



Press Release

For immediate release

CECI-Guatemala joins in solidarity the people affected by the Fuego volcano eruption

Tuesday, June 5, 2018 – It is with utter dismay and profound sadness that CECI-Guatemala is witnessing the humanitarian disaster caused by the dramatic eruption of the Fuego volcano, still active as this release is being published. A state of emergency was declared on Monday for the departments of Chimaltenango, Escuintla and Sacatepéquez. In total, 1,7 million people live in the area affected by the eruption.

“Established in Guatemala since 26 years ago, CECI possesses broad experience with emergency interventions, enjoying great capacity of action,” stated Silvia Cotton, Director of CECI-Guatemala. *“As a member of Guatemala’s humanitarian network, CECI-Guatemala is currently evaluating the damages from a human and logistics perspective in order to provide the most adequate immediate response to the affected population. From Sunday, June 3rd, CECI-Guatemala has been in constant communication with its partners established in the disaster area, offering support to coordinate the efforts deployed jointly.”*

In the wake of the tragedy, the Guatemalan population immediately mobilized to collect food, water, medication and first aid supplies for the victims. To this day, over 1,600 volunteers got involved by distributing supplies, delivering first aid, and offering psychological support.

Guatemala’s national disaster management department is hard at work. Teams are currently deployed in the disaster areas to rescue those who are still trapped and help the evacuees, to evaluate the extent of the damages and to decide on how to proceed for the next days and weeks.

In total, 70 people perished in the eruption, with news of further casualties constantly coming in. Some twenty villages were directly assaulted by ash and lava flow mixed with mud. Several thousand people are still reported missing, as rescue teams struggle to access the disaster zones. Over 3,200 people were evacuated and transferred to the rescue centres spread across four neighbouring towns. Those with injuries and burns were transferred to the nearest hospitals.

Over the course of the next days, CECI-Guatemala will keep collaborating with local and national authorities, as well as with partners from Guatemala and Canada, to assess the population’s needs and decide on the best courses of action to bring things back to normal as quickly as possible.

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The Centre d'étude et de coopération internationale (CECI) is an international cooperation and development NGO founded in Quebec in 1958 with a mission to combat poverty and exclusion among the most disadvantaged communities of Africa, Asia and the Americas. CECI is involved in different projects relating to humanitarian assistance, development and volunteer cooperation in over 20 countries across the world. At the onset of a crisis, we implement reconstruction and socio-economic rehabilitation projects, always keeping our development initiatives active so as to facilitate a fast recovery for the communities. **CECI-Guatemala was established in 1992.** www.ceci.ca