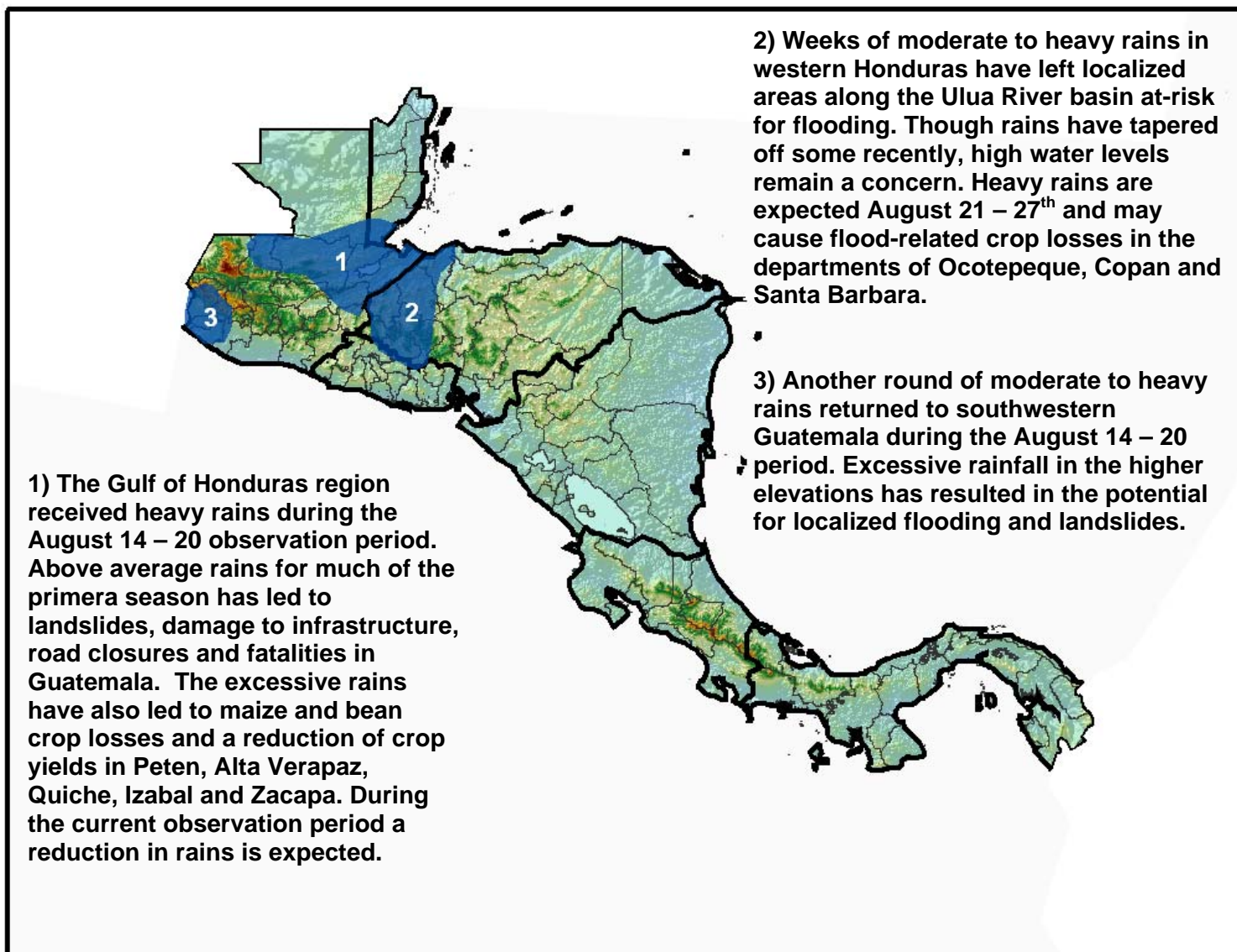


The MFEWS

Central America Weather Hazards and Benefits Assessment

For

August 21 – 27, 2008

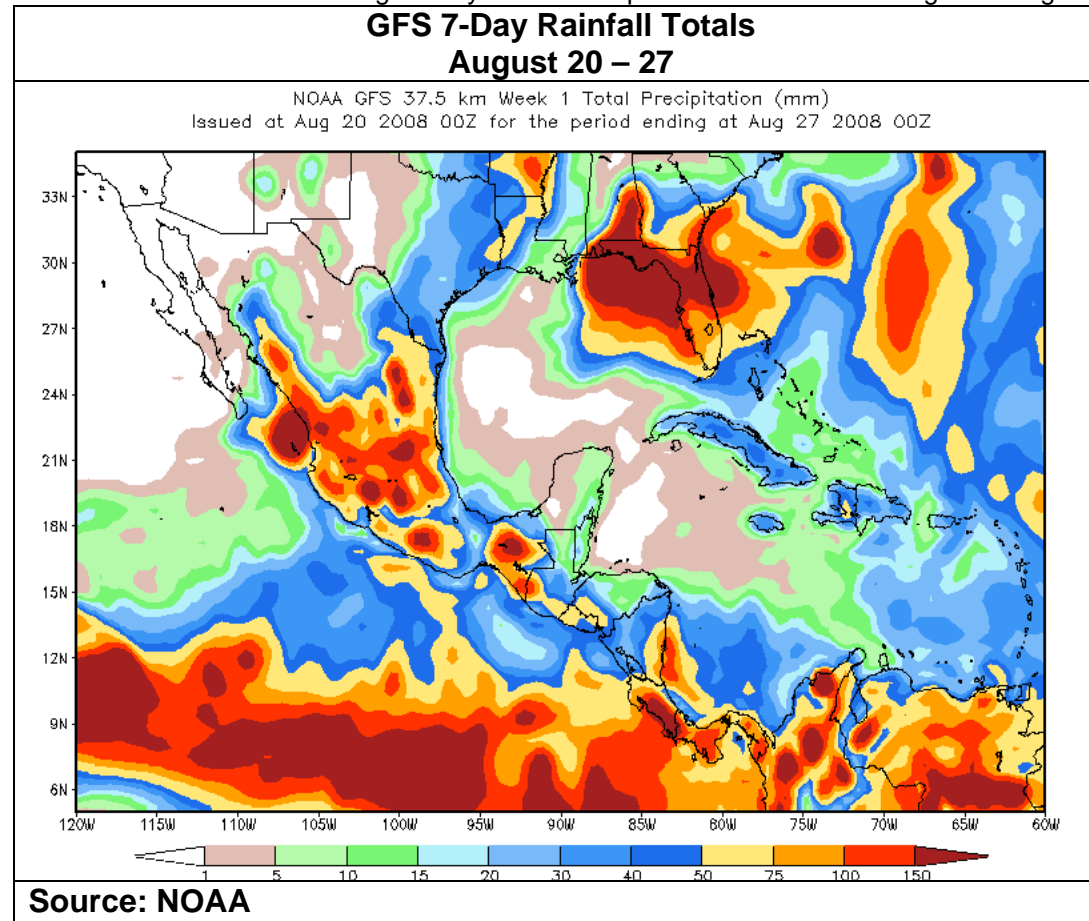


Hazards Assessment Text Explanation:

Though the Central America region is now experiencing its Canicula Period, heavy rains remain a concern for most areas. Municipalities near Guatemala City are showing evidence of the impacts associated with Canicula having had a significant decrease in rainfall.

Elsewhere in Guatemala, departments have been receiving excessive rains since June and seasonal rainfall totals for the country are now approaching or are in excess of 300 percent of normal in many areas. Crops that are nearing the end of their cropping cycle are at risk of being lost if excessive rains continue. Beans are especially vulnerable because they are very sensitive to moisture. In addition to the potential of crop loss, excess soil moisture has raised concerns with the potential that landslides may occur in addition to those that have already taken place. The government has recently declared a number of municipalities in the departments of Alta Verapaz, Chiquimula, Guatemala, Huehuetenango, Izabal, Quiche, Zacapa and Peten to be in a state of emergency due to the flooding, landslides, infrastructure damage and fatalities in recent weeks. During the August 21 – 27th observation period rains are expected to taper off significantly in many of the eastern departments of Guatemala, while heavy rains remain a concern in the southwest. In the southwestern departments there is potential for localized flooding and landslides.

Central Honduras has suffered crop losses due to the mid-May to June dryness. While water availability and ground conditions are near normal in the central region, flooding has become a concern in the west. In Ocotepeque, Honduras there are already reports of flood related crop losses. There is also the concern that water levels in the Ulua River could exceed its banks and cause localized flooding. Heavy rains are expected to return to this region during this period furthering flood concerns.



The evaluation of climatological threats of MFEWS include the participation of the central and local offices of MFEWS, NOAA-CPC, USGS, NASA, INETER of Nicaragua, Meteorological Service of Honduras, IMN of Costa Rica, INSIVUMEH of Guatemala, ETESA of Panama, NMS of Belize and SNET of El Salvador. Any questions or comments on this product can be directed to Wassila.Thiaw@noaa.gov