

# **EXHIBIT 140**



## TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS CONSIDERATIONS: NICARAGUA APRIL 2017

### Hurricane Mitch: Damages and Recovery

Hurricane Mitch made landfall in Nicaragua in October 1998. The storm killed 3,045 people, and 885 were reported missing.<sup>1</sup> The devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch affected nearly 868,000 people.<sup>2</sup> Landslides and floods destroyed entire villages and caused extensive damage to the transportation network, housing, medical and educational facilities, water supply and sanitation facilities, and the agricultural sector.<sup>3</sup> Overall damage estimates ranged between \$1.3 to \$1.5 billion.<sup>4</sup>

As of May 1999, the Government of Nicaragua estimated that Hurricane Mitch destroyed 23,854 homes and damaged an additional 17,566.<sup>5</sup> Housing reconstruction costs were estimated at \$143.7 million.<sup>6</sup> Damages to roads and bridges accounted for approximately 60% of Hurricane Mitch-related reconstruction costs.<sup>7</sup> Approximately 1,500 kilometers of paved and 6,500

<sup>1</sup> *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*, Reunión del Grupo Consultivo, May 25-28, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* (Past Refugee, Asylum and International Operations (RAIO) reports stated that two million people were affected by Hurricane Mitch, citing to a URL hosted by the National Climactic Data Center. This report, however, cites to a figure produced by the Government of Nicaragua at the Consultative Group Meeting for the Reconstruction and Transformation of Central America held in Stockholm, Sweden in May 1999. The purpose of the Consultative Group Meeting was to raise aid for countries devastated by Hurricane Mitch. In its efforts to obtain aid, the Government of Nicaragua produced a precise figure further broken down by region. For example, the storm affected 867,752 people, with 448,209 of the victims residing in Region II (comprised of León and Chinandega departments) and 190,577 residing in Region VI (comprised of Matagalpa and Jinotega departments). The government estimated that 50.1% of those affected were women, and 45.7% were minors under age 14. This RAIO report cites to the Government of Nicaragua figure). See also: *Mitch: The Deadliest Atlantic Hurricane Since 1780*, National Climactic Data Center, <http://lwf.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/reports/mitch/mitch.html> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

<sup>4</sup> *Nicaragua Overview*, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), <http://web.archive.org/web/20110606154439/http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/bj2001/lac/ni/> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017). According to a USAID source, overall damages were US\$1.5 billion. The Government of Nicaragua assessed damages at US\$1.3 billion. See *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

<sup>5</sup> *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

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kilometers of unpaved roads were damaged, while 3,800 meters of bridges were damaged or destroyed.<sup>8</sup> As a result, the country's main cities were physically disconnected from smaller towns and communities.<sup>9</sup> Road and bridge reconstruction and rehabilitation costs were estimated at \$804 million.<sup>10</sup>

Estimates of schools damaged vary. The Government of Nicaragua reported that Hurricane Mitch destroyed 296 schools and damaged 216 more.<sup>11</sup> More than 294,000 textbooks were destroyed and 555 teachers were left homeless or injured, contributing to damages totaling \$43.7 million.<sup>12</sup> An alternate source, however, indicated that approximately 340 schools were damaged.<sup>13</sup>

Likewise, estimates of damages to health infrastructure vary. According to the Government of Nicaragua, a total of 102 health units were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Mitch, including one hospital, 30 health centers, and 71 health posts.<sup>14</sup> However, an alternate source reports that 90 health centers, 40 health posts, and six hospitals suffered damages.<sup>15</sup>

Damages from Hurricane Mitch to the agricultural sector, comprised of the internal consumption and export markets, impacted the agricultural economy and local food access.<sup>16</sup> The bean, corn, and rice crops, all destined for domestic consumption, suffered estimated losses of 71%, 51%, and 28%, respectively.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, crops destined for the export market, including sesame, peanuts, and bananas, saw losses of 65%, 27%, and 18%, respectively.<sup>18</sup> In addition, an estimated 77,000 cattle, 21,509 horses, 97,121 pigs, and 222,736 poultry were lost in the storm, contributing to a decrease in the overall food supply.<sup>19</sup>

The hurricane also damaged 79 potable water and nine sewage treatment systems.<sup>20</sup> In the urban sector, 24 water uptake systems, 20 wells, 67 water pump stations, and 52 kilometers of pipes were damaged.<sup>21</sup> In the rural sector, approximately 634 wells were damaged.<sup>22</sup> Overall, damage

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 1,500 kilometers and 6,500 kilometers account for 83% and 39% of all paved and unpaved roads in Nicaragua at the time of Hurricane Mitch, respectively.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Christoplos, Ian, et al., *Learning From Recovery After Hurricane Mitch: Experience From Nicaragua*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, p. 14, 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Nicaragua: *Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

<sup>15</sup> Christoplos, et. al, p.14.

<sup>16</sup> Nicaragua: *Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.



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from Hurricane Mitch caused a 40% reduction in water service, affecting close to a million people.<sup>23</sup>

The international community and the Government of Nicaragua helped to repair the damage and destruction left behind by Hurricane Mitch. For example, the Canadian Red Cross and the United Nations Development Programme collaborated to build 1,300 homes,<sup>24</sup> and local authorities, with the assistance of various small Spanish non-governmental organizations (NGOs), built 300 homes in the municipality of Ocotal.<sup>25</sup> These programs, however, represent a mere fraction of the more than 41,000 homes that were damaged or destroyed.<sup>26</sup> Nicaragua reportedly has one of the highest housing deficits in Central America, with a need for “957,000 new houses and home improvements”—only 50% of which is covered by the private and public sectors.<sup>27</sup>

A significant amount of aid was dedicated to repairing and improving road infrastructure, including various projects to rehabilitate, maintain and improve roads funded by the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank.<sup>28</sup> However, transportation infrastructure in Nicaragua remains “poor and often suffers damage from tropical storms and hurricanes,” with public protests related to poor road conditions occasionally occurring.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the impact of Hurricane Mitch, access to drinking water and sanitation has increased in Nicaragua in the long-term.<sup>30</sup> Nicaragua has benefited from various loans from the Inter-

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> *Rebuilding after Hurricane Mitch: Housing reconstruction in Honduras and Nicaragua*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, p.3, 2007.

<sup>25</sup> *Reconstrucción post-Mitch en Nicaragua*, EcoSur, Aug. 2009, <http://www.ecosur.org/ediciones-antteriores/105/455-reconstruccion-post-mitch-en-nicaragua>, (last visited Apr. 14, 2017).

