

# Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

November 9, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Samantha Power  
Administrator  
United States Agency for International  
Development  
13-00 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Secretary Blinken and Administrator Power:

We, members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC), write to express our concerns about the devastating aftermath and ongoing effects of Hurricane Otis, which made landfall in Acapulco, Mexico on October 25, 2023.

Hurricane Otis continues to have a particularly devastating impact on the more than 1 million people in and around the city of Acapulco, including Americans<sup>1</sup>. The Category 5 hurricane caused catastrophic damage to Acapulco, as the storm rapidly intensified from 70 mph winds to sustained winds of 165 mph within the span of 24 hours<sup>2</sup>. The rapid intensification gave the residents and tourists in the city very little time to prepare ahead of the storm's landfall, resulting in 46 confirmed deaths and 58 missing people, including 11 Americans<sup>3</sup>.

Reporting at this time indicates that the storm not only destroyed 63,000 businesses in Acapulco, but also destroyed 10,000 utility poles<sup>4</sup>, cutting off critical communications across the region. Additionally, 80% of the city's hotels and 120 hospitals were damaged because of the storm. Moreover, the storm also caused significant damage to other critical infrastructure, leaving nearly half a million homes without electricity, and overwhelming the city's municipal water system<sup>5</sup>.

The Government of Mexico has mobilized resources to respond to the crisis, including the deployment of 10,000 troops to Acapulco. Additionally, the economic toll from Hurricane Otis in Acapulco could top \$20 billion, far beyond what the government has set aside so far to rebuild it<sup>6</sup>. Acapulco is in need of additional resources to repair the critical infrastructure that has been damaged and to help find the missing people in Acapulco, including the 11 missing Americans.

We write to request more information on how the State Department is engaging with the Mexican government following Hurricane Otis' landfall. We are also inquiring into how USAID is supporting efforts on the ground in Acapulco and in collaboration with local, state, and federal government. Given the strong relationship between the United States and Mexico, we believe it

1 <https://www.nesdis.noaa.gov/news/hurricane>

2 <https://www.usatoday.com>

3 <https://abcnews.go.com/US/58-people-missing-including-11-americans-week-after>

4 <https://www.nesdis.noaa.gov>

5 <https://apnews.com/>

6 <https://www.bloomberg.com/news>

is important that the United States directly support the Mexican people during this extremely difficult time. The CHC would be happy to set up a briefing with your agencies for concerned members.

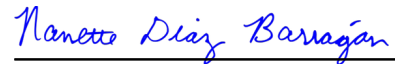
We hope to hear from you soon on how we can work together to find our fellow Americans who are still missing, and help the Mexican government protect families, children, and save lives.

Sincerely,



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Norma J. Torres  
Member of Congress



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Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress  
Chairwoman, Congressional  
Hispanic Caucus



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Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



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Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



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Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress



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Veronica Escobar  
Member of Congress



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Greg Casar  
Member of Congress



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Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress