

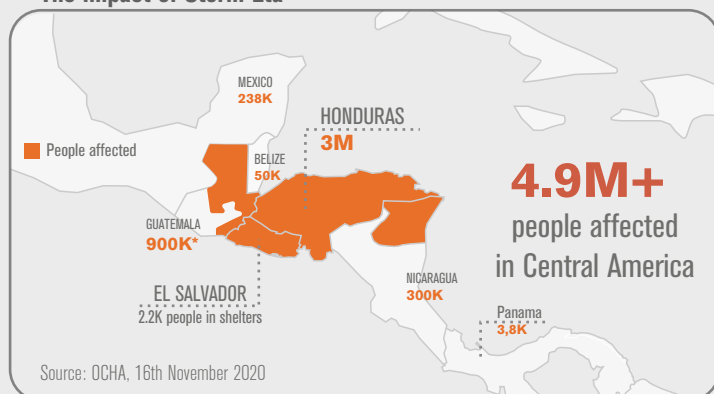
Tropical Storms ETA & IOTA Emergency in Central America



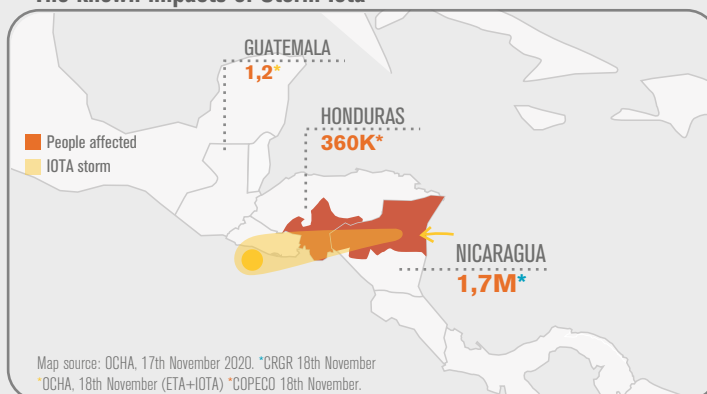
Assistance is needed in:



The impact of Storm Eta



The known impacts of Storm Iota



One storm after another, with no time to recover

In less than two weeks, Central America faced two hurricanes that became tropical storms and left millions of people affected, communities cut off, homes, schools, roads, and infrastructure damaged by the strong rains, landslides, and floods. It is urgent that relief is provided for immediate needs.

According to OCHA, Tropical Storm Eta left 4.9M people affected in Central America: Honduras was dealing with damage across 155 of its 298 municipalities, Guatemala had declared a state of emergency in 10 out of 22 departments, and El Salvador was managing 2.2K sheltered people when Hurricane Iota struck Nicaragua on the night of the 16th of November.

These emergencies worsened the existing loss of crops and food insecurity, and came on top of economic crises, internal displacement and gang violence, creating a catastrophic scenario with dire humanitarian consequences, especially in Honduras and Nicaragua.

In Honduras, shelters were already facing overcrowding before Tropical Storm Iota hit. Now, NRC is witnessing how the situation has continued to worsen. There is a risk that Covid-19 and other diseases, such as dengue, will spread. Domestic violence is exacerbated by the current situation of uncertainty.

NRC has also seen families with protection needs, who were only recently deported back to Honduras, and have now had to be evacuated from their temporary homes due to flooding.

“We did not expect this catastrophe. We lost our belongings in the floods and we are concerned because this is a dangerous place. We couldn't rescue anything and now we are sheltered in a church. After the pandemic, the storm was the last thing we expected.”

Carla, Honduran woman affected by Eta storm, three days before Iota storm.



Photo: NRC / Lucy Abreu

Spotlight on Honduras after IOTA

- The most affected areas by Eta were the northern Atlantic departments, while Storm Iota has affected the south of the country with a devastating consequence in all the country.
- The country reports **360K people affected by Storm Iota**, in addition to 3M affected left by Tropical Storm Eta.
- **61,228 people sheltered**, with more than 10K people evacuated.

“First displaced by violence and now, when we thought we were starting a life from scratch, two storms come to tear away the little we achieved.”

NRC beneficiary in Honduras

- **750 shelters available.** Food, blankets, mattresses, kitchen and hygiene items are insufficient in shelters.
- **142 shelters were closed** due to people returned, before storm Iota.
- **7,556 houses** damaged or affected.
- **79 rivers** and streams have overflowed.
- The real number of affected people and number of deaths attributable to Eta may never be known (OCHA).
- According to Movimiento Mundial por la Infancia Honduras (MMI-H) children are at high risk and in the situation of vulnerability because of the emergency.. More than **1.5M Honduran children are at risk** said Unicef.
- **Cases of people threatened by gang members inside shelters** need special attention and protection to mitigate the risk.
- A flash appeal is presented by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), OCHA, and COPECO to request \$69.2M US to contribute **to the assistance of 450K people affected.**
- The flash appeal prioritized Food Security, WASH, Protection, CCCM, Health, Education, and Coordination as the main sectors to respond to the emergency.
- Organisations at the Honduran border warn that thousands of Hondurans may try to flee the emergency in the coming months, and that the humanitarian community must be prepared for mass displacements.

“We could only flee with our children and with some clothes. Fortunately, we arrived at the shelter just in time. The storms left us with nothing and we are homeless now. Our neighborhoods remain flooded. We do not know what is going to happen.”

Antonio Madrid and his family affected by the tropical storms, Honduras.



Photo: NRC / Justo Martínez

NRC'S RESPONSE

- 1,500 hygiene kits delivered in shelters in San Pedro Sula, Honduras to prevent the spread of Covid-19.
- A team from Colombia has been deployed to support the WASH and Shelter assistance.
- As part of the flash appeal, NRC would respond in Food Security, Protection, Camp Management/Shelter, and WASH sectors. **4 out of 6 sectors prioritized** by HCT.
- We are strengthening the emergency response team in Honduras with new humanitarian workers.



We deliver hand-washing kits and provide information on hygiene habits to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Shelter in Honduras. Photo: NRC / Justo Martínez

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **A Humanitarian Response Plan must be developed and implemented for the region,** in order to respond to the needs generated by both storms, as well as by the existing humanitarian crisis in the region due to chronic violence, displacement, climate change and food insecurity.
- **The Education Cluster must be activated.** Education must be a priority to ensure protection for children, their emotional recovery and ensure education continuity after the disaster. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, 6 out of 10 children have stopped learning, while the current disaster has reduced their possibility of accessing their right to education.
- Due to the short amount of time between the two storms, **the complete humanitarian impact is still unknown.** A joint assessment to gather quality data and information is key to prioritize assistance.