<sup>26</sup> Gómez, Rosa Julia, *Salud en la Vivienda en los Países que Conforman la Red Interamericana de Centros de Salud en la Vivienda: El Caso de Nicaragua*, Organización Panamericana de la Salud, p.22, Mar. 2000. The pre-Mitch housing shortage in Nicaragua was estimated at 594,000 housing units, affecting 3.6 million people, or eight out of 10 Nicaraguans.

<sup>27</sup> *Habitat for Humanity in Nicaragua*, Habitat for Humanity, <https://www.habitat.org/where-we-build/nicaragua>, (last visited Apr. 6, 2017).

<sup>28</sup> *NI0099: Panamerican Highway Rehabilitation*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0099> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *NI0146: Road Rehabilitation San Lorenzo-Muhan*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0146> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *NI0170: PPP Road Program for Competitiveness*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0170> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *Nicaragua: Third Roads Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project*, World Bank, Dec. 18, 2000; *Nicaragua: Fourth Roads Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project*, World Bank, Mar. 27, 2015 (see complete report).

<sup>29</sup> *Nicaragua > Infrastructure*, Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Central America And The Caribbean, Feb. 3, 2017, <http://janes.ihs.com/Janes/Display/1302302> (last visited Apr. 6, 2017).

<sup>30</sup> *Estimates on the use of water sources and sanitation facilities – Nicaragua*, WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, Jun. 2015, [http://www.wssinfo.org/documents/?tx\\_displaycontroller%5Bregion%5D=&tx\\_displaycontroller%5Bsearch\\_word%5D=nicaragua&tx\\_displaycontroller%5Btype%5D=country\\_files](http://www.wssinfo.org/documents/?tx_displaycontroller%5Bregion%5D=&tx_displaycontroller%5Bsearch_word%5D=nicaragua&tx_displaycontroller%5Btype%5D=country_files), (last visited Apr. 14, 2017).



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American Development Bank to improve its water and sanitation systems.<sup>31</sup> According to the World Health Organization/United Nations Children’s Fund (WHO/UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, as of 2015, an estimated 87% of the Nicaraguan population had access to an improved drinking water source, while an estimated 68% had access to improved sanitation facilities; in 1995—the last year of survey data before Hurricane Mitch—76% had access to an improved drinking water source, while only 49% had access to improved sanitation facilities.<sup>32</sup>

### Post-Hurricane Mitch Environmental Disasters

Nicaragua is “vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters,”<sup>33</sup> including hurricanes, severe storms and flooding, landslides, significant volcanic activity, and destructive earthquakes.<sup>34</sup> According to the 2017 Global Climate Risk Index, Nicaragua ranked as the 4<sup>th</sup> most affected country in the world by extreme weather events from 1996 to 2015; during this time, Nicaragua averaged \$234.7 million in damages per year, and witnessed over 3,200 total fatalities from extreme weather events.<sup>35</sup> Per the World Food Programme, Nicaragua’s vulnerability to natural disasters hinders its progress in addressing both poverty and food security.<sup>36</sup> Both strong seasonal rains

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<sup>31</sup> NI0097: *Modernization Potable Water/Sanitation*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0097>, (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); NI0142: *Implementation Sanitation Measures Managua Lake*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0142>, (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); Lockwood, Harold et al., *Activity Report 106, Nicaragua: Rural Water Supply, Sanitation, and Environmental Health Program*, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Environmental Health Project, p. 15-16, Dec. 2001; NI-L1017: *Potable Water and Sanitation Investment Program*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI-L1017> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *Water and sanitation company extends services and increases efficiency*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/mapamericas/nicaragua/water-and-sanitation-company-extends-services-and-increases-efficiency.5597.html> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *Nicaragua will improve water and sanitation services with IDB support*, Inter-American Development Bank, Dec. 3, 2010.

<sup>32</sup> *Estimates on the use of water sources and sanitation facilities – Nicaragua*.

<sup>33</sup> *WFP Nicaragua Country Brief*, World Food Programme, p.2, Jun. 2016; *The World Factbook – Nicaragua*, CIA, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/nu.html>, (last visited Apr. 18, 2017).

<sup>34</sup> *Foreign Travel Advice – Nicaragua: Natural Disasters*, GOV.UK, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/nicaragua/natural-disasters> (last visited Apr. 16, 2017).

<sup>35</sup> Kreft, Sönke, Eckstein, David and Melchior, Inga, *Global Climate Risk Index 2017*, Germanwatch, p. 5-6, Nov. 2016.

<sup>36</sup> *WFP Nicaragua Country Brief*, World Food Programme, p.2, Feb. 2017.

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and a prolonged drought in the section of Nicaragua located in Central America's "Dry Corridor"<sup>37</sup> have plagued the country in recent years.<sup>38</sup>

Since Hurricane Mitch, various hurricanes, tropical depressions, and tropical storms have made landfall in Nicaragua—a country which is prone to flooding.<sup>39</sup> In November 2001, Hurricane Michelle damaged or destroyed 3,349 houses, seven bridges, and 7,000 hectares of crops;<sup>40</sup> in September 2007, Hurricane Felix, a category 5 storm, killed over 100 and damaged or destroyed an estimated 16,400 houses;<sup>41</sup> in May 2008, Tropical Storm Alma damaged seven Pacific coast departments, leaving three people dead and 10 missing, and damaging "most major roads, water wells and latrines" in the department of Leon in western Nicaragua;<sup>42</sup> in October 2008, Tropical Depression 16 brought intense rains that left four people dead and affected 10,633 people in eight departments;<sup>43</sup> and in November 2009, Hurricane Ida, a category 1 storm, brought heavy rains and winds to the northern coast of Nicaragua, causing damage to 875 homes, contaminating 300 wells, and affecting over 13,000 people.<sup>44</sup>

More recently, in October 2011, heavy rains linked to Tropical Depression 12E produced flooding and landslides throughout the country.<sup>45</sup> An assessment carried out by the Government of Nicaragua found that 87 of 153 municipalities<sup>46</sup> suffered damages, and nearly 149,000 people were affected by damages to their property, crops, and other livelihoods.<sup>47</sup> A total of 8,924

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<sup>37</sup> According to a report published by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on Central America's "Dry Corridor": "The term dry corridor, although it points to a climatic phenomenon, has an ecological basis: it defines a group of ecosystems that combine in the ecoregion of dry tropical forest in Central America, which starts in Chiapas, Mexico, and in a strip of land, contains the lowlands of the Pacific slope and much of the central pre-mountain region of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and part of Costa Rica (up to Guanacaste); in Honduras, it also includes fragments which approach the Caribbean coast." See van der Zee Arias, Amparo, et. al, *Estudio de caracterización del Corredor Seco Centroamericano*, FAO, p.8, Dec. 2012. Another FAO report defines the "Dry Corridor" as: "an imprecise geographical demarcation defined by a zone with climatic characteristics of dry tropical forest, with a marked and prolonged dry season (*verano*), and where there is a latent risk of recurring drought during the reduced rainy season (*invierno*), which could occur due to the late arrival of the rainy season, an extension of the dry season, or a premature end of the rainy season." See Peralta Rodriguez, Orlando, et. al, *Buenas prácticas para la seguridad alimentaria y la gestión de riesgos*, FAO, p.8, Feb. 2012.

