

www.ifrc.org
Saving lives,
changing minds.

Information bulletin

Pacific: Kiribati, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Information Bulletin n° 1
18 March 2015

This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The National Societies of Kiribati, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), are monitoring the situation closely. The IFRC Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) has been mobilised to support the National Societies of Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Solomon Islands in the implementation of respective Emergency Plans of Action.



Inundation from sea swells on Nui Island, Tuvalu.
Photo: Tuvalu Red Cross Society.

The Situation

Since early March 2015, the Pacific region has experienced a number of severe weather events which had brought about significant impact to the countries across the region, most of which are small island countries. Severe Tropical Cyclone Pam, which reached Category V was the most destructive of these events creating widespread destruction in Vanuatu and flooding in Solomon Islands, while Tropical Storm Bavi in the Northern Pacific and Tropical Cyclone Nathan off the coast of Australia have further affected the humanitarian response in the region.

While much of the international community's focus has been on Vanuatu, other neighbouring countries (Kiribati, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea) have also been impacted and require as much assistance in relief and recovery.

In Kiribati and Tuvalu, many of the low lying atolls have experienced the effects of sea swells and salt water inundation causing damage to infrastructure, housing, water supplies and creating health risks for many residents. The Government of Kiribati National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) reported that three outer islands (Arorae, Tamana and Onotoa) had been struck by strong winds which caused extensive damage to houses.

In Solomon Islands, damages resulted from the strong winds and flooding have been reported in in several provinces.

In Papua New Guinea, heavy rain since 4 March has created flooding in many parts of the country and up to 20,000 people have been affected across five provinces.

Fiji and the Marshall Islands also felt the impact of the large weather systems; however no significant damage has been reported.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Action

Kiribati Red Cross Society

Kiribati Red Cross Society has been coordinating with the NDMO and working closely with island disaster management committees to meet immediate needs of affected people. Kiribati Red Cross Society is mobilising its volunteers to conduct assessments and to utilize the information to prepare the appropriate response.

Assessment information is being received from Tamana, Onotoa, Arorae, South Tarawa and Betio, indicating needs in water and sanitation, shelter, food and medical supplies.

CHF 73,258 has been allocated from the IFRC Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Kiribati Red Cross Society to implement its response operation. These funds will support replenishment of preparedness stocks advanced from Fiji as mobilization of non-food relief and emergency shelter items for distribution. The DREF allocation will also support the high cost of freight and transportation to affected areas. The Fiji Red Cross Society mobilised relief non-food items (NFIs) to be transferred to support the operations of Kiribati Red Cross Society.

Tuvalu Red Cross Society

Tuvalu Red Cross Society has completed an inventory of its preparedness stocks and its branch members and outer island representatives are currently working closely with their respective island disaster management committees in immediate response to the disaster.

Tuvalu Red Cross Society has undertaken distribution of items, including blankets and tarpaulins and on 15 March assessment and distribution teams comprising government representatives and 10 Tuvalu Red Cross Society staff and volunteers left in the three boats to undertake assessments on Nui, Vaitupu and other atolls and islands. In support of the assessment process, teams distributed much needed supplies of water and water containers. More detailed assessment information from Nui is coming in and more is expected from Vaitupu in the coming days. The assessment information indicates immediate needs in water and sanitation, shelter, food, medical supplies and equipment for clearing debris.

Tuvalu Red Cross Society has requested for technical support from the IFRC and Partner National Societies present in the region to respond to needs brought by the weather systems.

Similarly to the DREF for Kiribati, a DREF for CHF 81,873 has also been allocated to support the Tuvalu Red Cross Society to implement its response operation. The Samoa Red Cross Society and the Fiji Red Cross Society have mobilised relief NFIs to be transferred to support the operations of Tuvalu Red Cross Society. The DREF allocation will support replenishment of preparedness stocks advanced from Partner National Societies and/or through the IFRC zone logistics unit as well as mobilization of addition non-food relief and emergency shelter items for distribution. The DREF allocation will also support the high cost of freight and transportation to affected areas.

