

Hurricanes Eta & Iota

Situation Report #2

November 17, 2020

RESPONSE UPDATE SUMMARY

- Project HOPE is on the ground and coordinating assessment and response efforts in Honduras.
- Project HOPE is sending an initial shipment of 200K surgical and KN95 masks to the region.
- At the request of the Honduran government and PAHO, HOPE is mobilizing an emergency medical team with partners.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

- Iota made landfall Monday, November 16 at 10:40pm ET as a Category 4 hurricane near Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua.
- Iota is heavily impacting regions already damaged and populations left vulnerable by Hurricane Eta which made landfall 2 weeks ago.
- COVID-19 cases are rapidly rising in Honduras with 2,100 new cases confirmed last week and a 33% positive testing rate at shelters in Tegucigalpa.
- Honduras upwardly revised impact numbers from Hurricane Eta from 1.6 million people affected to 3 million people.

Hurricane Iota made landfall south of Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua Monday night as a Category 4 storm bringing damaging winds and significant rain. While the storm is now a Category 1 and expected to weaken further as it crosses Central America, Iota is anticipated to release up to 30 inches of rain on areas already flooded or highly saturated due to rainfall from Hurricane Eta less than two weeks ago.

Iota is disrupting repairs to local infrastructure. In Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, a makeshift hospital had its roof blown off as Iota made landfall and many temporary shelters were destroyed due to the heavy winds. In Honduras, the airport in Tegucigalpa closed early Tuesday morning, hampering efforts to bring humanitarian supplies into the country, which continues to have limited overland travel due to damage to roads and bridges from flooding and landslides.

COVID-19 cases are expected to surge in the aftermath of the two hurricanes. Official data from the Ministry of Health in Honduras shows

Quick Facts

- Hurricane Iota made landfall Monday as a Category 4 Hurricane in Nicaragua
- Project HOPE is sending 200K surgical and KN95 masks to the region as well as an emergency medical team.
- Significant flooding and landslides reported in Central America
- 3M people remain affected by Hurricane Eta in Honduras
- 57K people are in shelters in Honduras
- 130K+ impacted in Nicaragua

2,100 new cases from November 6 to 13.ⁱ The surge in COVID-10 cases can be attributed to a lack of available personal protective equipment (PPE) as well as the limited space for isolation of family units or individuals in shelters that currently house approximately 56,986 people.ⁱⁱ In Tegucigalpa, COVID-19 tests at shelters have a 33% positive testing rate. Project HOPE also anticipates a surge in vector borne diseases in the aftermath of heavy flooding in the region.

Following Eta, many communities remained isolated with estimated that up to 100,000 people may remain isolated from national roadways and responders in Honduras. The additional rainfall, flooding, and damage to infrastructure from Iota will likely prolong the isolation of these communities from health and WASH services.

PROJECT HOPE'S RESPONSE

A Project HOPE emergency response team is in Tegucigalpa coordinating assessment and response efforts as Iota crosses the region. Working with local partners, Project HOPE is sending 200,000 surgical and KN95 masks for use by health care workers and vulnerable populations in shelters, to help limit the spread of COVID-19. Following Hurricane Eta, the team distributed hygiene kits in shelters to meet immediate needs.

HOPE is mobilizing an Emergency Medical Team (EMT) in partnership with the NGO SAMU at the request of the Honduran government and PAHO/WHO. This team will provide primary care to remote and isolated regions of Honduras. As Iota leaves the affected regions, this team will ensure communities maintain access to quality healthcare.

As assessments continue, the team has identified additional health needs in addition to PPE, including hygiene kits, water filtration and WASH services, medical surge capacity at shelters and in isolated communities, and medicines. Cold-chain storage for medicines and vaccinations has also been highlighted. Project HOPE is coordinating with partners to deliver resources and people to address these needs.

In both Honduras and Nicaragua, Project HOPE is preparing to provide COVID-19 and mental health trainings for frontline workers as they respond to the dual crises of Hurricanes Eta and Iota and COVID-19. Based on curriculums already utilized in Latin America, the trainings will improve health workers abilities to contain and treat COVID-19, as well as manage mental health needs in a highly stressful environment. Prior to Hurricane Eta, more than 146 health care workers in Honduras received Project HOPE's COVID-19 training.

ⁱ <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20201115%20CA%20Eta-lota%20SitRep%203.pdf>

ⁱⁱ COPECO

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