

BOLIVIA: Forest fire Emergency

Situation Report No. 1 of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)

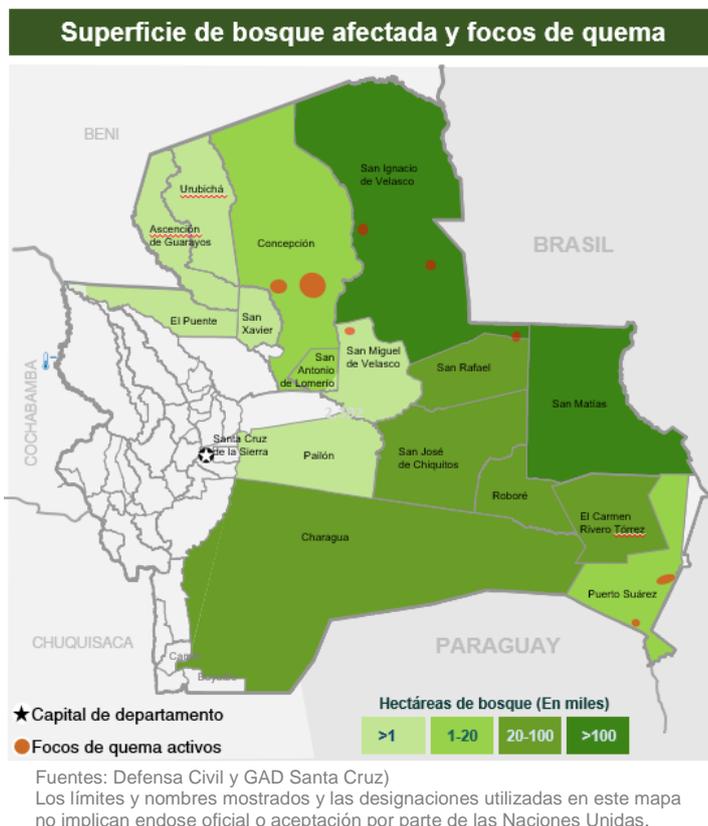
(27,08,19)



This report is prepared by OCHA and the Office of the Resident Coordinator in Bolivia in collaboration with the partners of the Humanitarian Country Team.

Highlights

- The department of Santa Cruz declared as departmental emergency due to forest fires (August 16).
- President Morales announced the formation of an "Environmental Emergency Cabinet" with the participation of the ministries of the Presidency, Government, Defense, Environment and Water, Rural Development and Land and Health to deal with the fires of Chiquitania and the East Bolivian (August 21).
- President Morales welcomed voluntary international assistance that contributes to fire control (August 25).
- 521 thousand hectares of forest and grassland are destroyed
- 1,817 families affected in nine municipalities
- The Resident Coordinator has activated the HCT.
- UN Agencies and HCT members have expressed willingness to mobilize economic and technical resources to assist mainly in post-fire care and recovery process.
- The Government informed to be able to cover any humanitarian needs, so the needs expressed are for fire forests first response.



521 k* hectares of forest and grasslands	497 Heat focuses	1.817 Affected families	3700 People engaged in the response	8 Destroyed houses	40 People evacuated
--	----------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	------------------------------	-------------------------------

Fuente: Comando de Incidente (VIDECI)

Situation Overview

Based on information received from the Ministry of Environment and Water (MMAyA) on August 26th, 521 thousand hectares are affected by fire forest in the Chiquitania region, Department of Santa Cruz, and 274 hectares of crops affected. Medias inform that the fires destroyed 738 thousand hectares. The presence of heat sources is 497. The greatest heat sources are located in the municipalities of Puerto Suarez (208), San Matías (88), Concepción (43) and San José de Chiquitos (41).

The Forestry and Land Control and Social Control Authority (ABT) indicated that between 1st and 18th August 17 thousand heat sources were registered, of which 11 thousand were located in the Department of Santa Cruz, destroying in short period 471 thousand hectares of forests and grasslands. The Bolivia Documentation and Information Center (CEDIB) warned in 2016 through a study that Bolivia loses 350 thousand hectares of forest annually due to legal and clandestine deforestation.

The department of Santa Cruz declared a disaster on August 16th due to forest fires (D.D. No. 287/19).

The humanitarian impact as of August 26th, identifies 1817 affected families, in nine municipalities of the department of Santa Cruz. The most affected municipalities considering the number of families are Robore (546), San Rafael (400), San José de Chiquitos (364) and San Ignacio de Velasco (350). Eight affected families with eight homes destroyed are reported.