<sup>38</sup> *From Words to Facts: Acting on Climate Change in Central America, Action and Financing, Now!*, Oxfam, p.3, Nov. 2014.

<sup>39</sup> *Central America - Drought in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua*, ACAPS, p.5, Sep. 29, 2015.

<sup>40</sup> *Hurricane Michelle - Honduras / Nicaragua OCHA Situation Report No. 11*, UNOCHA, Nov. 19, 2001.

<sup>41</sup> *Emergency Operation, Nicaragua 10700*, World Food Programme, p.1, [http://one.wfp.org/operations/current\\_operations/project\\_docs/107000.pdf](http://one.wfp.org/operations/current_operations/project_docs/107000.pdf), (last visited Apr. 17, 2017); *Latin America and the Caribbean – Hurricane Season 2007, Fact Sheet #8*, USAID, p.1, Sept. 12, 2007.

<sup>42</sup> *Costa Rica and Nicaragua: Tropical Storm Alma*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Jun. 5, 2009.

<sup>43</sup> *Final Report - Central America: Floods*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Oct. 29, 2009.

<sup>44</sup> *Nicaragua: Floods*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Nov. 11, 2009.

<sup>45</sup> *Nicaragua: Flash Appeal Revision*, UNOCHA, p.1, 2011.

<sup>46</sup> Nicaragua is divided administratively into 15 departments and two autonomous regions, which are sub-divided into 153 municipalities. See *Artículo 16 de Ley No. 503, Reforma a la Ley No. 59, Ley de División Política Administrativa*, Asamblea Nacional de la República de Nicaragua, Feb. 3, 2005.

<sup>47</sup> *Nicaragua: Flash Appeal Revision*, UNOCHA, p.1, 2011.

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homes were flooded; 1,235 were partially destroyed, and 335 were completely destroyed.<sup>48</sup> Damages and losses associated with Tropical Depression 12E totaled \$445 million, or 6.8% of gross domestic product in 2010.<sup>49</sup> In June and July of 2013, tropical storms and heavy seasonal rain resulted in 15 deaths, widespread flooding, and 12,000 people affected.<sup>50</sup>

During 2014 and 2015, a series of storms producing heavy rain and flooding caused significant damage and loss of life in Nicaragua. In July 2014, heavy rains and flooding in the center and Caribbean regions of the country affected 1,015 people, caused the death of three others, and damaged or destroyed 205 homes.<sup>51</sup> Prolonged rain and flooding in October 2014 impacted close to 65,000 people, causing 33 deaths, destroying 4,500 homes, and leaving 33,000 people homeless.<sup>52</sup> Heavy rains and flooding also affected 1,075 people and damaged 215 homes in May 2015,<sup>53</sup> and caused even more damage in June, when rain and flooding impacted 11 of 17 departments, affecting over 35,000 people and causing six deaths.<sup>54</sup> At least 20 people were killed during the 2015 rainy season.<sup>55</sup>

In 2016, heavy rains and wind once again caused damage and flooding in Nicaragua.<sup>56</sup> In July, more than 8,900 people were affected, 3,900 people were evacuated, and nearly 1,700 homes were flooded due to heavy rains and flooding.<sup>57</sup> In November 2016, Hurricane Otto—a category 2 storm—damaged 817 and destroyed 120 homes, and necessitated the evacuation of over 11,600 people.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p.7.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> *Nicaragua: Floods – June 2013*, ReliefWeb, <http://reliefweb.int/disaster/fl-2013-000085-nic> (last visited Apr. 17, 2017).

<sup>51</sup> *Tres muertos y 1,015 personas afectadas por fuertes lluvias en Nicaragua*, El Nuevo Diario (Nic.), Jul. 14, 2014.

<sup>52</sup> *Afectados por las fuertes lluvias ascienden a 64,360*, Redhum, Nov. 11, 2014; *Global Emergency Overview – November 2014*, ACAPS, p.120, Nov. 11, 2014; *Nicaragua flooding leaves 24 dead*, Agence France-Presse, Oct. 19, 2014.

<sup>53</sup> *Más de mil afectados por lluvias*, Nuevo Diario (Nic.), May 1, 2015.

<sup>54</sup> *Heavy rains in Nicaragua leave six dead*, Agence France-Presse, Jun. 15, 2015.

<sup>55</sup> *Al menos 20 muertos por temporada de lluvias en Nicaragua*, Government of Nicaragua, Oct. 24, 2015.

<sup>56</sup> *Gobierno atiende a familias afectadas por fuertes vientos en Malpaisillo*, Government of Nicaragua, Apr. 27, 2016; *REDLAC Weekly Note on Emergencies Latin America & The Caribbean - Year 9 - Volume 451*, UNOCHA, May 10, 2016; *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua - 06/01/2016: 509 people affected by rain*, Pan American Health Organization, Jun. 1, 2016; *Ríos crecidos y zonas incomunicadas por las lluvias*, El Nuevo Diario (Nica.), Jun. 6, 2016; *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua - 07/12/2016: 1,781 families have been affected in 9 municipalities due to flooding - Update*, Pan American Health Organization, Jul. 12, 2016; *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua - 12/13/2016: Strong rains affect the Southern Caribbean region*, Pan American Health Organization, Dec. 13, 2016; *Más de 900 familias afectadas por lluvias*, Redhum, Oct. 22, 2016.

<sup>57</sup> *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua - 07/12/2016: 1,781 families have been affected in 9 municipalities due to flooding - Update*; *World events - ECHO Daily Map | 12/07/2016*, European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office, Jul. 12, 2016.

