



Workers unload relief supplies in Honduras.

Honduran Bishop Fears Rumors Will Cut Aid

New York [RNS] — The Catholic bishop of San Pedro Sula in Honduras expressed grave concern here that "false reports" on the disposition of relief supplies and "rumors" of extensive looting of emergency materials will prematurely cut off assistance to hurricane-ravaged Honduras.

Bishop Jaime Brufau Macia, whose diocese covers most of the area hit by Hurricane Fifi (Sept. 18-20), declared that it will take "from three to five years" to rebuild the Honduran economy and he is "worried" that when the short-term relief efforts stop "people will forget about the continuing plight of the people there."

During a visit to New York, made primarily to dispel what he described as "untruthful reports and rumors" about the handling of relief materials in Honduras, Bishop Brufau said, he also wanted to encourage programs of long-range aid and development because so much of the small Central American nation's agricultural and industrial capacity was crippled or destroyed.

The prelate, who has been deeply involved personally in the relief efforts as head of Caritas, the Catholic relief organization in San Pedro Sula, and is also a member of COPEN, the government's permanent council for national emergencies, also denied that the death totals were inflated by the Honduras government to encourage more aid from outside the country.

He noted that his own figures show the death toll is between 8,000 and 10,000. He said it would have been disastrous for the government to "mislead the people about such a thing," adding that in the town of Choloma, near San Pedro Sula, more than 3,000 persons were killed.

Bishop Brufau's diocese, which spans the northern coastal area of Honduras and includes most of the productive land and industry, received the brunt of Hurricane Fifi. He said 90 per cent of the crops, particularly bananas, and more than 100,000 cattle were destroyed. In addition, 25,000 homes were destroyed and 300,000 people left homeless.

Acknowledging that relief efforts have come to Honduras from all over the world, Bishop Brufau noted that Caritas joined with Concorde, a group of private Christian organizations, to administer much of the aid, setting up relief centers throughout the stricken area.

In declaring that rumors of "large-scale looting and misdirection of relief supplies are not true," Bishop Brufau said some people believe that because the army was supervising the

unloading of supplies it was diverting them for its own uses. He said the army was simply making sure "the supplies were not mishandled."

The bishop acknowledged that "some pilfering" always takes place, but the bulk of the supplies are getting to the people through the network of relief centers set up.

He said that as director of diocesan Caritas he "must pay for the distribution of relief materials, food, medicine, clothing," and that he had "to buy 10 pickup trucks after the Hurricane struck."

Noting that the government will be busy enough rebuilding roads, bridges, railroads and

industrial centers that were largely responsible for the needs of the people, the prelate estimated that Honduran refugees will need 100,000 pounds of food, medicine and clothing a day for an indefinite period.

Just to buy trucks, electric generators and train personnel to help in the rehabilitation work, Bishop Brufau said, he would need about \$70,000 for Caritas in the next six months. He added that \$1 million would be necessary for tools and materials to rebuild towns and homes. For the immediate future the "top priorities" would be food for the homeless and unemployed and funds for rehabilitation and development programs.

Education Department Employs Coordinator

The Department of Education, a division of the Pastoral Office, has employed Mrs. Judy Kollar as a consultant to all parish education committees in the diocese.

Mrs. Kollar, who holds a Masters degree in religious education, has been the coordinator of religious education, for three years in Houston, Tex., and for one year in Fredericton, W. New Brunswick.

"I will act as the liaison between the Pastoral Office and all of the parish education committees, whether general, adult or religious education, by letting the office become aware of particular parish educational needs. I will also help the individual committees within a parish iron out their problems and integrate their activities so they run smoothly together," she said.



MRS. KOLLAR

Working with the parishes to establish new committees is also part of Mrs. Kollar's responsibilities, and she will assign teaching teams to train committee staff members.

"Present policies concerning religious education are in the

process of change. I will help the committees see their roles in the church and the church see its role as part of the teaching mission," she said.

Mrs. Kollar can be reached for consultation by phoning 265-1219 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

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