This report is produced by OCHA in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the period from 3 to 6 November 2020. The next report will be issued on or around 9 November.

KEY POINTS

- Although Eta has now cleared Central America and is out over the Caribbean Sea regaining strength, the continued persistent rainfall and resulting floods across Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and parts of Costa Rica, Panama and Belize have affected hundreds of thousands of people.

- Several governments are either in contact with international organizations and humanitarian partners on the ground or have requested international support to help deal with the scale of the impacts and likely immediate needs in Shelter, WASH, Food Security, Health and Protection.

- Humanitarian organizations are readying resources, personnel and supplies to assist response efforts across Central America once conditions allow for complete evaluations.

- While Governments and organizations undertake response efforts in Central America, Eta is making its way over the Caribbean Sea in a north-east direction, potentially affecting Cuba and the Cayman Islands.

130K People affected in Nicaragua
Source: SINAPRED

104.5K People affected in Guatemala
Source: CONRED

1.6M People affected in Honduras
Source: COPECO

1.7K People in shelters in El Salvador
Source: Government of El Salvador

1.3K People in shelters in Costa Rica
Source: CNE

2.1K People in shelters in Panama
Source: SINAPROC

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Eta entered over Nicaragua’s north-eastern shores as a Category 4 storm on 3 November, slowly moving across northern Nicaragua and into eastern Honduras in a north-west direction towards north-eastern Guatemala and then the Caribbean through 6 November. During its passage, Eta downgraded to a tropical storm and then to a tropical depression, decreasing rainfall that the United States’ National Hurricane Center (NHC) had marked at more than 600mm of rain at its peak, as well as maximum windspeeds as high as 235 km/h.

Despite the significant decrease in intensity, Eta, throughout its various stages, drenched vulnerable communities across Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, as well as parts of Belize, Costa Rica and Panama, causing rising river levels, flooding and landslides that have spurred immediate action from national disaster management agencies in these countries. While authorities are still determining the exact numbers of people affected and their needs, along with death tolls, information rolling out of affected countries, both official and unofficial, cites hundreds of thousands of affected people in Central America; the regional Central American Integration System (SICA) estimates that Eta’s impacts have affected at least 3 million people across the region.
The National Coordinator for Disaster Reduction (CONRED) in Guatemala reports more than 104,500 people affected, Honduras’ Permanent Commission for Contingencies (COPECO) reports more than 1.6 million people affected, the Government of El Salvador reports 1,700 people in 44 shelters as a preventive measure, Costa Rican water authorities say 100,000 people have had their safe water supply affected and Panama’s National Civil Protection indicates more than 1,000 affected families. Nicaragua, the first country to take on Eta’s rains, will issue a detailed report on 9 November, but has so far said there are 130,000 affected people, many of whom have partially or completely lost their homes and now lack access to water and sanitation and food security.

As disaster response personnel scramble to aid affected people in communities suffering Eta’s ongoing impact, several governments have reached out to international organizations and the UN for support. Nicaraguan officials have expressed interest in seeing how international assistance can form part of their recovery plans. The Government of Honduras issued a formal request for international assistance as UN teams and humanitarian networks work to identify available response resources and personnel. Humanitarian teams and inter-agency sector working groups in Guatemala are similarly preparing amid ongoing exchanges with CONRED. El Salvador’s Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) is identifying resources ahead of a potential response. UN emergency teams in Belize and Costa Rica are ready to support national civil protections if requested. Regionally, the Central American Disaster Prevention Coordination Centre (CEPREDENAC) are in contact and supporting national efforts and coordinating potential regional mechanisms with SICA.

Eta will likely further strain health and social protection systems still dealing with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in Central America that continues to have a significant impact on health, food security, nutrition, protection, livelihoods and education. The pandemic further exacerbated existing needs in countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, with recent humanitarian needs overview citing 5.2 million in need prior to the pandemic out of a collective population of 30.7 million.

Additionally, Eta comes during the region’s rainy season that often give way to spikes in seasonal illnesses such as influenza and vector-borne diseases such as dengue, zika and chikungunya, factors that pose additional health risks to communities seeking to recover from Eta’s destructive effects.

Although Eta is clear of Central America, NHC forecasts that the system will regain strength as a tropical storm on a north-eastward path towards parts of the Caribbean, including Cuba and the Cayman Islands, in coming days. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) is on alert and monitoring the system as Regional Response Mechanism partners prepare to convene to determine preparedness actions.

**HUMANITARIAN FINANCING**

Several organizations are either readying, or already making use of, internal financing mechanisms to kickstart immediate response efforts while they await damage assessments and needs evaluations that will yield the required information for more comprehensive project financing.

At present, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) reports that the Nicaraguan Red Cross and Honduran Red Cross are each receiving US$488,900.00 from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support 10,000 people and are exploring other financing mechanisms as the severity and scope of the impacts become clearer.

**HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**

**Pre-positioned supplies and personnel (El Salvador/Guatemala/Honduras)**

OCHA created a dedicated matrix to track supply pre-positioning in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Reporting partners across the three countries indicate that non-food items (NFIs) and response personnel pre-positioning make up more than half of all activities between the three countries, with a strong emphasis on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Health and Food Security. There are currently 47 reported activities from 30 reporting organizations across 8 sectors. For more information, please visit the pre-position matrix at: [https://bit.ly/354qMzU](https://bit.ly/354qMzU)
Honduras

OCHA’s 345W tracking matrix for response activities in Honduras currently features 99 activities from 15 organizations in 14 departments. Reporting partners are prioritizing WASH, Shelter and Protection response activities, as well as coordination and information management activities. Reporting partners are preparing to deliver some 40,000 litres of water and deploy 53 staff between NGOs and UN agencies. For more information, please visit the Honduras 345W at: https://bit.ly/366xBAs

Guatemala

OCHA’s 345W tracking matrix for response activities in Honduras currently features 29 activities from 6 organizations in 4 departments. Reporting partners are similarly prioritizing WASH activities, as well as focusing on Food and Nutritional Security. Partners are working to deliver 135,000 litres of water and 1,000 emergency kits. For more information, please visit the Guatemala 345W at: https://bit.ly/3k5I4RM

Shelter

Needs:

Nicaragua
- According to the National Disaster Prevention System (SINAPRED), there are some 47,000 people in shelters across the north and centre of the country.

Honduras
- COPECO indicates they have opened 724 shelters which currently host some 9,000 people.
- PAHO/WHO identifies a need to ensure that those sheltered have access to medical assistance, medicines, supplies for people with acute respiratory infections and biosecurity supplies to prevent COVID-19 transmission.

El Salvador
- The Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources reports 1,786 people in 44 out of 1,152 available shelters, most of them in the departments of La Unión, La Libertad, and Ahuachapán (http://emergencia.marn.gob.sv/).

Response:

Regional
- IOM is contributing $270,000.00 to respond to needs in shelters with NFI, with $100,000 for Honduras, $70,000 for El Salvador and $50,000 for Guatemala; the remainder will go towards Belize and/or Panama if required.

Nicaragua
- The Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) indicates they have received requests to support SINAPRED with hygiene kits, plastic and bedding to support 4,000 people in shelters.
- Save the Children indicate they are supporting approximately 300 affected families.
- Plan International can provide support shelters in the urban areas with the delivery of humanitarian aid kits.

Guatemala
- IOM, in coordination with CONRED and the Office of the First Lady (SOSEP), is activating the Shelter cluster, as requested by the HCT, and are convening with relevant partners.
- UNICEF is acquiring hygiene kits for schools being turned into shelters in compliance with health protocols.
• Save the Children, who is present in Guatemala City, Quiché and Chiquimula in the Dry Corridor, has pre-positioned stock for shelters and are ready to distribute at CONRED’s request.
• Plan International in Alta Verapaz is providing hygiene kits for families with children under 5 years old, feminine hygiene kits and shelter kits containing mattresses, sheets, pillows and food rations.

Honduras
• UNICEF, with partners, is in capacity to provide mental health and psychosocial support in remote communities and temporary shelters, reaching approximately 2,000 children.
• PAHO/WHO is in the process of acquiring a batch of 40,000 antigen tests and 300,000 PCR test reactions to donate to the Ministry of Health for the early detection of cases of COVID-19 in shelters.

Belize
• IOM will support 75 displaced families in Cayo with water, hygiene and food.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Needs:

Nicaragua
• SINAPRED indicates damages to systems as well as thousands of contaminated wells and thousands of damaged latrines as a result of overflowing rivers.

Response:

Regional
• UNICEF is liaising with national WASH working groups and reviewing hurricane and COVID-19 WASH plans. It is working to ensure minimum WASH working standards and reviewing capacity mapping for supplies and resources.

Nicaragua
• The Nicaraguan Red Cross prepared logistics support to deploy to Bilwi in RACCN to respond to WASH needs.
• UNICEF pre-positioned WASH supplies to support 15,000 people including 6,000 children. These supplies include 3,000 family hygiene kits, 3,000 water containers, nine 5,000-litre water tanks, 1,500 hygiene kits and enough water tablets for about 3,400 m³ of water. Supplies are standby for delivery to the Ministry of Health and SINAPRED.

Honduras
• UNICEF is ready to activate agreements with WASH partners to procure emergency WASH kits and services and is monitoring WASH access conditions in temporary shelters, as well as COVID-19 prevention conditions. UNICEF has re-allocated internal resources to support a joint WASH and Protection humanitarian response in temporary shelters which may expand pending financing availability.

Guatemala
• UNICEF has three pre-positioned water treatment plants available for immediate response in Izabal, Petén and Alta Verapaz. The UNICEF-led WASH cluster is active and monitoring the developments.

