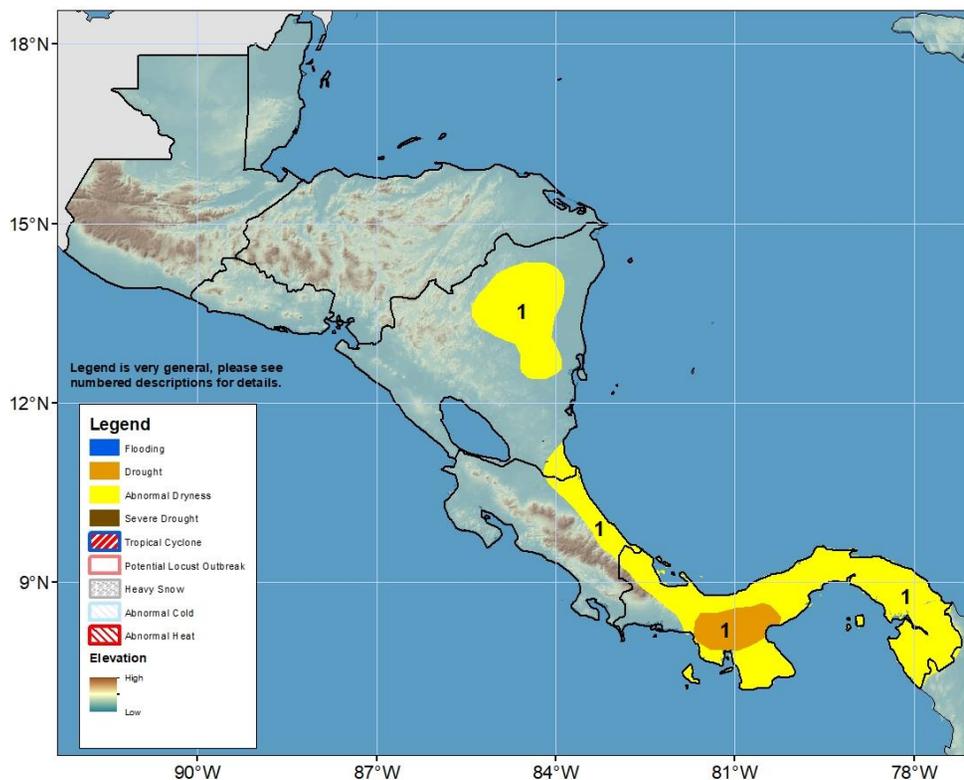


## Climate Prediction Center's Central America Hazards Outlook For USAID / FEWS-NET 11 January – 17 January 2024

Below-average rainfall over the past several weeks has maintained drier conditions in parts of Central America.



- 1) Insufficient rainfall over the past several weeks has maintained moderate moisture deficits, which have already delayed sowing activities 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 past 90 days (long-term) and past 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 levels of the Gatun Lake are below average.

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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**Dry conditions may worsen in parts of Central America as near-average to below-average rainfall is forecast during the next week.**

During early January, light to locally moderate rainfall was observed along the Atlantic coastlines of Central America, whereas dry conditions prevailed elsewhere. Nevertheless, moderate to locally heavy and above-average rainfall was received in central Costa Rica, contributing to erode short-term rainfall deficits over the dry portions of the country. An analysis of the accumulated rainfall over the past 30 days has shown drier-than-average conditions over many areas in Central America, including northeastern and southwestern Guatemala, southwestern Belize, east-central Nicaragua, eastern Costa Rica, and Panama, where rainfall deficits exceeded 50 mm. The largest rainfall deficits ranged between 100-200 mm and were observed in Panama. In Nicaragua, unevenly-distributed rainfall over the past several weeks has already impacted agricultural activities, including delayed sowing in the eastern regions, according to reports. Over the past 90 days, east-central Nicaragua and eastern Panama registered only between 25-50% of their average rainfall, indicating prolonged dryness since the previous rainfall seasons. In Panama, the resulting low water levels have already affected ship crossings along the Panama Canal. Meanwhile, cold weather with below-freezing temperatures were observed in Labor Ovalle and Los Altos in the Quetzaltenango Department in Guatemala during the past week.

During the next week, little to light (< 25 mm) rainfall is forecast along the Atlantic Tier and southern Caribbean Region in Central America. The expected rainfall amounts could fall below-average, which may maintain rainfall short-term and long-term deficits over the dry portions of the sub-region. The expected dry conditions and large diurnal temperature range could increase the risks for forest fires over many local areas. Meanwhile, though mean temperatures are expected to remain above-average across Central America, minimum temperatures could still descend below freezing, potentially leading to frosted crops and hypothermia to local residents over elevated terrains in western Guatemala.

