

Papua New Guinea: Highlands Earthquake

Situation Report No. 1

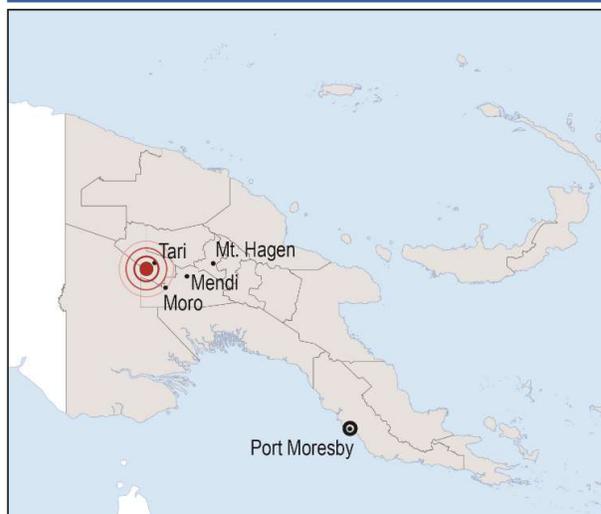
(as of 10 March 2018)

This report is produced by the National Disaster Centre, the Office of the Resident Coordinator and the United Nations Coordination and Assessment (UNDAC) Team in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It was issued by the Disaster Management Team Secretariat. It covers the period from 29 February to 10 March 2018. The next report will be issued on or around 14 March.

Background

- An earthquake measuring M7.5 occurred on 26 February 2018 at 3:44 am (25 February, 17:44 UTC). The epicentre was located in the Southern Highlands. There have been a series of strong aftershocks, including a M6.7 quake on 8 March in the same area and a M6.8 quake off the coast of New Ireland.
- The Government has declared a state of emergency on 2 March for Hela, Southern Highlands, Western and Enga provinces.
- According to initial estimates, over 544,000 people are affected across the five most affected provinces. Over 270,000 people require immediate humanitarian assistance.
- Priority needs include medicine, tarpaulins and tents, blankets, food, and water. The Government, private companies and humanitarian partners have focused initial relief efforts on communities in the worst-hit seven Local Level Government (LLGs) in Hela and Southern Highlands provinces.
- Damage to infrastructure, including airfields, bridges and access roads limit access to communities.
- The Government has established Forward Operating Bases in Mt. Hagen and Moro, as well as Emergency Operations Centres in Mendi and Tari.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA 7.5 EARTHQUAKE



Source: NDC, UNDAC, OCHA, USGS
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

544,368

Affected people

270,442

People targeted for assistance

26,000

Displaced in Western Province

7

Local Level Government Units

5

Provinces

Situation Overview

On 26 February 2018, at 03:44AM local time, an earthquake measuring M7.5 hit the Highlands region of Papua New Guinea (PNG), with its epicentre located 30 km south of Tari town, Hela Province. A series of strong aftershocks, including a M6.7 quake on 8 March in the same area and a M6.8 quake off the coast of New Ireland, caused widespread panic amongst the communities, and forcing many to sleep outside and under the rain.

According to preliminary estimates and based on latest earthquake intensity mapping produced by the National Disaster Centre (NDC), about 544,000 people in five provinces were exposed to strong to violent shaking and more than 270,000 people are in immediate need of assistance. These figures are expected to increase as more areas become accessible.

+ For more information, see “background on the crisis” at the end of the report

While damages were reported in Enga, Gulf, Hela, Southern Highlands and Western Highlands provinces, Southern Highlands and Hela Provinces have been the worst affected. North Koroba, South Koroba, Yahapuga Rural, Koma rural, Hulia Rural, Nipa Rural and Lake Kutubu Rural are the seven most affected Local Level Government (LLG) areas in Hela and Southern Highlands Provinces.

Understanding the full extent of the impact of the earthquake in remote mountainous and hilly area will take some additional time as access to many affected areas remains limited. On 9 March, the Government has cleared the main Highlands Highway connecting Western Highlands, Southern Highlands, and Hela. However, many roads linking to the Highway remain impassable.

Many locals are traumatized. Afraid of returning to their homes, they stay in informal care centres and move onwards as aftershocks occur. Over 26,000 people are displaced in Western Province. As tensions grow, people move to more central locations hoping to access relief items more quickly.

Immediate needs include medicine, tarpaulins and tents, blankets, food, and water. The Government, private companies and humanitarian partners have focused initial relief efforts on communities in the worst-hit seven LLGs in Hela and Southern Highlands provinces. Private companies and bilateral partners, including Australia, Japan and New Zealand, play a critical role in the early phase of the response. They work closely with UN agencies, NGOs, CSO, FBOs and the Red Cross. Humanitarian partners have provided food to over 34,400 people in Nipa Kutubu LLG and Komo Magarima LLG. Up to 54,260 households are estimated to be in need of emergency shelter. To date, 100 households in Mount Bosavi LLG and another 100 households in Para/Moro have received shelter equipment.

