

Humanitarian Bulletin

Latin America and Caribbean

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 13.2 million people were affected by disasters between January and October 2015.
- El Niño will exacerbate drought in Central America and will bring above average rainfall in South America. It is expected to peak in November-December.
- A joint IOM and WFP study affirms a correlation between food insecurity, violence and migration in countries of the Northern Triangle in Central America.
- The first World Humanitarian Summit will take place in Istanbul, Turkey, from 23 to 24 May 2016 with the aim of finding new ways to address humanitarian needs in a changing world.

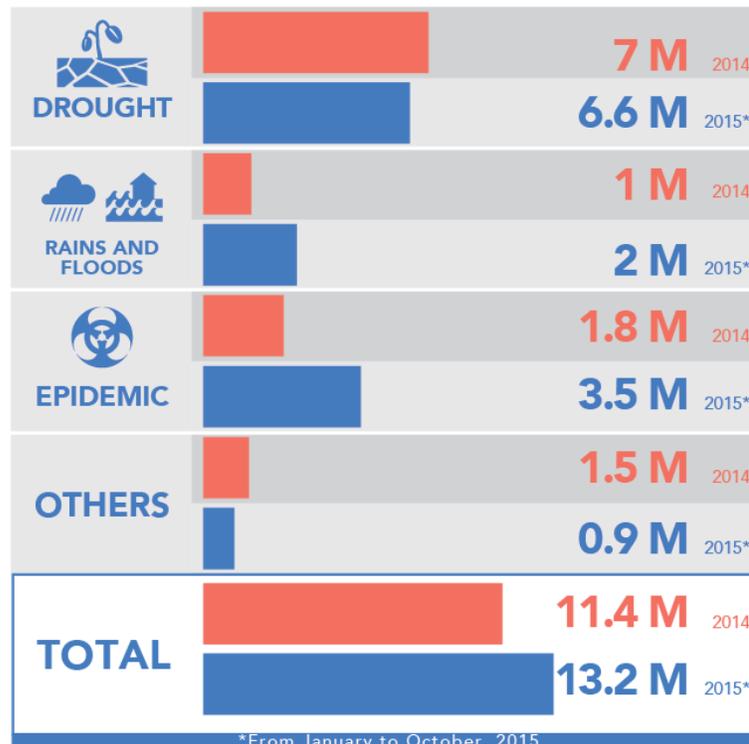
13.2 million people affected by emergencies from January to October 2015

13.2 million people have been affected by disasters from January to October 2015 in Latin America and the Caribbean. Drought is the disaster that affected the most people, followed by excessive rains, floods and epidemics like dengue, chikungunya and cholera.

Hurricanes, violence, environmental emergencies and cold waves are some of the other disasters that affected people in 2015.

This figure exceeds the number of people affected in 2014 (11.4 million), which is a reminder that preparedness efforts must remain a priority to reduce impacts and humanitarian needs.

Comparative figures of people affected from January to October 2015 versus 2014



From January to October 2015, drought and rains have affected the most people in the region, a similar pattern as in 2014.

In 2014, *Others* includes earthquakes, unaccompanied migrant children and forest fires. In 2015 *Others* includes environmental pollution, cold waves and displaced people.

Source: Reports from national authorities published by OCHA according to internal criteria. For further information about OCHA methodology, please write to: ocha-rolac@un.org

PEOPLE AFFECTED

JAN TO DEC 2015

Drought	6,682,975
Epidemics	3,511,420
Floods	2,067,127
Cold Wave	599,523
Environmental Emergency	206,475
Other	189,532
Total	13,257,052

Source: Compiled from reports issued by national authorities from emergency situations monitored by OCHA ROLAC.

Note: The figures are taken from official reports. However, this does not imply they have been officially approved by the countries as the final figures. The figures are solely for reference. Please contact the national authorities if you require further information.

*From January to October, 2015

Drought and violence as drivers of migration in Central America:

interview with IOM Regional Director

Hunger without Borders is a joint effort between the International Organization for Migrations (IOM) and the World Food Program (WFP), with the support of the Organization of American States (OAS).

