HONDURAS
Floods

Heavy rains that started on 4 October in Honduras have caused flooding and landslides across the country. Most damage has been reported in Francisco Morazán, Valle, and Choluteca departments, where a red alert was issued by the government. 12,076 people have been affected by the floods. 963 homes were damaged, including 169 flooded, and nine completely destroyed. Among them, 7,234 people have been evacuated, and 6,789 moved to 78 temporary shelters.
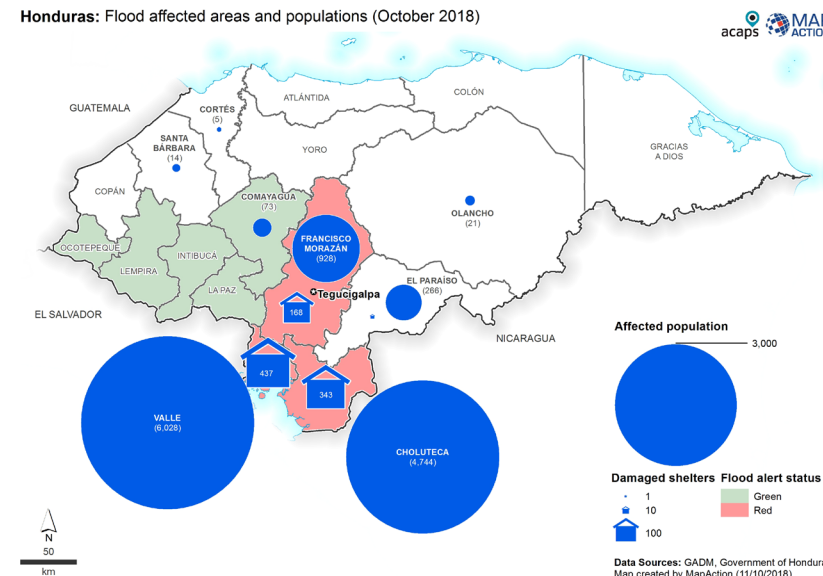
NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Not required   Moderate   Major

IMPACT

Very low   Moderate   Major

Honduras: Flood affected areas and populations (October 2018)

GUATEMALA

CORTÉS (5)   ATLÁNTIDA   COLÓN

SANTA BÁRBARA (14)   YORO   GRACIAS A DIOS

COPÁN

OCOTEPEQUE   COMAYAGUA (73)   OLANCHO (21)

LEMPIRA   INTIBUCÁ   FRANCISCO MORAZÁN (928)

LA PAZ   EL PARAÍSO (266)

EL SALVADOR   Tegucigalpa   168

NICARAGUA

437   343

VALLE (6,028)   CHOLUTECA (4,744)

Affected population
3,000

Damaged shelters
• 1
• 10
🏠 100

Flood alert status
Green
Red

N
50
km

Data Sources: GADM, Government of Honduras
Map created by MapAction (11/10/2018)

Anticipated scope and scale

Heavy rains were associated with the passage of Hurricane Michael, but the storm has now moved towards the Gulf Coast of the United States. The COPECO (Comité de Alertas de la Comisión Permanente de Contingencias) announced on 10 October that it was monitoring the formation of another low-pressure system in the north of Darién gulf between Colombia and Panama over the next five days. This low-pressure system is likely to bring further heavy rainfalls, and there is a risk a cyclone might form (COPECO 10/08/2018).

As of 11 October, the red and green alerts are still maintained for all eight affected departments in Honduras. Rain and hurricane seasons are expected to continue until November, likely to result in further flooding (El Heraldo 10/10/2018).

Key priorities

+12,000
people affected

+6,700
people moved to 78 shelters

+960
homes damaged

Crop damage
impacting rural livelihoods

Humanitarian constraints

Floods and landslides damaged 34 roads and 13 bridges (including seven that were completely destroyed). High levels of violence and insecurity in Honduras create a security constraint, but there are no indications it has affected flood response.

Limitations.

The extent of crop damage is unclear, which makes it difficult to assess the longer-term impact on livelihoods and food security.

Disaggregated data on vulnerable groups is absent.

Crisis impact

Since 4 October, heavy rainfall due to two low pressure systems across Central America and the Caribbean has caused flooding and landslides in Honduras. A red alert was issued by the government on 6 October for three departments: Francisco Morazán (where the capital Tegucigalpa is located), Valle, and Choluteca. On 8 October, five other departments were put on green alert: Comayagua, La Paz, Intibucá, Lempira y Ocotepeque (Government of Honduras 09/10/2018, Act Alliance 08/10/2018).

As of 9 October, 12,076 people had been affected by floods and the 55 landslides recorded since 4 October across the country. 7,234 people were evacuated, of whom 6,789 people were moved to 78 shelters (Government of Honduras 09/10/2018). Most of the affected populations and physical damage were reported in the red alert departments.