<sup>58</sup> *Humanitarian Bulletin - Latin America and the Caribbean*, UNOCHA, p.2, Nov-Dec. 2016; *Huracán Otto provoca daños en 817 viviendas*, Redhum, Nov. 29, 2016; *Rosario presenta informe sobre respuesta a familias afectadas por el huracán Otto*, Redhum, Nov. 28, 2016.



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Consecutive years of drought (from November 2013 to April 2016)<sup>59</sup> have negatively impacted agriculture, fishing, and hydroelectric energy production in Nicaragua.<sup>60</sup> Linked to the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ESNO),<sup>61</sup> the drought has had the most significant impact in the country's "so-called 'dry corridor'—an arid region in the northeast and centre of Nicaragua encompassing 33 of the country's 153 municipalities, characterized by low rainfall and high poverty levels" with a population of over one million people.<sup>62</sup>

In 2014, the impact of the drought extended beyond the country's Dry Corridor, as an estimated 112 of 156 municipalities in Nicaragua reported damages or losses to crops.<sup>63</sup> By November 2014, over 268,000 families in the Dry Corridor were affected by crop loss,<sup>64</sup> and the drought was affecting the food security of 100,000 people in the country.<sup>65</sup>

By February 2015, the drought had contributed to the loss of 1 million bushels of rice and maize, and the death of 5,000 cattle.<sup>66</sup> Despite having the most abundant water sources in Central America, in the summer of 2015 Nicaragua was reportedly facing a nationwide water shortage due to the impact of the drought, a lack of investment in its water system, poor water management, soil erosion, deforestation, and climate change.<sup>67</sup> By November 2015, Nicaragua had lost between 50 and 75 percent of its production of basic grains in the Dry Corridor, while an estimated 23% of all cattle in the country were at risk of being impacted by the drought.<sup>68</sup>

The impact of the multi-year drought continued to be felt in 2016. The Dry Corridor remained the most impacted area of Nicaragua; in March 2016, Inter Press Service cited a study indicating that the region had lost 100 percent of its harvests and 90 percent of its water sources due to the drought.<sup>69</sup> Declining food production "led to food insecurity and a decline in household incomes in the region's rural areas."<sup>70</sup> By June 2016, over 302,000 people were in need of food assistance in Nicaragua.<sup>71</sup> While Nicaragua received more rainfall in 2016 in comparison to previous years, the increase was reportedly insufficient to support a full recovery of surface and subterranean

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<sup>59</sup> *Situación "muy grave" con 40 pozos comunitarios secos en Occidente*, La Prensa (Nic.), Feb. 16, 2017.

<sup>60</sup> Rios, Julia, *In drought-hit central Nicaragua, water 'is like looking for gold'*, Agence France-Presse, Apr. 7, 2016; Silva, José Adán, *Cambio climático seca a Nicaragua*, Inter Press Service, Mar. 30, 2016.

<sup>61</sup> The El Niño Southern Oscillation, more commonly known as El Niño, is a "weather cycle that periodically causes drought on the western Pacific seaboard and the centre of the country, in contrast with seasonal flooding in the north and the eastern Caribbean coast." See Silva, Jose Adan, *El Niño Triggers Drought, Food Crisis in Nicaragua*, Inter Press Service, Jul. 10, 2014.

<sup>62</sup> Silva, Jose Adan, *Thirsty in Nicaragua, the Country Where 'Agua' Is Part of Its Name*, Inter Press Service, Jun. 4, 2015.

<sup>63</sup> *Global Emergency Overview – November 2014*, p.120.

<sup>64</sup> *From Words to Facts: Acting on Climate Change in Central America, Action and Financing, Now!*, p.6.

<sup>65</sup> *From Words to Facts: Acting on Climate Change in Central America, Action and Financing, Now!*, p.15.

<sup>66</sup> *Global Emergency Overview – March 2015*, ACAPS, p.112, Mar. 24, 2015.

<sup>67</sup> Silva, *Thirsty in Nicaragua*.

<sup>68</sup> *Latin America and the Caribbean - Weekly Note on Emergencies*, UNOCHA, p.2, Nov. 2, 2015.

<sup>69</sup> Silva, *Cambio climático seca a Nicaragua*.

<sup>70</sup> *IFAD to provide \$20.5 million to boost sustainable agriculture in Dry Corridor in Nicaragua*, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Nov. 29, 2016.

<sup>71</sup> *WFP Nicaragua Country Brief - June 2016*, World Food Programme, Jun. 2016.

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water sources impacted by the drought.<sup>72</sup> As a result, at the start of the dry season in February 2017, certain communities in the Dry Corridor were already feeling the impact of the scarcity of water.<sup>73</sup>

Damages resulting from other natural disasters, such as volcanic and seismic activity, have also affected Nicaragua. In September 2012, the eruption of the San Cristobal volcano—one of the most active in the country—prompted the evacuation of hundreds of residents from surrounding areas.<sup>74</sup> Between early May and late July 2015, the Telica volcano erupted 426 times;<sup>75</sup> residents of neighboring communities—over 2,000 of whom were affected—reported respiratory problems due to the release of volcanic gas and ash, and expressed fears of larger eruptions.<sup>76</sup> Six of the country's 18 volcanoes were active in 2016, including the Momotombo volcano, which—after more than 110 years of inactivity—erupted more than 400 times from December 2015 to April 2016, and remained constantly active through November.<sup>77</sup>

In June 2013, a 6.6 magnitude earthquake off the coast of Nicaragua triggered a tsunami warning and caused structural damage near its epicenter.<sup>78</sup> On April 10, 2014, a significant 6.2 magnitude earthquake, originating in Lake Managua, struck the country, followed by subsequent 6.2 and 6.7 magnitude earthquakes the next day; in total, there were over 535 seismic events in less than two weeks following the original earthquake on April 10.<sup>79</sup> The earthquakes affected 24,025 people and damaged 2,952 homes.<sup>80</sup> In response to a 7.4 magnitude earthquake in October 2014, 100,000 people were evacuated from coastal areas.<sup>81</sup> A 6.1 magnitude earthquake in June 2016 caused landslides, power outages, and damaged over 3,000 homes.<sup>82</sup>

Nicaragua has also been impacted by a regional coffee rust<sup>83</sup> epidemic, which has caused crop loss and declining coffee production throughout Central America in recent years.<sup>84</sup> By October

<sup>72</sup> Situación “muy grave” con 40 pozos comunitarios secos en Occidente.