"The study Hunger without Borders is an example of the need to address social phenomena such as violence, migration and food insecurity from an interdisciplinary perspective given their multi-causal complexity", Marcelo Pisani, IOM Regional Director for Central America, North America and the Caribbean.

The study consolidates findings from the London School of Economics (LSE) and IOM from March to May 2015. Results of WFP's Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) carried out after the 2014 drought are also included. The Assessment identified an increase in migration from affected areas.

We spoke with Dr. Marcelo Pisani, IOM Regional Director for Central America, North America and the Caribbean about these and other findings from the report.

What are the links between food insecurity, violence and migration in the Northern Triangle countries?

A positive correlation exists between food insecurity and migration in the three countries of the Northern Triangle: El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. Migration is used as a strategy to face food insecurity. Violence is added to this as an additional driver for migration, although to a lesser degree depending on the particular situation in each of the three countries.

Among the different types of violence, organized crime represents one of the major threats in Central America, and has caused an increase in the migration of children and women since 2011 –contrary to what has occurred in Latin American countries, where this has decreased.

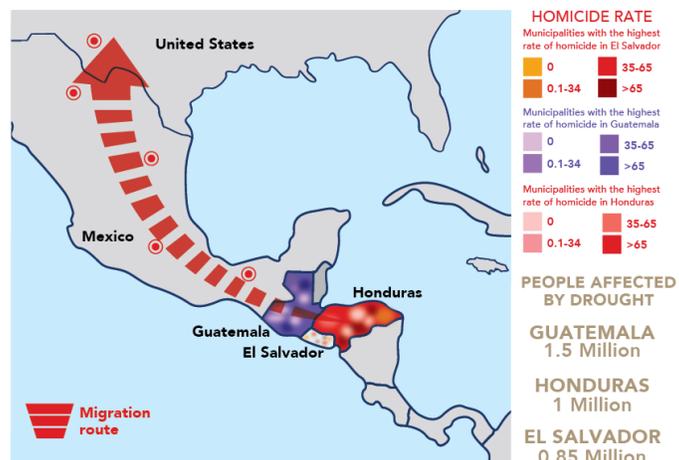
What are the recommendations the report proposes for humanitarian action on food security, protection and migration?

At policy and program levels it recommends intensifying efforts to counteract food insecurity and violence so that, based on their positive effects, migration is reduced. Other recommended actions are to design activities for the reinsertion of deportees and returnees, activities to strengthen the resilience of children and youth whose parents have emigrated against crime and violence, promoting livelihoods, and developing advocacy strategies where local governments play a leading role, along with United Nations agencies and other international organizations.

What are the consequences of not responding to the drought and violence in Central America?

The consequence of not responding adequately to the drought could be an increase in migration and also of violence, given that both could be used as survival strategies by the affected population.

For further information visit: www.redhum.org



Map © OCHA with data from IOM

The report recommends a more profound analysis of the situation in order to have a deeper understanding of the effects of violence, food insecurity and their impact on migratory patterns.



30 years after the Mexico City earthquake

“Mexico plays a very important role in the humanitarian context. It is a country that USES its own experience to strengthen regional disaster preparedness and response mechanisms and at the same time enriches the international humanitarian dialogue”, Wendy Cue, Head of the OCHA Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean during her visit to Mexico within the framework of the 30th anniversary of the earthquake.

“Without your support things would not have been the same. Mexico thanks you.” These were the words of the Head of Government in the City of Mexico to the international community, acknowledging their assistance after the devastating earthquake that ravaged Mexico City on 19 September 1985, which took at least 10,000 lives.

Thirty years after the quake, Mexico has not forgotten the countries and international organizations that sent humanitarian assistance after the tragedy, nor the thousands of Mexican heroes and heroines that responded immediately to rescue hundreds of people trapped beneath the rubble with their hands and household tools.

Many questions have come up during this time: “In the event of a similar or larger earthquake to that of 1985, would Mexico once again require international assistance, and if so in what form?” What has changed in three decades with regards to national and international response capacity?” The United Nations, coordinated by OCHA, works with Mexican institutions to answer to these and other questions, by strengthening the National Civil Protection System of Mexico (SINAPROC), which was created one year after the 1985 earthquake.

