

# Tropical Storm Amanda severely impacts food security of 340,000 Salvadorans



SAN SALVADOR - Damage caused by Tropical Storm Amanda which lashed El Salvador is compounding the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and is set to increase the number of food insecure people in El Salvador, the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) warned today.

"This is a dramatic situation for thousands of people who have lost their livelihoods. I call on the international community to support the efforts of the government and the United Nations to urgently reduce the suffering of thousands of Salvadorans," said Miguel Barreto, WFP's Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean. "It is crucial to support governments that are facing extreme weather events amidst an ongoing pandemic."

The results of a WFP rapid food security assessment in El Salvador conducted after the storm that hit the country on 31 May, estimate that 336,300 people in urban and rural areas could be pushed into severe food insecurity, meaning that they may not have the means or resources to feed themselves. On 6 June, WFP and the City of San Salvador began distributing food to 5,500 people in 73 shelters located in the departments of San Salvador, Sonsonate and La Libertad.

Following the storm's passage, WFP needs US\$8 million to provide urgent food assistance for two months to 153,500 people in severe food insecurity. This request for funds is in addition to the US\$19 million required to support the Government of El Salvador in its response to COVID-19.

"These are the worst rains I've seen since Hurricane Mitch in 1998," said WFP's Representative in El Salvador, Andrew Stanhope, who added that "the impact of Tropical Storm Amanda and the pandemic has worsened the food security of the poorest families. Now more than ever we must redouble our efforts to urgently reach those most in need with food assistance."

The west and center of the country are the main areas affected by the storm, the first in this hurricane season. Authorities have reported heavy flooding, with between 500 to 800 mm of rain accumulated in some departments, and severe damage to infrastructure. The government of El Salvador has declared a state of emergency.

WFP is also supporting the Government of El Salvador in its response to COVID-19. Starting in April, WFP provided food or cash to 32,000 vulnerable people.