19 March 2014: World Events

SYRIA - Humanitarian needs, access and conflict
- Aid operations are struggling; approx. 3.5 million people in hard-to-reach areas have received very little aid. About 220,000 people have been besieged for months, 175,000 in Government-controlled areas and 45,000 in areas controlled by opposition groups.
- The Syrian army has regained control of the town of Yabroud after more than four weeks of fighting. Military offensives in the area triggered a new influx of Syrian refugees into the Arsal region in Lebanon, as well as rising insecurity in the border areas between the two countries.
- Hostilities are also taking place in the southern governorates of Dara'a, Quneitra and As-Suweida. Current estimates indicate that the number of people in need of humanitarian aid in the southern governorates has increased from 290,000 to 520,000. (ECHO)

SOUTH AFRICA – Severe Weather
- Heavy rains and floods have affected parts of northern and eastern areas of South Africa during the last two weeks.
- According to media, as of 18 March, 32 people have died (25 were swept away by floods, another six were killed by lightning and one died after a collapsed wall) in the provinces of North West, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. (Local Media)

VANUATU – Tropical Cyclone LUSI
- Aerial assessments of the damage caused by Tropical Cyclone LUSI in Vanuatu between 9 and 11 March, indicate eight islands in five provinces as the most affected: Western Pentecost, East Ambae, and Maewo islands in Penama Province, Western Ambrym island in Malampa Province, South Santo in Sanma Province, Gaua and Vanua Lava in Torba Province, and Shepherd islands in Shefa Province. 10 people are reported dead, two missing, four injured and there are 112 people displaced. Emergency needs include water and sanitation, non-food items (NFIs), food and agriculture assistance. (GDACS, ECHO, IFRC, NDMO)