



# Papua New Guinea: Volcanic Activity

## Office of the Resident Coordinator Flash Update No. 4

As of 05 July 2019

This update is produced by Office of the Resident Coordinator in Papua New Guinea in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the period from 18:00 02 July to 18:00 05 July 2019 (GMT +10). The next report will be issued if there are new developments or significant changes in the situation.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- On 26 June, the Ulawun volcano in West New Britain erupted. The eruption ceased after 24 hours.
- An estimated 7,318 people are staying in 7 evacuation sites in West New Britain Province and 2,538 people are staying in one evacuation site in East New Britain Province.
- There have been no reported damages to homes, buildings or infrastructure.



### SITUATION OVERVIEW

#### Mt Ulawun Volcanic Activity

Displacement profiles, completed by IOM, in six displacement sites (two government-run care centres and four informal camps) in West New Britain and one in East New Britain have identified an estimated 7,318 people that remain displaced in the seven sites following the eruption. There is one additional site located on Hargy Oil Palm, Ltd. plantation.

In West New Britain, 86 per cent of those displaced are staying in the government-run care centres. Shelter types vary across the six sites, with around 16 per cent staying in open spaces or with no shelter. People at three of the sites, including one of the care centres, reported using nearby creeks as the primary water source. At four of the sites, food distribution was reported as infrequent, while two sites reported receiving no food support. Furthermore, no nutrient supplements were available for children or lactating or pregnant women. In some sites, people reportedly had been returning to their home gardens to collect produce and bring it back to the sites for consumption. Five of the six sites reported health-related concerns, including malaria and coughs and only one site was reported to have health services on-site.

The government is providing police security for their two care centres, although no security was observed during the survey. To date, there have been no reports of security or gender-based violence incidents at any of the sites. Five

of the sites reported inadequate lighting, with one site reported to have no lighting. Schools are currently on semester break, but if displacement is prolonged education services could be disrupted. Mobile phone coverage is available at all sites but is patch and frequently cuts out. All displacement sites are accessible by vehicles. People staying in displacements sites requested information on shelter, the situation in their places of origin, how to access additional relief assistance and on safety and security.

Hargy Oil Palm is hosting 627 displaced people in addition to approximately 6,000 workers and their families. While the camps have received some assistance from the government, the company has been supplementing with food, soap, shelter and relief items. Markets have been set up in its camps for evacuees to purchase fresh and pre-packaged foods to supplement rations, and the company's medical staff have established two clinics to attend to patients and monitor for communicable disease outbreaks. A midwife is also visiting to monitor children under two and pregnant women. Company security staff are also on site.

In East New Britain, 2,528 evacuees are staying in an informal camp. Around 85 per cent of people displaced are living in makeshift shelters. The site was reported to lack functioning toilets or separate bathing facilities and the primary source of drinking water are nearby streams. Evacuees are returning to their homes to collect produce for their gardens as their primary source of food. Reported health problems include malaria and diarrhoea; there are no health services available near the site. Cellular services do not cover the evacuation site area. There is no security on site and no lighting, and it is unknown whether any security or gender-based violence incidents have been reported. Evacuees say they want information on shelter, other relief assistance, access to services and the situation in their areas of origin.

The Rabaul Volcanological Observatory has not yet released its assessment report, which authorities are waiting for before allowing people to return to their homes. Air Niugini plans to resume flights on Saturday, 6 July.

### **Manam Volcanic Activity**

On 28 June, the Manam volcano in Madang Province began actively emitting volcanic ash and superheated pyroclastic flows to the west and northeast slopes of the volcano. An estimated 1,410 people from seven villages remain affected. As many as 455 homes and many home gardens have been destroyed. On the response to the Manam volcanic activity, provincial disaster authorities have identified immediate needs for food and water. The National Disaster Centre said it released relief items to provincial authorities on 4 July 2019.

## **RESPONSE**

---

The Prime Minister has committed K5 million (US \$1.4 million) for the response and the Pomio, East New Britain, Member of Parliament has pledged K500,000 (\$142,000) and the governor of Hela has promised K100,000 (\$28,000). The Indian Government has contributed PGK3.5 million (\$1 million) to the National Disaster Centre for relief efforts. The private sector in West New Britain, including many businesses in Kimbe, have donated food and other relief items.

In addition to assistance being provided through the provincial authorities and from the PNG Red Cross and Salvation Army, the National Disaster Centre has delivered two containers of food and other relief supplies to West New Britain. East New Britain Province has approved K64,000 (\$18,000) for tarpaulins, water containers, mosquito nets and food items.

The Health Cluster has identified that the West New Britain Health Authority is understaffed and is concerned about disease outbreaks in the overcrowded displacement sites. In addition to surge health staff, the provision of water and sanitation facilities, hygiene kits and increased disease surveillance through static and mobile health services are required. Health Cluster members are currently identified how they can support.

The WASH Cluster has mapped out partners with response capacity, including prepositioned relief supplies and technical staff. The Cluster has developed a plan with the Shelter Cluster to target 50 per cent of the displaced people in the two government-led care centres for WASH services and 1,150 households for shelter support to clean up and repair damaged homes. For families that may stay longer in displacement sites, they propose additional relief goods and awareness-raising activities.

The Protection Cluster is consulting with its members on their organizational abilities to assist in the relief efforts, if asked by the NDC through the DMT Secretariat.

It was recommended that private-sector donations be coordinated and tracked with other relief efforts to avoid duplication and gaps in assistance. Clusters are working through the Logistics Working Group to coordinate any delivery of goods and services.

The Disaster Management Team will hold an ad hoc meeting on Monday, 8 July to review the response, gaps and any possible requests for assistance. Any offers of international assistance must be directed through the PNG National Disaster Centre.

**For further information, please contact: Richard Higgins, Humanitarian Coordination Specialist, [richard.higgins@undp.org](mailto:richard.higgins@undp.org)**