

OPERATION UPDATE

TONGA | VOLCANO AND TSUNAMI

Emergency appeal №: MDRT0002 Emergency appeal launched: 21/01/2022 Operational Strategy published: 04/02/2022	Glide №: VO-2022-000005-TON
Operation update #1 Date of issue: 25/02/2022	Timeframe covered by this update: From 5/02/2022 to 23/2/2022
Operation timeframe: 24 months (18/01/2022 – 21/1/2024)	Number of people being assisted: 17,000
Funding requirements (CHF): CHF 2.5 million through the IFRC Emergency Appeal CHF 3.1 million Federation-wide	DREF amount initially allocated: CHF 430,666



*Tonga Red Cross Volunteers have assisted households in the worst affected areas on Tongatapu by distributing and erecting tents.
Photo: TRCS*

This Emergency Appeal, which seeks CHF 2,500,000, is 68 per cent funded to date, and it supersedes the DREF funding of CHF430,666. Further funding contributions are needed to enable the National Society, with the support of the IFRC, to continue with the preparedness efforts and provide humanitarian assistance and protection to people on the move.

The Tonga Red Cross (TRCS) and IFRC are assisting approximately 17,000 people (2,833 households) affected by the Hunga-Tonga-Hunga-Ha'apai (HTHH) volcano and tsunami. The funding contributions will meet the essential needs of the affected populace, help them self-recover from the crisis sustainably and strengthen their resilience to future shocks. The operation also intends to strengthen TRCS's response to future disasters and crises through preparedness, humanitarian assistance, and protection. The Operational Strategy is [available here](#).

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the crisis

On 20 December 2021, an eruption was observed at Hunga Tonga and Hunga Ha'apai, two sister volcanic islands in an uninhabited area approximately 65 kilometres north of Nuku'alofa, Tonga's capital. There was further volcanic activity on 14 January, resulting in tsunami waves of 30 centimetres. These initial eruptions in 2021 gave little warning of the unimaginable eruption that would occur in the coming weeks. An eruption of historic proportions occurred at 17:20 on 15 January 2022 and sent ash more than 20 kilometres into the air in a five kilometres plume.

The eruption triggered an unprecedented Pacific-wide tsunami, with waves causing damage and casualties as far away as Chile and Peru. Locally, the subsequent tsunami waves of up to 15m struck the west coasts of Tongatapu, 'Eua and Ha'apai, and it is estimated that waves of 1.5-2 metres reached the capital, Nuku'alofa. Ash cover was reported to be one-two centimetres by the following morning and subsequently reached up to four-five centimetres in some areas. On Sunday, 16 January 2022, the ash cloud grew but subsequently dissipated. The underwater volcano eruption is believed to be the largest volcanic event in the past 30 years¹.

New Zealand Defence Force and Australian Defence Forces surveillance flights on 17 January showed significant damage to houses, roads, water tanks and other infrastructure on the west coast of Tongatapu, the Ha'apai island group and the west coast of 'Eua.

Early government estimates were that 84,176 people (84 per cent of the population) on Tongatapu, Ha'apai and 'Eua) had been affected, particularly by ashfall. Following the eruption, a Tongan naval ship conducted a reconnaissance mission to outer islands in the Ha'apai group, accompanied by Red Cross volunteers with essential supplies such as tents, drinking water and hygiene kits. The assessment team found devastating scenes of destruction, with all infrastructure and housing on three out of four islands completely destroyed.

On 18 January, the Prime Minister of Tonga declared a state of emergency effective 16 January. Both the Tongan Government and the Tonga Red Cross (TRCS) have requested international assistance.

As of 8 February 2022, only three direct fatalities and one indirect fatality have been officially recorded in Tonga. The low level of fatalities partly reflects Tonga's effective early warning systems, combined with previous experience of natural disasters in Tonga. Following the eruption, a small proportion of people suffered breathing difficulties and a few, mainly children, were hospitalized.

¹ According to various news sources such as [Radio New Zealand](#), [Pasifika Environews](#), [Washington Post](#) and [The Guardian](#).

Overview of the host National Society and ongoing response

The TRCS headquarters in Nuku'alofa on Tongatapu, where the disaster management unit is based, is low lying, and there was flooding on the property following the tsunami. Essential household items for 1,200 households were previously prepositioned in 14 containers around Tonga. This was critical to TRCS distributing items in the first few days and weeks of the operation on both Tongatapu and the outer islands. Tonga Red Cross has also previously prepositioned some PPE, which will help safeguard staff and volunteers during the upcoming activities.

The eruption and subsequent tsunami created significant communications challenges across Tonga, including TRCS. While satellite phones in the TRCS headquarters were not operating initially, all four TRCS satellite phones are now operating and have been used to support restoring family links (RFL) calls and operational communications. TRCS's "IT in a box" computer systems are operational. However, there is damage to the telecommunications network outside TRCS, which means there has been almost no internet connectivity. New Zealand Red Cross has procured GX Explorer satellite telecommunications equipment which will be lent to Tonga Red Cross as soon as it can be shipped to provide internet connectivity until normal connectivity can be restored.

The TRCS is responding proactively to the volcano and tsunami despite the challenges faced. The National Society has 14 staff and around 80 volunteers, of whom 24 are already participating in the Tongatapu response. Though TRCS also has active branches in Ha'apai, 'Eua and Vava'u, information about numbers participating on other islands are yet to be confirmed. In the immediate aftermath of the tsunami, trained² staff and volunteers from the Tonga Red Cross assisted people evacuating to evacuation centres and higher ground and provided first aid as needed.

On 16 January, following an initial situation assessment, Tonga Red Cross provided relief items to the west coast of Tongatapu. Distributions have also occurred on Ha'apai and 'Eua. Relief items distributed include shelter toolkits, tarps, kitchen sets, blankets, jerry cans, buckets, hygiene kits and solar lanterns from prepositioned stocks³. Tonga Red Cross has also previously prepositioned some PPE, which will help safeguard staff and volunteers during the upcoming activities.

NEMO and Tonga Red Cross commenced joint initial damage assessments on Monday, 17 January, on the west coast of Tongatapu. Since that time, NEMO, in conjunction with others, has completed Initial Damage Assessments (IDA), covering Tongatapu, Ha'apai and 'Eua (refer below).

Tonga Red Cross has supported government authorities⁴ with water distribution to affected communities in Tongatapu and Ha'apai. In response to the damage to infrastructure, Tonga Red Cross has provided six portable toilets/latrines for use in affected communities.

As of 11 February 2022, distributions by Tonga Red Cross staff and volunteers are as follows:

² TRCS programmes include disaster risk reduction and response, first aid, health promotion (including COVID-19 prevention messaging), and support for people living with disabilities (including a school for disabled children). The TRCS undertook a Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) simulation in 2021 to identify the organizational strengths and weaknesses, following which further development activities were undertaken including refresher trainings for emergency responders and contingency planning.

³ Essential household items for 1,200 households were previously prepositioned in 14 containers around Tonga. Whether any of the containers has been damaged as a result of the volcano and tsunami is yet to be determined.

⁴ In addition to the extensive water distribution programme, the Tongan government has conducted distributions and clean-up activities in several locations. To assist with financial hardship, it has distributed a cash grant to affected families and increased this month's stipend payment to elderly/disabled people.

Division/ Village	Immediate Needs assisted with Distribution (NFIs)									
	Shelter Tarps	Tent	Shelter Toolkit	Water Container	Bucket	Kitchen Set	Hygiene Kit	Blanket	Solar Lamp	Mosquito Net
1. Kolomotu'a	35	12	12	9	8	38	48	140	30	-
2. Tukutonga	32	10	10	6	6	50	51	137	41	1
3. Nukunukumotu	-	-	-	-	-	16	16	25	14	-
4. Kanokupolu	89	39	16	-	-	70	1	231	71	-
5. 'Ahau	6	2	1	-	-	2	4	11	3	-
6. Ha'atafu	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	1	-
7. Navutoka	7	-	4	-	-	-	6	7	-	-
8. Mataika	2	-	1	-	-	1	1	5	-	-
9. Tofoa	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10. 'Atata Island	-	-	1	2	-	3	3	9	3	-
11. 'Atata Island /Evacuation Centre (FC of Tonga/Kapeta)	4	4	-	-	-	5	20	20	4	-
Tongatapu total	176	67	45	17	14	186	151	588	167	1
1. Hihifo (Lifuka Island)	11	-	7	21	11	18	23	32	2	3
2. Tungua Island (Relocated to Tongatapu /Vaini Village)	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-
3. Mango Is (Relocated to FWC Longolongo Hall)							20			
4. Supported NEMO with Distribution to Ha'apai Division									204	
Ha'apai total	11	-	7	23	11	18	44	32	206	3
1. 'Ohonua						40	40			
'Eua total						40	40			
GRAND TOTAL	187	67	52	40	25	244	235	620	373	4

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners currently actively involved in the operation include the IFRC, ICRC, Australia Red Cross, New Zealand Red Cross, French Red Cross, Red Cross of China. The IFRC country cluster delegation Suva, which supports Pacific National Societies, provides remote support for the Tonga RC response activity, including planning, donor engagement, logistics, communications, planning, monitoring, evaluation, reporting, finance and cluster participation.

ICRC has supported the Tonga Red Cross with Restoring Family Links (RFL) services. From 26 January, 150 Tongan households made "safe and well" calls to family overseas using Tonga Red Cross satellite phones. In addition, enquiries were received from 42 international family members seeking news of Tongan relatives. The eruption and subsequent tsunami created significant communications challenges across Tonga, including TRCS. While satellite phones in the TRCS headquarters were not operating initially, the TRCS satellite phones are now operating and have been used to support RFL calls and operational communications

New Zealand Red Cross has procured GX Explorer satellite telecommunications equipment which will be lent to Tonga Red Cross as soon as it can be shipped to provide internet connectivity until normal connectivity can be

restored. Relief items have been shipped by the Australia Red Cross, Red Cross Society of China, French Red Cross and New Zealand Red Cross.

Non-RCRC Actors

Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation are the Civil Society Forum of Tonga (CSFT), UNDP, UNICEF, Save the Children, WFP, FAO, WHO, UN Women, UNFPA, OCHA, Caritas, OXFAM, Act for Peace, Mainstreaming of Rural Development Initiative (MORDI), CARE international CARE Australia, Habitat for Humanity, SPC, SPREP, Pacific Disability Forum (PDF).

There have been several disaster events in Tonga in recent years, and the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) is experienced in disaster response. A tsunami warning system is in place in some of the most densely populated high-risk coastal areas.

The National Emergency Management Committee (NEMC) first met on 15 January. A full National Inter-cluster meeting was held on 18 January 2022, chaired by NEMO. The TRCS attended this meeting and participated as a leading agency within the National-Level Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI) Cluster, the WASH Cluster and the Safety and Protection Cluster. The standing coordination mechanism for shelter is led by the National Emergency Management Office and co-led by TRCS. IFRC has been supporting this co-leadership of the cluster, focusing on both preparedness and response. Several INGOs have programmes in Tonga. UN Agencies operating in Tonga include UNDP, UNICEF, UNOCHA, UN Women, WFP, WHO and WMO. There are a number of local civil society organizations (CSOs) partnering with international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) during the response, including Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovation (MORDI), the Women and Children's Crisis Counselling Centre, The Talitha Project, an NGO dedicated to empowering young women and The Tonga Leitis Association (LTA) - Tonga's sole LGBTIQ+ organization. Many Tongans belong to churches, and some churches have provided support to their members since the disaster. The Royal family have also supported relief activities.

The WASH cluster partners provided a desalination unit to provide drinking water for 5,000 people. The WASH cluster is also working with a Fiji company to retrofit latrines and have distributed hygiene kits. In addition to the extensive water distribution programme, the Tongan government has conducted distribution and clean-up activities in several locations. To assist with financial hardship, the Tongan government has distributed TOP 500 (CHF 202) to affected families and increased February's stipend payment to senior/disabled people by TOP 200 (CHF 81).

Needs analysis

Shelter and settlement

The initial damage estimation in the Operations Strategy was based on early OCHA situational reports (sit reps), NEMO sit reps and satellite images available, which estimated 20 per cent of Tongatapu was affected, 75 per cent of E'ua and Ha'apai was affected; and none of Ongo Niua was affected. Based on this, it was decided for TRCS to target 25% of the affected with support in shelter and essential household items.

2021 Population & Housing pre-census					Damage Estimations & Targets for TRCS support in Shelter and essential household items					
Divisions	Male Pop.	Female Pop.	Total Pop.	Total HH	Pop. affected ⁵	HH damages ⁶	People targeted (25%)	HH targeted (25%)	Integrated assistance Males	Integrated assistance Females
Tongatapu	36,032	38,422	74,454	12,409	14,891	2,482	3,723	620	1,802	1,921
Vava'u	7,089	7,194	14,283	2,381	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ha'apai	2,676	2,743	5,419	903	4,064	677	1,016	169	502	514
'Eua	2,406	2,497	4,903	817	3,677	613	919	153	451	468
Ongo Niua	574	576	1,150	192	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	48,777	51,432	100,209	16,702	22,632	3,772	5,658	942	2,755	2,903

These numbers were then reduced in the Emergency Appeal budget to 500 households (approximately 2,850 people). These estimations were based on the early damage received in NEMO sit reps of damage to specific villages. These villages were used as proxy indicators for nearby communities. The revised damage estimates are below:

Division/ District	Male Pop.	Female Pop.	Total Pop.	Total HH	Estimated Completely Destroyed HH	Estimated Partially Damaged HH	Total Estimated Affected HH	Total Estimated Affected Pop.
Kolofo'ou	8,370	8,926	17,296	3,765	75	0	75	450
Kolomotu'a	8,095	8,729	16,824	3,942	30	42	72	434
Vaini	6,434	6,812	13,246	2,661	0	0	0	0
Tatakamotonga	3,468	3,748	7,216	1,542	0	0	0	0
Lapaha	3,633	3,720	7,353	1,522	43	0	43	260
Nukunuku	3,990	4,230	8,220	1,698	34	0	34	204
Kolovai	2,042	2,257	4,299	966	61	37	98	588
Total Tongatapu	36,032	38,422	74,454	16,096	243	79	323	1,935
Neiafu	2,652	2,725	5,377	1,372	0	0	0	0
Pangaimotu	574	629	1,203	278	0	0	0	0
Hahake	1,082	1,095	2,177	486	0	0	0	0
Leimatu'a	1,467	1,406	2,873	589	0	0	0	0
Hihifo	986	1,008	1,994	460	0	0	0	0
Motu	328	331	659	310	0	0	0	0
Total Vava'u	7,089	7,194	14,283	3,495	0	0	0	0
Pangai	980	1,059	2,039	508	0	0	0	0

⁵ Pop. affected by damages/ destruction of homes

⁶ From satellite images and early reports

Foa	675	692	1,367	298	15	0	15	89
Lulunga	326	334	660	264	66	0	66	396
Mu'omu'a	176	168	344	150	87	0	87	522
Ha`ano	234	222	456	121	0	0	0	0
'Uiha	285	268	553	203	20	0	20	122
Total Ha'apai	2,676	2,743	5,419	1,544	188	0	188	1,129
'Eua Motu'a	1,369	1,402	2,771	638	2	45	47	282
'Eua Fo'ou	1,037	1,095	2,132	449	0	0	0	0
Total 'Eua	2,406	2,497	4,903	1,087	2	45	47	282
Niuatoputapu	354	365	719	261	0	0	0	0
Niuafu'ou	220	211	431	137	0	0	0	0
Total Ongo Niua	574	576	1,150	398	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	48,777	51,432	100,209	22,620	434	124	558	3,347

The Tongan National Emergency Management Office (NEMO), in conjunction with others, has subsequently released the Initial Damage Assessments (IDA) report. NEMO has reported that a total of 284 household shelters have been severely damaged or completely destroyed, while a further 182 household shelters have suffered minor or moderate damage. Approximately 2,796 people are in need of shelter and essential household items.

Island	District	HH's with Minor damage	HH's with Moderate damage	HH's with Severe damage	HH's Completely destroyed	HH's damaged and destroyed
Ha'apai	Lifuka	7	3	2	5	17
	Lulunga	6	13	8	18	45
	Otumu'omu'a	11	6	5	55	77
	Uiha	4	0	0	0	4
Total Ha'apai		28	22	15	78	143
Tongatapu	Kolofo'ou	3	25	26	6	60
	Kolomotu'a	21	24	24	11	80
	Kolovai	7	15	41	41	104
	Lapaha	17	9	5	3	34
Total Tongatapu		48	73	96	61	278
'Eua	'Ohonua	5	6	6	28	45
Total 'Eua		5	6	6	28	45
Grand Total		81	101	117	167	466

People were evacuated from several islands following the eruption, including Mango, Fafa, Pangaimotu, and Makaha Islands. Many others relocated due to damage to their homes. As of 15 January, over 3,000 people were staying in evacuation centres, and this number fell to 2,390 people by 31 January. While many have returned home or are now staying with family and friends, some evacuation centres remain operational in community/village halls

(in some cases supplemented by tents). An update on numbers still in evacuation centres is currently not available. People staying in evacuation centres receive support for essential needs, including food and hygiene.

Some households will need emergency shelter support and shelter recovery activities. Before the eruption, some people from other islands had travelled to Tongatapu and live in informal settlements. Special consideration is being given to the needs of these affected people.

Livelihoods and basic needs

Many families have suffered damage to livelihoods, including as a result of damage to crops. NEMO has advised that around 200 boats have been destroyed or severely damaged, including fishing boats. The World Bank, D-RAS and Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction have estimated direct damage following the HTHH volcano and tsunami to be USD 90.4 million (CHF 83.2 million). Around 80 per cent of households are involved in their own food production in kitchen gardens. There has been extensive damage to above-soil crops, and saltwater inundation will affect the ability of some households to grow their own food. The Tongan government and other agencies in Tonga have been providing food support to targeted affected households. It is expected that some families will need support in order to reinstate household kitchen gardens.

Health

All of the affected population have likely been affected psychologically. The combined impact of the volcano, tsunami, subsequent challenges in contacting family and friends, and damage to personal property has contributed to a need for psychological first aid. Those traumatized by the volcano and tsunami are likely to have been further impacted by difficulties in contacting loved ones, concerns following the outbreak of COVID-19, and subsequent COVID-19 restrictions.

Standing water arising from the tsunami is expected to contribute to an increased risk of infectious diseases in the coming weeks. There are specific concerns regarding the risk of dengue fever, with cases being reported on one island. The Ministry of Health has been spraying targeted affected communities.

Information about disease prevention will be important for affected communities. According to OCHA, an estimated 15,000 people have been reached with health assistance and 10,000 with nutrition assistance (Sit Rep#4). Booster vaccines are underway, UNICEF supports the Ministry of Health with the vaccine efforts and Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests (RAT). Medical Assistance teams continue in Ha'apai to maintain health service delivery. Currently, outreach activities were constrained by the lockdown.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)

It was assumed that the damage to water and sanitation access would be greater than the shelter damage when developing the Operational Strategy. See below **for** estimated damage.

2021 Population & Housing pre-census					WASH Needs and Households/people targeted for TRCS assistance					
Divisions	Male Pop.	Female Pop.	Total Pop.	Total HH	Estimated Pop. in need (84%)	Estimated HH in need (84%)	Estimated Pop. targeted (25%)	Estimated HH targeted (25%)	Estimated male pop. targeted	Estimated Female pop. targeted
Tongatapu	36,032	38,422	74,454	12,409	62,541	10,424	12,508	2,085	6,053	6,455
Vava'u	7,089	7,194	14,283	2,381	11,998	2,000	2,400	400	1,191	1,209
Ha'apai	2,676	2,743	5,419	903	4,552	759	910	152	450	461
'Eua	2,406	2,497	4,903	817	4,119	686	824	137	404	419
Ongo Niua	574	576	1,150	192	966	161	193	32	96	97
Total	48,777	51,432	100,209	16,702	84,176	14,030	16,835	2,806	8,194	8,641



The combined impacts of ashfall and the tsunami have impacted nearly 85,000 people. Photo: TRCS

Water has been a priority need during the immediate response due to the combined impacts of infrastructure damage, ashfall contamination, and seawater inundation following the tsunami. Many households are dependent on rainwater harvesting, while other households use bore water. There was an urgent need for lifesaving water and water containers following the eruption.

The IDA has since confirmed that there has been significant damage to water supply tanks, pipes, channels and local water supply (rainwater harvesting water tanks etc.). The government has undertaken chlorination of groundwater, and the aquifer is reported to be safe to drink. Significant damage appears to have occurred to the outer island's

infrastructure. OCHA Sit rep #4 estimates that 50,326 people from 8,388 households need WASH assistance. The National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) reported that the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources conducted water testing in Ha'apai and found water contaminated by seawater in Fono'i, Tungua and Nomuka, rendering it not suitable for drinking. An estimated 19,689 people are yet to be reached with WASH assistance. The COVID restrictions have slowed down or halted WASH distributions.

While there are unlikely to be significant adverse health impacts from drinking tank water, provided that normal water treatment measures are followed, some household water tanks have been damaged, and some households require tarpaulins to cover water tanks in case of further volcanic ashfall. Infrastructure/housing damage has contributed to sanitation and hygiene needs. WASH needs are particularly critical in light of the recent outbreak of COVID-19, as strong hygiene measures can help reduce the spread. Some vulnerable households may need assistance with clean-up activities.

Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI)

OCHA reports indicate that a high number of the estimated 25,430 young adolescent girls (10-14 years old) and women of reproductive age (15-49 years old) in the affected areas might require dignity kits and hygiene supplies. More detailed information is pending initial damage assessments. An estimated 1,470 pregnant women and 1,960 women with children under 12 months may require additional support such as sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services.

Risk reduction, climate adaptation and recovery

The volcano and subsequent tsunami and ashfall have impacted the livelihoods of many of the affected population. It is anticipated that those in the most affected areas will need livelihoods assistance and financial support in the coming months.

There continues to be the possibility of further volcanic activity. The cyclone season is also in progress. Accordingly, activities that rebuild and strengthen disaster preparedness will be crucial in the coming weeks. As part of this process, it will be important to replenish relief items as soon as possible.

Operational risk assessment

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating steps
Further eruption(s) and/or tsunami causing further harm to population and/or impacting the response.	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring information relating to the volcano status, public health and other matters Ensuring relief items are received in Tonga as soon as possible Protection of water sources from ashes Ongoing communication to the extent possible, to help in meeting most critical needs In cooperation with SPREP repair and establishment of Early Warning System (EWS)
COVID-19 impacts the health and wellbeing of the team	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TRCS has previously prepositioned personal protective equipment (PPE) TRCS will implement COVID-safe programming to limit the spread of communicable diseases TRCS has been promoting good hygiene practices and awareness raising on COVID-19 Compliance with government requirement on COVID-19 protocols for people and relief items is critical Staff and volunteers have been encouraged to receive COVID-19 vaccinations.
COVID-19 impacts logistics, e.g. supply chains, ability to release items from ports, availability of shipping	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relief items have been prepositioned in 14 containers in Tonga International logistics personnel are supporting procurement TRCS will comply with all COVID-19 regulations regarding the movement and storage of goods
Supply chain issues impact feasibility of cash and voucher assistance (CVA) interventions.	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct cash feasibility and market analysis prior to implementing CVA activities and regularly monitor local market conditions
Health and safety risks to response team, e.g., ash causing health issues, travel risks.	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of PPE to response team Briefing with best available information Use of technology to minimize unnecessary travel
Lack of situation information/communications challenges impacts planning and implementation.	High (short term)	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular times have been established for efforts to communicate with TRCS While the appeal is based on the best information available, it is recognized that additional assessment information may result in the need for an operations update
Issues affecting wellbeing of dislocated populations at evacuation centres, e.g., overcrowding, SGBV.	Medium (short/medium term)	Medium/High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist government in possible relocation to other identified evacuation centres Online messaging and support on safety, protection, psychosocial support and community and household preparedness and referrals given.

Cyclone or other disaster event during response adversely affects volcano and tsunami response.	Medium	Medium/High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRCS are experienced in responding to cyclone events and have trained staff and volunteers and SOPs in place. • Replenishment of relief items will be progressed as soon as possible.
Insufficient trained personnel to implement a response plan of this magnitude, impacting implementation time frames and/or resulting in burnout of personnel (e.g. due to difficulties in recruiting staff/volunteers during the COVID-19 outbreak)	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRCS has experience in disaster preparedness, including using the PER approach • The response plan has been prepared with consideration for the likely resources • Surge support has been offered to support TRCS • The Emergency Appeal budget includes provision for hiring some roles to support the response in country
Systems/processes do not meet the needs of a very large response, potentially delaying implementation.	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A PER simulation exercise has recently been carried out in 2021 and has contributed to identification of weaknesses which have been addressed as part of this plan with the intent the NS will be stronger by going through this response. • Consideration has been given to the lessons learned during the TC Gita response. • Surge support has been agreed with TRCS

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Update on the strategy

As indicated above, Tonga Red Cross supported NEMO's early assessment process. NEMO has completed the Initial Damage Assessment process, and it is expected to be released shortly. The Operations Strategy has been published on 4 February and is [available here](#). More information on the operation can be found on the [GO platform - Tonga: Volcano and Tsunami](#).


The following minor changes have been made to the Operations Strategy:

- The proposed activity of distributing mosquito nets has been broadened to include other forms of mosquito protection (e.g. coils) due to the current hot climate, which discourages some people from using nets.
- It is now anticipated that the water tanks will be for community use rather than individual household use, which will increase the activity's reach.
- As there were surprisingly few people injured following the volcano and tsunami, the activity relating to first aid provision has been removed.

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak in Tonga following the volcanic eruption, COVID-19 considerations and activities are now an integral part of the overall operational strategy. It is expected that the health messaging that was previously included in the Operations Strategy will now include COVID-19 messaging. The "COVID safe best practice guide" will be important in guiding the team's response, ensuring COVID-19 measures are adequately incorporated into all activities.

DETAILED OPERATIONAL REPORT

STRATEGIC SECTORS OF INTERVENTION

 Shelter, Housing and Settlements		Females targeted: 5,851	Males targeted: 5,613
Objective:	<i>Communities in disaster and crisis affected areas restore and strengthen their safety, wellbeing and longer-term recovery through shelter and settlement solutions</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Target	Actual
	# households provided with emergency shelter assistance (tents, tarps and toolkits)	500	119*
	# households provided with essential household items (blankets, solar lanterns, kitchen sets)	500	160*
	# households provided with safe and adequate shelter and settlements recovery support	500	0
	# households provided with technical support or guidance on safer shelter awareness appropriate to the type of shelter assistance given	500	0

The Tongan government's Initial Damage Assessment information is now available. As indicated above, NEMO has reported that a total of 284 household shelters have been severely damaged or completely destroyed, while a further 182 household shelters have suffered minor or moderate damage. Current distribution information is detailed in the Summary of Current Response section. The number of households reached is estimated based on current distribution data and revised in the next Ops Update.

Tonga Red Cross staff and volunteers have participated in assessments alongside government authorities. As of 11 February 2022, the following emergency shelter assistance and essential household items had been distributed. The above households reached is estimated based on the distributed items below.

Community Name	Distributed items (Household data not yet available)						
	Shelter Tarps	Tent	Shelter Toolkit	Kitchen Set	Blanket	Solar Lamp	Mosquito nets
Tongatapu	176	67	45	186	588	167	1
Ha'apai Island Group	11		7	18	32	206	3
'Eua				40			
GRAND TOTAL	187	67	52	244	620	373	4


Due to the challenges in communication, the TRCS team could not be provided with IEC materials for the shelter response. The IEC materials that were context specific has since been sent to TRCS via a USB on the shipment of relief items from New Zealand Red Cross.




Tonga Red Cross staff and volunteers distributing non-food items. *Photo: TRCS*

Following the identification of two cases of COVID-19 on 1 February 2022, the Tongan government issued a stay-at-home order, which restricted movements both within and between islands. Although Tonga Red Cross has an exemption from the movement restrictions in respect of this operation, distribution activities were largely suspended while planning was undertaken to ensure any activities undertaken would be carried out in a COVID-safe manner.

During the second week of February, six containers of relief items have arrived in Nuku'alofa from Fiji. Tonga Red Cross staff and volunteers have been working hard to clear the items from the port. As a result, it has been possible to distribute clothing and breakfast crackers to affected communities on Tongatapu.

 Livelihoods		Females targeted: 2,904	Males targeted: 2,754
Objective:	<i>The most affected households are supported with re-establishing livelihoods</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Target	Actual
	# households receiving livelihood support	1,000	0
<p>As it is still early in the response, the needs analysis is yet to be completed. However, it is anticipated that this activity will include support for households regrowing damaged gardens and or replacement of livelihood assets whenever necessary</p>			

 Multi-purpose Cash		Females targeted: 2,904	Males targeted: 2,754
Objective:	<i>Households are provided with unconditional/multipurpose cash grants to address their basic needs</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Target	Actual
	# households receiving multipurpose cash grants	500	0
<p>As it is still early in the response, the needs analysis is yet to be completed. This will be the first time that Tonga Red Cross will have implemented cash-based programming. It is expected that this activity will include a cash feasibility and market assessment, training for staff and volunteers, and the distribution of multipurpose cash grants to targeted affected families.</p>			



Health & Care

Mental Health and psychosocial support / Community Health / Medical Services

Females targeted:
8,725

Males targeted:
8,275

Objective:

Strengthening individual and community health of the population impacted by the eruption through community level interventions

Key indicators:

Indicator

Target

Actual

people reached with health messaging regarding disease prevention

3,000

0

people reached with direct psychological first aid (PFA) support

100

3

households provided with mosquito protection (including nets, coils etc)

1,000

4

masks provided to health facilities/community members

14,500

0

TRCS did not have IEC materials due to communication issues in the early response. This has since been sent to TRCS via a USB on the shipment of relief items from the New Zealand Red Cross. While it was previously anticipated that the provision of information regarding disease prevention would play an important role in the response, this has now become critical following the outbreak of COVID-19. TRCS has posters and pamphlets and is soon to display and distribute these.

Currently, operating TRCS staff and volunteers are experienced in PFA support. It is being provided by volunteers as needed during the distributions. Refresher training will be planned for additional volunteers, once possible.

Based on need, four mosquito nets have been distributed to targeted households in Tongatapu with vulnerable family members (including pregnant women/infants).

The Health and Nutrition cluster is working closely with the Ministry of Health to identify the support required for the COVID-19 response, including importing additional vaccines, swabs and health items. Response planning with local partners is proving difficult given the COVID-19-lockdown and communication challenges. The lockdown has now eased, with daytime restrictions no longer in place. In the coming week, beginning Monday 28 February, they will ease further, enabling response activities to occur more freely. COVID items are included in the Mobilization Table, including additional masks, gloves, RAT tests, thermometers, pulse oximeters.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Females targeted:
8,725

Males targeted:
8,275

Objective:

Ensure safe drinking water, proper sanitation, and adequate hygiene awareness of the communities during relief and recovery phases of the operation

Key indicators:

Indicator

Target

Actual

# people reached through hygiene promotion	20,000	n/a
# litres of safe water distributed	20,000	n/a
# households receiving WASH relief items (buckets, jerry cans, hygiene kits)	1,500	see below distributions
# of water tanks (10,000L) and filtration installed in communities	20 water tanks	0

Tonga Red Cross has supported government authorities with water distribution to affected communities in Tongatapu and Ha'apai. Tonga Red Cross staff and volunteers have supported the distribution of 6,780 litres of water to affected families in the first four days after the eruption (up to 19 January), benefitting more than 10,000 people. Updated information on litres distributed by TRCS is currently not available. They were continuing to support NEMO to deliver water until the COVID movement restrictions came into effect. TRCS is also supporting the government to distribute hygiene kits to those self-isolating. As of 17 February, the government had distributed to 213 households, and TRCS has distributed 52 kits of their own stock as of 28 January.

The latest information from TRCS indicates they have distributed 187 jerry cans, and 67 buckets have been distributed to five communities in Tongatapu and Ha'apai, benefitting 894 people.

Community Name	Distributed items (Household data not yet available)		
	Jerry cans	Buckets	Hygiene kits
Tongatapu	17	14	151
Ha'apai Island Group	23	11	44
'Eua	0	40	40
GRAND TOTAL	187	67	52

Tonga Red Cross has hired and placed six portable toilets in affected communities in Kanokupolu (western Tongatapu). Along with two additional portable toilets from another source, these support around 100 households, An external provider is servicing the portable toilets.

The WASH programme for three months is being supported by an IFRC surge delegate supported by Australian Red Cross.

 Protection, Gender and Inclusion	Females targeted:	8,725	Males targeted:	8,275
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Objective: *Communities identify the needs of the most at risk and particularly disadvantaged and marginalized groups, due to inequality, discrimination and other non-respect of their human rights and address their distinct needs*


Key indicators:	Indicator	Target	Actual
	# households receiving special support and/or referrals	600	n/a
	# people accessing RFL services	200	192

With support from ICRC, Tonga Red Cross commenced Restoring Family Links (RFL) services on 20 January. From 26 January, 150 Tongan households made "safe and well" calls to family overseas using Tonga Red Cross satellite phones. In addition, enquiries were received from 42 international family members seeking news of Tongan relatives. Along with other activities, RFL was temporarily suspended when lockdown commenced on 2 February.

While the need for RFL has eased on Tongatapu, the ongoing challenges in communication with other island groups mean that Tonga Red Cross is likely to continue to offer RFL support in the near future.


Tonga Red Cross has collected gender-disaggregated data regarding individuals benefitting from relief distributions. The number of households receiving special services or referrals is not available yet.

TRCS continues to support those that need to self-isolate with water and food at the request of the government

 Disaster Risk Reduction		Females targeted: 8,725	Males targeted: 8,275
Objective:	<i>The response contributes to reduced risk of further impacts of the volcano and tsunami and strengthens the capacity and capability of TRCS to respond to future disasters and crises.</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Target	Actual
	# new TRCS procedures revised/developed	n/a	0
	# EWS repaired or established	n/a	0
	PER results reviewed with a real-time PER and/or after-action PER	Yes	Not yet

To date, the operation has been in the relief phase, and hence risk reduction activities have not yet commenced. The cyclone season is continuing and hence it will be important that the relief items distributed from prepositioned stocks are replenished as soon as possible.

Enabling approaches

 Community Engagement and Accountability			
Objective:	<i>Develop and deploy standardized approaches for community engagement and accountability for meaningful community participation throughout the operation, collection and use of community feedback data to better understand community perspectives and act on their needs</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	# of feedback messages received	100	0
	# staff and volunteers trained on CEA	40 (20 staff, 20 volunteers) at HQ and branches	0

It is anticipated that a community feedback mechanism will be implemented in the coming months.

This activity is being supported by an IFRC surge delegate who has previously implemented community feedback mechanisms in the Asia Pacific region.



Coordination and Partnerships

Objective:

Strengthen Coordination and Partnerships within the Movement and with relevant external actors

IFRC and Tonga Red Cross continue to engage and coordinate with government authorities, INGOs with a presence in Tonga, and participate in the Pacific Humanitarian Team.



Shelter Cluster Coordination

Objective:

Ensure a coordinated and integrated approach to the shelter response following the Hunga-Tonga-Hunga-Ha'apai volcano and tsunami, including support for self-recovery through the provision of appropriate tools, materials, and complementary technical assistance to promote early recovery and complement the existing resilience in the affected population.

Despite the challenges in communication with the Tonga Emergency Shelter and NFI Cluster, email communication with the focal points at NEMO Tonga (Government lead for the shelter cluster and inter-cluster) have been established. Despite the offer of support to NEMO to coordinate the shelter cluster, no support was requested as the the Government of Tonga sees the Tsunami and Volcano response as WASH-heavy. The communication breakdown and the travel restrictions imposed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic would make remote coordination of the shelter cluster exceedingly difficult.

Despite this, the IFRC, as convener of the Pacific Regional Shelter Cluster, maintains contact with regional shelter partners with agencies in Tonga and has attended the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) Regional Inter-Cluster Coordinators Group (RICCG), PHT Principals, and extended donors' meetings. The cluster ensures that the work and key advocacy points of national and regional shelter cluster agencies with working partners in Tonga are well represented.



National Society Strengthening

Objective:

National Society capacity building and organizational development objectives are facilitated to ensure that the National Society has the necessary foundations, systems and structures, competences and capacities to plan and perform.

Key indicators:	Indicator	Target	Actual
	# volunteers mobilized and protected	80	n/a

National Society volunteer insurance is in place for 80 volunteers.

As indicated above, telecommunications within Tonga remain challenging. New Zealand Red Cross has procured GX Explorer satellite telecommunications equipment which will be lent to the Tongan Red Cross in the coming weeks to support communications.



Secretariat Services

Objective:

1. Strengthen Secretariat services to the operation to ensure TRCS provides relevant, timely, accountable services to those affected.
2. IFRC ensure that TRCS is stronger and more capable after this operation.

IFRC Country Cluster Delegation Suva, which supports Pacific National Societies, provides remote support for the HTHH response, including planning, donor engagement, logistics, communications, PMER, finance, and cluster participation. There are daily conversations between IFRC and Tonga Red Cross when telecommunications permit.

Due to the critical WASH needs in Tonga, a WASH surge delegate has been deployed to support this activity. Surge support will also assist with communications in the coming weeks.

C. FUNDING

On 9 February 2022, the first working advance of CHF 30,000 was paid to Tonga Red Cross. Financial information will be provided in the next Operations Update.

[A mobilization table](#) has been developed for items needed, including tents, tarpaulins, shelter toolkits, kitchen sets, PPE to enable staff to work safely, and other items, and strong support has been received.

Contact information

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

In the Tonga National Society

- Sione Taumoefolau, Secretary General; email: sg@tongareddcross.to
- Marika Moala, Disaster Manager; dmo@tongareddcross.to

In the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation, Suva

- Katie Greenwood, IFRC Head of CCD; email: katie.greenwood@ifrc.org
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In IFRC Regional Office for Asia Pacific, Kuala Lumpur

- Alexander Matheou, Regional Director; email: alexander.matheou@ifrc.org

- Joy Singhal, Head of Disaster, Climate and Crisis; email: joy.singhal@ifrc.org
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- Karla Morizzo, Senior DREF Officer; email: karla.morizzo@ifrc.org
- Eszter Matyeka, Senior Officer, DREF; email: eszter.matyeka@ifrc.org

For IFRC Resource Mobilization and Pledges support

- Alice Ho, Partnership in Emergencies Coordinator; email: partnershipsEA.AP@ifrc.org

For Performance and Accountability support (planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting enquiries)

- In IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office: Fadzli Saari, PMER Manager a.i; email: fadzli.saari@ifrc.org

Reference documents



Click [here](#) for key documents including Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA), Emergency Appeal, and Operations Strategy

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief, the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable, to **Principles of Humanitarian Action** and **IFRC policies and procedures**. 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.