



EU-LAT
Advocacy Network
Red de Incidencia



**LATIN AMERICA
WORKING GROUP**

EU-LAT Network, FONGI, Espacio ACI and LAWG

Articulation between civil society organisations is key in the response to ETA and IOTA

The EU-LAT Network, Espacio ACI, FONGI and LAWG, composed of European and North American organizations, want to express their solidarity with Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico, especially with all the communities, organizations, and people who are bravely facing damages and organizing themselves to help those most affected by the hurricanes.

In Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua the impact of hurricanes ETA and IOTA have been devastating. At the moment it is estimated that almost 5 million people have been affected as a result of the first hurricane ETA. Honduras, with 3 million people affected, and Nicaragua, still without official figures, could be the hardest hit. The economic, social, and material damages of this ecological disaster are unprecedented in the region and represent a regression of more than 10 years of human development¹.

The impacts of these hurricanes added to the global warming, a long period of drought, illegal logging, and the expansion of the extractivist model in the territories, hitting the region at a time of extreme vulnerability. The continuous crises of the rule of law that have marked the recent history of these countries culminate with reports of serious irregularities in the management of the COVID 19 pandemic by the governments.

These last weeks, we have received multiple complaints from organizations and communities in these countries, pointing to acts of corruption, discrimination, proselytism, negligence, and abuses of power in the context of these catastrophes. In Nicaragua, we have learned that elements of the national police and military forces are preventing access to essential goods to the affected communities. In Honduras, there are concerns about the legislative initiative that conditions and makes access to humanitarian aid more bureaucratic. In Guatemala, the recent approval of a budget of almost 100 billion quetzals,

¹ Latinoamérica & El Caribe Temporada de Huracanes 2020. Reporte de Situación No. 4, 20 November 2020 // 20 de noviembre de 2020, OCHA.

the largest in the history of the country, with serious anomalies, have generated the indignation of the population, expressed in a serie of protests².

Given the weakness of the structural and institutional responses, communities and civil society organizations are managing to offer emergency assistance to affected families themselves, monitoring the most pressing needs and seeking to organize a coordinated response from the territories. The severity and size of the effects and the needs for care, rehabilitation and reconstruction make an urgent response from the governments necessary. These responses need to be depoliticized, equitable and articulated with the civil society present in the territories.

Therefore, we urge the international community, the European Union, and its member states to:

- Promote, protect and support civil society, particularly peasant, indigenous and afro-descendant organizations, which are playing a key role in the management of this crisis in the territories of the affected populations.
- Guarantee mechanisms of transparency and accountability in the management and use of international cooperation funds to minimize the risk of corruption.
- Include the participation of organizations, communities and human rights defenders in the design of the humanitarian aid and cooperation strategy, focused on addressing the structural causes that make Central America and its population one of the most vulnerable to this type of catastrophe.
- Promote, with the technical support of the ILO, the implementation of national social protection systems within the framework of development cooperation policies.
- Promote and establish a regional dialogue, including society's organizations, on the structural reforms needed to strengthen the rule of law.
- Exhort and support the governments of the region, to achieve a dialogue on the structural reforms that the countries need to build a rule of law.

² "Ley para la facilitación de asistencia humanitaria internacional en caso de desastre y recuperación inicial",