

Alert note***Honduras, Floodings caused by Tropical Storm Sara
November 15, 2024*****Completed by:** Maria Amparo Peña, CASM**Date completed:** November 18, 2024.**Forum:** ACT Forum Honduras**Type of emergency:** Flooding due to Tropical Storm Sara**Date of emergency (if rapid onset):** November 13, 2024**1. The nature of the emergency**

Tropical Storm Sara severely impacted Central America, posing a critical threat to Honduras due to heavy rainfall and widespread flooding following its landfall late on November 14. The storm made landfall approximately 100 miles west-northwest of Cabo Gracias a Dios, on the Honduras-Nicaragua border, with sustained winds of 45 mph and a westward movement of 10 mph. Torrential rains across the region have significantly heightened risks, with forecasts predicting up to 30 inches of rainfall in northern Honduras. These conditions are expected to result in dangerous flash floods and mudslides, particularly in vulnerable areas such as the flood-prone Sula Valley¹.

The emergency in Honduras is escalating, especially in the departments of Atlántida, Yoro, and other heavily impacted areas. The Secretariat for Risk and National Contingency Management (COPECO) has issued multiple alerts to safeguard the population and enable real-time risk monitoring. Additionally, a national emergency has been declared under decree PCM-35-2024, published on November 15 in the official newspaper La Gaceta (Number 36,690). This declaration establishes a 30-day emergency for areas identified by COPECO as severely affected by Tropical Storm Sara.

On Nov. 17, a red alert has been issued for the departments of Islas de la Bahía, Atlántida, Yoro, Colón, Cortés, Valle, Choluteca, and Gracias a Dios. Meanwhile, a yellow alert is in place for Santa Bárbara, Olancho, El Paraíso, and Francisco Morazán.

2. The impact and scale of the emergency

According to the National Report on the Impact of Tropical Storm Sara (November 14–19, 2024)², the storm has impacted 45,531 families, totalling 144,144 people. Among them, 7,184 people are taking shelter in government-designated emergency centres, while others have sought refuge with relatives or friends. At the level of all departments under red alert, there are 2,379 isolated communities where the status of the population remains unknown due to inaccessibility, further exacerbating the situation.

The most vulnerable families have been disproportionately affected, primarily due to inadequate infrastructure, soil saturation, and road collapses. These factors have significantly increased their exposure to additional risks. Damage to road infrastructure, including the collapse of bridges and the obstruction of key roads, has severely hindered access to many affected communities. This has delayed critical rescue and relief operations, complicating the delivery of assistance to those in urgent need.

There are growing concerns about the escalation of the emergency, with organizations, including members of the ACT Forum Honduras, warning that conditions could worsen if heavy rains continue. Forecasts predict accumulated rainfall of up to 600 mm, which could lead to a significant increase in the number of affected individuals, further complicating relief and rescue efforts.

Additionally, ongoing rainfall is expected to exacerbate the existing damage, especially in rural and remote areas that relief teams have yet to reach. This prolonged adverse weather may delay recovery efforts and intensify the demand for continued humanitarian assistance.

¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/central-america-tropical-storm-sara-flash-update-no-1-15-november-2024#:~:text=Tropical%20Storm%20Sara%20made%20landfall,than%2020%2C500%20people%20in%20Honduras.>

² [INFORME DE AFECTACIONES A NIVEL NACIONAL TORMENTA TROPICAL SARA DEL 14 AL 19 NOVIEMBRE 2024 - 0500 AM.pdf](#)

INFORME DE AFECTACIONES A NIVEL NACIONAL - TORMENTA TROPICAL SARA



Del 14 al 19 de noviembre 2024 | Hora 0500

FECHA: 14 nov 2024, 1... (9) - NOMBRE DEL EVENTO - TIPO DEL EVENTO: Excl... (1) - DEPARTAMENTO - MUNICIPIO -

RESUMEN DE LAS AFECTACIONES

	FAMILIAS	AFECTADAS 42.531	DAMNIFICADAS 9.943	EVACUADAS 3.258	ALBERGADAS 2.374	
	PERSONAS	AFECTADAS 144.144	DAMNIFICADAS 23.462	EVACUADAS 13.345	ALBERGADAS 7.184	
	MUERTOS 4	 VIVIENDAS DAÑADAS 3.658 DESTRUIDAS 395		 COMUNIDADES INCOMUNICADAS 2.379		
	LESIONADOS 3					HERIDOS 4
	DESAPARECIDOS 1					
	RESCATADOS 7.682					

Currently, there is no disaggregated data by sex or gender for the affected population. However, it is essential that, as conditions improve and allow for more comprehensive data collection, the collection of sex- and gender-disaggregated information is prioritized. Doing so will enable a more inclusive, equitable, and effective humanitarian response.

CASM and the ACT Forum Honduras will base their intervention on data generated by the already-established population groups, such as Municipal Emergency Committees (CODEM) and Local Emergency Committees (CODELES). These groups, alongside the teams on the ground, conduct on-site monitoring to assess the needs of the population. Combined with official data provided by COPECO, this approach ensures that efforts are not duplicated and avoids repeating analyses already conducted by relevant entities through a damage and needs assessment.

3. Local and national capacity

People affected by Tropical Storm Sara are facing the emergency with limited resources and, in many cases, without access to basic services due to the collapse of infrastructure. The initial response of the population has been to seek refuge in safe places, such as the homes of relatives and friends, or in temporary shelters set up by the authorities. However, the situation is still precarious, especially for the most vulnerable communities.

The UN Resident Coordinator contacted the Minister of COPECO to confirm that the Humanitarian Network’s Contingency Plan is active and ready to support the National Risk Management System (SINAGER) in its response efforts. To strengthen coordination, the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG), the Humanitarian Network, and the Sula Valley Local Coordination Team will convene to review their contingency plans. Meanwhile, the Humanitarian Network’s communications team is actively disseminating storm preparedness information and amplifying COPECO’s official updates to ensure widespread public awareness³.

At the local level, there are several structures and resources available to deal with the emergency, although their capacity is being tested by the magnitude of the disaster:

³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/central-america-tropical-storm-sara-flash-update-no-1-15-november-2024#:~:text=Tropical%20storm%20Sara%20made%20landfall,than%2020%2C500%20people%20in%20Honduras.>

1. **Shelters and emergency centres:** Local governments have set up temporary shelters to accommodate displaced people.
2. **Firefighters, Red Cross, COPECO:** These emergency bodies are active in rescue, evacuation and aid distribution in affected areas.
3. **Community resources:** Some communities have local resources, such as volunteer groups and Local Emergency Committees (CODEs in Spanish) that operate with very limited resources.
4. **Basic infrastructure:** In urban areas, hospital infrastructure and health centers are functioning, but the capacity for care is limited by saturation and damage to access routes.

CASM and the organizations within the Forum are actively monitoring the phenomenon across all affected areas, maintaining constant communication to coordinate actions with local stakeholders, particularly local governments. This approach aims to ensure complementarity, and the generation of accurate data based on the primary needs of the population. Additionally, ACT Forum organizations in Honduras are mobilizing material and financial resources to support emergency response efforts in the most affected communities. Local teams have been activated to conduct initial assessments and collect critical data on the storm's impact. However, Tropical Storm Sara is testing institutional capacity due to the scale of the disaster.

It is crucial to recognize that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the area affected by Tropical Storm Sara are currently in a process of managing resources in order to offer effective support in responding to the emergency. This process includes mobilizing donations, coordinating with local authorities and other humanitarian organizations, and prioritizing needs in a context of limited resources.

4. Key needs and gaps

The National Report on the Impact of Tropical Storm Sara (November 14–19, 2024)⁴ highlights extensive damage and humanitarian challenges across seven departments, affecting tens of thousands of people. Below is an overview of the situation and the specific humanitarian needs for each location:

- In Cortés, structural damage, including roof collapses and fallen trees, was reported in Puerto Cortés, San Pedro Sula, and Choloma. Strong winds and heavy rain displaced families and caused significant damage to homes and infrastructure. Hundreds of people were affected across the department.
- In Atlántida, severe flooding in La Ceiba and Tela rendered over 7,000 people inaccessible in multiple communities. Landslides and road obstructions further compounded the crisis, isolating vulnerable populations and disrupting essential services.
- In Colón, flooding in Tocoa affected over 7,002 people, while Trujillo reported extensive damage to homes, roads, and bridges. Critical infrastructure, including key transportation routes, suffered severe impacts, leaving many communities isolated.
- In Yoro, over 2,100 people were affected by flooding in El Progreso, Arenal, and Victoria. Rising water levels led to mass evacuations, and blocked transportation routes hampered relief efforts.
- Gracias a Dios was severely impacted by river overflows, particularly Río Patuca, which flooded homes and isolated communities. In Puerto Lempira alone, over 7,611 people were affected, while similar devastation was reported in Brus Laguna.
- In Choluteca, flooding in San Antonio de Flores displaced 1,200 people, while Choluteca City experienced significant structural damage and evacuations due to rising water levels.
- In Valle, flooding in San Lorenzo affected 486 people and submerged critical roads, isolating affected communities.

To date, the following are the main identified pressing humanitarian needs:

- Shelter and relief supplies: Immediate provision of emergency shelters, food, water, and non-food items for displaced families.
- Medical assistance: Urgent medical support for those in shelters and affected by the crisis.
- Logistical support and access: Restoration of roads and bridges to improve connectivity and ensure timely delivery of aid to remote and isolated areas.

⁴ [INFORME DE AFECTACIONES A NIVEL NACIONAL TORMENTA TROPICAL SARA DEL 14 AL 19 NOVIEMBRE 2024 - 0500 AM.pdf](#)

- Reconstruction efforts: Repair and reinforcement of homes and critical infrastructure, including transportation networks, to facilitate recovery.

According to the needs assessment carried out with the support of technical teams, community representatives, and entities such as CODEM and COPECO, along with data obtained by the ACT Forum in Honduras during field visits, affected families are facing a critical situation. They urgently need assistance in key areas such as shelter, first aid, psychosocial support, access to drinking water and sanitation, and basic food supplies.

Local governments, although responding, are limited by significant shortages in equipment, logistics, financial resources, and technical experience, which hinders their ability to provide an adequate response. Therefore, NGOs are requested to collaborate in coordinating efforts to alleviate the situation of the affected families.

The impact on housing varies among families, some of which have sought refuge in temporary shelters set up by the government, others in the homes of relatives or friends, and the rest have had to improvise shelters with materials swept away by the currents, exposing themselves to additional risks, especially given the situation of violence and human trafficking in the country.

The shortage of food and basic hygiene products, along with unsanitary conditions, increases the risk of diseases such as dengue, acute respiratory infections, and diarrhoea due to the consumption of unpurified water and exposure of food to the elements.

Please indicate whether you are considering:

	Indicate your intention with an X below
Rapid Response Fund (<i>intended for small and medium scale emergencies</i>)	X
Appeal (<i>intended for large scale emergencies</i>)	

If you indicate an intention to launch an appeal, the secretariat will activate an Emergency Steering Committee meeting within two working days on receipt of this alert.

5. Forum Capacity and members intention to respond

ACT Member	Geographical focus	Sectors of expertise and experience
CASM	North: Cortés, Atlántida, Colón, Yoro, Gracias a Dios South: Choluteca, Valle	Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) Food security/Nutrition

6. Potential responses

CASM has presence in the most affected regions, enabling extensive humanitarian coverage, including rural and hard-to-reach areas. Their coordinated response during past disasters, such as hurricanes ETA, IOTA, and Julia, has improved efficiency, reduced duplication of efforts, and ensured that resources reach the most vulnerable. CASM maintains strong coordination with local and national authorities, particularly COPECO, and collaborate with community organizations to deliver tailored, locally driven emergency responses.

The families selected to receive assistance will be chosen based on several key criteria. Priority will be given to those who are severely affected by the disaster and have not yet received aid, with particular focus on pregnant and lactating women, families with children, people with disabilities, indigenous families, and those with elderly members or individuals with pre-existing medical conditions. Low-income families, particularly those led by women, will also be included in the selection process. This approach will ensure that the most vulnerable groups receive the support they need to address their immediate needs and facilitate their recovery.

CASM plans to provide emergency response to 1,200 families (4,800 individuals, including 2,496 women and 2,304 men) over a three-month period, focusing on the sectors of WASH, Food Security, and Nutrition.