



ALERT No. 2 Hurricane Ida

November 9, 2009

AmericasRelief Team is monitoring this event

AmericasRelief Team's Emergency Center Report

The AmericasRelief Team's Emergency Center has not been activated; the Center is staffed to help coordinate the shipping of relief aid to victims of the event. However, we anticipate that air relief flights, ocean relief space and co-loading opportunities will develop. We will notify our colleagues, friends and partners of space-available opportunities as this emergency develops.

With 124 dead, rescuers seek Salvador survivors

VERAPAZ, El Salvador — Soldiers and townspeople dug through rock and debris Monday in hopes of finding dozens of people missing in a mudslide that swept down on a town, part of a wave of floods and landslides that killed at least 124 people in El Salvador.

Days of heavy rains loosed mud and boulders that rolled down the slopes of the Chichontepec volcano before dawn Sunday, burying homes and cars in Verapaz, a town of about 3,000 people 30 miles (50 kilometers) outside the capital, San Salvador.

Hurricane Ida's presence in the western Caribbean late last week may have played a role in drawing the rain-packed Pacific low-pressure system toward El Salvador on the other side of Central America, said Dave Roberts, a Navy hurricane specialist at the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami.

Soldiers, emergency workers and relatives resumed a search for the missing at daybreak Monday and military helicopters flew in food for the searchers.

Survivor Cruz Ayala described the slide as "something black, like a huge wave, a huge noise, and I heard screams of people asking for help."

She fled and climbed the roof of a neighbor's house without knowing if her 71-year-old mother and teenage nieces escaped.

She found her mother and one of girls, but the other, 14-year-old Evelyn, remains missing.

Amid a persistent drizzle, rescuers dug frantically for survivors with shovels and even bare hands. But the search was made difficult by collapsed walls, boulders and downed power lines that blocked heavy machinery.

A small church turned into an impromptu funeral home, with relatives waiting outside under the rain for loved ones to be prepared for burial.

Mario Montoya said his sister, who was eight months pregnant, was among the dead.

"A torrent of water grew and great boulders started to destroy homes. It was terrible," said Montoya, 29.

President Mauricio Funes declared a national emergency and called the damages incalculable.

"The images that we have seen today are of a devastated country," Funes said on local television.

El Salvador's Civil Protection agency raised the death toll by to 124 late Sunday, with another 60 people missing. It didn't break down the deaths by location, but the deaths were concentrated in San Salvador and San Vicente province, where Verapaz is located. Red Cross spokesman Carlos Lopez Mendoza said earlier that 60 people were missing in Verapaz.

Matias Mendoza, 26, was at home in Verapaz with his wife Claudia and their year-old son, Franklin, when the earth began moving.

"It was about two in the morning when the rain started coming down harder, and the earth started shaking," Mendoza recalled. "I warned my wife and grabbed my son, and all of a sudden we heard a sound. The next thing I knew I was lying among parts of the walls of my house."

"A few minutes later, I found my wife and my son in the middle of the rubble, and, thank God, we're alive," said Mendoza, who suffered cuts on his cheek that emergency workers stitched up.

Almost 7,000 people saw their homes damaged by landslides or cut off by floodwaters following three days of downpours from a low-pressure system indirectly related to Hurricane Ida, which brushed Mexico's Cancun resort on Sunday before steaming into the Gulf of Mexico.

San Vicente Gov. Manuel Castellanos said workers were struggling to clear roadways and power and water service had been knocked out. At least 300 houses were flooded when a river in Verapaz overflowed its banks, Lopez Mendoza said.

Ida's presence in the western Caribbean may have played a role in drawing a Pacific low-pressure system toward El Salvador, causing the rains, said Dave Roberts, a Navy hurricane specialist at the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami.

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POSSIBLE CONSIGNEE

All humanitarian aid must be assigned to an approved in-country NGO (consignee). Please contact us if you know of an NGO on location who is willing to act as a consignee for donated items.

Contact us at the main office at 305-884-0441 or by e-mail at

info@americasrelief.org.

AVAILABILITY OF DONATED ITEMS

Qualified NGOs are requested to contact us to check on the availability of donated in-kind products in our databank and waiting for final disposition.

Contact us at the main office at 305-884-0441 or by e-mail at

info@americasrelief.org.

CHARTER FLIGHTS

Charter flights for relief operations are available through **AmericasRelief Team**.

Small cargo planes from 10,000 to 40,000 lbs. and larger cargo planes such as DC3, DC8 or DC10 are also available for charter flights to the affected areas.

Contact us at the main office at 305-884-0441 or by e-mail at info@americasrelief.org.

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OUR MEDIA PARTNERSHIP



We are proud of our media partnership; created to give South Floridians an opportunity to reach out and help those who have been directly affected by catastrophic events.



AmericasRelief Team

AmericasRelief Team is a Florida private sector collaboration of corporations and non-profit organizations created to help our Latin America and Caribbean friends in times of crisis and disasters.

AmericasRelief Team reacts to immediate crisis, provides ongoing logistics assistance, and conducts plans for future events in the region which will require effective coordination of humanitarian relief.

For

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