

Fiji: Severe Tropical Cyclone Yasa

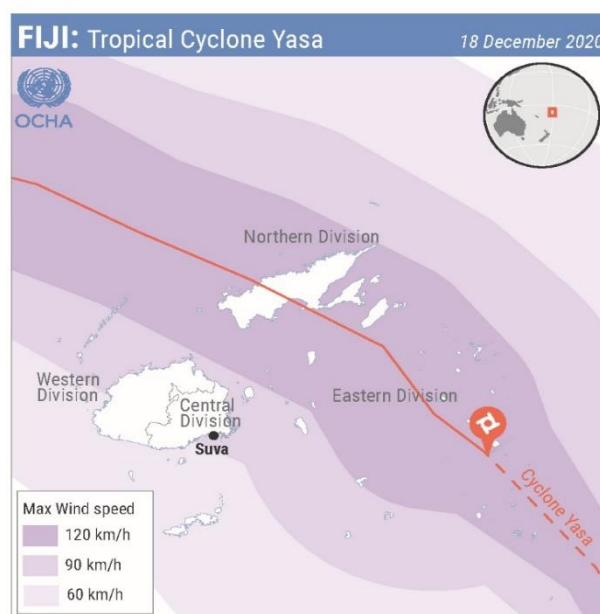
Situation Report No. 01 (as of 18 December 2020)



This report is produced by the OCHA Office of the Pacific Islands (OoP) in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the period of 17 – 18 December 2020. The next report will be issued on or around 19 December 2020.

Highlights

- On 17 December, 2020, TC Yasa cut a path of destruction across Vanua Levu. It was the strongest cyclone since TC Winston in 2016 to hit Fiji;
- NDMO estimates that some 93,000 people (21,000 households) living in the most affected areas of the cyclone.
- 02 persons have been confirmed dead;
- The damage of the cyclone is estimated by the government to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars;
- A 30 day State of Natural Disaster has been declared.



Sources: GDACS, Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Situation Overview

TC Yasa, with Cat 5 intensity, made landfall over Vanua Levu, Fiji, in the evening of 17 December. It caused heavy destruction to infrastructure, buildings and agricultural areas. The Government of Fiji speaks of hundreds of millions of dollars. It was the strongest storm in the basin since TC Winston in 2016 and the strongest in the cyclone season 2020 – 21.

Based on the secondary data analysis of the cyclone track, there are about 145,000 people within the area with wind speed higher 120km/h. About 130,000 are in the northern division. WFP's initial vulnerability assessment indicates that approximately 70,000 people in the 3 provinces of northern division are economically vulnerable.

The authorities confirmed that two people have died; one in the Western and one in the Northern Division.

To ensure public safety, on 17 December, 2020, the Government declared a 14-hour curfew from 4 pm to 6 am as TC Yasa was making landfall in Fiji. On 18 December, the Government declared a 10-hour curfew from 8 pm to 6 am.

During the height of the storm, some 23,000 people sought shelter in evacuation centers. COVID-19 quarantine measures remain in place. In a note of 14 Dec, 2020, MoFA stipulated that all incoming travelers to undergo mandatory "Entry Swabbing Testing" on Day 2 after arrival into Fiji; and on Day 12 of quarantine to determine their release or otherwise on Day 14.

General Coordination

The Fiji Government is leading the response to this emergency. The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) is coordinating efforts and has activated the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC). The government declared a “State of Natural Disaster” on 16 December, 2020, and gazetted the Natural Disaster Cyclone Yasa Regulations for the next 30 days.

The Fiji Government has established three levels of planning to guide their cyclone response – current operations, future operations, and planning and international coordination.

The Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) has reached out to the authorities to discuss cooperation and coordination in establishing humanitarian needs as well as defining a timely humanitarian response. UNOCHA, on behalf of the PHT, is liaising with the NDMO in order to lend support in coordination efforts, the conduct of assessments, the production of IM products and potential funding mechanisms. Regional clusters (also part of the PHT) are in regular contact with their national counterparts to lend support in conducting assessments and assisting in the response. The Resident Coordinator in Fiji, on his side, is in contact with senior government officials to reaffirm the international community’s commitment to assist Fiji in these difficult times.

Overall Response

Logistics

Overview

Although there was considerable impact on the infrastructure (details still to be established), Nadi and Nausori Airports are open and operational. Labasa and Rotuma Airports will be operational later today.

Regional cluster is in contact with national cluster lead. Earlier today, the cluster reached out to partners to provide list of relief items to potentially go on a *Fiji Airways* flight from Sidney to Nadi, scheduled to depart on 19/12.

It also undertook preliminary discussion with DFAT regarding Australian Government offering logistics support to the Government of Fiji, pending approval.

Needs

Not yet known at this stage.

Response

Pending assessments.

Gaps and Constraints

Not known yet.



Emergency Telecommunications

Overview

There is currently no mobile connectivity in the BUA and Macuata area.

130 Vodafone Towers on Vanua Levu have been misaligned where communications still functional though connectivity has been compromised.

As at 4pm GMT+12 only 40 towers left to be realigned and expected to be completed by Saturday 19/12 by Vodafone. No data available from Digicel at this stage but are reporting to have realignment complete by Saturday 19/12.

No known damages on Viti Levu – and other islands as of writing this report.

Needs

Not yet known at this stage.

Response

Emergency Telecommunication Cluster coordinator (WFP) has loaned three (3) x units for connectivity (broad global area network or BGAN) terminal and three (3) x iridium satellite phones to the NDMO.

The Crisis Connectivity Charter was activated on 18/12 for TC Yasa response – this will provide the response with 30GB of data for each BGAN terminal.

NDMO requested ETC Cluster Coordinator to conduct a BGAN user training to staff who will be using the satellite transceiver for Data communication.

Gaps and Constraints

Not known yet.



Shelter

Overview

The Fiji Shelter Cluster convened on 16/12/2020 in preparation for the impact of TC Yasa. The meeting was attended by government authorities, humanitarian agencies and one donor.

Initial damage assessment information not yet available but it is anticipated that there will be damage to shelter and settlements caused by flooding, storm surge and destructive winds along the cyclone track.

Needs

Initially, it is anticipated that affected households will require emergency shelter (tarpaulins and toolkits) and essential household items assistance (clothing, kitchen sets, solar lamps, blankets), as well as appropriate technical assistance.

NDMO has highlighted emergency/transitional shelter as a priority need.

Response

Fiji Red Cross Emergency Plan of Action was approved on 16/12/2020 (pre-impact) and targets 17,698 people across the 4 divisions with early action emergency shelter activities. The plan will be revised and adapted based on findings of Initial Damage Assessment.

<http://adore.ifrc.org/Download.aspx?FileId=369956>

Gaps and Constraints

There are stocks available in-country to support approx. 3,000 households with emergency shelter and up to 4,700 households with essential household items. Gaps can be determined once Initial Damage Assessment data are available.



Health & Nutrition

Overview

Two confirmed deaths – one in Lovelove (a man outside of Labasa) and one baby/child in Rakiraki (in a school evacuation centre). Both reportedly from falling walls.

Most facilities are intact and only minor repairs required, and most health facilities are operational. Lautoka Hospital temporarily relocated most patients to the ground floor. Nausori HC relocated to Vunimomo High School. Some damage to Koro and Taveuni Health Centres. Korovo Hospital out of power due to faulty generator.

Ongoing monitoring/assessment (including infrastructure, cold chain, etc. – will be run by Divisions), with focus on Northern Division, Lomaiviti & Lau group.

COVID-19 quarantine facilities intact and operational.

Needs

Emergency Medical Response Team (FEMAT) deployed six-person team to Labasa today to free local staff to respond in communities - Emergency Medical Response Team is coordinating clinical and public health response and monitoring the evacuation centres.

Northern Division (Vanualevu), marytime islands (Lomaiviti and Lau etc) will be of immediate priority for health and nutrition cluster response.

Response

FEMAT generator being sent to Korovou Hospital.

The following Essential Nutrition Supplies are being released through UNICEF to MoHMS:0

- 04 cartons of F 75 therapeutic milk of 24 cans of 400 mg – sufficient to treat 25 - 30 cases of Severe Acute Malnutrition with medical complications;
- 06 cartons of F 100 therapeutic milk;
- 06 cartons of ready-to-use Therapeutic Food;
- 260 PAC of Retinol 200,000 IU; and
- 50 PAC of 100,000 IU each with 500 capsule in each PAC

A joint statement against the distribution of breastmilk substitute and unhealthy food is currently drafted for signature by the MoH.

For now, no international Emergency Medical Team (EMT) requests, pending additional assessments.

Gaps and Constraints

Will depend on the findings of initial assessment of health facilities and communities. Shipping/transportation of nutrition supplies to the North and other affected areas.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Overview

WASH specific situation assessment details expected over the coming days.

MoHMS has already activated their Emergency Operation Centers in Suva and at the District WASH Offices in Fiji especially in the Northern and Eastern Divisions. Priority areas at the Vanua Levu group (Bua and Cakaudrove) and in the maritime islands of Lau and Lomaiviti.

Needs

Initial Damage Assessment starting today. Technical Assistance in supporting Ministry with tools to gather and analyse damage assessment data. Continue to update and share the consolidated list of WASH supplies currently pre-positioned across cluster members in warehouses in Fiji.

Supporting the WASH Cluster / MoHMS for developing the TC Yasa WASH Response and Recovery Plan.

Several partners noted the importance of dignity kits.

Response

Pending assessments.

Gaps and Constraints

WASH Cluster – in close cooperation with MoH - will look at the available shipping options for shipment of supplies.



Education

Overview

Severe damage to classrooms, teacher quarters, school text books, school resources and facilities in Bua, Macuata, Cakaudrove in Vanualevu, Taveuni, Yasawa and Southern Lau. Schools that have sent initial damage assessment through to MEHA. Some schools are still used as Ratu Luke Memorial and Savusavu Secondary evacuation centers. MEHA has activated their Emergency Operation Centers in Suva and at the District Education Offices in Fiji.

Needs

In order to open affected schools safely till 18 Jan, 2021, the following EiE supplies need to be delivered to the affected schools:

- Tents & Tarpaulins for temporary learning spaces;
- School-in-a-Box;
- Students back packs, ECD kits, Recreation kits, WASH kits, hygiene kits;
- Quick fix toilets and wash facilities;
- Psycho-social support for students and teachers in affected schools.

Response

Supporting MEHA in development of the TC Yasa Education Response Plan.

Gaps and Constraints

Funding MEHA in the operation of EOC Centers and the conduct of Detailed Damage Assessments in schools in the affected areas.



Food Security

Overview

Damage to agricultural areas is focused on Yasawa-i-rara, Vanua Levu, Taveuni and Maritime islands (including Koro, Cicia, Moce, Komo). Central and Western Divisions appear to have suffered less damage than predicted.

Of the 83,395 farmers, about 11% are estimated to be located in the red zone with a radius of 50km from the centre, which is mainly in the Bua Province, Taveuni and maritime islands. Rehabilitation works will be focused in these areas. A further 33% are estimated to be in the yellow zone located with a radius of 100km from the centre (above from Fiji MoA). Based on the track of TC Yasa, MoA has been able to identify and estimate the number of agriculture households and farmers affected by wind damage. Flooding and storm surge damage will also be factored in. Specific figures to be supplied in due course

Needs

Preliminary needs calculated by MoA:

- Planting materials – seeds, seedlings and cuttings
- Livestock feed including sugar for bees
- Basic farm tools
- Fencing materials and building reconstruction
- Above items across 40,000 farmers (specific quantities to be calculated)

Response

- All Agriculture EOCs activated
- Initial Damage Assessment has commenced, with findings expected to be received within 72 hours.
- Review of IDA form, MoA suppliers and capacity and MoA coordination structures at district and division level have been completed
- MoA Disaster Service Liaison Officer (DSLO) working with NDMO;
- Pre-positioned stocks, Fiji MoA/ FAO:
- Approx. 7,000 packets of vegetable and watermelon seed of various sizes;
- MoA: 4,000 packets of dry vegetable seeds in Suva;
- dry vegetable seeds from suppliers available and a nationwide mapping completed of planting material provided by suppliers.

Gaps and Constraints

Not known yet.

Donations

The Government has set up a dedicated trust account to receive all donations made towards recovery efforts for TC Yasa. It is called “Prime Minister’s National Disaster Relief & Rehabilitation: TC Yasa”.

Humanitarian donors are planning to provide a range of military assets and financial contributions to support priority tasking from the Government if Fiji.