In the five departments on green alert, the impact so far has been minimal, but the risk of landslides is still extremely high. In addition, the soil is saturated due to heavy rains, which has a direct impact on crops in those areas (El Heraldo 10/10/2018).

As of 10 October, the red and green alerts in all eight departments were to be maintained for another 24 hours, as heavy rain is expected to continue (El Heraldo 10/10/2018).

		Francisco Morazán	Valle	Choluteca	Honduras
Populations	Affected	928	6,028	4,744	12,079
	Evacuated	687	1,570	4,744	7,234
	In shelters	569	1,571	4,618	6,789
Number of houses	Impacted	53	436	288	794
	Flooded	111	0	54	169
	Destroyed	4	1	1	9

(Government of Honduras 10/10/2018)

Shelter: The flooding and landslides have affected a total of 963 houses across the country, including 169 flooded, and nine completely destroyed. The majority (over 65%) of flooded houses are located in Francisco Morazán department. 78 temporary shelters (albergues) are hosting 6,789 people. (Government of Honduras 09/10/2018).

Food & Agriculture: Although an evaluation to assess the exact extent of the damage is yet to be done, significant crop damage has been reported in the three departments on red alert. In Marcovia municipality (Choluteca) alone, almost 5,000 hectares of cane sugar crops were destroyed as a result of the floods. Heavy rains have also led to a reduction of salinity in lagoons, negatively impacting shrimp farming (El Heraldo 10/10/2018, Government of Honduras 09/10/2018). Beyond the immediate infrastructural damage, floods are likely to have a longer-term impact on agriculture and rural livelihoods as recovery will take time and require assistance.

Education: 13 schools have been flooded (Government of Honduras 09/10/2018). On 8 October, the Ministry of Education announced the closure of all schools nationwide (Act Alliance 08/10/2018). As of 10 October, schools were still closed, but COPECO asked the Ministry of Education to reopen classes in departments below yellow alert level, except for education facilities used as temporary shelters for affected populations (El Heraldo 10/10/2018).

WASH: Seven water distribution systems have been affected. Access to safe water for affected populations has been highlighted as a key response challenge (Government of Honduras 09/10/2018).

Impact on critical infrastructure

Seven different rivers overflowed across the country, leading to six bridges being damaged, and seven others collapsing. In addition, 34 roads were damaged. As of 9 October, nine towns were affected by power shortages (El Heraldo 10/10/2018, Government of Honduras 09/10/2018).

Vulnerable groups affected

Children and elderly people are affected disproportionally by floods. Two out of the six people killed as a result of the floods were children (Government of Honduras 10/10/2018).

People with disabilities are also more vulnerable to extreme weather events. (Act Alliance 08/10/2018). However, there is no disaggregated data available on affected people with disabilities.

Flooding is more likely to impact people whose livelihoods depend on subsistence agriculture. Farmers depending on subsistence agriculture for their livelihoods make up 70% of the agricultural population in Honduras. The subsistence basic grains and remittances livelihoods zone is concentrated mainly in southwestern Honduras, which is not only the area that was the most affected by floods, but also part of the dry corridor (FEWSNET 09/2018, FEWSNET 04/2014, FEWSNET 12/2014).

Humanitarian and operational constraints

Some roads and bridges have been damaged, and some areas are still completely cut off. Some areas are completely cut off, which could create access constraints and complicate the delivery of aid (Act Alliance 08/10/2018).

Honduras is part of the 'Northern Triangle' (along with El Salvador and Guatemala) and is experiencing high levels of violence and insecurity. (Council on Foreign Relations 26/06/2018, ACAPS 01/12/2016) The highly volatile security environment should be taken into account, however, there is no indication so far that response to the floods has been impeded by insecurity.

Aggravating factors

Seasonal factors

Rainy season: There are two rainy seasons in Honduras: one between September and November, the other between mid-April and late July. (FEWSNET 12/2013)

Hurricane season: Hurricane season lasts from June to November in Honduras (FEWSNET 12/2013). The tropical storm Michael is currently heading to the US gulf coast, and brought a flow of Pacific air over Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, which will continue to bring heavy rains (Act Alliance 08/10/2018). There is a risk that the pressure system forming in the Darién gulf between Colombia and Panama could lead to the formation of a hurricane similar to Mitch hurricane, which hit the region in 1998 and was one of the biggest and most devastating hurricanes ever recorded (El Heraldo 09/10/2018).

Vulnerability to extreme weather events

According to the Global Climate Risk Index 2018 published by the think tank German Watch, Honduras is the country that is the most vulnerable to extreme weather events in the world, ahead of Haiti and Myanmar. Between 1997 and 2016, 62 extreme weather events were recorded in the country, killing over 300 people (4.28 per 100,000 inhabitants) and causing over 561 millions of dollars of damages (almost 2% of the GDP) (German Watch 09/11/2018).

