the Altiplano have been wiped out or damaged, putting livelihoods at risk.

The Mayan villages of Panabaj and Tzanchaj, on the shores of Lake Atitlan, an area popular with Western tourists, have been particularly hard hit. The area was buried in massive mudslides, as tonnes of mud poured down the

sides of the mountains surrounding the lake. A total of 1,400 people are confirmed to be missing and are presumed dead. Between 80 and 140 mm of rain are being reported each day; the normal amount of rainfall is between 10 and 30 mm. More than 200 landslides have been reported through the country's road network, blocking access to many communities. According to Guatemalan authorities, at least 90 villages remain cut off. Most of the affected communities are located in the southern Pacific coast region of the country.

Honduras

In Honduras the passage of the depression related to the formation of tropical storm/Hurricane Stan has been causing constant, heavy rainfall since Thursday, 28 September, affecting 2,869 people and causing 6 deaths. There are currently some 700 people staying in 9 shelters that have been set up in the affected areas. The Ulúa River in the Sula valley in the north of the country has swollen, flooding several communities in Potrerillos and San Manuel, affecting hundreds of hectares of crops of beans, maize and sorghum. In the south of the country, several communities have been seriously affected by the flooding which has damaged both homes and crops. In the department of Lempira, a mud slide has obliged 40 families to evacuate their homes and in the centre of the country, the capital city has been affected with 15 landslides occurring on major roads, whilst in the East of the country over 100 families have been evacuated as a preventive measure. In addition, a number of major roads are blocked by landslides. It is estimated that damage to crops is now affecting over 4,000 families. The government has declared a red alert which is currently in force for the south of the country.

Nicaragua

Nicaraguan authorities have confirmed that three people have died and 1,576 families have been affected following the heavy rains brought on by Hurricane Stan. The most affected area is the municipality of San Sebastian de Yaliin the department of Jinotega. In this area, 50 percent of the population in 9 communities have been affected. Other seriously affected departments are Chinandega, Leon and Granada. In Leon and Chinandega, 14 communities have been affected. Some 973 people are staying in 13 shelters that have been set up in the affected areas. At least 13 homes have been destroyed, another 50 have been seriously damaged, and 167 houses have been flooded.

Mexico

Hurricane Stan made landfall in Mexico as a category one storm and was quickly downgraded to a tropical storm as it moved over land. However, the storm system brought with it strong winds of up to 130 km/h and heavy rains. The most affected states in Mexico are Chiapas, Oaxaca, Veracruz, Hidalgo and Puebla. At least 15 people have died as a result of the floods and mudslides: 8 in Chiapas, 3 in Pueblo and 4 in Oaxaca. According to the Mexican Red Cross, some 1,296,000 people have been affected in 2,956 communities. Some 331,000 people have been evacuated and 296,000 are staying in the 1,233 temporary shelters that have been set up. Throughout Mexico, at least 173,000 houses have been affected, of which some 2,254 have been completely destroyed. In addition, 364 roads have been damaged, as well as 121 bridges. Given the levels of flooding, there are also health concerns in the affected area and medical brigades are being sent to the area. Some 69 hospitals have reported significant damages, 20 of which have been completely destroyed.

In Veracruz, 15 thousand residents have been evacuated. Houses in at least 20 municipalities have been flooded and another 20 towns have been cut off. In the state of Tabasco, which was also seriously affected, some 500,000 people have been affected by the rains, although the Mexican Civil Protection Agency reports that the situation in that state has stabilized. In Oaxaca, authorities have reported that heavy rains forced thousands of residents out of their homes near the town of Ostuta as the nearby river flooded its banks. Civil Protection officials in Chiapas report that some 251 schools have been damaged. Authorities are providing shelter residents with water, food, mattresses and blankets.

Haiti

In Haiti, at least one person has died and around 2,000 families have been seriously affected by flooding. The Department of Bas-Artibonite in the north of the country has been affected by floods caused by the overflowing of the Artibonite River after heavy rains throughout early October. The district of Dessalines and the 5th section of Saint Marc, where approximately 40,000 people live, have been especially hard hit. In the district of Dessaline, 70 percent of the commune of Grande Saline has been flooded and village of Rossignol is completely flooded. Other affected communities in Dessaline are Chevreau Lombard, Théart, La Porte, La Tapie, Le Droin, Dauphine and Lanneu. Several roads in the affected areas have been completely wiped out and in some cases towns are only

accessible by boat. A number of houses and heads of cattle were swept away by the waters. In addition, people are threatened by water-borne diseases as diarrhoea, malaria, parasitic or bacterial diseases.