The Minister of Defense informed that the fires near the communities have been attended and 40 people are evacuated. Also, heat and fire sources tend to decrease between 40 and 70%, however, air pollution is present in the affected areas, and require suspension of school activities in Robore municipality.

Registered forest fires will affect livelihoods, so a multisectoral assessment to evaluate the impact will be necessary to carry out, once the fires are under control.

Since Friday, August 23th, the Boeing 747 "supertanker" aircraft with capacity of 70,000 liters of water is operating from the "Virus Viru" Airport to support controlling fires.

More than 3700 people from ministries, government, army, police, firefighters, volunteers and other instances are involved in fire forest response.

President Morales on August 25th welcomed the voluntary international assistance that contributes to fire control. Based on President Morales decision the Foreign Ministry informed on several expressions of support from different countries and organizations. The Chancellor said that air support is mainly required to fight the fire, since there are field personal to support the work. He also informed that Peru will send two helicopters Mi 17 to support the fire fighting in Chiquitania.

Additionally, he mentioned that White Helmets from Argentina is willing support with specialized technical, as well as Chile and the US for technical advice. Also, he indicated that on 26th august the Bolivian ambassador in UN will meet with the UN secretariat to discuss on possibly support from UNS organizations.

Coordination

On August 21th, President Morales announced the formation of an "Environmental Emergency Cabinet" with the ministries of the Presidency, Government, Defense, Environment, Rural Development and Land, and Health to deal with the fires of Chiquitania and in All of eastern Bolivia. The Emergency Cabinet is operating from Robore municipality in Santa Cruz where a situation room is established considering four sectors for first response: health, water, environment, and agriculture and livelihoods.

This Committee has been decentralized into three Tactical Commands that operate from Roboré (central), San Ignacio de Velasco and Puerto Suárez; the FF. AA coordinates these Tactical Commands, which are acting with different instances of the National Government and Bolivian Police.

The Government of Santa Cruz and First Response Teams, volunteers and private workers work under decentralized coordination.

Operational coordination of the first response is the responsibility of the Ministry of Defense, through the Vice Ministry of Civil Defense (VIDECI), to support the work of Civil Defense, staff of Intervention and Rapid Support Group of Swiss Cooperation (4 people) and one OCHA staff is supporting information management. The Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD) assumed responsibility for the post-fire response.

The Red Cross initiated a national campaign to collect donations for subsequent shipment to Santa Cruz since five days ago and refers to having medicines and foods: eye drops, antidiarrheals, cream for burns, antiallergics, oral rehydration serums, antispasmodics, gauze, water and non-perishable (canned) foods, and also in relation to equipment is requested donations of headlamps, batteries for flashlights, smoke glasses, machetes, shovels, chinstraps, fire resistant boots. Robore will be attended first and after San Ignacio de Velasco.

The Resident Coordinator activated the HCT hold an extraordinary meeting on August 27th to identify coordination and complementarity actions to support the government. Within the UNS, the United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETT) was activated, under the leadership of UNDP.

Funding

On date, the response to forest fires has been covered with national funds (the amount is unknown), however, public figures announced willingness to support with cash donations. The soccer player Marcelo Martins indicated in his twitter account the availability to donate U \$ 20 thousand. The CAF reported the donation of US \$ 300,000 and the provision of a concessional loan for recovery. The IDB with availability of US \$ 200 thousand.

The Swiss Cooperation with technical support to VIDECI in Robore, pledged an initial financial support of 50 thousand Swiss francs (approximately US \$ 50 thousand), of which 35 thousand Swiss francs is for firefighting supplies.

UNDP with the availability to mobilize between US \$ 100 and 150 thousand to assist government actions.

FAO has confirmed the availability of US \$ 500,000 for livelihoods recovery, agriculture and the environment in the affected area.

Other UNS Agencies and members of HCT have expressed their willingness to mobilize economic and technical resources to assist mainly in the post-fire care and recovery process.

Humanitarian Response



Early Recovery

Needs:

- Evaluate the impact on flora and fauna; The affected forest areas was home to 554 wildlife species (69 of mammals, 221 of birds, 54 of reptiles, 50 of amphibians and 160 of fish). (*Platform for the Environment and Life - ARBOL, 08/21/19*). There is a considerable impact on the fauna of the affected area, not yet quantified (*Ministry of Defense, 08/20/19*).
- The families and communities of indigenous peoples living in the affected areas fed on animals and fruits from these forests, which will generate a loss of livelihoods that has not yet been quantified.
- Water is required for human, animal consumption and to extinguish fires.
- Losses in the livestock sector amount to approximately US \$ 5 million, mainly in infrastructure; due to lack of grass, 2 million head of cattle are at risk that are concentrated in the Chiquitanía (*Federation of Livestock Farmers of Santa Cruz-FEGASACRUZ, 08/25/19*).