<sup>73</sup> Corredor Seco otra vez afectado por sequía, La Prensa (Nic.), Feb. 17, 2017.

<sup>74</sup> Thousands evacuate as Nicaragua volcano spews ash, ABC News, Sep. 8, 2012.

<sup>75</sup> Ineter: el Volcán Concepción retoma sus explosiones, La Jornada (Nic.), Jul. 28, 2015.

<sup>76</sup> Más de 2 mil afectados por cenizas y gases del Telica, El Nuevo Diario (Nic.), May 12, 2015.

<sup>77</sup> En Nicaragua vulcanólogos estadounidenses para estudiar el Momotombo, Government of Nicaragua, Apr. 10, 2016; Ineter pronostica baja probabilidad de actividad sísmica relevante, Government of Nicaragua, Mar. 2, 2016; Nicaragua sin sustos volcánicos, Government of Nicaragua, Mar. 7, 2016; Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua-11/18/2016: Momotombo Volcano presents abundant gas emissions, Pan American Health Organization, Nov. 18, 2016.

<sup>78</sup> Sismos dejan personas lesionadas y daños leves en Nicaragua, La Prensa (Pan.), Jun. 15, 2013.

<sup>79</sup> Nicaragua, Terremoto. Reporte de Situación N°. 7, UNOCHA, p.1-3, Apr. 25, 2014.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, p.1.

<sup>81</sup> Global Emergency Overview – November 2014, p.120.

<sup>82</sup> REDLAC Weekly Note on Emergencies Latin America & The Caribbean - Year 9 - Volume 456, UNOCHA, June 13, 2016.

<sup>83</sup> According to an academic study of the coffee rust crises in Colombia and Central America: “Coffee rust is caused by the fungus *Hemileia vastatrix*, an obligate parasite that affects the living leaves of the genus *Coffea*... The disease causes defoliation that, when acute, can lead to the death of branches and heavy crop losses.” See J. Avelino et. al., *The coffee rust crises in Colombia and Central America (2008–2013): impacts, plausible causes and proposed solutions*, Food Security, Vol. 7, Iss. 2, p.304, April 2015.

<sup>84</sup> Malkin, Elisabeth, *Coffee Crop Withers: Fungus Cripples Coffee Production Across Central America*, New York Times, May 5, 2014.

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2014, an estimated 655,000 people in Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador were considered food insecure due to the coffee rust epidemic.<sup>85</sup> As of March 2016, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reported that coffee production in Nicaragua continued to recover from the outbreak.<sup>86</sup>

In recent years, Nicaragua has been impacted by various mosquito-borne diseases, including Zika, dengue fever, and chikungunya.<sup>87</sup> In August 2015, Nicaraguan authorities declared a “state of emergency and health alert for the increase of cases of chikungunya and dengue.”<sup>88</sup> In 2016, there were “88,320 probable dengue cases (incidence rate of 1,411 cases per 100,000 population), including 6,599 confirmed cases.”<sup>89</sup> Through the first half of 2016, Nicaragua reported 4,675 suspected and 682 confirmed case of chikungunya.<sup>90</sup> Since first being detected in the country in early 2016, there have been 2,055 confirmed cases of Zika in Nicaragua as of early January 2017.<sup>91</sup>

### Violence and Conflict

Nicaragua lacks the high levels of crime and violence which are evident in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. In general, Nicaragua “has a relatively low crime rate, an absence of transnational gangs and a generally trusted police force that focuses on crime prevention.”<sup>92</sup>

In 2016, Nicaragua’s homicide rate slightly declined to 7 murders per 100,000 inhabitants—its lowest rate in over 15 years, and slightly higher than the 2013 global average of 6.2 per 100,000.<sup>93</sup> According to InSight Crime, much of Nicaragua was “virtually violence-free” in 2016, as “65 percent of the country’s 153 municipalities registered either one or zero homicides” during the year.<sup>94</sup> Regions along Nicaragua’s Caribbean coast have higher homicide rates than the rest of the country due to the presence of organized crime and drug trafficking in these areas.<sup>95</sup>

Since 2015, violence has increased along Nicaragua’s Caribbean coast due to conflict over land between indigenous communities and *mestizo* (Nicaraguans of mixed Spanish and Native

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<sup>85</sup> *Global Emergency Overview – November 2014*, p.120.

<sup>86</sup> *El Niño: Overview of Impact, Projected Humanitarian Needs, and Responses*, UNOCHA, p.18, Mar. 9, 2016.

<sup>87</sup> *Latin America and the Caribbean: Weekly Note on Emergencies*, UNOCHA, Jul. 4, 2016.

<sup>88</sup> *Latin America and the Caribbean: Weekly Note on Emergencies*, UNOCHA, Aug. 17, 2015.

<sup>89</sup> *Zika - Epidemiological Report: Nicaragua*, Pan-American Health Organization, Feb. 27, 2017.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> Replogle, Jill, *Why Nicaraguan Kids Aren’t Fleeing To U.S.*, KPBS, Jul. 29, 2014.

<sup>93</sup> *Global Study on Homicide 2013*, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, p.13, March 2014; Gagne, David, *InSight Crime’s 2015 Latin America Homicide Round-up*, InSight Crime, Jan. 14, 2016; Gagne, David, *InSight Crime’s 2016 Homicide Round-up*, InSight Crime, Jan. 16, 2017.

<sup>94</sup> Gagne, *InSight Crime’s 2016 Homicide Round-up*.

<sup>95</sup> Lohmuller, Michael, *Is Nicaragua as Effective at Deterring Drug Trafficking as it Claims?*, InSight Crime, Apr. 3, 2014.