El Salvador
• Three implementing partners (PROVIDA, ACUA and CORDES) have pre-positioned WASH supplies for families and children at shelters, including 400 hygiene kits for families, soap, disinfectants and other cleaning items for shelters.
Belize

- Per UNICEF, WASH partners are procuring supplies for delivery if needed, some of which have also been pre-positioned at district level. WASH partners have also distributed hygiene kits to the Government for national and sub-national delivery. These materials are available for delivery to flood-affected areas upon request.

Protection

Response:

Nicaragua

- Plan International is working to provide friendly spaces for the care of children and their families and are focused on childhood protection.

Honduras

- UNHCR set up 13 refugee housing units (RHUs) in Tegucigalpa that can house up to 60 people. The RHUs are fully furnished, with WASH facilities and a communal kitchen already installed. Additional RHUs are expected to be installed together with COPECO in Comayagua and San Pedro Sula, both as accommodation sites for affected people and as COVID-19 screening check points.
- UNICEF will provide immediate support for the set up of three emergency shelters in Puerto Cortés, which will provide temporary shelter for 400 girls, boys and families. Other emergency requests from hard-hit coastal towns are being considered for rapid support, mainly through the rapid activation of temporary shelters.
- UNICEF and partners have the capacity to provide mental health and psychosocial support in remote communities and temporary shelters, reaching approximately 2,000 children, and protection services and support in temporary shelters for 300 boys, girls and adolescents and their families.
- UNICEF and partners are providing immediate relief in shelters, such as psychosocial support, protection services to affected families and children and information to shelter coordinators on ensuring protection of girls, boys, women and other vulnerable groups.
- Through the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) sub-group, UNICEF and partners are coordinating the provision of services for GBV survivors in shelters and advocating for the continuity of such services by central and municipal authorities.

Health

Needs:

- PAHO/WHO are expressing concern over the potential overlap of the impact of Eta on health conditions with vector-borne diseases such as dengue, zika and chikungunya, diseases prone to spiking in the aftermath of storms that leave behind large areas of standing water that can become vector breeding grounds.

Nicaragua

- SINAPRED indicates severe damages to a regional hospital, health centre, three community health centres and a maternal health centre, and are expressing concern over COVID-19 contagion risk, as well as vector-borne diseases.

Honduras

- PAHO/WHO identify a lack of personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning and disinfection supplies for health personnel and volunteers in health facilities and shelters, as well as the need to ensure the availability of medical assistance and medicines. The rehabilitation of damaged health facilities is also a priority need.

Response:

Nicaragua

- WHO has established a health task force to support assessments for identifying immediate needs, analysis of the health network and the preparation of health aid kits, including PPE for COVID-19 and hygiene kits.
Honduras

- PAHO/WHO report that, together with the Ministry of Health, they have begun a preliminary health facility evaluation to ascertain damages by the storm, as well as coordinating the use of triage spaces for the separate treatment of people who test positive for COVID-19 in shelters.
- PAHO/WHO continue to provide the Ministry of Health with technical support to prepare the response, including shelter management guidelines taking COVID-19 into account, and strengthen information and epidemiological surveillance systems and the resilience of health services.

Food Security

Needs:

Nicaragua

- SINAPRED says there are meals for people in shelters, but that there are still needs for providing affected families outside of shelters with meals.

Response:

Nicaragua

- At the request of the Government, WFP pre-positioned 80 metric tons of food assistance in the region. Prior to Eta’s arrival, WFP dispatched 72 metric tons of rice and 8 metric tons of vegetable oil to RACCN. WFP also supported the Government in the preparation of food baskets to be distributed in Bilwi.
- World Vision in Nicaragua is coordinating with SINAPRED to deliver 300 food kits and emergency kits in coordination with municipal authorities.

Honduras

- World Vision in Honduras is coordinating with COPECO to deliver kits purchased with internal resources to the departments of Yoro, Copán and Intibucá. World Vision is targeting some 11,000 people.

GENERAL COORDINATION

OCHA has led meetings of the Regional Group on Risks, Emergencies and Disasters for Latin America and the Caribbean (REDLAC) to gather information from regional sector leads and partners on pre-positioned supplies, resources, logistics, information, response considerations under existing emergency declarations and status of requests for international assistance and general coordination. OCHA is also working to mobilize teams to affected countries, gathering information on deployments, resources and tracking support requests.


Background on the crisis

Hurricane Eta began affecting north-eastern Nicaragua and northern Honduras in the early morning of 3 November following rapid intensification from tropical storm to Category 4 hurricane on 2 November and moving over northern Nicaragua and parts of Honduras and Guatemala while decreasing to a tropical storm and then tropical depression. Eta’s rains caused significant flooding in parts Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala, as well as parts of El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama and Belize. The impacts of Eta’s persistent rains have prompted immediate action from national and regional disaster response offices and humanitarian counterparts to respond to the needs of potentially millions of vulnerable people. With Eta’s formation, the 2020 Atlantic hurricane season joins the 2005 season as the busiest ever recorded with 28 storms each.

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For more information, please visit www.unocha.org www.reliefweb.int
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