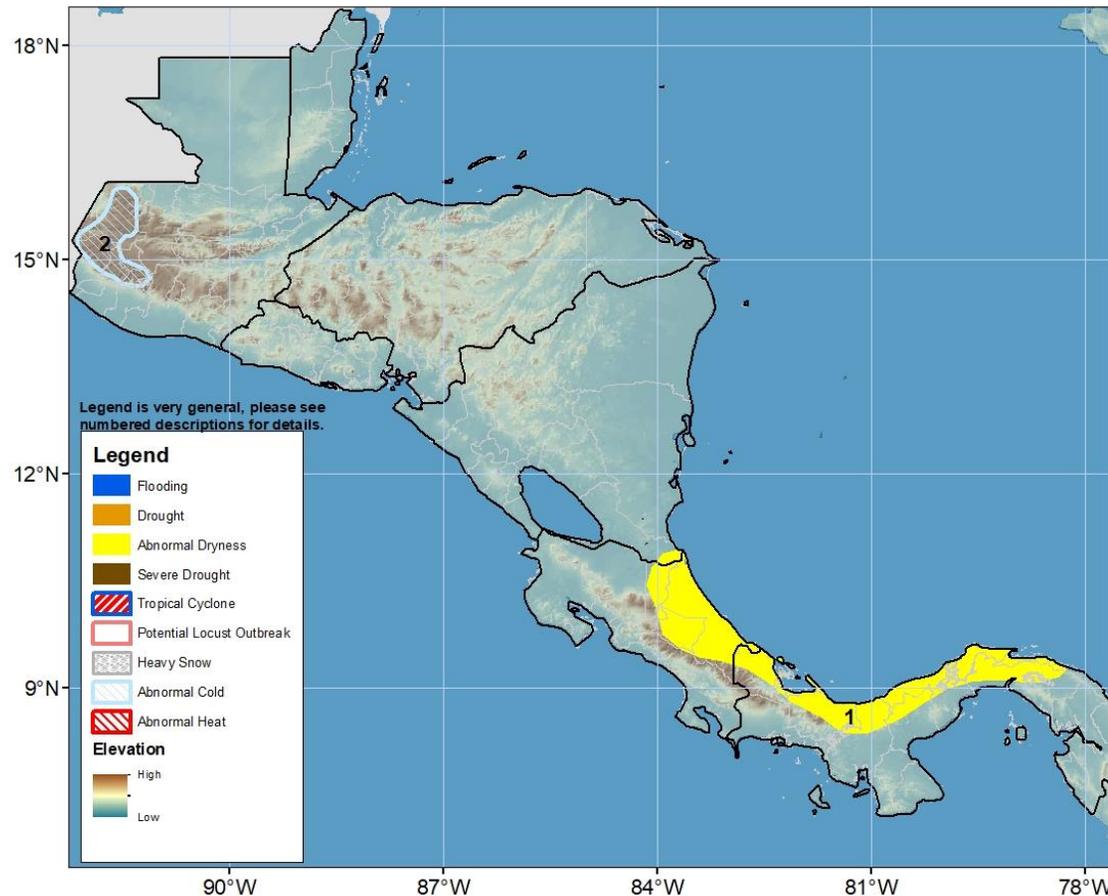


Climate Prediction Center's Central America Hazards Outlook For USAID / FEWS-NET 5 – 11 January 2023

Below-average rain since December of the past year has led to abnormal dryness in Costa Rica and Panama.



1. Suppressed rainfall and corresponding low SPI values in eastern Costa Rica and northern Panama have resulted in the placement of abnormal dryness.
2. Below freezing temperatures were observed and are expected to persist over the higher elevations in western Guatemala as frontal systems are forecast to move across northern Central America during the next week.

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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Relatively dry conditions to continue over Central America during the next week

During late December, dry conditions with suppressed rainfall dominated over Central America. However, little to light rain was observed locally in parts of southwestern Guatemala, eastern Nicaragua, central Costa Rica, the Gulf of Honduras, and along the Caribbean coasts. Over the past 30 days, below-average rain with departures from the average ranging between 50-200 mm was observed along the eastern Littorals in Costa Rica and Panama, whereas near-average conditions were depicted elsewhere. Abnormal dryness was posted across the dry portions of Central America, where moderate to large negative thirty-day rainfall anomalies and negative values of the Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) were present. For vegetation conditions, the latest Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) analysis showed neutral to positive anomalies over most areas in Central America, indicating seasonable to favorable conditions. However, the ongoing typical lack of moisture during this time of the year, combined with strong winds could lead to an environment that is conducive to forest fires over many local areas.

During the next week, rainfall forecasts suggested that light to moderate rain is expected along the Atlantic Tier of Central America. However, the weekly rain accumulation could still fall near to below average. Also, while mean surface temperatures are forecast to average near to above average, the expected passage of cold fronts across northern Central America could push minimum temperature to descend below freezing across the higher terrains in the Huehuetenango, Quetzaltenango, San Marcos, Totonicapán, and Sololá Departments in Guatemala.