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American descent) settlers from other areas of the country.<sup>96</sup> Driven by cheap land, the promise of timber and gold, and drought in other parts of the country, thousands of non-indigenous Nicaraguans have moved into the ancestral lands of indigenous communities in recent years.<sup>97</sup> The influx of settlers has “unleashed a deadly conflict” over the territory of the indigenous Miskito people,<sup>98</sup> who argue that their land has been illegally sold or taken by settlers.<sup>99</sup> Murders, rapes, abductions, beatings, beheadings, the burning of villages, and forced displacement have all been reported.<sup>100</sup> Hundreds have reportedly been killed,<sup>101</sup> and more than 3,000 Miskitos have reportedly been displaced<sup>102</sup>—many of whom fled to informal refugee camps in Honduras “where they live without any official humanitarian aid.”<sup>103</sup> Both the Miskitos and the settlers feel that the Nicaraguan government “has abandoned them,”<sup>104</sup> allowing both the “the settling and the violence to continue unabated.”<sup>105</sup> In addition, both sides claim that there “has been no investigation into the crimes, and police often refuse to register their complaints.”<sup>106</sup>

While the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Diplomatic Security has reported that Nicaragua has “low overall reported crime rates,” particularly in comparison to neighboring countries like Honduras, general crime is nevertheless “a persistent risk for residents and visitors alike.”<sup>107</sup> However, less than 5% of Nicaraguans view crime as the most pressing problem in the country.<sup>108</sup>

Nicaragua has been generally free from the high levels of gang violence afflicting El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.<sup>109</sup> While Nicaragua has a “significant presence of local gangs,” there are relatively few members of Barrio 18 and Mara Salvatrucha in the country in comparison to El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.<sup>110</sup> Gangs in Nicaragua are comparatively smaller and more localized, and “there’s virtually no extortion in Nicaragua from criminal gangs of the kind

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<sup>96</sup> *Deadly Nicaragua Land Conflict Displaces Hundreds*, Associated Press, Sep. 30, 2015; Carrere, Michelle, *Nicaragua’s hidden war*, IRIN, Oct. 4, 2016; Robles, Frances, *Nicaragua Dispute Over Indigenous Land Erupts in Wave of Killings*, New York Times, Oct. 16, 2016; Galanova, Mira, *Lush heartlands of Nicaragua’s Miskito people spark deadly land disputes*, The Guardian, Mar. 1, 2017.

<sup>97</sup> *Deadly Nicaragua Land Conflict Displaces Hundreds*; Carrere; Robles; Galanova.

<sup>98</sup> Carrere.

<sup>99</sup> Robles; Carrere.

<sup>100</sup> *Deadly Nicaragua Land Conflict Displaces Hundreds*; Carrere; Robles; Galanova.

<sup>101</sup> Robles.

<sup>102</sup> Carrere.

<sup>103</sup> Galanova.

<sup>104</sup> Carrere.

<sup>105</sup> Robles.

<sup>106</sup> Galanova.

<sup>107</sup> *Nicaragua 2014 Crime and Safety Report*, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, May 12, 2014. See also *Nicaragua 2015 Crime and Safety Report*, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, June 12, 2015; *Nicaragua 2016 Crime & Safety Report*, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, April 15, 2016.

<sup>108</sup> Gagne, David, *Why Is Nicaragua 7 Times Less Violent Than Honduras?*, InSight Crime, Aug. 29, 2016.

<sup>109</sup> *Freedom in the World 2016 - Nicaragua*, Freedom House, Jun. 26, 2016.

<sup>110</sup> Ribando Seelke, Clare, *Gangs in Central America*, Congressional Research Service, p.3-4, Aug. 29, 2016.

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rampant in the Central American nations to the north.”<sup>111</sup> Community policing and other government efforts have been effective in limiting the impact and growth of local gangs.<sup>112</sup>

Violent drug trafficking organizations—pervasive in a country like Honduras—are “largely absent” in Nicaragua.<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, Nicaragua remains an important transit route for drug trafficking, particularly the North and South Caribbean Autonomous Regions, which have higher crime and unemployment rates than the country at large.<sup>114</sup>

Police in Nicaragua focus on community policing and work with neighborhood watch groups, citizens, and community organizations to prevent crime and violence and help at-risk youth.<sup>115</sup> Security forces are generally less corrupt than their counterparts in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.<sup>116</sup> The police even have a positive image amongst the population, with a 79% approval rate.<sup>117</sup> In addition, the national police director has consistently ranked as the most popular public figure in the country, with an approval rating of 80% in a 2014 poll.<sup>118</sup>

Nevertheless, the U.S. Department of State has cited reports that “police frequently abused suspects during arrest, used excessive force, and engaged in degrading treatment.”<sup>119</sup> Police presence is extremely limited outside of major urban areas, particularly in regions along the Caribbean coast.<sup>120</sup> Police also lack the necessary resources to effectively respond to crimes in progress.<sup>121</sup>

The U.S. Department of State reported that, according to Nicaraguan non-governmental organizations, violence against women remained high in 2016.<sup>122</sup> Casa Alianza, an organization working with street children and sex workers, has reported that one in three women in Nicaragua have suffered physical abuse.<sup>123</sup> Per Amnesty International, “rape and sexual abuse are widespread in Nicaragua, and the majority of victims are young.”<sup>124</sup> Underreporting and the failure to enforce existing laws against rape have contributed to widespread impunity for this crime.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Replogle; Wilkinson, Tracy, *Few Nicaraguans among Central America's exodus to U.S.*, Los Angeles Times, Aug. 30, 2014; Johnson, Tim, *Nicaraguans, safe at home, feel little reason to flee to U.S.*, McClatchy, Aug. 18, 2014.

<sup>112</sup> Replogle.

<sup>113</sup> Gagne, *Why Is Nicaragua 7 Times Less Violent Than Honduras?*

<sup>114</sup> *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) - Nicaragua*, U.S. Department of State, Mar. 2016.

<sup>115</sup> Replogle.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> Replogle; Gagne, *Why Is Nicaragua 7 Times Less Violent Than Honduras?*.

<sup>118</sup> Replogle.

<sup>119</sup> *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: Nicaragua*, U.S. Department of State, Mar. 2016.

<sup>120</sup> *Nicaragua 2016 Crime & Safety Report*.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: Nicaragua*.

<sup>123</sup> Klibanoff, Eleanor, *Nicaragua: These Women Had Dreams*, The Pulitzer Center, Aug. 16, 2013.

<sup>124</sup> *Listen to their Voice and Act: Stop the Rape and Sexual Abuse of Girls in Nicaragua*, Amnesty International, Nov. 25, 2010.

<sup>125</sup> *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: Nicaragua*.

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### **Summary**

Hurricane Mitch devastated Nicaragua in 1998, causing over a billion dollars in damages to the country's infrastructure, economic activities, and people. While the international community responded to the disaster with an unprecedented amount of aid, and reconstruction projects have been completed, Nicaragua remains vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters and environmental concerns—many of which have occurred in recent years; these include hurricanes and tropical storms, floods and seasonal rains, volcanic and seismic activity, drought, mosquito-borne illnesses, coffee rust, and other extreme weather events. These and other environmental issues continue to pose challenges for Nicaragua as it seeks to promote economic development for its citizens and minimize the humanitarian impact of natural disasters like Hurricane Mitch. While Nicaragua has lower homicide and crime rates, a general lack of transnational gangs, and less corrupt security forces than its northern neighbors, it is nevertheless facing various security challenges, including armed conflict over land and high rates of violence against women.



