
Embassy of the United States of America

Public Affairs Section, La Paz, Bolivia

Avenida Arce 2780, La Paz, Bolivia

For more information please contact: Phone 216-8122, Fax 216-8622

Embassy website: <http://bolivia.usembassy.gov>



February 23, 2006

U.S. Government donates food and supplies to communities in Pando and evacuates families stranded by the floods

The U.S. Government donated 50 tons of food and supplies to 1,098 families in 5 municipalities in the Department of Pando who had been affected by the overflowing of several rivers. It also provided airborne evacuation to more than 80 people, including dozens of children, who were stranded in the town of Riberalta and could not return to La Paz due to the massive flooding.

Approximately 150 communities in the municipalities of Gonzalo Moreno, Puerto Rico, Sena, San Lorenzo, and San Pedro in the province of Madre de Dios will be benefited with this humanitarian donation provided by the U.S. Government Agency for International Development (USAID) and transported by the U.S. Embassy's Narcotics Affairs Section's (NAS) aircraft.

These towns had been flooded since early January by the overflowing of the Beni, Orthon, and Madre de Dios rivers that inundated almost all their cultivated lands. Javier Monje Santa Cruz (24), schoolteacher in the indigenous town of Esejjas, said that the residents in his community had lost everything, and added that thanks to this donation they would be able to address the food shortage that had afflicted several dozen families for the past three weeks.

"The river swelled up and swept away everything we had. The torrent killed the chickens and pigs. We hope we will receive assistance to replant our crops. We lost it all," said Monje. The main crops in those communities are bananas, yucca, vegetables, citrus fruits, and cacao, which are sold in the market of Riberalta.

The donated food, which will be distributed starting Friday, includes flour, peas, vegetable oil, and wheat. Jorge Becerra, the Congressman representing that region (district 63), said that upon providing emergency relief, there would be a second stage to replant the crops the community members lost.

Among the people that had become stranded in Riberalta were Florentina Ramos and her son. Ramos said: "We could not leave. We had gone to Riberalta to visit our relatives but were trapped. We were eating from a potluck but we were running out of food." Once the food was delivered, the U.S. Government authorized the NAS to use its aircraft to provide transportation back to La Paz to more than 80 people that had been isolated in Riberalta for three weeks.

###