Landslides burying or damming traditional sources and increased observable turbidity in rivers and streams limit access to water for drinking, washing and cleaning. The National Department of Health and partners are planning for water quality assessment of water sources in Southern Highlands province and Gulf province (downstream) in the coming 72 hours. Meanwhile, partners have provided ten mobile water purification units and ten 3,700l water storage tanks.

While health facilities outside the catchment areas of private companies remain to be assessed, partners have distributed 100 per cent medical kits and 13 cartons of reproductive health kits to Mendi and Tari provincial hospitals and most impacted health facilities. Much needed vaccines (in cold boxes with cold packs) and vaccine devices have been transported to Hela, Southern Highlands, Enga and Western Highlands provinces. Routine immunization with TT vaccine are planned for over 60,000 children under 1 year of age and for over 758,000 women of reproductive age.

PNG-DF has deployed to the area to clear armed road blocks by local communities and ensure a safe relief distribution.

Humanitarian Response



Food Security & Livelihoods

Needs:

- An estimated 143,127 people (74,426 male, 68,701 female) have been rendered food insecure by the earthquake due to landslides destroying food gardens.
- The latest mVAM report indicates that up to 64,070 people were experiencing extreme food insecure conditions before the earthquake events.
- Affected communities are unable to reach remaining food gardens or gather bush food e.g. seasonal nut *karuka* (edible pandanus nut) due to persisting aftershocks.

143,127

food insecure people

Response:

- The cluster has developed a localized standard food basket to be used by partners and government.
- To date, 34,487 people in Nipa Kutubu LLG and Komo Magarima LLG have received some form of food assistance from private sector and humanitarian partners.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Approximately 101,140 people (52,592 male, 48,548 female) have yet to receive food relief assistance.

- Availability of food relief supplies and humanitarian access including lack of road access, limited aircraft assets and remoteness of communities continues to hamper the provision of food relief to affected communities.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Needs:

- Landslides burying or damming traditional sources and increased observable turbidity in rivers and streams limit access to water for drinking, washing and cleaning.
- Existing community rainwater storage infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed by the earthquake as have any sanitation facilities.

10

water tanks

Response:

- Bilateral and humanitarian partners have provided water containers for distribution as well as ten mobile water purification units and ten 3,700l water storage tanks.
- To date, partners have distributed WASH NFIs for 100 households in Mt Bosavi LLG and 300 households in Moro and Para areas together with hygiene kits and water purification tablets.
- Where existing sources of water are not available, bottled drinking water has been distributed together with food relief.
- The National Department of Health supported by partners are planning for water quality assessment of water sources in Southern Highlands province and Gulf province (downstream).

Gaps & Constraints:

- There is a lack of verified information on water quality at remaining water sources.
- There is no planned response around sanitation and hygiene.



Health

Needs:

- Two provincial hospitals in Tari and Mendi have been impacted by the earthquake. Rural health facilities have been damaged or destroyed.
- Functionality of health facilities have been affected by disruption to water and power supply and insufficient supply of emergency medical supplies. Health workers have experienced psychological trauma and damage/destruction to their homes and gardens.
- Restore medical and public health services and additional staff surge capacity, surveillance, mental and health support for trauma affected persons.

13

reproductive health kits

Response:

- The National Department of Health supported by partners have commenced health facility assessments to determine needs of health facilities in quake-affected LLGs. The health department has established a joint emergency operation centre supported by partners.
- To date, 100 per cent medical kits and 13 cartons of reproductive health kits have been distributed to Mendi and Tari provincial hospitals and most impacted health facilities.
- Vaccines (in cold boxes with cold packs) and vaccine devices have been transported to Hela, Southern Highlands, Enga and Western Highlands provinces comprising 53,535 doses of BCG vaccine; 49,742 doses of Penta valent vaccine; 43,457 doses of MR vaccine; 17,500 doses of injectable polio vaccine; 16,500 doses of Hepatitis B vaccine; and 220,000 doses of tetanus toxoid vaccine (for women of child-bearing age).
- Routine immunization with TT vaccine are planned for children under 1 year (60,295) and women of reproductive age (758,401) across the four affected provinces.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Gaps remain in public health staff capacity due to the earthquake's impact on health workers.
- There is a lack of a clear and coordinated staging plan detailing the dispatching of essential supplies, medical and public health.

- Health facilities in locations outside the existing catchment area of oil and gas project areas are yet to be assessed.