With almost 30 years of experience, Mexico’s SINAPROC contributes to strengthening regional civil protection and participates in international response mechanisms such as UNDAC and INSARAG. Mexico is also a committed partner of humanitarian fora such as the Regional Meetings of the International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance (MIAH) and the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS).

“The key to mutual strengthening without a doubt lies in cooperation and exchange of experiences”, pointed out the National Coordinator for Civil Protection in Mexico at the 2015 National Prize for Civil Protection ceremony when referring to the role of Mexico as a globally responsible actor.

For further information visit: www.redhum.org



Search and rescue teams in the Zocalo of Mexico City during the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the earthquake. Image © OCHA



Representatives from the international community and the Government of Mexico during a commemorative event at the National Center for the Prevention of Disasters (CENAPRED). Image © OCHA



UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team (UNDAC) in Paraguay

After the field mission, the UNDAC team provided specific recommendations for strengthening national emergency response capacity and will follow-up with preparedness and disaster response activities.

Response efforts to floods in 2012 and 2014 in Paraguay included the support of UNDAC (United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination) missions.

In October, an UNDAC team deployed to Paraguay to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the state of disaster preparedness and response in the country.

During the two-week mission, the UNDAC team interviewed 138 people from 74 organizations and carried out field visits to the departments of Alto Paraná, Concepción, Itapúa, Presidente Hayes and San Pedro.



The UNDAC team collected information on the 50,000 families that were affected during the floods of 2014. Image © OCHA

After the mission, the UNDAC team provided recommendations aimed at supporting and strengthening current structures and for further planning and coordination measures in various areas such as health, shelter, water and sanitation.

For further information visit: www.redhum.org



Increasing Response Preparedness - Cotopaxi Volcano in Ecuador

800,000 people could be affected by the eruption of the Cotopaxi volcano, one of the highest snow-capped peaks in the world.

Activity at the Cotopaxi volcano is characterised by magma slowly arriving at the reservoir with an uninhibited path to the surface, according to the Geophysical Institute of the National Polytechnic School.

For this reason, eruptive activity has progressively increased in the past weeks, with incidents of ash emissions followed by small explosions. Close to 800,000 people could be affected by the eruption according to the Secretary of Risk Management. Government institutions have updated and activated their contingency plans.

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) is working with the Ecuador's Ministry of Security Coordinator to prepare for a possible eruption by strengthening capacities in disaster preparedness, decision making and coordination among the various response actors.

OCHA supports the HCT to identify humanitarian priorities, strengthen capacity and improve sectoral coordination with national technical working groups aimed at building a Preliminary Response Plan for the volcanic eruption.

For further information visit: www.redhum.org

The humanitarian community supports Haiti's efforts to identify, track and assist migrants arriving from the Dominican Republic. Priority will be given to initiatives to relocate returnees to their communities of origin.

OCHA facilitates coordination between national and international organizations to improve response efforts.

Border crossings near the Colombian departments of La Guajira, Norte de Santander, Arauca and Vichada have been closed for weeks. This is having an impact on people's access to protection and assistance.



Crisis at the Haiti - Dominican Republic border

Since June 2015, when the deadline to register for the Dominican Plan for Regularization of Foreigners (PNRE) expired, thousands of Haitians have returned to Haiti.

The General Directorate of Migration in Dominican Republic reports that 5,558 people have been deported to Haiti. However, IOM has interviewed more than 34,877 people arriving in Haiti, and the total number of returnees is unknown. Some have returned to their towns of origin while others settled in spontaneous sites in border towns.

A considerable number of the people interviewed by IOM report that they left the Dominican Republic for fear of repression. The majority have lived in the country for years and left their homes with little or no property.

People settled in the spontaneous sites (at least 3,000 people in five camps) lack basic services such as adequate food, hygiene, drinking water and shelter. Some families are living in areas hit by drought and exposed to risk of cholera and natural disasters. The Haitian Government and local civil society organizations took the initiative to distribute food, water, hygiene kits and mattresses. However, available resources are insufficient to meet their needs.

While supporting the Haitian *Direction de la Protection Civile* (DPC) with assessment and response activities, the humanitarian community continues to mobilize resources to address border migration. Since June, IOM has been monitoring the returnees with funding provided by OCHA Haiti's Emergency Response and Relief Fund (ERRF) and UNICEF has been supporting shelter for repatriated minors.

