



CENTRAL AMERICA – FLOODS

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- As weather conditions generally improve in Guatemala, El Salvador, and southern Honduras, with decreased rainfall and subsiding river levels in recent days, USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) is monitoring the potential impact of Hurricane Rina on eastern and northern Honduras, Guatemala’s Caribbean coast, Belize, and Mexico’s Yucatán peninsula. USAID/OFDA has staff on standby in Belize and Mexico to respond as needed.
- On October 23, 2011, USAID/OFDA airlifted emergency relief supplies—including water containers, hygiene kits, blankets, kitchen sets, and rolls of reinforced plastic sheeting for shelter use—from the USAID/OFDA warehouse in Miami, Florida, to San Salvador for distribution to flood-affected people in El Salvador.
- Since October 10, heavy rains associated with tropical depressions have caused floods and landslides throughout Central America, including in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. The floods and landslides have resulted in approximately 110 deaths and have affected approximately 640,000 people to date. U.S. ambassadors to Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras have declared disasters due to the effects of the floods and landslides.
- In response, USAID/OFDA has provided more than \$524,000 for response activities and local procurement and distribution of emergency relief commodities in the region. Between October 12 and 19, USAID/OFDA activated assessment teams in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama to monitor conditions and conduct damage and needs assessments in affected areas. The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) has also provided a total of \$100,000 for local procurement and distribution of emergency relief supplies in El Salvador and Honduras.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

Country	Number Affected	Number Evacuated	Deaths	Source
Guatemala	248,924	25,970	35	GoG ¹ – October 22, 2011
El Salvador	Approximately 300,000	54,903	35	U.N. – October 21, 2011
Honduras	59,920	11,402	29	GoH ² – October 22, 2011
Nicaragua	Nearly 30,000	10,643	15	GoN ³ – October 20, 2011

TOTAL FY 2012 USAID/OFDA HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE CENTRAL AMERICA FLOODS

Total USAID/OFDA Assistance to Guatemala	\$50,000
Total USAID/OFDA Assistance to El Salvador	\$369,231
Total USAID/OFDA Assistance to Honduras	\$105,000
Total USAID/OFDA Assistance to Central America	\$524,231

TOTAL FY 2012 DOD HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE CENTRAL AMERICA FLOODS

Total DoD Assistance to El Salvador	\$40,000
Total DoD Assistance to Honduras	\$60,000
Total DoD Assistance to Central America	\$100,000

¹ Government of Guatemala (GoG)

² Government of Honduras (GoH)

³ Government of Nicaragua (GoN)

Context

- To date in 2011, Latin America and the Caribbean region have experienced 17 named storms—including Hurricane Rina, which developed into a hurricane on October 24—during the Atlantic hurricane season, which lasts from June 1 to November 30. In recent months, above-average rainfall has exacerbated storm impacts in some areas, leading to floods and landslides.
- Between October 14 and 18, the governments of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras declared national states of emergency or calamity due to floods and landslides. As of October 23, the governments of Costa Rica and Panama had not requested international assistance.
- USAID/OFDA prioritizes preparedness and capacity-building activities in Latin America and the Caribbean region to enable rapid response to humanitarian needs as a result of storms and flooding. USAID/OFDA has pre-positioned emergency relief supplies in its warehouse in Miami, Florida, for transport to Central America as needed. In addition, USAID/OFDA has agreements with air charter services in the region for the transportation of personnel and supplies, if required. USAID/OFDA maintains a network of locally-based staff throughout the region, including more than 20 Disaster Risk Management Specialists and more than 300 surge capacity consultants, to provide technical assistance to national governments and assess disaster impacts, as necessary.

