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Emergency Plan of Action operation update Vanuatu: Tropical Cyclone Pam



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| DREF n° MDRVU002 | GLIDE n° TC-2015-000020-VUT |
| EPoA update n° 1 | Date of issue: 16 March 2015 |
| Operation start date: 13 March 2015 | Timeframe covered by this update: 13 to 15 March 2015 |
| Overall operation budget: CHF 132,996 | Note: This DREF is now considered loan to planned Emergency appeal |
| Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners currently actively involved in the operation: The Vanuatu Red Cross Society has mobilized over 100 staff and volunteers who are working relentlessly to distribute aid and provide critical health care. A total of 40 volunteers are in Port Vila working alongside the authorities to assist in 26 evacuation centres. The National Society is working with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) as well as the Australian Red Cross, French Red Cross and New Zealand Red Cross. | |
| Other partners organizations actively involved in the operation: Vanuatu's National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and provincial disaster committees (PDCs), CARE International, Oxfam, UNICEF, UN OCHA, Save the Children, World Vision and other members of the UN-led Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT). The governments of Australia and New Zealand have also mobilized assets and teams, including the military, for the response in Vanuatu. | |

A. Situation analysis

Description of the disaster

As Tropical Cyclone Pam continues to make way in the South Pacific Ocean towards New Zealand, after battering Vanuatu on Friday 13 March 2015 with Category V strength, a gloomy picture of its impact has begun to emerge. What is turning out to be one of the worst cyclones to affect the Pacific in recent history has left massive humanitarian needs across inhabited islands of Vanuatu.

So far the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) has confirmed eight deaths in the capital, Port Vila, alone with the toll expected to climb as contact is re-established with outlying islands and more information on the storm's effects is obtained. A state of calamity has been declared and on Sunday, 15 March 2015, the Government of Vanuatu issued a formal appeal for international assistance.

Described as the strongest storm to make landfall since Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines in November 2013, Pam flattened homes, uprooted trees and caused considerable damage even on sturdy buildings such as schools and the city's main hospital. Based on the sheer size of the storm, its ferocity and the track it took — right over inhabited islands — it is expected that there has been extreme destruction, with thousands of people left without shelter and stripped of their source of livelihoods.

Summary of current response

Overview of Host National Society

The Vanuatu Red Cross Society (VRCS) had put its staff and volunteers on standby for immediate response as Tropical Cyclone Pam approached. On Saturday 14 March 2015, as soon as safety conditions permitted, a VRCS team undertook an ocular survey around Port Vila to assess the immediate impact. The National Society's staff and volunteers also assessed the status of evacuation centres, assisted in the registration of people sheltered in the centres and distributed basic relief supplies.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

The IFRC Pacific Regional Office (PRO), the Asia Pacific Zone office and the head office in Geneva continue to monitor the situation closely and are – together – ensuring that IFRC is effectively playing its role of coordinating international assistance on behalf of National Societies. Earlier on Sunday 15 March 2015, the PRO organized a teleconference for partners present in the region, to better coordinate the response. The Asia Pacific Zone office has scheduled a wider-reaching teleconference for Monday, 16 March 2015, afternoon GMT+8.

Following an analysis of the situation on the ground and a request by the VRCS, IFRC is deploying its international disaster response tools. Already, a five-member Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT) have been activated and some members are on way to Vanuatu. The team comprises members mobilized from Partner National Societies including Australian Red Cross, New Zealand Red Cross and the Netherlands Red Cross.

A shelter coordination delegate is already in Port Vila while an emergency communications delegate, a disaster management delegate and an acting country representative are expected to arrive on Monday 16 March 2015. Other deployments will be confirmed in the coming days.

Meantime, the Australian Red Cross, French Red Cross and New Zealand Red Cross have also mobilized supplies and human resources to support the response through existing bilateral arrangements with the VRCS. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is also ready to support in restoration of family links.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

The VRCS continues to coordinate with the NDMO and provincial disaster committees (PDCs). All VRCS branches are members of their respective PDCs and are involved in response planning with the local authorities.

The IFRC Pacific Regional Office (PRO) is maintaining close coordination with UNOCHA and other regional partners. IFRC is actively participating in meetings of the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT).

Needs analysis and scenario planning

Based on the information that has emerged so far, the needs wrought by Tropical Cyclone Pam are massive. They cover all sectors including relief, shelter, emergency health, water and sanitation and livelihoods. Shelter is clearly a top need as thousands of families have been displaced after their houses were damaged or destroyed.

The IFRC is deploying a FACT, which will support the VRCS in coordinating the immediate response — priority is on saving lives and delivering immediate assistance — and undertaking assessments to inform the formulation of a broader response plan.

B. Operational strategy and plan

The IFRC system is all geared to support the VRCS to respond to immediate needs wrought by Tropical Cyclone Pam. The deployment of global tools and regional capacity — including supplies mobilized from preparedness stocks — will ensure that the IFRC and its member National Societies to respond faster, collectively and in a coordinated manner, so as to contribute to saving lives and enabling the affected people to get on the road to recovery.

Operational support services

Logistics and supply chain

Considering the distances between islands in Vanuatu logistics of reaching the more isolated communities will take time and substantial costs. The IFRC has chartered an aircraft to facilitate movement of supplies and human resources from Port Villa to other affected island. Meantime, planning has advanced to deploy logistics experts who will help coordinate movement of supplies — which are expected to start arriving in Port Villa on Monday 16 March 2015 — and undertake a logistics assessment. The assessment is crucial in getting the operation going smoothly. A logistics expert from the IFRC's zone logistics unit (ZLU) is already in Australia and will proceed to Port Villa.

Information technologies (IT)

The New Zealand Red Cross supports telecommunication programmes across the region, including Vanuatu. An IT and telecommunications delegate has been deployed by the New Zealand Red Cross to Vanuatu and is arriving later on Monday 16 March 2015. The delegate has essential satellite communication equipment, including satellite phones and a BGAN. Members of the FACT that is being deployed are also self-sufficient in terms of satellite phones, mobile phones and personal computers. The acting country representative and other delegates deployed from the IFRC Pacific Regional Office to provide surge capacity in-country are also self-sufficient in terms of satellite phones, mobile phones and personal computers as well as with one BGAN.

Communications

Communications has been an important element in this operation in order to ensure that target audience, including the media and donors, is aware of the situation on the ground and the needs wrought. The two recent articles published on the IFRC's website, www.ifrc.org, are "[Vanuatu and Tuvalu: the Red Cross responds to Severe Tropical Cyclone Pam](#)" and "[Lethal Pacific storm marks start of Sendai disaster conference, as IFRC and UN call for 'unprecedented cooperation' on climate](#)." A press release, "[Vanuatu: Red Cross delivers aid while reports confirm large-scale damage across the island nation](#)", was issued on 15 March 2015. In addition, materials such as photos and key messages are being issued via the IFRC Newswire.

C. Progress against operational plan

Early warning & emergency response preparedness

Outcome 1: The VRCS is better prepared to respond to Tropical Cyclone Pam.

Output 1.1 Surge capacity is provided and supports the National Society in its immediate response.

A five-member Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT) have been activated and some members are already on way to Vanuatu. The team comprises a team leader and members with expertise in shelter, emergency communications, information management and overall programme design and coordination. The team will also be augmented by specialists mobilized from the region, with expertise in sectors such as emergency health, logistics, information technology and water and sanitation.

Output 1.2: Needs assessments are undertaken.

Pending assessments, it has been determined that needs on the ground are massive. At the moment, technical units of the IFRC Pacific Regional Office (PRO), the Asia Pacific Zone office and the head office in Geneva are analyzing secondary data. On Monday, 16 March 2015, an emergency appeal will be launched on preliminary basis. More details are expected to be provided during the teleconference scheduled for Monday 16 March 2015 afternoon GMT+8.

Reference documents



Click [here](#) for:
The Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA)

Contact Information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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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 (NGO's) 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**.