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According to the World Bank, Nicaragua “has stood out for maintaining growth levels above the average for Latin America and the Caribbean” in recent years.<sup>126</sup> Although poverty declined from 2009 to 2014, it nevertheless “remains high,” and Nicaragua is “still one of Latin America’s least developed countries, where access to basic services is a daily challenge.”<sup>127</sup> In August 2017, the Nicaraguan government reported that 96% of the population was employed, and 42.6% of the population was underemployed as of the first quarter of 2017.<sup>128</sup> A Nicaraguan news outlet claimed that these statistics could not be verified because the Nicaraguan government had not published the underlying quarterly data on unemployment since the end of 2012.<sup>129</sup>

The U.S. Department of State does not currently have an active travel alert or travel warning for Nicaragua.<sup>130</sup> In a 2017 report, the World Economic Forum ranked Nicaragua 92<sup>nd</sup> out of 136 countries in its travel and tourism competitiveness index, including 65<sup>th</sup> in regards to safety and security.<sup>131</sup> In 2015, Nicaragua ranked 92<sup>nd</sup> out of 141 countries in the overall rankings.<sup>132</sup>

**(1) Any updates on crime/violence in 2017 for each of the three countries. Also, in particular, the El Salvador report gives statistics for January-April of 2017, noting the number of homicides was half what it was for the same period the year prior. Would be helpful to know whether that reduction has held;**

According to Salvadoran government authorities, from January 1 to August 31, 2017, there were 2,434 murders in El Salvador—a 36.5% reduction from the same period in 2016, when 3,836 people were killed.<sup>133</sup> During the first three months of the year, there was an average of 9 homicides per day.<sup>134</sup> Between January 1 and August 20, there was an average of 10.05

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<sup>126</sup> Nicaragua Overview, The World Bank, Oct. 10, 2017, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview> (last visited Oct. 19, 2017).

<sup>127</sup> Nicaragua Overview, The World Bank, Oct. 10, 2017, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview> (last visited Oct. 19, 2017).

<sup>128</sup> Alvarez Hidalgo, Wendy, Crecimiento económico mella poco en el subempleo, La Prensa (Ni.), Aug. 8, 2017.

<sup>129</sup> Alvarez Hidalgo, Wendy, Crecimiento económico mella poco en el subempleo, La Prensa (Ni.), Aug. 8, 2017.

<sup>130</sup> Safety & Security Messages, U.S. Embassy in Nicaragua, <https://ni.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/security-and-travel-information/> (last visited Oct. 19, 2017).

<sup>131</sup> The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017, World Economic Forum, 2017.

<sup>132</sup> The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017, World Economic Forum, 2017.

<sup>133</sup> Morales, Napoleón, Ramírez Landaverde: “Al mes de agosto los homicidios se han reducido en un 36.5%”, Diario la Pagina (El Sal.), Sep. 2, 2017.

<sup>134</sup> Morales, Napoleón, 10.05 salvadoreños mueren a diario en El Salvador, Diario la Pagina (El Sal.), Aug. 21, 2017.

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homicides per day.<sup>135</sup> In June 2017, InSight Crime reported that, despite a declining homicide rate, “gangs in El Salvador continue to wield significant control in many areas of the country, despite a heavy-handed, years-long campaign aimed at wiping out these criminal groups.”<sup>136</sup> In addition, El Salvador has also “repeatedly suffered from short spikes in homicides linked to temporary escalations in gang-related violence.”<sup>137</sup>

In Honduras, from January 1 to August 23, 2017, there were a reported 2,548 murders—a 24% reduction from the same time period in 2016, when 3,356 people were killed.<sup>138</sup> In May 2017, the Thomson Reuters Foundation reported that, “With one of the world’s highest murder rates, Honduras is struggling to contain drug-fueled gang violence and organized crime.”<sup>139</sup> In September 2017, Nicaragua’s police chief reported that the country’s homicide rate from August 2016 to July 2017 was 6 homicides per 100,000 people—the lowest rate in the last 16 years.<sup>140</sup>

**(2) Any updates on the drought conditions for the three countries;**

In July 2017, the World Food Programme (WFP) reported the following on food security in Central America:

Four years of consecutive drought (2014-2017) in parts of Central America (the zone known as Dry Corridor) have negatively affected food production and income opportunities for vulnerable people, with increased food insecurity among subsistence farmers, day labourers and their families.

The cumulative effect has reduced productive assets, disrupted livelihoods and caused irregular emigration to the USA, as the preliminary results of a recent WFP study reveals. Over the past four years, households in the Dry Corridor have had to increasingly rely on negative consumption and livelihood coping strategies with increasing levels of emergency coping strategies...

In Honduras, the cumulative effects of four years of drought have significantly undermined the food security of the most vulnerable subsistence farmers and agricultural laborers in the dry corridor... On 19 June 2017, the Government of Honduras declared state of emergency, up to 31 December 2017, to the national

<sup>135</sup> Morales, Napoleón, 10.05 salvadoreños mueren a diario en El Salvador, Diario la Pagina (El Sal.), Aug. 21, 2017.

<sup>136</sup> Goi, Leonardo, Barrio 18 Extortion Scheme Casts Doubt on El Salvador Govt Security Narrative, InSight Crime, Jun. 19, 2017.

<sup>137</sup> Clavel, Tristan, Spike in Attacks on Security Force Families as El Salvador Violence Declines, InSight Crime, Jun. 13, 2017.

<sup>138</sup> Honduras: Van 808 homicidios menos que 2016, La Prensa (Hon.), Aug. 26, 2017.

<sup>139</sup> Moloney, Anastasia, Hundreds flee gang warfare in Honduras' murder city, Thomson Reuters Foundation, May 15, 2017.

<sup>140</sup> La tasa de homicidios en Nicaragua baja de 8 a 6 por cada 100.000 habitantes, Agencia EFE, Sep. 12, 2017.