Guatemala

- Due to decreased rainfall and improved weather conditions, as of October 22, the GoG National Emergency Response Commission (CONRED) maintained a red alert for only five of Guatemala's 22 departments—a decrease of 14 departments since October 20. Emergency officials at the national emergency operations center (EOC) in Guatemala City and 21 department-level EOCs continue to monitor and respond to the effects of the floods and landslides.
- Since October 10, sustained heavy rainfall associated with a tropical depression has caused flooding and landslides in the majority of Guatemala's departments, resulting in 35 confirmed deaths and affecting nearly 250,000 people, according to CONRED as of October 22. The flooding and landslides have damaged or threatened nearly 22,200 houses and numerous roads and bridges, resulting in the evacuation of nearly 26,000 people. Of nearly 26,000 people who have been evacuated, approximately 15,000 are currently residing in at least 145 emergency shelters.
- As of October 22, CONRED had mobilized approximately 367 metric tons (MT) of humanitarian assistance in response to the present emergency, of which more than 272 MT had been distributed to affected communities as of October 20. The Guatemalan Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations are also contributing to response efforts.
- On October 15, U.S. Ambassador Arnold A. Chacon declared a disaster due to the effects of the floods in Guatemala. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$50,000 through USAID/Guatemala to CONRED for local procurement of emergency relief commodities, including 500 water filters, 3,000 personal hygiene kits, protective gear and equipment for emergency responders, and fuel. On October 21, due to improving conditions, USAID/OFDA began demobilizing the seven-member assessment team stood up on October 12. As of October 23, two team members remained in Guatemala to monitor conditions and coordinate U.S. Government (USG) assistance with CONRED.

El Salvador

- Since October 20, conditions have been improving in El Salvador as rainfall has decreased significantly and river levels have begun gradually to subside. Since mid-October, heavy rainfall associated with a tropical depression has caused flooding and landslides throughout El Salvador, resulting in 35 deaths and affecting an estimated 300,000 people, including nearly 55,000 people currently residing in 681 emergency shelters nationwide, according to the U.N. Emergency Technical Team. Preliminary assessments indicate that floods have affected 182 of the country's 262 municipalities, including damage to schools, health centers, and houses. Damage assessments continue.
- On October 16, U.S. Ambassador Mari Carmen Aponte declared a disaster due to the effects of the floods in El Salvador. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$100,000 through USAID/El Salvador to the Government of El Salvador (GoES) Civil Protection Agency for local procurement of emergency relief commodities—including hygiene kits, kitchen sets, and fuel—and for transportation support. On October 23, USAID/OFDA airlifted 10,200 ten-liter water containers, 9,984 hygiene kits, 2,500 blankets, 1,020 kitchen sets, and 100 rolls of reinforced plastic sheeting for shelter use from the USAID/OFDA warehouse in Miami, Florida, to San Salvador for distribution by the GoES. Valued at more than \$269,000, including transportation, the emergency

relief commodities bring USAID/OFDA's total assistance in response to the floods in El Salvador to more than \$369,000.

- GoES authorities continue to distribute relief supplies, including food rations, hygiene items, bedding, and clothing, to populations in emergency shelters. As of October 19, GoES officials had distributed 470 MT of relief items throughout El Salvador, according to the Central American Coordination Center for the Prevention of Disasters.
- The GoES Civil Protection Agency has distributed nearly 3,000 USAID/OFDA-funded personal hygiene kits—pre-positioned last year—in La Paz, San Vicente, and Usulután departments. Each hygiene kit contains soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, laundry detergent, and other hygiene items and meets the hygiene needs of a family of five for approximately two weeks. USAID/OFDA is also coordinating the distribution of USAID/OFDA-funded toolkits, containing shovels, pickaxes, and mattocks, to community civil protection commissions in La Paz, Ahuachapán, and Usulután departments.
- USAID/OFDA's nine-person assessment team in El Salvador continues to conduct rapid damage and needs assessments, assist with and monitor the distribution of USAID/OFDA-funded relief supplies, and coordinate efforts with the GoES.
- In addition, DoD is providing a total of \$40,000 in humanitarian assistance to El Salvador for the local purchase of mattresses, blankets, and kitchen kits for distribution in Ahuachapán, La Paz and San Vicente departments, as well as for materials to build temporary shelters in Morazán Department.

