



CARE's Volcano Fuego Humanitarian Response Fund

Background

Relief efforts are ongoing despite increased volcanic activity, days after the deadly eruption of Volcano Fuego, 24 miles southwest of Guatemala City. In the face of ongoing emissions of ash and gases, authorities have kept many areas on high alert. The eruption on June 3 killed at least 99 people in the provinces of Chimaltenango, Escuintla and Sacatepéquez and affected more than 1.7 million. More than 12,000 people were evacuated, and some 4,100 remain in emergency shelters.¹

Efforts to locate the missing people are ongoing and difficult, as some areas are hard to reach and others have been closed by the government because active lava flow has rendered them inaccessible. Heavy rains are forecast for the next few days, potentially intensifying the crisis as mud flows and flooding could hinder search and rescue efforts and potentially threaten some 25,000 residents of as-yet unaffected communities.

Given the large-scale population displacement, primary needs include shelter and household items such as mattresses and blankets, as many families are sleeping, unprotected, on the ground.

A CARE emergency response team is now in the affected area assessing the impact of the blast and determining how best to meet the needs of affected families and communities. Urgent and medium-range priorities include assistance with **water, sanitation and hygiene; food security; and protection** – in particular for **women and girls at risk of gender-based violence**.

To enable a quick and comprehensive response to this emergency, CARE has created the **Volcano Fuego Humanitarian Response Fund** with an initial **\$1 million goal**.² Your contribution is a crucial source for rapid response and the most effective way to support CARE's work. It provides us flexible resources to address the needs of families affected by the eruption. Your gift will help us position and deploy needed supplies and staff, make funds available to emergency-affected communities for immediate assistance, strengthen our ability to respond to future emergencies, and provide overall program oversight to ensure the highest-quality response.



Fuego Volcano's second eruption of the year, on June 3, closed off many roads, making humanitarian access more difficult.

¹ Figures as of June 7. <https://reliefweb.int/report/guatemala/guatemala-volcanic-eruption-situation-report-no-2-07-june-2018>

² In order to effectively manage the current emergency response and continue to be able to rapidly deploy resources for other emergencies, CARE will reserve 20 percent of donations to the Volcano Fuego Humanitarian Response Fund to cover technical support, administration and emergency preparedness expenses, including the rapid deployment of staff to emergencies.

CARE's Response

CARE has worked in Guatemala since 1959. Since that date, we have responded to emergencies including the 1976 earthquake, Hurricane Mitch in 1998, Tropical Storm Stan in 2005, Tropical Storm Agatha and the eruption of Pacaya Volcano in 2010, and most recently the earthquake in San Marcos Province in 2012. With a regional office near the affected area – in the city of Chimaltenango – and ongoing programs in the three affected provinces, we are very familiar with the regions affected by the eruption.

CARE launched relief efforts on the first day of the emergency. We deployed rapid assessment teams in full coordination with other humanitarian agencies and Guatemala's National Coordinator for Disaster Reduction (*Coordinadora Nacional para la Reducción de Desastres* – CONRED). Our team's initial assessment identified immediate needs including food security and nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene; non-food items such as household and personal supplies; and protection and violence prevention, with a particular focus on the risk of gender-based violence. In the days ahead, CARE will closely assess the particular effects of the disaster on women and indigenous minorities and craft our response strategy taking these issues into account.

- **Food security and nutrition:** The affected provinces of Sacatepéquez, Escuintla and Chimaltenango are mostly rural and the population relies heavily on agriculture for food and income. CARE's long-term programming in the area includes support of coffee- and avocado-growing communities. Many families have suffered heavy losses of crops and livestock from falling ash and volcanic matter, as well as to a lesser extent lava flows. The potential of mudflows could worsen this situation. Families are in immediate need of dry food items including corn flour, fortified biscuits and rations for children under 5. Affected populations, especially those displaced from their homes, will require support to secure access to food in the coming months, as well as to relaunch productive activities. CARE is exploring the most efficient means of providing aid, which could include targeted cash transfers – a proven means of directing help quickly where it is most needed, while minimizing waste and supporting the local economy.
- **Water and sanitation:** Waterborne diseases are a concern in the aftermath of a disaster. Without access to safe drinking water, people – especially those living in shelters – can be at risk of contracting diarrhea. Some areas have lost access to their water supply due to electricity outages. Young children, infants and pregnant women are at greatest risk of waterborne disease. CARE will continue to monitor the need for safe drinking water and sanitation support such as small water treatment plants and filters, as well as latrines in shelters, to help prevent the spread of waterborne diseases.



CARE's emergency team is working to support the response at shelters, where some 4,100 displaced people remain.



CARE works with farming families in the region, many of whom have suffered crop losses from volcanic emissions.

- **Non-food items:** Many families had to flee to save their lives, leaving all their belongings behind. CARE has already identified needs including mattresses, kitchen kits, blankets, towels, hygiene kits and cleaning equipment (including shovels, masks, goggles, gloves and helmets) – needs that may be met either in kind or via cash grants. Other needs will be identified as relief work continues.
- **Protection and violence prevention:** As more people are evacuated, cases of violence against vulnerable people, including sexual violence, are expected to rise. CARE will work to protect and prevent violence in all of its forms, establishing referral mechanisms and providing information about risks and available resources.

As in all our work, CARE is committed to a **gender-equality approach** to emergencies, recognizing that crises affect men, women, boys and girls differently, and that local cultural norms and power dynamics play a role in the outcomes of emergency response. We will give priority to this approach in all our needs assessments, program design, staffing ratios, accountability mechanisms, reporting, and other aspects of our response in Guatemala. CARE coordinates with UN Women, CONRED, local women leaders and other organizations to ensure gender standards are met. Of note, systems for preventing, reporting and addressing risks of sexual and gender-based violence are integrated throughout our work.

Conclusion

In the aftermath of the eruption of Fuego Volcano, survivors face many challenges. In addition to the threat from ongoing seismic activity, people who have been forced to flee their homes are at risk of waterborne disease. CARE is particularly concerned about women and girls, who face increased risks in crisis situations.

As we have for more than half a century, CARE remains committed to stand with the people of Guatemala, both during the immediate crisis and for the long task of recovery and reconstruction. We thank you for considering a generous gift in support of our efforts.

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Search and rescue teams from government agencies at work in the disaster zone. (Photo © 2018 Wuilfred Colaj/CARE)