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agricultural productive sector and has identified 77 municipalities in urgent need for assistance.<sup>141</sup>

An August 2017 study conducted by a group of international organizations “found a correlation between prolonged droughts in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras – exacerbated by El Niño phenomenon from 2014 to 2016 – and the increase in irregular migration from these countries to the United States.”<sup>142</sup> The aforementioned study focused on El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, particularly the parts of these countries located in the Dry Corridor.<sup>143</sup>

In an August 2017 report on El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reported that:

Despite below average accumulated rainfall in parts of southern Honduras and El Salvador, and northeastern Nicaragua during the *Primera* [April-September]<sup>144</sup> growing season, the consistent distribution and lack of an extended period of drought has allowed normal development of basic grain crops in almost all of the region, including for small farmers in areas of the dry corridor affected by low production during various years.<sup>145</sup>

**(3) Updates on the coffee rust epidemic. We noted “continues to recover” language, which seems to imply it’s concluded or is concluding or improving, at least?**

In an August 2017 report on El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reported that:

The prevalence of coffee rust is at its lowest point since the rust outbreak in 2012. However, the production and generation of employment in El Salvador and Nicaragua has not fully recovered, due to the impact of the rust during several years and the low prices of coffee during the same period, limiting the incentives for investment in the sector. In addition, there exists the risk of an increase in the prevalence of rust during the remainder of the year, due to favorable climatic conditions for this pest.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> World Food Programme Food Security Update Central America—July 2017, The World Food Programme, Jul. 2017.

<sup>142</sup> Emigration and food insecurity in Central American 'dry corridor' focus of new UN-backed study, UN News Centre, Aug. 23, 2017.

<sup>143</sup> Food Security and Emigration: Why people flee and the impact on family members left behind in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, International Organization for Migration, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Inter-American Development Bank, Organization of American States, World Food Programme, p.5, Aug. 2017.

<sup>144</sup> Central America and Caribbean Price Bulletin, Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), p.1, Aug. 2017.

<sup>145</sup> El Salvador, Honduras y Nicaragua: Actualización de monitoreo remoto, Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), p.1, Aug. 2017.

<sup>146</sup> El Salvador, Honduras y Nicaragua: Actualización de monitoreo remoto, Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), p.1, Aug. 2017.



**(4) Any updates on the mosquito-borne disease outbreak?**

In late August 2017, Salvadoran government officials reported that there had been a “noticeable” decrease in the number of cases of dengue, chikungunya and Zika in 2017.<sup>147</sup> As of early September 2017, there had been a 96% reduction in suspected cases of Zika (from 7,370 through early September 2016 to 335 during the same time period in 2017); a 92% reduction in suspected cases of chikungunya (from 5,745 to 437); and a 60% reduction in suspected cases of dengue (from 7,177 to 2,902).<sup>148</sup>

Honduras witnessed a decline in the number of cases of Zika, chikungunya, and dengue through late June 2017 compared to the same period of time in 2016.<sup>149</sup> During this time period, Zika cases were down 97% (from 25,401 to 280), chikungunya cases declined 96% (from 12,053 to 249), and cases of dengue declined 81% (from 15,259 to 2,894).<sup>150</sup>

The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization reported in late June 2017 that “During 2017, transmission of Zika continues in Nicaragua with less intensity compared to the large outbreak reported in 2016.”<sup>151</sup> Through mid-May 2017, there were 389 suspected cases and 5 confirmed cases of Zika, compared to 546 suspected and 192 confirmed cases during the same period in 2016.<sup>152</sup> In addition, by mid-May 2017, there were 22,963 suspected and 1,047 confirmed cases of dengue—“a 14% increase in suspected cases and a 52% decrease in confirmed cases compared to the same period in 2016.”<sup>153</sup> Finally, through mid-May 2017, there had been a total of 337 suspected and 8 confirmed cases of chikungunya, compared to 5,437 suspected and 403 confirmed cases during the same period the previous year.<sup>154</sup>

**(5) Finally, could we get some basic economic data/trends for the three countries? There is always interest in that from higher levels, we’ve found.**

<sup>147</sup> Reportan un descenso de casos de dengue, zika y chikungunya, La Prensa Gráfica (El Sal.), Aug. 23, 2017.

<sup>148</sup> Boletín Epidemiológico Semana 36 | (del 03 al 09 de Septiembre de 2017), Ministerio de Salud (El Sal.), Sep. 15, 2017.

<sup>149</sup> Disminuyen los casos de zika, dengue y chikungunya, Secretaria de Salud (Hon.), Jul. 7, 2017.

<sup>150</sup> Disminuyen los casos de zika, dengue y chikungunya, Secretaria de Salud (Hon.), Jul. 7, 2017.

<sup>151</sup> Zika - Epidemiological Report Nicaragua, Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization, p.1, Jun. 2017.

<sup>152</sup> Zika - Epidemiological Report Nicaragua, Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization, p.1-2, Jun. 2017.

<sup>153</sup> Zika - Epidemiological Report Nicaragua, Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization, p.2, Jun. 2017.

<sup>154</sup> Zika - Epidemiological Report Nicaragua, Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization, p.2, Jun. 2017.

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**GDP growth (annual %)<sup>155</sup>**

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>El Salvador</b>	1.9	1.8	1.4	2.3	2.4
<b>Honduras</b>	4.1	2.8	3.1	3.6	3.6
<b>Nicaragua</b>	6.5	4.9	4.8	4.9	4.7

**Select Economic Indicators**

	El Salvador	Honduras	Nicaragua
GDP Per Capita (current US\$) (2016) <sup>156</sup>	\$4,224	\$2,361	\$2,151
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population) (2014) <sup>157</sup>	31.8%	62.8%	29.6%
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate) (2016) <sup>158</sup>	6.3%	6.3%	5.9%
Personal remittances, received (% of GDP) (2016) <sup>159</sup>	17.1%	17.9%	9.6%

<sup>155</sup> GDP growth (annual %), World Development Indicators, The World Bank, 2017, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.PCAP.CD&country=NIC,SLV,HND#> (last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

<sup>156</sup> GDP Per Capita (current US\$), World Development Indicators, The World Bank, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.PCAP.CD&country=NIC,SLV,HND#> (last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

<sup>157</sup> Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population), World Development Indicators, The World Bank, 2017, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=SI.POV.NAHC&country=HND,SLV,NIC> (last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

<sup>158</sup> Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate), World Development Indicators, The World Bank, 2017, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.PCAP.CD&country=NIC,SLV,HND#> (last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

<sup>159</sup> Personal remittances, received (% of GDP), World Development Indicators, The World Bank, 2017, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS&country=NIC,SLV,HND#> (last visited Sep. 19, 2017).