LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Humanitarian Snapshot: January - February 2018

As of 28 February 2018

OVERVIEW

MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA:
A 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck Oaxaca, Mexico, a region still recovering from significant damages after a September 2017 earthquake that killed hundreds.

Flooding in Guatemala and Panama and heavy rainfall in Honduras caused significant damage to homes and crops. National authorities have responded by delivering food and dry goods to those affected.

SOUTH AMERICA:
Recent data from OCHA Colombia and the Information Management and Analysis Unit (UMAIC) reveals that internal displacement is on the rise, as approximately 50 per cent more people have been displaced in January and February 2018 compared to the same reporting period in 2017.

Persistent flooding across the continent has affected more than 125,000 people in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia and Paraguay.

THE CARIBBEAN:
Nearly six months after Hurricane Maria devastated Dominica, the Caribbean country has managed to resumed public services and reopen public schools. However, 80 per cent of the island still lacks electricity, adequate roofing for houses remains a concern, and school attendance has yet to reach normal levels.

In Haiti, data for January 2018 deportations from Dominican Republic migration authorities shows a 245 per cent increase from January 2017.

AFFECTED PEOPLE BY EMERGENCY TYPE AND BY COUNTRY (JAN - FEB 2018)

- Floods: 169,448
- Earthquakes: 104,340
- Storm: 65,683
- Forced Displacements: 3,500
- Cold Wave: 733

TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE AFFECTED: 344,280

DISTRIBUTION OF AFFECTED PEOPLE

- Mexico: 100,000
- Bolivia: 87,500
- Honduras: 65,683
- Guatemala: 37,871
- Paraguay: 23,100
- Argentina: 12,900
- Colombia: 8,550
- Peru: 6,740
- Panama: 1,360
- Ecuador: 576

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

The numbers presented are for orientation and not conclusive. Sources are reports from national emergency authorities from public websites.

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Feedback: ocha-rolac@un.org | www.unocha.org/rolac | www.reliefweb.int
On 16 February, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake damaged more than 6,000 homes in Oaxaca, Mexico, according to the Governor of the state. Oaxaca is one of the many regions in Mexico that still recovering from the effects of earthquakes in September 2017 that killed hundreds and toppled buildings.

Authorities in Oaxaca have requested emergency funding to supply food, shelter and health services, rebuild towns affected by the earthquake and repair damaged infrastructure.

A cold front passed over the Caribbean coast of Honduras in early February, causing high speed winds, increased rainfall and some flooding in the Colon, Cortés, El Paraíso, Islas de la Bahía and Santa Bárbara departments.

Despite limited access caused by the effects of the storm on road networks, authorities in Honduras were able to distribute more than 5,000 lbs. of food rations, as well as hygiene kits, mattresses, and blankets, to people in need in the affected communities.

Floods in Guatemala and Panama in 2018 have damaged more than 14,500 hectares of farmland in Guatemala, equivalent 1.4 per cent of national production, according to the Guatemalan Ministry of Agriculture. The most affected departments are Alta Verapaz, Izabal, Petén, and Quiché.

In Panama, the National Civil Protection System (SINAPROC) reported that nearly 300 families living in riverside communities in the Colón province were affected in January by the overflow of nearby rivers, prompting the evacuation of some 175 people.

Authorities in both countries have carried out damage assessments and have delivered aid to the affected communities, including food kits and dry goods.
Per OCHA Colombia and the Information Management and Analysis Unit (UMAIC), more than 3,500 people have been forcibly displaced in 14 mass displacements (50 or more people) between January and February 2018, a 50 per cent increase from the same reporting period in 2017. Indigenous and Afro-descendant people represent 41 per cent of this number.

The Ombudsman’s Office of Colombia has expressed concern for the security and protection needs that these movements are generating.

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos has requested international assistance to deal with the rising number of Venezuelans that are crossing the border into Colombia. Per official immigration figures, the number of Venezuelans in Colombia rose 62 per cent in the last half of 2017.

In Brazil, a state of emergency was declared for the border state of Roraima. UNHCR reports that protection and WASH are priority needs in the shelters set up for Venezuelans in Roraima.

A magnitude 6.8 earthquake struck Arequipa, Peru, some 350 miles southeast of the capital city of Lima, killing at least two people, injuring more than 100, knocking out power and collapsing homes in the area, affecting some 780 families.

National authorities quickly deployed debris clearing equipment, and worked to restore damaged water supplies and deliver temporary housing units to the affected.

Flooding caused by seasonal rainfall has affected countries throughout South America so far in 2018. The overflow of the Pilcomayo river forced the evacuation of 10,000 in Argentina, nearly all of Bolivia’s nine departments have reported flooding, the overflow of multiple rivers in western Colombia have affected at least 1,000 families and Paraguayan authorities have assisted some 4,000 families affected by the overflow of the Paraguay river.
The Jamaican Government declared a state of emergency in St. James on 18 January due to the recent increase of violence in the streets, with more than 300 murders recorded in 2017. The emergency period was extended on 30 January to cover five months until 2 May.

According to the Jamaican Constabulary Force, the national murder count so far in 2018 represents a 17 per cent increase over the comparative period for 2017.

The Dominican Republic's General Directorate of Migration (DGM) indicated that between 1 January and 22 February, a total of 14,402 Haitians have been deported or have returned to Haiti – 12,074 in January and 2,328 between from 1-22 February 2018. Per DGM data, the 12,074 deportees in January constitute a considerable increase in deportation cases of Haitians, representing a 245 per cent increase of recorded cases compared to the same reporting period in 2017.

According to the Living Water Community's Ministry to Refugees and Asylum Seekers (LWC) who work in Trinidad and Tobago as implementing partners of UNHCR, the number of Venezuelans asylum seekers and refugees in Trinidad and Tobago is increasing, noting a nine fold increase from January to December 2017. The LWC also stated that they are especially vulnerable to exploitation and even sexual and gender-based violence.

Normalcy is returning to Dominica as public services resume and private business reopen. Public schools have also reopened, although attendance levels are still below normal. Inadequate roofing for houses remains a concern. Eighty per cent of the population is still without access to electricity. The slow recovery of the agriculture and tourism sectors continues to affect the livelihoods of many in Dominica.