In addition to the flooding in the north of the country, several areas in the West Department, near Port-au-Prince have been affected, particularly the areas around Barbako and Kokye. In the communes of Balam and Ganthier, 754 people have been affected, 91 homes have been destroyed and another 59 seriously damaged. It is estimated that 45 percent of livestock and 65 percent of crops were also destroyed. Also seriously affected was the area of Pétion Ville where the overflowing Sous Madam River caused flooding in the town of Lakou Mouton Pernier.

Operational developments

Assessments in *Belize* indicate that, although some parts of the country are flooded, this is not sufficiently serious to warrant international assistance. Belize will therefore not be included in this emergency appeal.

Guatemala

Some 20 branches of the Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC) are participating in the relief operation, each of which has between 30 and 40 volunteers. Two Federation Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT) team members arrived in Guatemala on 11 October 2005: one specialized in water and sanitation and the other specialized in logistics. Two Regional Intervention Team (RIT)s members from the Costa Rican Red Cross are in Guatemala, along with three Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) delegates working in water and sanitation, logistics and disaster management. An operations coordinator has been identified and arrived in the country on 11 October to work with the Federation and the Guatemalan Red Cross. Negotiations are also underway to request relief Emergency Response Units (ERU) specialized in water and sanitation and health. Finally, the Spanish Red Cross is sending two bilateral logistics delegates to work within the Movement system in Guatemala.

The GRC and the Federation held a meeting with the Spanish, Netherlands and German Red Cross Societies to coordinate activities in the country. The Spanish Red Cross has ongoing projects in the Altiplano region and will work in coordination with the GRC in this area. The Netherlands Red Cross is planning to work in the southeast, and in the southwest where the Federation is carrying out health projects. In addition, it is expected that ECHO will issue an emergency decision for Guatemala for which the Spanish and Netherlands Red Cross Societies have expressed an interest in applying. The German Red Cross has indicated interest in working in the area of rehabilitation/reconstruction. The Norwegian Red Cross has contracted a water and sanitation delegate to work in Guatemala in response to the floods emergency.

All week, relief assistance on the part of the Guatemalan government, public institutions, social and relief organizations, and non-governmental organizations have been focused on search and rescue, shelter and relief distribution for the affected population. Various groups are also working to clear mud from the roads and repair roads and bridges to allow access to communities that remain cut off. Work is also ongoing repair telephone and electrical services, which is helping to more accurately determine the level of damages throughout the affected area. Given the level of damages and the number of people affected, Guatemala has issued an official appeal to the international community to assist more than a million people.

Mexico

The federal and state governments, through the Mexican army and air force, have implemented their disaster response plan to provide assistance to the affected population. The Mexican government has provided airplanes to distribute relief items collected by the Red Cross to beneficiaries in hard to reach areas. The Secretary of Health is also planning to carry out community health days to raise awareness of important health issues, with the participation of the Mexican Red Cross. Despite the ongoing relief efforts, some communities in Chiapas still remain cut off.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact

Emergency relief (food and basic non-food items)

Objective: Families affected by the floods in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti, and Mexico, will have benefited from the distribution of food and non-food relief items in order to help them to recover from the effects of the floods.

Note: The number of beneficiary families being targeted is currently being reviewed as new plans of action are being developed.

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

To date, the following relief goods have been sent from the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) in response to this emergency:

Country	Date	Relief goods
Guatemala	9 Oct	3,500 blankets, 1,000 hygiene kits, 1,000 kitchen sets, 4,000 toothbrushes.
	13 Oct	3,500 blankets, 1,000 hygiene kits, 1,000 kitchen sets
Haiti	11 Oct	3,000 blankets, 1,000 hygiene kits, 1,000 kitchen sets, 2,000 mosquito nets

Costa Rica

The Costa Rican Red Cross emergency operations centre has been activated. Search and rescue activities have been undertaken by Red Cross personnel, together with evacuation of those in hazard-prone areas, provision of first aid care and support for the setting up and administration of shelters. Volunteer personnel are on alert in the 9 branches in the Province of Puntarenas and at least 40 volunteers are working in the most-affected areas. On 30 September CHF 30,000 was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to respond to the emergency. The Costa Rican Red Cross is assisting 2,250 families (11,250 people) with the provision of food, kitchen sets and hygiene kits.

Guatemala

To date, damage and needs assessments in Guatemala have been carried out by nine GRC branches and one relief post. In total, 45,722 people in 138 communities have been affected and evacuated to shelters. The most affected municipality is Coatepeque in the department of Quetzaltenango, where 14,226 people are staying in shelters.