\$ 5 Millones
Loss on cattle farmers
(FEGASACRUZ)

Response:

- The livelihood impact assessment is ongoing. (*Rural Contingency Unit, Ministry of Rural Development and Land, 08/20/19*).
- More than 50 veterinarians and volunteers moved to the area to treat injured animals. (*Platform for the Environment and Life - ARBOL, 08/21/19*).
- A shelter will be enabled for injured and burned animals, where 50 state veterinarians and another 20 from the College of Veterinarians of Bolivia will operate. A call for volunteer veterinarians opens. (*Environmental Emergency Cabinet, 08/21/19*).
- The medium-term plan for reforestation with native species under the National Forest Fund (FONABOSQUE) is refined. (*Environmental Emergency Cabinet, 08/21/19*).
- Another plan will be prepared for the recovery of pastures for livestock consumption that will be implemented in the long term. There will be participation of the Government and the mayors. (Environmental Emergency Cabinet, 08/21/19).

Gaps/ Restrictions/Limitations:

- Identify needs to mitigate the loss of environmental functions, especially the contamination of water sources, in the protected areas affected:
 - Laguna Concepción, municipal protected area and RAMSAR zone; the Natural Area of Integrated Management (ANMI) San Matías, and the Tucabaca Natural Heritage Conservation Unit located in the municipality of Roboré (Roboré Forest Unit Manager, Rudy Vargas, 08/05/19).
 - 100 hectares have affected in the protected area Otuquis National Park (Suri Cabrera, Responsible for Monitoring and Environmental Management of Otuquis National Park, 08/25/19).
 - 600 hectares have affected in several indigenous communities and in the Biological Station of the Department of Beni, the fire has been partially controlled (Mayor Riberalta, 08/25/19).

- Recover lost livelihoods that complemented the food generated by the forest, by the 4,701 ha of crops planted affected (corn, cassava, beans, others) in 48 communities in six municipalities: Roboré (20); San Ignacio (10); Carmen Rivero (5); San Matías (3); Concepción (4); San Javier (6). (Rural Contingency Unit, Ministry of Rural Development and Land, 08/20/19).
- Promote the reforestation of burned area, with a long-term, phased approach, since its restoration will take more than 200 years, as it is a primary forest (Santa Cruz Forest Engineers College, 08/21/19).
- As these are still active fires, it is necessary to continue assessing the impact on families, their livelihoods and biodiversity.

Education

Needs:

- A first coordination meeting was held between technical from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education.
- Among the main problems is the involvement of air pollution by smoke, there is no water in educational establishments or the water is contaminated, the access roads are closed; students have diarrhea, vomiting, conjunctivitis, respiratory infections; There is no electrical system in some of the affected Educational Units.
- The Ministry of Education requested a report from Educational Units (EUs) and affected students to the Department of Education, who submitted the report on August 22 with the following information:

56
Education Units with
classes suspended

No.	District	EU s without class	Affected Students	Observations
1.	Roboré	12	301	In risk due to the proximity of the fire.
		31	5,049	Affectation due to air pollution with smoke
2.	San Rafael	1	Without data	In risk due to the proximity of the fire.
3.	San José de Chiquitos	4	430	In risk due to the proximity of the fire.
4.	San Matías	8	Without data	8 EUs were in risk by fire, but the fire was controlled.
	TOTAL	56	5,780	

Response:

- Concrete actions have not yet been developed. It has been coordinated with the Government of Santa Cruz so that in its field trip on August 27 and 28, it includes more information on education.
- On Thursday, August 29, a meeting will be held with the Departmental Emergency Table of the Ministry of Education, in the city of Santa Cruz, where the information will be updated, and the needs of the sector will be identified more clearly.
- UNICEF Education Sector has pre-positioned 200 filter units for educational units and there are pre-positioned school bags in the Ministry of Education, supplies that can be moved to the affected municipalities.

Gaps/ Restrictions/Limitations:

- The information is not accurate, and efforts are made to get more information on education rights and student safety.
- The requirements of the sector will be identified concretely in the coming days.
- According to the number of school days lost, support should be given with school reinforcement actions.

