

INTERNATIONAL



FEDERATION

DENGUE IN CENTRAL AMERICA

RED CROSS RESPONSE



IMPACT

According to the latest figures provided by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) there are almost **2.5 million reported cases of dengue** and more than 1000 deaths in the Americas. It is likely that these figures will continue to increase in the upcoming weeks. Additionally, unreported and unrecognised dengue infections make it difficult to estimate the true extent of the epidemic.¹

In the Americas dengue incidence has increased over the last 50 years according to the World Health Organization (WHO), and the current dengue outbreak in Central America represents a growing concern to the IFRC and the National Societies within the region.

The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito which carries the disease is present in a wide geographical area, including cities with large populations.

Dengue epidemiology is inseparable from vector ecology. Transmission has distinct patterns that are seasonal (within a year) and cyclical (with outbreaks in certain years), reflecting interactions between the climate (rainfall and temperature), the mosquito, the circulating virus, and population immunity.²

This mosquito-borne viral disease has catastrophic consequences for the individuals, families and communities affected. A long-term strategy covering effective vector control, access to health services and early clinical management are steps towards ensuring that populations are less susceptible to unnecessary, silent suffering caused by the disease.



CLIMATE CHANGE

A combination of seasonal rains and warming global temperatures are being blamed for dengue's rapid spread, creating more stagnant pools that are ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes. There are rising concerns that this will make the outbreak harder to contain.

The WHO estimates that rising global temperatures, as well as altered rains and humidity linked to climate change, could increase the frequency and intensity of vector born disease outbreaks —making epidemics more difficult to predict and control.

KEY DATA IN CENTRAL AMERICA

HONDURAS

81,854

CASES OF DENGUE

144

DEATHS

(65% CHILDREN UNDER 15)

GUATEMALA

30,221

CASES OF DENGUE

45

DEATHS

(50% CHILDREN UNDER 15)

NICARAGUA

130,243

CASES OF DENGUE

19

DEATHS

(209% INCREASE COMPARED 2018)

EL SALVADOR

23,390

CASES OF DENGUE

12

DEATHS

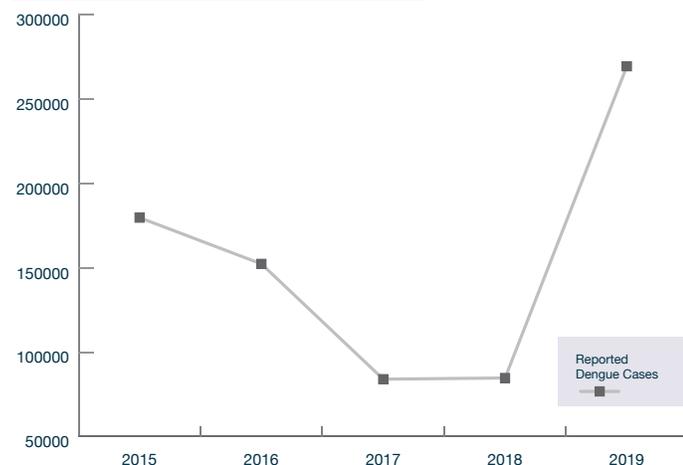
COSTA RICA

6,376

CASES OF DENGUE



5 YEAR REPORTED DENGUE CASES IN EMERGENCY APPEAL COUNTRIES³



¹ <https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099%2816%2930545-X/fulltext?elsca1=etoc>

² idem

³ <http://www.paho.org/data/index.php/en/mnu-topics/indicadores-dengue-en/dengue-nacional-en/252-dengue-pais-ano-en.html?start=2>

WHY IS THIS OUTBREAK ALARMING?

- The size of this outbreak is unprecedented across Central America. Case numbers have surpassed the number of cases in previous years.
- Women and children have been disproportionately affected by this outbreak. For children under 15 years, they may have not been exposed before and so the population's herd immunity is lower.
- 220 people have died in Central America, the highest number of deaths from dengue in the last 20 years. There have been more deaths from dengue in these countries in 2019 than the last 6 years combined.
- The primary dengue serotype circulating is DEN-2 – the deadliest of the four serotypes in circulation.
- Social and political challenges in Central America hinder access to reliable health, water and sanitation services.

Dengue is a disease that often affects the most vulnerable, those who live in places where there is poor sanitation and where mosquitoes thrive. But the disease can be contained if governments and communities work together to raise awareness, increase access to medical care and clean up the environment. This is what the Red Cross teams across affected countries aim to do.

COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP

There is close coordination and collaboration with PAHO that is currently working with the different Ministries of Health to respond to the Dengue Regional Outbreak.

WIDE GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

We have access to areas where other humanitarian actors have limited operational capacity due to security concerns. This will also support the set up and function of a referral mechanism for severe cases of dengue.

THE RED CROSS APPROACH

LOCAL IMPACT

Teams of Red Cross volunteers, in affected Central American countries, have been supporting government efforts to slow the outbreak — going door-to-door to raise awareness about the disease and how it can be prevented. The experience of the Red Cross with combatting Zika increased our capacity to respond to dengue outbreaks.

AUXILIARY ROLE

As auxiliaries to their governments, Red Cross National Societies can bridge the gap in providing critical health knowledge and technical experience to communities, ensuring equitable and sustainable community-specific solutions.

Red Cross National Societies add value in health interventions due to the fact that our health staff and volunteers work closely with communities to promote and implement the primary health care management of dengue cases.

HELP US IN OUR RESPONSE TO THIS DENGUE OUTBREAK IN CENTRAL AMERICA BY SUPPORTING THE IFRC **EMERGENCY APPEAL**



2,9 million

Swiss francs
needed



550,000

people to receive
assistance



12

months
support

Focus on

Health | Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion | National Society strengthening

5 countries

Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica

The overall objective is to assist Red Cross National Societies with the implementation of humanitarian operations that better respond to the dengue regional outbreak, strengthen their capacity and address underlying risks and vulnerabilities that have not been fully covered through the DREF operations. This requires facilitating a community- and people-centred approach where individuals and communities are enabled to lead their own outbreak response efforts; providing assistance which supports and builds on local capacities and links to Government plans; and increasing the capacity of households and communities to cope with future outbreaks

Reducing the burden of dengue is a shared responsibility among governments, civil society and partners alike. Empowering communities is essential in reaching the most vulnerable individuals and households and reducing the dengue burden. Together, we can build more resilient communities and reduce the unnecessary mortality and morbidity caused by dengue if we focus on its prevention and control.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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