GRC Branches	Persons in shelters	No. of shelters
San Marcos	90	4
Tejutla (relief post)	4,200	22
Tecún Uman	6,880	28
Retalhuleu	4,015	11
Mazatenango	4,140	6
Quetzaltenango	1,740	5
Concepción Chiquirichapa	6,600	20
Coatepeque	14,226	42
El Palmar	3,834	staying with family & friends
TOTAL	45,722*	138

* This is the figure confirmed by the GRC; CONRED statistics refer to 140,266 people in shelters.

In Guatemala, 5,000 beneficiary families are being provided with three food parcels, three hygiene kits, (for a one month period in three distributions), a kitchen set, five blankets and three mosquito nets. Families are staying in temporary shelters, with family or neighbours or have been able to remain at home. The GRC branches in Coatepeque, Tecun Uman, Mazatenango, Retalhuleu, El Palmar, Quetzaltenango, Concepción Chiquirichapa, Tejutla, San Marcos and Guatemala have carried out search and rescue activities and evacuations, provided basic

health care, distributed drinking water in the affected areas, and helped beneficiaries to locate separated family members. Thus far, 1,000 families in Guatemala have received relief items. Each family received one food parcel, one hygiene kit and five blankets via the GRC/Federation.

Relief Distributions to Date

Branch	Families
Tecún Uman	200
Coatepeque	300
Retalhuleu	100
Mazatenango	100
El Palmar	100
Guatemala	200
TOTAL	1,000 families

The branches are providing psychosocial support and are disseminating messages on basic health and the prevention of common childhood illnesses. The Guatemala City branch of the GRC is also supporting 15 doctors to provide first aid support in the department of Sololá.

Outside the framework of this emergency appeal, 2,600 families in Coatepeque received food parcels and hygiene kits via the Spanish International Cooperation Agency (AECI). These goods were flown from Madrid, as facilitated by the Spanish Red Cross. In addition, collection centres have been set up in the branch headquarters. A central warehouse has been set up in the Aurora International Airport where donations from the collection centres are taken since the majority of relief distribution are being transported by plane, given the level of damage to the road system; however, even aerial transportation has been limited due to the ongoing rains in the country. Hundreds of volunteers, primarily women and youth, are working with the GRC to sort the donated items in the branches, the GRC headquarters and the central warehouse.

Haiti

The Haitian National Red Cross Society undertook a three day assessment mission from Wednesday 5 October to Friday 7 October 2005, assisted by the Federation. The team was led by the Disaster Management Director of the HNRCS; five volunteers from the Saint Marc branch of the National Society also participated in assessment work. It is difficult to assess the damage; however, according to preliminary information, there are needs for hygiene kits, kitchen sets, water purification tablets and mosquito nets.

Grande Saline is built on swampland; the HNRCS has set up a plan of action to assist 1,000 beneficiary families (5,000 people) in response to the disaster taking into account the problem of access to the affected area. This plan consists of relief assistance, and possibly water and sanitation actions. Apart from distributions of relief items to vulnerable families, there is a need for of a vigorous health promotion campaign enhanced by distributions of educational material. The immediate needs are for kitchen sets, hygiene kits, mosquito nets, blankets, water purification tablets and, at a later stage, there may be a need for rehabilitation of latrines.

Honduras

The Honduran Red Cross, through its branches in Choluteca, Nacaome and San Lorenzo is carrying out evaluations of the families in high risk areas of the country. The Honduran Red Cross has established an operations centre for the department of Valle in the Nacaome branch.

In Honduras, over 4 thousand families have lost their subsistence crops of beans, maize, sorghum and vegetables. The Honduran Red Cross plans to assist one thousand of the most vulnerable of these families in communities which are considered as priority areas of interventions by the HRC branches. Surveys and identification of beneficiaries are taking place by National Society personnel with the following criteria: those whose houses were flooded, have lost crops and/or animals; most vulnerable families in the community (farmers, single mothers, those with limited income, the disabled; those who are not receiving assistance from other public or private organizations). It is planned to provide 100 pounds of food rations per family for a one month period in order to help to reduce the economic impact of the floods on families who have lost their crops. In addition, family hygiene

kits together with kitchen sets will be provided. It is planned to assist 500 families in the southern part of the country, 200 in the eastern part and 300 in the northern region of the country.

Mexico

The Mexican Red Cross (MRC) has been assisting the victims of floods and mudslides since the beginning of this emergency situation, carrying out activities in search and rescue, first aid, evacuation, damage and needs assessments and the organization of shelters in coordination with state and government authorities. The MRC is distributing food to beneficiaries in the affected areas and has set up collection and distribution centres for clothing and other relief items. To date, the Mexican Red Cross has sent 300 tonnes of relief goods to the affected areas, including 100 tonnes off relief assistance to Veracruz, 174 tonnes to Chiapas, 3 tonnes to Guerrero and 11 tonnes to Puebla.

