



Situation Report 2 –Tropical Storm Olga – DOMINICAN REPUBLIC 14 DECEMBER 2007

This situation report is based on information received from the United Nations Resident Coordinators in country and OCHA Regional Office in Panama.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Tropical Storm Olga has claimed the lives of 35 people. Some 49,170 persons were evacuated and 3,727 are in shelters.**
- **Needs assessments are ongoing in the affected areas to update the Noel Flash Appeal.**

SITUATION

1. Olga developed from a low-pressure system into a named storm Monday 10 December, although the Atlantic hurricane season officially ended November 30. The centre of Tropical Storm Olga passed through the middle of the Dominican Republic overnight Tuesday to Wednesday on a direct westward path. Olga has weakened to a tropical depression and moved over the waters between Cuba and Jamaica. The depression is expected to become a remnant low within the next 12 hours.

2. Olga is expected to produce additional rainfall, accumulations of 1 to 2 inches over the southeastern Bahamas, eastern Cuba, Jamaica and Hispaniola.

3. The storm passed Puerto Rico on Tuesday night, claiming one death and causing power shortage to 79,000 people. In Haiti, two people died in the Department Nord, two were injured and one is missing. Some roads are still blocked, and 418 houses are damaged and 52 destroyed.

Forecast

4. The National Meteorological Office ONAMET forecasts better weather conditions however low to moderate rains will continue in the North East, the North, South East, Valle Del Cibao and the border area as a result of the passage of Olga.

5. The Emergency Operations Centre (COE) is maintaining a red alert in 30 provinces: Santo Domingo, Distrito Nacional, San Cristóbal, Monte Plata, Santiago Rodríguez, Dajabón, San Pedro de Macorís, Santiago, Puerto Plata, Espaillat, Hermanas Mirabal (Salcedo), Duarte (Bajo Yuna), María Trinidad Sánchez, Samaná, Montecristi, Valverde-Mao, Sánchez Ramírez, El Seibo, La Romana, Hato Mayor (in particular Sabana de la Mar), La Altagracia, La Vega, Monseñor Nouel, Peravia, Azua, San José de Ocoa, Pedernales, Independencia, San Juan de la Maguana and Barahona. Two provinces are under a yellow alert.

Impact

6. So far the death toll stands at 35 people and one injured. Some 49,170 persons were evacuated, 3,727 are in shelters. Some 9,543 houses were damaged, 291 were destroyed and 189 communities are isolated. Four bridges and 23 roads were damaged.

7. In view of the possible overflow of the river Yaque del Norte, the Civil Defense and local emergency authorities had preventively evacuated about 8,000 families in Guayubin, Palo Verde, Castanuelas, Loma de Castanuelas, Bajo Yuna and Mao

8. In the national District, La Cienaga, Capotillo, La Zurza and Los Girasoles suburbs are the most affected.



Health, water and sanitation

9. On 12 December, the State Department for Public Health and Social Support (SESPAS) issued a epidemiological alert as a prevention to possible surge of infections and water born diseases. So far, no damage to health infrastructure in any of the affected areas was reported.

10. In Santiago, the drinking water service is operating at 30% of its capacity. River Yaque's overflow damaged the water treatment plant and the aqueduct system in Mao. The National Water Institute reported that 45 aqueducts, 11 water irrigation channels and 23 hydraulic systems were damaged in Cibao Central. The Emergency Operation Centre (COE) informs that water levels in five dams (Valdesia, Rincón, Sabaneta, Hatillo and Jigüey) have increased over their maximum storage level.

Food security and nutrition

11. In Duarte province, damages up to millions of pesos are reported to rice and fruit crops. River Yaque del Norte's overflow caused the total destruction of bananas and tomatoes plantations. In Linea Noroeste and Cibao Central regions, 90% of the bananas plantations have been damaged. In Moca, 80% have been destroyed.

Infrastructure

12. According to the COE, four bridges (three in La Vega province and one in Mao-Valverde) were damaged as a result of the rains. The Electricity Company EDENORTE provided electricity to only 48% of its beneficiaries as a result of damages in the electricity systems in the Cibao region. In the South, 10 networks of the Electricity Company EDESUR remained out of order causing power shortages in the municipalities of Pedro Brand, Bayona and la Isabela, Santo Domingo province, and areas in Cristobal, Bani, San Juan and Barahona. In the East, the Electricity Company EDESTE reported that at least 7 networks have been damaged.