Solomon Islands Red Cross Society

Solomon Islands Red Cross Society branch volunteers in Malaita have started assessments and in Temotu teams are mobilising for assessments of remote islands. Solomon Islands Red Cross Society will analyse the incoming assessment information to update the Emergency Plan of Action. In total it is estimated that more than 30,000 people in the two affected provinces.

Meanwhile CHF 153,770 has been allocated from DREF for Solomon Islands which aims to address the immediate needs of up to 600 households through the provision of essential household NFIs, emergency shelter materials and access to safe water. In order to deliver the assistance, operational support and assessment teams will be mobilized and deployed with support of the DREF allocation

Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society

Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society has been assessing and supporting communities dealing with the effects of heavy rainfall and resulting flooding.

In West New Britain up to 20,000 people have been affected by flooding and Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society has held meetings with the National Disaster Coordinator to agree on a plan of action for response. Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society and National Disaster Coordinator will work closely to collate assessment data, area coverage and confirm numbers affected for West New Britain in coming days and develop the Plan of Action.

IFRC

The IFRC is coordinating the Movement's international assistance in close liaison with the leadership of the National Societies in the region. IFRC is actively participating in meetings of the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT).

The IFRC Pacific Regional Office (PRO) is maintaining close coordination with UNOCHA and other regional partners based in Suva, Fiji. It is also responding to humanitarian needs in coordination with affected national societies and national societies of Fiji, Samoa, Australia and New Zealand.

An IFRC delegate in Papua New Guinea is supporting the PNGRCS with assessment and planning and resources. As new information comes in, the IFRC is ready to provide additional support to the affected National Societies.

An [Information Bulletin](#) focusing on Tropical Cyclone Pam in the Pacific was issued on 13 March 2015.

Other Movement partners

With the approval of New Zealand Red Cross Society, Cook Islands Red Cross has released a New Zealand Red Cross Society Delegate to be deployed to support operations in Tuvalu.

The Samoa Red Cross Society mobilised relief non-food items (NFIs) to be transferred to support the operations of Tuvalu Red Cross Society

As soon as cyclone warnings were lifted for Fiji, the Fiji Red Cross Society mobilised relief NFIs to be transferred to support the operations of Kiribati Red Cross Society and Tuvalu Red Cross Society.

Challenges identified:

- Due to the geographical location of countries in the Pacific region, the logistics arrangement for relief transportation will be time-consuming and costly.
 - The damages to telecommunication infrastructures in these countries further complicated the response as well as communication and information flow.
 - Prior to these events, IFRC had no in-country presence, and support to the National Societies in the region was provided by the PRO.
 - These National Societies also have limited human resources, particularly active trained volunteers, to respond to this scale of disaster.
-

Contact information

For further information, please contact:

Kiribati Red Cross Society (phone +686 22501):

- Meaua Tooki, Secretary General, email: redcross.krcc@gmail.com

Tuvalu Red Cross Society (phone +688 20706):

- Olioliiga Iosua, Secretary General, email: kakega@gmail.com

Solomon Islands Red Cross Society (phone +677 226 82):

- Joanne Zoleveke, secretary general, email: secgen@redcross.org.sb

Papua New Guinea Red Cross (phone +675 3257016):

- Stanley Kila Pat, secretary general, email: stanleykilapat.pngrcs@gmail.com

IFRC Pacific regional office, Suva (phone +679 3311 855):

- Aurélia Balpe, head of regional office, email: aurelia.balpe@ifrc.org
- Vuli Gauna, regional disaster management coordinator, email: vuli.gauna@ifrc.org

IFRC Asia Pacific zone office, Kuala Lumpur (phone: +60 1025729; + 60 1025775):

- Andreas Weissenberg, operations coordinator, email: andreas.weissenberg@ifrc.org
- Peter Ophoff, head of planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER), email: peter.ophoff@ifrc.org



[Click here](#)

1. [Map below](#)
 2. [Return](#) to the title page
-

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to **inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the **maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.**

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives,
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote social inclusion
and a culture of
non-violence and peace.



Pacific region

