
The United States Responds to Natural Disaster in El Salvador

**Office of the Spokesman
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On November 7-8, [2009], heavy rainfall related to Tropical Storm Ida caused floods and landslides in much of the central and eastern areas of El Salvador, including the capital city of San Salvador, which has resulted in more than 190 deaths and severe infrastructural damage and agricultural losses. At least 14,000 people have been forced from their homes and are staying in temporary shelters.

In response, to date the United States Government has provided more than \$840,000 in emergency assistance to El Salvador through the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance and the U.S. Department of Defense's Southern Command.

After the storm, USAID immediately released \$100,000 for the local purchase of essential emergency relief supplies and fuel for El Salvador's armed forces helicopters to transport supplies to communities in need, as well as to fly assessment missions over the affected areas. In addition, on November 11, 2009, USAID airlifted to El Salvador emergency relief supplies from USAID stockpiles in Miami. The airlift, valued at approximately \$180,000 included:

- Transport
- Rolls of plastic sheeting to build temporary roofs and shelters
- 5,000-gallon water bladders
- Ten-liter collapsible water containers
- Hygiene kits containing soap, detergent, and other essential supplies

For more information about USAID's emergency humanitarian assistance programs, please visit: www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance.

U.S. Southern Command has committed an additional \$50,000 to finance five Humanitarian Assistance Projects to support homeless families in the hardest hit communities. These funds will be used to purchase and donate supplies, potable water, and canned food, as well as construction materials, mosquito netting, beds, and mattresses.

Additionally, on November 11, 2009, a 45-member team from U.S. Southern Command's Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-Bravo or JTF-B), located at the Honduran Air Force Base Soto Cano, arrived in El Salvador with four helicopters, including one equipped to support medical evacuations, to work with Salvadoran military and civilian authorities in the delivery of emergency supplies, food, and potable water to isolated communities. The team also included engineers to assist in the assessment of infrastructure repair projects and a medical assessment team which is working closely with the Ministry of Health to determine emergency medical needs. In its first day of operations, JTF-Bravo helicopters transported nearly 20,772 pounds of supplies to six villages, providing the first delivery of food and potable water to the worst hit and most isolated areas. As of November 15, 2009, JTF-B helicopters have delivered more than 315,200 pounds of relief material to the most remote areas damaged by floods and mudslides. For further information on U.S. Southern Command's relief efforts in El Salvador, please visit: <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/factFiles.php?id=128>.