Shelter / Camp Coordination and Camp Management

Needs:

- Up to 54,260 households are estimated to be in need of emergency shelter due to damage/destruction to homes or displacement due to fear of returning to existing homes.

54,260

households

Response:

- To date, 100 households in Mount Bosavi LLG and another 100 households in Para/Moro have received shelter NFIs

Gaps & Constraints:

- Availability of shelter NFIs and humanitarian access including lack of road access, limited aircraft assets and remoteness of communities continues to hamper the provision of emergency shelter to affected communities.



Protection

Needs:

- Approximately 37,689 people are identified as having been most affected while a further 232,753 people have also been severely exposed the impacts of the earthquake. Of these, there are at least 35,782 are women of reproductive age group based on the MISP calculator.
- At least 3 Safe Spaces for vulnerable women and young girls established in affected areas with at least over 25% survivors (179 clients) of sexual violence have access to medical treatment and psychosocial support services.
- Access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services in 7 LLGs and safe delivery services for up to 2,000 pregnant women.

3

safe spaces

Response:

- Five community tents are being planned for transport to impacted locations for the establishment of 3 Safe Spaces for vulnerable women and young girls.
- 1,200 dignity kits have been procured for downstream distribution.
- Partners are working with human rights defenders in affected locations to track cases of sorcery accusations and related violence in relation to the occurrence of the earthquake.
- A joint NGO-government supported trauma and crisis counselling toll-free hotline has been reprogrammed to support survivors of sexual abuse in need of referrals.
- A civil-society partner is undertaking an assessment of current response efforts in Mendi to ensure needs of persons living with disabilities are considered.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Lack of feedback and reporting mechanisms for affected communities to reach relevant authorities, including complaints for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

General Coordination

The Government is leading the response operation and has welcomed the support of humanitarian partners. The National Disaster Committee (NDComm) and relevant sub-committee have been mobilized to develop the national response strategy. The National Disaster Centre (NDC) coordinates assessments and relief operations. On 1 March, the Government appointed an Emergency Controller to lead the National Emergency Disaster Restoration Team in overseeing the relief and recovery efforts.

The Government has established two Forward Operating Bases (FOBs), one in Mt Hagen led by the Western Highlands Provincial Disaster Coordinator, and one in Moro is led by the Provincial Administrator. The Government

has further established Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) in the capitals of Hela and Southern Highlands provinces, Tari and Mendi respectively. Provincial Administrators have assumed leadership in coordinating provincial responses.

The joint interagency PNG Disaster Management Team has been convened to coordinate relief efforts of humanitarian partners and private companies. Seven clusters (WASH, Shelter, Food Security, Health, Protection, Education, Nutrition) and the inter-cluster coordination group support the work of the Disaster Management Team.

An UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Team has deployed to directly support the NDC in response coordination and information management. UNDAC supports an inter-agency coordination network comprising UN agencies, NGOs, CSO, FBOs and the Red Cross. This network augments the coordination capacity of Provincial Administrators in key operational nodes in Port Moresby, Mt Hagen, Moro, Tari and Mendi.

The Government has tasked the PNG-DF to assist local partners in the distribution of relief items. Logistics coordination specialists have deployed to provide supply chain coordination support to the Government and the PNG-DF, particularly in Port Moresby, Mt. Hagen and Moro.

Humanitarian partners are encouraged to register on www.humanitarian.id and actively use the dedicated earthquake response window on www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/papua-new-guinea.

Background on the crisis

On 26 February 2018, at 3:44am local time, an earthquake measuring M7.5 hit the Highlands region of Papua New Guinea (PNG), with its epicentre located 30 km south of Tari town, Hela Province. The tremor was the largest earthquake recorded in the region since a similar event in 1922. A series of strong aftershocks, including a M6.7 quake on 8 March in the same area and a M6.8 quake off the coast of New Ireland, caused widespread panic amongst the communities. According to preliminary estimates and based on latest earthquake intensity mapping, about 544,000 people in five provinces were exposed to strong to violent shaking and more than 270,000 people are in immediate need of assistance. Damages were reported in Enga, Gulf, Hela, Southern Highlands and Western Highlands provinces. Southern Highlands and Hela provinces have been the worst affected. North Koroba, South Koroba, Yahapuga Rural, Koma rural, Hulia Rural, Nipa Rural and Lake Kutubu Rural are the seven most affected Local Level Government (LLG) areas in Hela and Southern Highlands Provinces.

For further information, please contact:

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For more information, please visit <http://pngndc.gov.pg/> or <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/papua-new-guinea>.

To be added or deleted from this Sit Rep mailing list, please e-mail: undacpng2018@undac.org