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I. HIGHLIGHTS/key priorities

- Flooding over the past three days has resulted in two deaths while individuals were trying to save their livestock from swollen rivers.
- Nadi Airport reported over 145 mm of rain in the last 24 hours, totalling over 260mm of rain in the last 48 hours
- 715 individuals are in 33 evacuation centers in Nadi, Ba, Tavua and Nanu.
- Rain, heavy at times, is expected to continue across Fiji until Thursday

Situation Overview

Flooding in Fiji has resulted in two deaths and forced 715 individuals (393 Adults and 322 children) to seek shelter in evacuation centers according to Fiji Government as of 11AM this morning. The 33 evacuation centers are located in Nadi (17), Ba (9), Tavua (5) and Nanu (2). The Ministry of Information has warned of continuing heavy rain, thunderstorms and high winds, and suggest that conditions are likely to worsen in the coming 24 hours. High tides at 19:000 this evening are likely to cause further flooding in Ba and Nadi and other coastal low-lying areas. The two men killed in separate incidents in Nuvoli and on Vanua Levu were both swept away while attempting to save their livestock from rising rivers.

Access to affected areas remains a challenge as a number of roads and bridges are not passable in Nadi, Ba and other affected areas. A curfew was imposed in Nadi last night but was lifted during the morning. Water supply in the affected areas may become a more significant issue. Currently the government is ensuring clean water to essential services such as hospitals and clinics.

Government teams are reportedly assessing damage and needs but a consolidated report may not be available for some days. Fiji Red Cross has mobilised teams to assess needs in affected areas and in the evacuation centers. Families moving to evacuation centers were advised to arrive with 24 hours of food and water to allow time for additional assistance to be delivered if needed.

The Fiji Meteorological Service also reported significant flooding on Vanua Levu. Heavy rains caused a landslide in Labasa and damaged roads, homes, bridges and crops. Farms in Labasa were worst hit.

In Denarau, a marina and tourist area near Nadi is not flooded, however, the access to Nadi and the international airport remains blocked due to high waters. The South Sea Cruises vessels were on standby to transport tourists to a safe area accessible by land transport should the situation worsen.

The Government warns for those living in low-lying areas, keep alert of flooding and move to higher ground if flooding is anticipated and parents are strongly advised to keep a close watch on their children.

Weather forecast

Heavy rain over the western and northern divisions of Fiji are a result of northwest winds pushing a layer of monsoonal air down over Fiji. A broad band of clouds and rain remains active stretching from Vanuatu to Fiji then southeast to Tonga. Radar imagery indicates a number of heavy showers currently passing over the west this morning and the satellite imagery indicates there is much more cloud to the northwest (see image) still to move over Fiji later today.

This morning Nadi airport reported over 145 mm of rain in the last 24 hours, totalling over 260mm of rain in the last 48 hours. With much more rain to come during today, extensive river flooding seems inevitable across the west and north of Fiji today.

Flash flooding of low lying areas and extensive river flooding in Nadi, Lautoka, Ba, Sigatoka and Labasa will continue, particularly following the next high tide which is at 19.00 hrs tonight. Currently there is no indication of any short term clearance of the rain band and forecast guidance indicates the rain continues tomorrow, 25 January, much as it presently. Rain will start to ease more generally from Thursday for a day or two but not completely clear away as the South-Pacific Convergence Zone (SPCZ) is expected to stay over Fiji.

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