

Trinidad and Tobago: Floods

FLASH UPDATE No. 02 (as of 5 November 2018)



This report is produced by OCHA ROLAC in collaboration with the United Nations Emergency Technical Team in Trinidad. It was issued on 7 November 2018. It covers the period from 18 October to 7 November 2018.

Situation

On 18-19 October 2018, Trinidad and Tobago experienced torrential rainfall across the country. According to Government officials, Trinidad alone received a full month's worth of rain during the two days, with estimates that 80 per cent of the country was affected by flooding. Floods and landslides affected communities and public services and blocked main roads. Central and eastern regional corporations were the most affected, namely Chaguanas Borough, Couva-Tabaquite -Talparo, Mayaro-Rio Claro, Sangre Grande and Tunapuna (Flash Note No. 1).

Shelters were activated across the country and school services were temporarily disrupted. On 20 October, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago activated its National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) at the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM). The Government has taken the lead through ODPM. No international/external support has been requested. (Flash Note No. 1).

There have been no reports of any outbreaks of diseases. All major health facilities remain open and ready to receive a surge in patient load. Health centres remain vigilant of increased health threats. There are reports that some refugees and asylum-seekers are stranded in some of the affected, as well as an increasing number of reports of cases of gender-based violence (GBV).

The Trinidad and Tobago United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETT) continues to be in contact with Government and local counterparts involved in the recovery process. Additionally, UN agencies continue to collaborate with their line ministries to provide technical advice and develop strategies and best practices for future disaster response coordination.



Figure 1: Map of Affected Areas

Response

As of 7 November 2018, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is in the process of carrying out assessments of shelters with the Office of the Prime Minister for the implementation of the referral pathway for gender-based violence (GBV). In terms of health, the Ministry of Health continues to update on adverse weather with its reporting, as well as providing health surveillance and performing community outreach. Additionally, the Ministry of Health is carrying out post-flood clean-up to prevent waterborne diseases and ensure food safety and WASH. Health education is being provided via vehicular public service announcements and psychosocial sessions are being offered.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) continues to aid the Living Water Community, particularly in the most affected areas such as Kelly Village, where there are several refugees. Similarly, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is aiding migrants, particularly Venezuelans, through medical brochures, food, and rental accommodation. UNFPA is in the process of carrying out assessments of shelters with the Office of the Prime Minister for the implementation of the referral pathway for GBV. IOM, in partnership with UNFPA, is distributing blankets, mosquito nets and baby kits to migrants.

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) is undertaking a series of projects to ensure the protection of children:

- Child protection in disasters advertisements are being published in local newspapers.
- Child protection posters are being distributed to Ministries for sharing online.
- Child protection posters are being distributed and posted in emergency shelters.
- Child protection posters are being distributed on social media.
- Facility managers and defence force protection officers are also being briefed on child protection guidelines.

Through the Office of the Prime Minister, UNICEF has also been offering psychosocial support to children with the Return to Happiness (RtH) programme in two shelters (La Horquetta Regional Complex and La Horquetta South Government). There are plans for the programme to be implemented in schools as well.

The UNETT is assessing its response to the recent flooding to strengthen its activation and to develop a common approach along with its stakeholders to respond to cases of emergency. Moreover, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) continues to work closely with the UNETT Chairperson and the Office of the Resident Coordinator to provide strategic advice. Furthermore, the Ministry of Agriculture is developing a disaster management plan, which needs to be supported and finalized along with the ODPM.

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