Honduras

- Conditions continue to improve in southern Honduras, and displaced populations continue to return home as floodwaters recede and river levels return to normal rainy-season levels, according to the USAID/OFDA assessment team. The Inter-American Highway between Tegucigalpa and the southern zone, closed due to a landslide the previous week, has reopened. However, in eastern Honduras, rains associated with Hurricane Rina continue, potentially resulting in additional flash flooding and mudslides in mountainous terrain. On October 23, in anticipation of the strengthening of the tropical depression that is now Hurricane Rina, the GoH Permanent Emergency Commission (COPECO) issued a yellow alert for the Bay Islands and the departments of Gracias a Dios, Colon, Atlántida, Olancho, Yoro, Choluteca, and Valle, as well as green alerts for 10 other departments.
- Since mid-October, sustained heavy rainfall associated with a tropical depression has caused flooding and landslides throughout Honduras, resulting in 29 deaths and affecting nearly 60,000 people, according to COPECO. The floods and landslides have also affected nearly 10,700 acres of agricultural land and damaged houses, roads, and bridges. As of October 22, approximately 6,900 individuals resided in emergency shelters—a decrease of approximately 1,100 people since the figure reported on October 20. COPECO is leading GoH response efforts, and, in collaboration with the U.N. World Food Program (WFP), has distributed approximately 17 MT of food rations to affected families.
- On October 17, U.S. Ambassador Lisa Kubiske declared a disaster due to the effects of the floods in Honduras. In response, USAID/OFDA provided a total of \$100,000 to Save the Children (SC) and Plan International for child protection activities and for local procurement and distribution of emergency relief commodities, including hygiene kits, kitchen sets, mattresses, and blankets. In addition, through its Regional Disaster Assistance Program, USAID/OFDA provided 1,334 gallons of helicopter fuel to COPECO to support rescue and relief operations in flood-affected areas, valued at \$5,000. A two-person USAID/OFDA assessment team—with additional surge capacity consultants on standby to deploy, if necessary—continues to monitor conditions in Honduras and monitor distribution of USAID/OFDA-funded emergency relief commodities.
- On October 20, implementing partner Plan International began USAID/OFDA-supported psychological support and child protection activities in 11 emergency shelters in Marcovia, Triunfo, and Namasigue municipalities in Choluteca Department. In addition, since October 15, USAID/OFDA has worked with SC to distribute pre-positioned USAID/OFDA-funded emergency relief commodities—including 1,025 hygiene kits, bedding for nearly 700 people, and 600 kitchen sets—to flood-affected families in Valle and Choluteca departments. As of October 20, SC had distributed USAID/OFDA-funded supplies benefitting 983 flood-affected families. Since early October, USAID/OFDA partner World Vision has also been distributing pre-positioned hygiene kits to flood-affected families in Honduras.
- In addition, DoD is providing \$60,000 in humanitarian assistance to Honduras for the local procurement of mattresses, blankets, and kitchen kits for distribution to affected families in Choluteca Department and in Nacaome, the capital of Valle Department.

Nicaragua

- Since mid-October, sustained heavy rainfall associated with a tropical depression has caused flooding and landslides in 13 of Nicaragua's 15 departments, resulting in 15 deaths and directly affecting nearly 30,000 people, according to the GoN National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation, and Response (SINAPRED). Floods have also damaged thousands of houses, approximately 1,050 km of roads, and thousands of acres of agricultural land, SINAPRED reports. As of October 20, more than 10,600 people were living in 110 emergency shelters nationwide, according to SINAPRED, though the figure includes some people still displaced from floods in 2010.
- WFP plans to distribute USAID-funded relief commodities pre-positioned in Nicaragua. Based on priority needs identified by the GoN, the supplies include plastic tarps, water containers, water filters, flashlights, and tools and materials for temporary shelter construction. The Nicaraguan Red Cross will help distribute the supplies, according to the two-person USAID/OFDA assessment team in Nicaragua. The team activated on October 12 and continues to monitor conditions in Nicaragua and coordinate response efforts with SINAPRED, WFP, and USAID/Nicaragua.