Nicaragua

Through the Federation, the Nicaraguan Red Cross is working to assist 800 families in the department of Chinandega with food parcels, kitchen kits, and hygiene kits and will also provide support in water and sanitation. At present, 138 volunteers are working in the most affected areas: in the municipalities of Somotillo, Chichigalpa, Puerto Morazán, El Viejo, El Realejo, Villa Nueva in Chindega and in the department of León in the municipalities of Malpaisillo, and Quizaguaque, and in the department of Jinotega in the municipalities of Yalo. Overall, the Nicaraguan Red Cross is thus providing assistance to a total of 1,570 affected families.

Health

Objective: Targeted communities affected by the floods will have an increased awareness of health, hygiene and sanitation issues.

Activities towards this objective will be implemented once the emergency phase of the relief operation has been completed.

Disaster Preparedness

Objective: The capacities of the communities in the affected areas will have been strengthened.

Activities towards this objective will be implemented once the emergency phase of the relief operation has been completed.

Federation Coordination

In ***Costa Rica***, the Costa Rican Red Cross is working closely with national and local authorities to carry out relief activities in the affected areas.

In ***Haiti***, the Haitian National Red Cross Society (HNRCS) is working in coordination with the Departmental Risk and Disaster Management Committee of Artibonite (DCRDM). The HNRCS is also working closely with the PNSs present in the country: the American, Canadian, French, Netherlands and Spanish Red Cross Societies.

In ***Honduras***, the Honduran Red Cross (HRC) is a member of the Permanent Contingency Commission (COPECO) and is working closely with national authorities on the relief effort. At the local level, the HRC is coordinating with local leaders and non-governmental organizations present in the field.

In ***Guatemala***, the National Disaster Secretariat of the National Coordination Committee for the Reduction of Disasters (CONRED) is coordinating relief activities at the national level. The Guatemalan Red Cross is maintaining constant contact with CONRED, and the local branches of the GRC are working with municipal and departmental coordination committees to channel their work in an efficient manner. At the national level, the Federation and PNSs working with the GRC are in contact with the United Way, Ericsson Response, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission (ECHO), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Spanish International Cooperation Agency (AECI), among others. Within the Red Cross Movement, the Guatemalan Red Cross is coordinating with the Federation, the ICRC and the British, Italian, French, German, Netherlands, Norwegian and Spanish Red Cross Societies.

In *Mexico*, the Mexican Red Cross is working closely with national, state and local authorities, including the Mexican Civil Protection Agency to distribute relief items. The Mexican Secretary of Health is also planning to carry out community health days to raise awareness of important health issues, with the participation of the Mexican Red Cross.

In *Nicaragua*, the Nicaraguan Red Cross is coordinating its actions with the national emergency body, SINAPRED, and the PNSs working in the country: the Canadian, Italian, Netherlands and Spanish Red Cross Societies.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and initiatives

- Beneficiary selection criteria focus on the vulnerability of those affected.
- The relief operation is prioritizing assistance to children and the elderly.
- Activities are based on the SPHERE Project Humanitarian Charter and the Code of Conduct for emergency response.
- Transparency will be ensured through the production of regular reports and news bulletins.
- All objectives put forward in the appeal are in line with Strategy 2020, as well as the Strategy for the Movement and the Principles and rules of the Movement.

National Society Capacity Building

The relief operation will further build the capacities of the Costa Rican, Honduran, Guatemalan, Mexican, Nicaraguan and Haitian Red Cross headquarters and branches. Once the relief phase has been completed, further emphasis will be placed on the strengthening of branches, and disaster preparedness and mitigation work in vulnerable communities, in particular in Guatemala.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

The Federation is ensuring the implementation of a communications strategy to profile the emergency operations taking place. Media interviews are being held and press releases and news articles are being placed on the Federation web site. The National Societies involved in the emergency operations are working to provide information relayed from branches in the affected areas and as regards the progress of the relief activities. Given that ECHO funding has been allocated for specific relief activities in Guatemala, visibility of the donor will be highlighted. The operation provides an opportunity to promote the Red Cross and to reach large numbers of people, thus presenting the possibility of mobilizing and recruiting new volunteers, and to familiarize vulnerable groups with Red Cross services. As a member of the International Federation, the National Societies seek to promote the Fundamental Principles in all activities and subsequently facilitate additional visibility of the Red Cross Movement.

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