NATIONAL RESPONSE

13. President Leonel Fernández qualified as a tragedy the loss of lives and promised assistance to those affected.

14. The State Department for Public Health and Social Support (SESPAS) and the Pan American Health Organization put in place a health medical centre in the province of Santiago to assist those displaced by the floods. SESPAS is also intensifying preventive actions that include fumigation, prophylaxis, and medical interventions. SESPAS has made available to provincial and municipal authorities medical kits donated by Cuba and Brasil during the Noel emergency. SESPAS and PAHO distributed chemical latrines and six boxes of more than 30,000 water purification tabs.

15. The Government is also distributing food and non-food items to the affected persons in various points in the country. Food assistance is carried out through the Social Plan of the Presidency in coordination with local emergency authorities.

16. The Secretary of Agriculture has dispatched almost 100 brigades to help in the rehabilitation of plantations and other crops affected.

17. Large search and rescue operations and evacuations were carried out in the North and Northeast. Pressure and water level in dams are closely monitored by authorities as some dams have almost reached their maximum capacity, notably Taveras and Sabana Yegua. The technical committee had to increase the drainage of the pressure in the Travera dam to avoid its collapse due to rainfall registered in the basin of the Yaque del Norte river.

18. A large scale search and rescue operations as well as evacuations are on going in the North and North East. Provincial and municipal emergency operations Centres (COE) have been activated as well as emergency plans of rescue organizations.



INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

19. The UNETE has been reactivated to analyze the information received on the extent of the damages created by Olga. A meeting with the Under Secretary of International Cooperation was held to discuss the UN- system various initiatives to assist the Government in the response. The Resident Coordinator and the UNETE will update the Noel Flash Appeal accordingly to take into account new needs created by Olga. On 14 December, the World Food Programme (WFP) launched an appeal for USD 4 million to provide aid to 55,000 victims of Olga and Noel in the Dominican Republic.

20. On 13 December, the UNDMT dispatched three inter-agency teams to assess Línea Noroeste, Mao-Valverde and Montecristi, Santiago and La Vega areas. Other assessment missions will be visiting the affected areas on 14 December.

21. The Dominican Red Cross (DRC) emergency response teams are on alert and 2,000 volunteers are waiting for the situation to evolve in order to provide assistance. The NS also has 10 coordination centres and more than 117 operative centres waiting for further instructions if needed. There is one Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member already positioned in country supporting another emergency and is available if further assistance is needed. There are several Partner National Societies (PNS) present in country who are informed and alerted of the situation in order to provide further assistance if the conditions worsen. The Operation Centre has been activated and is in contact with all pertaining agencies in country.

22. The National Societies of the Dominican Republic with the support of the Federation has determined that external assistance is not required at this time, and are therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time

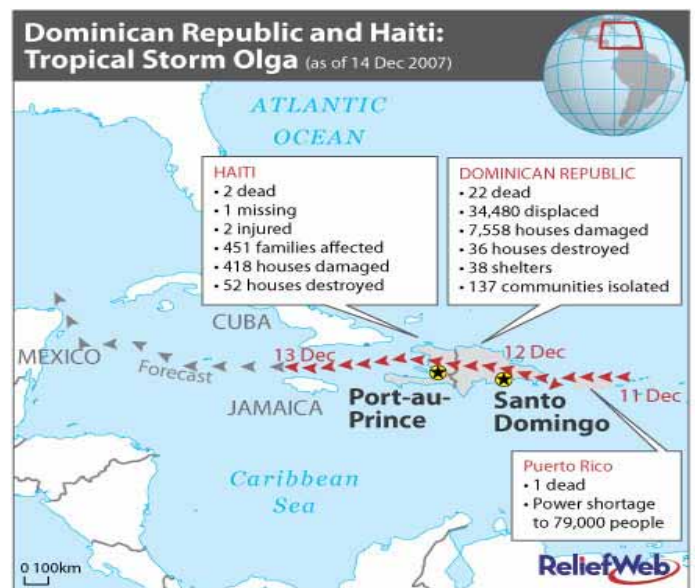
23. A meeting was held between the International Federation and the Latin America and the Caribbean

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Network of Environmental Funds (REDLAC) in order to share information about these emergency and other recent ones in the region.

24. All United Nations agencies present in the Dominican Republic have stated to be working at full capacity at the time in response to recent emergencies; therefore no further assistance has been requested from them.

25. This situation report, together with further information regarding on-going emergencies, is also available on the Reliefweb: <http://www.reliefweb.int>.



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



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