The UN in the Dominican Republic has organized more than 15 inter-agency field missions to monitor voluntary returns and the deportation of irregular migrants in the four official border crossing points and advocates for the protection of individuals with a legitimate claim to remain in the Dominican territory.

More information: www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/haiti/camp-coordination-management



"I had to return to Haiti empty handed, with all my children but without my husband", testified Joselyne Cajuste, mother of 5 children all born in the Dominican Republic. Image © OCHA



Humanitarian Situation at the Colombia – Venezuela border

The official registries for returnees from Venezuela to Colombia through Norte de Santander, La Guajira, Arauca and Vichada were closed on 23 September. However, reports of people returning and individual deportations continue. By mid-October at least 1,950 Colombians had been deported and more than 22,300 returns were registered.

With official registries closed, there are concerns regarding estimates of numbers of people arriving through formal and informal border crossings, humanitarian needs and ability to access assistance.

Additional concerns include possible gaps in assistance, particularly for the large percentage of returnees housed by different support networks and outside the officially established shelters, as well as for the capacities of receiving communities.

For more information, you can download the Situation Reports at: <http://bit.ly/1NsrtDv>



SIMEX Simulation Exercise in Chile

"In Chile we are exposed to major earthquakes. This reality requires us to be constantly prepared to lead and coordinate international aid. This is why the SIMEX is so important", Jorge Burgos, Chilean Minister of Interior.



The UNDAC/INSARAG simulation exercise (SIMEX) was held from 22 to 26 September 2015 in Santiago, Chile, to practice and test coordination between national and international actors in response to a large intensity earthquake.

The SIMEX was organized by the National Emergency Office of the Ministry of Interior and Public Security (ONEMI) and the Firefighters of Chile, in coordination with OCHA, through the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), which activates and coordinates specialized urban search and rescue teams (USAR), as well as other United Nations agencies.



More than 250 participants from various countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Spain, the US and China joined the exercise, as well as representatives of the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), the International Federation of the Red Cross, medical teams and the International Humanitarian Assistance Network.

"The SIMEX is a true school of learning to minimize the uncertainty that occurs when an emergency occurs", Ricardo Toro, National Director of ONEMI.



During the simulation, procedures such as the INSARAG guidelines and new technologies such as the use of the KoBo tool for data collection in emergencies were tested. Coordination between Chilean national actors with international counterparts such as UNDAC and FMTs (Foreign Medical Teams) was also tested.

The conclusions and lessons from the SIMEX will strengthen response coordination in the event of future emergencies.



The World Humanitarian Summit (#ReShapeAid)

“The World Humanitarian Summit is our generation’s opportunity to re-inspire the world with our humanitarian ambition”, Stephen O’Brien, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

Convened by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and organized by OCHA, the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) will be held on 23 and 24 May 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey. The Summit has two goals. First, to re-inspire and reinvigorate a joint commitment to humanity, and second, to initiate concrete actions aimed at enabling all stakeholders to better prepare for and respond to crises, and be more resilient to shocks.

The preparatory process for the Summit is built on four axes: eight regional consultations (Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean*), global thematic consultations, online consultations and linkages to related global processes on disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate change and the sustainable development goals.

Through the consultations, more than 23,000 people in all regions of the world have called for the WHS to reaffirm, at the highest level, a collective responsibility to uphold humanity and dignity for people in crisis. The Synthesis Report of the consultations proposes five major action areas to shape the Summit: dignity, safety, resilience, partnerships and finance.

Delegations from El Salvador, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala, Mexico and Venezuela attended the Global Consultation meeting as representatives of the region. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) reiterated the importance of an intergovernmental forum as stated in the Declaration of Guatemala elaborated after MIAH 2015**.

The request from the representatives of CELAC includes the development of a roadmap for the World Humanitarian Summit of Istanbul with key priority messages to the region and steps beyond the Summit.

* You can download the Regional Consultation in LAC Report at: <http://bit.ly/1NdlaCB>

** You can see the Declaration of Guatemala at: <http://bit.ly/1ExNpF2>

More information about the World Humanitarian Summit at: www.worldhumanitariansummit.org

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