Past floods: In October 2017, a yellow alert was declared for Olancho, Santa Bárbara and Francisco Morazán departments, and a green alert was declared in Copan, Comayagua, La Paz, Valle, Choluteca, Lempira, Ocotepeque, Intibucá and El Paraíso. 50,000 people were affected, 5,012 houses damaged, and 13 houses destroyed (IFRC 18/09/2018, ACT Alliance 15/11/2017).

Recent fires: Over 60,000 hectares of forest and land have been destroyed in 2018. Francisco Morazán was among the worst affected departments, with over 6,700 hectares destroyed. (El Nuevo Diario 16/08/2018).

Drought and food insecurity

Honduras has been affected by a drought that led to severe food insecurity and malnutrition. During June and July 2018, the main harvest was severely impacted by below average rainfall and drier than average conditions, with over 70% decrease in maize and beans production recorded. This led to an early depletion of food reserves, and a reduction of around 15% of the consumption of maize and beans between December 2017 and August 2018. Households are eating less, and are forced to prioritise food expenditures over other needs, putting them in an even more vulnerable situation (FEWSNET 09/2018, WFP 08/2018). Loss and damage caused to crops are likely to exacerbate the effects of the drought in the long term.

Key characteristics

- **Total population:** 9.1 million

- **Poverty rate:** 60% of the population live in poverty

- **Nutrition levels:** 23% of children aged 6-59 months are stunted, with peaks of up to 40%

- **Health statistics:** Maternal mortality ratio: 129/100,000; Infant mortality rate: 17.2/1,000

- **Literacy levels:** 89% (aged 15 and over)

- **Agricultural land:** 28.8%

- **Urban population:** 57.1%

- **WASH statistics:** Improved drinking water sources: 91.2% (urban 97.4%, rural 83.8%), Improved sanitation facility access: 82.6% (urban 86.7%, rural 77.7%)

- **Displacement:** there are some 190,000 internally displaced in Honduras due to violence, extortion, threats, and forced recruitment by urban gangs

Sources. WFP 08/2018, CIA World Fact Book

Response capacity

Local and national response capacity

COPECO (Comité de Alertas de la Comisión Permanente de Contingencias) is the official governmental body in charge of disaster management in the country (IFRC 18/09/2018). It is tasked with monitoring vulnerable areas, as well as organising the evacuation of families affected by the floods (Government of Honduras 09/10/2018).

In the direct aftermath of the floods, the government distributed more than 36,000kg of food to affected populations, as well as NFI items (such as mattresses, blankets, hygiene kits, or cooking equipment) (Government of Honduras 09/10/2018).

The Honduran army (FFAA – Fuerzas Armadas de Honduras) is also assisting in disaster relief (COPECO 10/08/2018).

International response capacity

During past floods, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement organisations present in the country contributed to preparing the Emergency Plan of Action. UNICEF was coordinator of the WASH board in the country. The Advocacy Board for Disaster Risk Management was coordinating sectorial boards to join the relief efforts planned by the National Risk Management System. All information related to heavy rainfalls and floods was relayed by UNOCHA-Honduras and the humanitarian country network (IFRC 18/09/2018).

Population coping mechanisms

During past floods, it was reported that affected populations had been changing their diets to adapt. Some farmers also had to sell products below their normal costs. These coping strategies coupled with the underlying vulnerabilities present before the floods are likely to lead to further food insecurity and the deterioration of livelihoods (IFRC 18/09/2018).

Information gaps and needs

The exact extent of damage caused to agriculture is currently unknown.

There is no disaggregated data on vulnerable groups affected, including women, elderly people, children, and persons with disabilities.

The majority of information about the floods come from government sources or local news sources that relay government data.

From the data reported by the Honduran Government, the distinction between 'impacted' and 'flooded' shelter is unclear.

Lessons learned

During the 2017 floods that affected over 50,000 people across the country, the identified needs were food, shelter, psychosocial support, WASH, and livelihood support (ACT Alliance 15/11/2017).

In the direct aftermath of the floods, contaminated water and stagnating floodwater increase the risk of waterborne diseases, vector proliferation, respiratory diseases, and injuries. In addition, affected populations' mental health is likely to be negatively impacted (IFRC 18/09/2018).

Families experience different types of damage depending on their socioeconomic status, affecting their shelter needs differently. The response must be tailored to address those different needs according to levels of vulnerability and prioritise areas that have suffered the greatest impact (IFRC 18/09/2018).

Immediate and efficient WASH interventions will be crucial in the coming months to promote improved sanitation, carry out monthly cleaning and disinfection campaigns for latrines (bleach), and conduct hygiene promotion as well as monthly cleaning and disinfection campaigns (IFRC 05/08/2016).

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acaps MAP ACTION

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LA PAZ

168

EL SALVADOR

Affected population

3,000

437

343

NICARAGUA

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(6,028)

CHOLUTECA
(4,744)

N

50

km

Damaged shelters **Flood alert status**

· 1

Green

10

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100

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