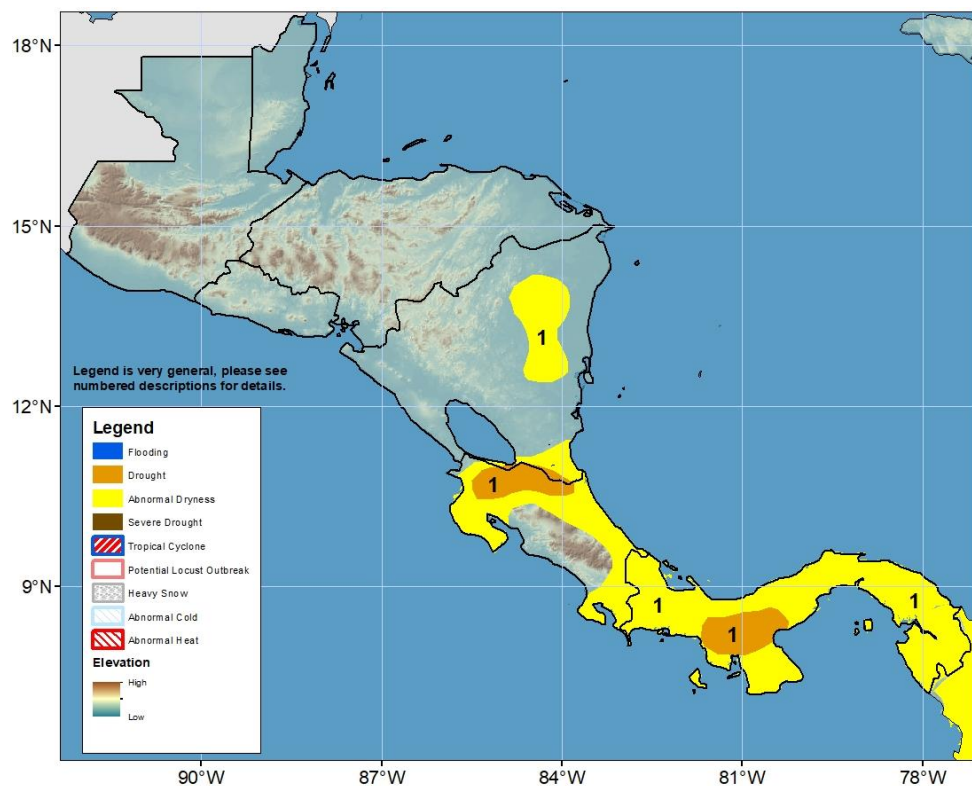


Climate Prediction Center's Central America Hazards Outlook For USAID / FEWS-NET 4 January – 10 January 2024

Drier-than-average conditions continue in southern Central America.



- 1) The past several weeks' below-average rainfall has maintained moderate moisture deficits, which have already delayed sowing for farmers in eastern Nicaragua. Reasonable amounts of rainfall during the past couple of months have helped improve short-term deficits across much Central America; but irregular and insufficient rainfall in the 90 days (long-term) and 30 days (short-term) is persisting in the southern Caribbean. The rainfall deficits are affecting the shipping industry in the Panama Canal, where the water level of the Gatun Lake is below average. Hazards are kept in the South where the end-of-season occurs later.

Note: The Hazards outlook map is based on current weather/climate information, short and medium-range weather forecasts (up to 1 week), sub-seasonal forecasts up to 4 weeks, and assesses the potential impact of extreme events on crop and pasture conditions. Shaded polygons are added in areas where anomalous conditions have been observed and predicted to continue during the outlook period. The boundaries of these polygons are only approximate at the spatial scale of the map. This product takes into account long-range seasonal climate forecasts but does not reflect current or projected food security conditions. FEWS NET is a USAID-funded activity whose purpose is to provide objective information about food security conditions. Its views are not necessarily reflective of those of USAID or the U.S. Government. The FEWS NET weather hazards outlook process and products include participation by FEWS NET field and home offices, NOAA-CPC, USGS, USDA, NASA, and a number of other national and regional organizations in the countries concerned.

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Near-average to below-average rainfall forecast in Central America during the next week

During late December of the past year, dry but typical conditions of the year was observed in Central America. However, moderate and above-average rainfall was received over localized areas in northern and southern Honduras and along the Pacific coastlines of Costa Rica and Panama. Since the beginning of the *Apante*, December-April, rainfall season, while most places in Central America have experienced near-average conditions, eastern Costa Rica and Panama have received below-average rainfall, with deficits ranging between 25-100 mm. Over the past 90 days, eastern Panama exhibited severe drought, impacting ships passage through the Panama Canal, whereas most areas in Central America displayed near-average to wetter-than-average conditions due to enhanced rainfall during October and November of the past year. Meanwhile, dry conditions and warmer weather conditions have resulted in forest fires over many local areas in Central America, including southern Guatemala.

During the next week, dry conditions are expected to continue in most places in Central America. While little to light (< 25 mm) rainfall is forecast over the inland of the sub-region, rainfall will likely be below-average along the Atlantic Tier, which could strengthen dryness in eastern Nicaragua and the southern Caribbean. Meanwhile, although above-average mean temperatures are forecast across Central America, the intrusion of northerly cold air mass could lead to near-freezing temperatures in the higher terrains in western Guatemala, including the Quetzaltenango and Huehuetenango Departments, potentially causing frost to crops and affecting local residents in the region.