Health

Needs:

- Strengthen Primary Health Care, mainly due to pathologies related to exposure to smoke such as conjunctivitis, acute respiratory infections (ARIs), dehydration, headaches and others, both for the affected population and for first responders in the field.

15
Medical clinics,
mobilized by Health
Secretariat

- Personal protective equipment for the population (chinstraps); for health first responders (chinstraps, boots and glasses).
- Ensure the provision of safe water for human consumption, both for the population and for first responders in the field.
- Actions to monitor water quality in water sources for human consumption.

Response:

- The government of the department together with the Department of Health Service (SEDES) has developed emergency response actions with the human resources and supplies and materials available in the health networks of the affected region.
- As of August 25, the Ministry of Health has mobilized 15 medical brigades made up of two doctors and support staff for the care of the population and the first response teams to the fire.
- The medical brigades carried out 517 medical care: the main ones are: conjunctivitis, acute respiratory infections, mild dehydration and to a lesser extent CO2 poisoning, burns and asthma.
- The Ministry of Health mobilized approximately half a million Bs. In medicines

Gaps/ Restrictions / Limitations:

- Financial resources for the mobilization of mobile health brigades and water quality monitoring.

**Logistics****Needs:**

- Transportation of supplies (if required) to the affected places.
- Transportation of support people to the affected places.

Response:

- The response of the transport company with which UNICEF has an LTA on routes, estimated arrival times and possible limitations is awaiting.
- For the transport of people, there is a current LTA with the agency Balas Tourism (02.07.2021).

Gaps/ Restrictions/Limitations:

- The information is waiting for the transporter.
- There is no information on alternative routes related to fires on the Bolivian Highway Administrator's website.

**Protection****Needs:**

- There is a lack of population data in a situation of vulnerability, so it is very difficult to estimate specific needs
- There are unofficial data from 40 people who were evacuated to educational units for protection.

40

Evacuated people for protection issues

Response:

- UNICEF cluster is coordinating with the Departmental Autonomous Government of Santa Cruz for the dissemination of key messages through the media for the protection of NNA groups.
- There are actors that could address technical assistance in protection in vulnerable groups.

Gaps / Restrictions / Limitations:

- Data on groups in vulnerable situations affected.
- Data on institutions that are working in the field and type of support they are providing.



Shelter

Needs:

- It is not identified

Response:

- Not requested from the Emergency Operations Center - COE

Gaps and Restrictions / Limitations:

- The Assessment of Damage and Needs Analysis - EDAN is being carried out in the fire zone in Chiquitania, which facilitate the identification of homes losses, there are reported eight damage houses (six in Robore and two in Taperas Community).
- Press media reported that in the San Lorenzo community forty families have been affected in their family dwellings, transferring them to the Education Unit of the Community for safety issues.

8

Damaged Houses



WASH

Needs:

- Oxfam - Bolivia identified a water requirement for human consumption in 40 indigenous Chiquitanas communities in the Municipalities of San Ignacio de Velasco and San Javier, but there is still no detailed accuracy.

Response:

- MMAyA (3 people) are gathering information regarding the effects of water, sanitation and hygiene services, mobilized from three locations: Roboré, San Ignacio de Velasco and Puerto Suárez. They coordinate their actions with the Incident Command "Tajibo Plan".
- MMAyA supports with tanks in the transport of drinking water from the town of Roboré to two communities of the Municipality.
- OXFAM Bolivia is mobilized through its counterparts CIPCA SC and Collective Rebel NGO in the municipalities of San Ignacio de Velasco and San Javier. Its response is oriented to the needs of replenishing access to water for human consumption with the provision of storage water tanks.
- UNICEF has identified pre-positioned water supplies for human consumption that could be mobilized if necessary.

Gaps and Restrictions / Limitations:

- The humanitarian assistance gaps in water, sanitation and hygiene is not determined, because the priority is fire mitigation.
- There is still no precision of the affected families and population regarding access to water for human consumption and sanitation services.
- The needs will be oriented to the provision of water and supplies to ensure the quality of water suitable for human consumption.
- Technical assistance for information gathering in the affected

40

Communities with water requirement

For additional information please contact:

Richard Terrazas, Asesor de Respuesta a Desastres (OCHA), terrazas@un.org.

Antonio Miranda, Oficial de Información (OCHA), miranda2@un.org

Fatou Aris, Oficina del Coordinador Residente, fatou.aris@one.un.org

Mauricio Ramirez, Coordinador Residente, mauricio.ramirez@un.org.