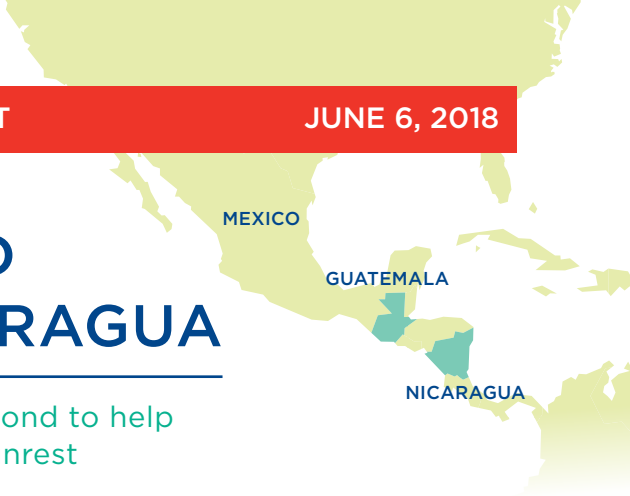




GUATEMALA VOLCANO AND POLITICAL UNREST IN NICARAGUA



Catholic Relief Services and its local Catholic partners respond to help families fleeing a volcanic eruption and those affected by unrest



Catholic Relief Services, through Caritas Escuintla, helps survivors of the volcano in an emergency shelter. Photo courtesy of Caritas

Deadly volcanic eruption

The eruption of Volcan de Fuego, or Fire Volcano, in Guatemala on June 3, was reportedly the worst in over a century, burying an entire community under ash, and blocking roads with fast-moving rocks, ash and hot gas.

More than 70 people have died, 46 are wounded, and nearly 200 are missing. In total, more than 1.7 million people have been affected. Families have evacuated with few belongings.

Roads, bridges and hundreds of homes were destroyed across the departments of Chimaltenango, Escuintla and Sacatepequez. The village of San Miguel Los Lotes was buried and the town of El Rodeo was severely damaged. Fresh flows of volcanic material are hampering relief efforts.

This is the second major eruption of the year, so communities who were working to rebuild are now facing even greater obstacles.

1.7 million

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY THE VOLCANIC ERUPTION AND ITS AFTERMATH



CRS response

Catholic Relief Services' local partner Caritas is already providing emergency relief shelters to some of the more than 3,000 people who evacuated.

A collection center has been set up to receive water and food, medicine and clothes. Efforts are focused on saving lives and recovering bodies, as well as locating missing loved ones. The National Forensic Sciences Institute is helping identify the deceased victims. CRS and Caritas staff report that there are many orphans among the survivors being served in the shelters.

A CRS team is also on the ground working with Caritas to assess the volcano's impact and identify further support needed to help communities recover their lives and livelihoods. We are working with peer humanitarian actors to ensure a coordinated response.

Early Caritas assessments indicate that hygiene kits are a priority, and significant water, sanitation and hygiene support will be needed, as well as early shelter recovery.



The village of San Miguel Los Lotes, just below the mountain, was buried in volcanic mud. Photo by Luis Rolando Sanchez/CRS.

HOW TO HELP

To support volcano survivors in Guatemala and those in need in Nicaragua:

- Donate online: donate.crs.org
- Donate by phone: 1-877-HELP-CRS
- Donate by check: Catholic Relief Services
P.O. Box 17090 Baltimore, Maryland 21297-0303

“In a few seconds, the sky became totally dark. We saw the ash coming and, because of the big noise, knew something very bad was happening”

Julia Gonzales

A mother whose daughter is still missing

SUPPORT IN RESPONSE TO UNREST IN NICARAGUA

Daily injury and loss of life

In Nicaragua, nationwide peaceful protests over legislation turned violent, and have resulted in more than 100 deaths since mid-April 2018. In addition, more than 1,000 people have been injured. There are daily reports of deaths and injuries as a result of confrontations.

Pope Francis has called for an end to the violence, Reuters reports. Making his Sunday address in St. Peter's Square on June 3, he expressed his "sorrow for the serious violence, with dead and wounded ... I pray for the victims and their families."

CRS response

The Catholic Church in Nicaragua is playing an instrumental role in peace and mediation, having led one of the largest peace marches in the nation's history on April 28.

The Church is acting as mediator in the national dialogue, brokering the release of many detained protestors, and providing water and medical care to the wounded.

CRS began working in Nicaragua in 1964. Besides focusing on agroenterprise to increase productivity and food security, we have helped to educate, train and place unemployed, marginalized youth in employment and self-employment livelihood opportunities.

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