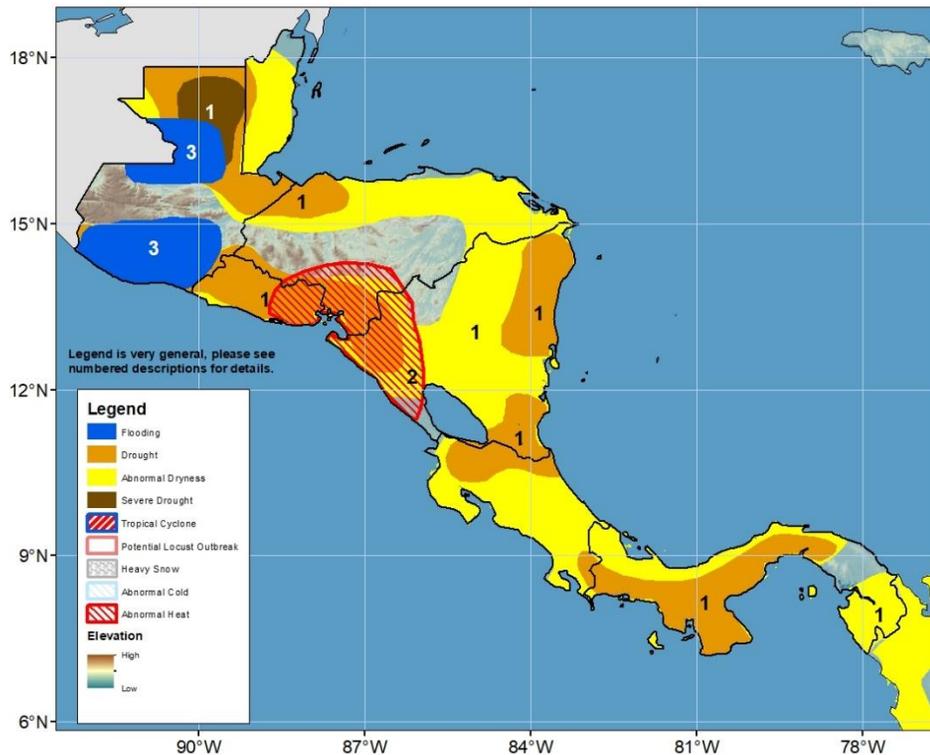


Climate Prediction Center's Central America Hazards Outlook For USAID / FEWS-NET 19 – 25 October 2023

Drier-than-average conditions has continued in Central America despite a recent increase in rainfall over many local areas.



- 1) Inconsistent and insufficient rainfall since the beginning of the *Primera* season, starting in April, has led to abnormal dryness and patches of drought across Central America. Moreover, a severe drought polygon is maintained in northern Guatemala due to the continuing rainfall deficits, significant vegetation stress and dry soil conditions. The irregular rains since the start of the *Primera* season have mainly affected the crops of subsistence farmers, who might experience yield reductions of 25% to 50% of average. In addition, high temperatures and a lack of rain have exacerbated moisture availability in the soil. Sowing delays are still reported in Guatemala. The rainfall deficits in Panama are affecting the shipping industry in the Panama Canal, where the water level of the Gatun Lake is below average.
- 2) Abnormal heat hazard is posted along the Gulf of Fonseca, where maximum temperature and heat index are expected to exceed 35°C for three or more consecutive days during the next week.
- 3) During the past week, torrential and well above-average rainfall has caused flooding over many municipalities in southern Petén Department in Guatemala. Consistent and heavy rainfall over the past few weeks has also triggered inundation, affecting many people and crops in the Guatemala City, Retalhuleu, and Suchitupéquez Departments. High risks for flooding remain as additional moderate to heavy rainfall is forecast 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.

Questions or comments about the hazards outlooks may be directed to Dr. Wassila Thiaw, Head, International Desks/NOAA, wassila.thiaw@noaa.gov. Questions about the USAID FEWS NET activity may be directed to Dr. James Verdin, Program Manager, FEWS NET/USAID, jverdin@usaid.gov

Heavy rainfall is forecast over the interior and along the Pacific and Atlantic coastlines of Central America during the next week.

During the past week, torrential rainfall, with totals exceeding 100 mm fell over the southwestern portion of the Petén Department in northern Guatemala, which has led to flooding over many municipalities in the region, according to reports. Heavy rainfall was also observed along the Pacific-facing region of Central America, including southern Guatemala, the Gulf of Fonseca, and the Southern Caribbean. In contrast, limited and below-average rainfall was received across the interior and Atlantic Littorals of the sub-region. As a result, negative rainfall anomalies persisted over many areas in Central America, except for parts of northwestern and southern Guatemala, western El Salvador, northern Honduras, and central Nicaragua, where positive rainfall anomalies were recorded over the past 30 days. Over the past 90 days, many areas received between 25-80% of their average rainfall, with the lowest accumulation below 50% of the average in northern Guatemala, northern Belize, the Gulf of Fonseca, northern Nicaragua, and parts of Costa Rica and Panama. For vegetation, poor conditions were already shown over many local areas in northern and southern Guatemala, Belize, southern Honduras, northern Nicaragua, central Costa Rica, and western Panama.

During the next week, heavy (> 50 mm) rainfall is forecast over the interior and along the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of Central America. Moderate to heavy rainfall is expected in Guatemala, maintaining high risks for flooding over many already-flooded and flood prone areas. While the forecast abundant rainfall should help mitigate dryness over some areas, the total amounts would unlikely be sufficient to erode accumulated rainfall deficits and therefore maintain drier conditions over most places. For temperatures, an abnormal heat hazard is posted along the Gulf of Fonseca, where maximum temperature and heat index are anticipated to exceed 35°C for at least three consecutive days, potentially affecting vulnerable people in the region.