Costa Rica

- Since October 10, heavy rainfall associated with a tropical depression has affected hundreds of communities and damaged roads, bridges, and public service networks throughout Costa Rica. Since October 21, conditions have improved in most of the country due to decreased rainfall, although rainfall associated with Hurricane Rina is affecting southern areas. On October 22, in anticipation of the hurricane, the Government of Costa Rica (GoCR) National Risk Prevention and Emergency Response Commission (CNE) declared a yellow alert for the Central Valley and entire Pacific coast and a green alert for the remainder of the country. CNE officials are monitoring the Claro River in southern Costa Rica, where a landslide has partially obstructed the waterway, and have alerted nearby communities to the situation.
- As of October 22, only 105 people remained in emergency shelters, a decrease from the 995 people in shelters on October 20, according to the CNE. Flooding and landslides have damaged dozens of roads and bridges, including portions of the Inter-American Highway north and south of San José, which remain impassable. Damage assessments remain ongoing; however, the GoCR had not requested international assistance as of October 23.
- Staff at the USAID/OFDA regional office in San José continue to work in coordination with the CNE and the U.S. Embassy in San José to evaluate flood-related damages and humanitarian needs. Two USAID/OFDA surge consultants based in Costa Rica remain on alert to assist, if required.

Panama

- Heavy rainfall in Panama has led to overflowing rivers, resulted in mudslides, and damaged homes and bridges in Chiriquí and Darien departments. Due to weather conditions and poor access to remote locations, a number of communities remain isolated and without access to emergency relief. On October 20, USAID/OFDA activated a three-person assessment team in Panama to monitor conditions in the country.
- In Chiriquí, blockage from a large landslide over the upper Palo Blanco River has caused a natural dam, and associated flooding poses a risk to communities downstream. On October 20, as a precautionary measure, authorities evacuated 680 people from the Barú district downstream, according to the USAID/OFDA assessment team. Authorities have opened emergency shelters and are providing food and other relief supplies to displaced populations. Authorities are monitoring additional rivers and reservoirs with high water levels and may evacuate additional populations, according to the USAID/OFDA team. Damage assessments remain ongoing; however, the Government of Panama had not requested international assistance as of October 23.

FY 2012 USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO CENTRAL AMERICA FOR FLOODS

Implementing Partner	Activity	Location	Amount
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO GUATEMALA			
GoG CONRED	Emergency Relief Commodities	Affected Areas	\$50,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO GUATEMALA			\$50,000

USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR			
GoES Civil Protection Agency	Emergency Relief Commodities and Transportation	Affected Areas	\$369,231
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR			\$369,231
DOD ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR			
GoES Civil Protection Agency	Emergency Relief Commodities	Affected Areas	\$40,000
TOTAL DOD ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR			\$40,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA AND DOD ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR			\$409,231

USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO HONDURAS			
Plan International	Emergency Relief Commodities and Protection Activities	Affected Areas	\$50,000
SC	Emergency Relief Commodities and Protection Activities	Affected Areas	\$50,000
GoH COPECO	Fuel	Affected Areas	\$5,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO HONDURAS			\$105,000
DOD ASSISTANCE TO HONDURAS			
GoH	Emergency Relief Commodities	Affected Areas	\$60,000
TOTAL DOD ASSISTANCE TO HONDURAS			\$60,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA AND DOD ASSISTANCE TO HONDURAS			\$165,000

TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO CENTRAL AMERICA FOR FLOODS	
Total USAID/OFDA Assistance to Central America for Floods ¹	\$524,231
Total DoD Assistance to Central America for Floods	\$100,000
TOTAL USG ASSISTANCE TO CENTRAL AMERICA FOR FLOODS	\$624,231

¹ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of October 24, 2011.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts in Central America is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations.
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID: www.usaid.gov – Keyword: Donations
 - The Center for International Disaster Information: or +1.202.821.1999.
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int.
 - A list of humanitarian organizations that accept cash donations for humanitarian relief efforts in Central America can be found at www.interaction.org.