

Emergency appeal №: MDRVU012 Emergency appeal launched: 18/12/2024 Operational Strategy published: 12/01/2025	Glide №: EQ-2024-000227-VUT
Operation Update #2 Date of issue: 27/02/2025	Timeframe covered by this update: From 18/12/2024 - 07/02/2025
Operation timeframe: 12 months (18/12/2024 - 31/12/2025)	Number of people being assisted: 50,000
Funding requirements (CHF): CHF 5.0 million through the IFRC Emergency Appeal CHF 5.2 million Federation-wide	DREF amount initially allocated: CHF 750,000

To date, this Emergency Appeal, which seeks CHF 5,200,000 is 28 per cent funded including bilateral contributions. Further funding contributions are needed to enable the Vanuatu Red Cross Society, with the support of the IFRC, to continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the cyclone-affected people in Vanuatu.

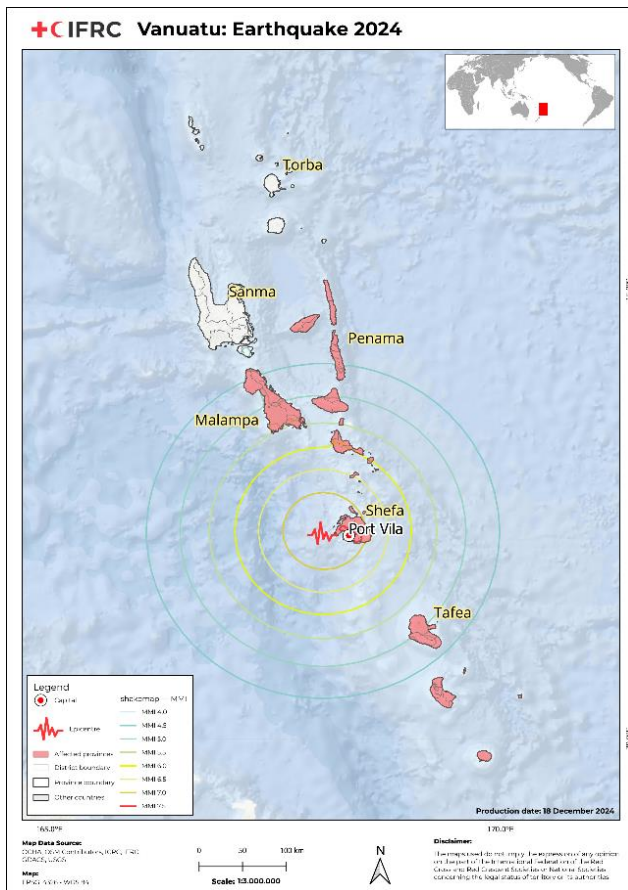


Distribution of non-food items by Vanuatu Red Cross personnel in Saravanua Community, Northern Ward (Photo: IFRC)



A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the crisis



On 17 December 2024, a 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck 30 kilometres west of Port Vila, Vanuatu’s capital city, at a depth of 57 kilometres, causing widespread damage. The earthquake triggered landslides, damaged buildings and caused severe damage to infrastructure, impacting essential services. Since then, there have been multiple aftershocks, including 15 with magnitudes over 5.0, including one with a magnitude of 6.1. These have increased the risk of further damage. According to the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), approximately 80,000 people were impacted (approximately 25¹ of Vanuatu's population). Efate and the nearby islands were the worst affected areas. It is estimated 36,000 of those living in Port Vila were directly affected.

The destruction disrupted telecommunications, electricity, and water supplies, heightening risks, particularly for vulnerable population. and Port Vila’s main hospital, schools, and two major water reservoirs sustained severe damaged. Reservoir damage also caused flash floods to nearby homes.

Landslides and debris have blocked roads and damaged airstrips, restricting access to affected areas and the closure of

a key wharf in Port Vila has disrupted shipping.

Port Vila’s central business district has been cordoned off due to collapsed buildings, affecting businesses, vendors, and employment and has only recently opened certain pathways to vehicular traffic to relieve some of the traffic congestion. The main market remains closed, though some vendors are operating in alternative locations. Long term lack of urban planning, and poor construction techniques contributed to damage in informal settlements. Vanuatu was already struggling with limited clean water, poor sanitation and healthcare access. These pre-existing challenges have exacerbated the earthquake’s humanitarian impact.

The Government of Vanuatu declared a State of Emergency which lasted 7 days. It activated the National Emergency Operations Centre and requested assistance from the Red Cross. The Vanuatu Red Cross Society (VRCS), with IFRC support, mobilized volunteers to provide emergency relief, health support, and needs assessments. After the emergency period ended on 24 December, the Government established a Recovery Operation Centre (ROC) in early January, the Director of the Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination (DSPPAC) and Chairman of the ROC estimated that around CHF 217M (VT29B) was needed to fund recovery.

Operational challenges, damaged infrastructure, and a lack of comprehensive assessment data, have hindered early relief efforts. Coordinated international support is still urgently needed to address immediate humanitarian needs and facilitate early recovery.

The 7.3 magnitude earthquake in Vanuatu has had extensive humanitarian impacts:

¹ UNICEF Vanuatu Humanitarian Situation Report No. 2 (Earthquake), 18 December 2024 - Vanuatu | ReliefWeb

Impact on Essential services - Essential services, including healthcare, water supply, electricity, and telecommunications, were initially disrupted. While power and telecommunications have largely been restored, some areas still experience outages, and internet connectivity remains limited. Communication challenges have further isolated remote communities, hindering access to aid. Damage to health facilities, schools, and roads has restricted medical care, education, and humanitarian assistance. Vulnerable groups, including children, pregnant women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, face the greatest barriers. Water access remains constrained due to reservoir and tank damage, with some bores becoming muddy post-earthquake. The Vanuatu Water bottling plant, initially non-operational, has resumed production. Limited safe water supplies increase the risk of infectious diseases. Port and road damage have disrupted the importation of goods and relief supplies.

Impact on physical and mental wellbeing - The Vanuatu Ministry of Health confirmed 14 fatalities (eight males, five females, one unidentified) and at least 265 injuries treated at Vanuatu Central Hospital (VCH), which initially operated from tents. On 24 December, OCHA reported 2,435 displaced individuals staying in six evacuation centres and 67 host households.² As of this update, there is one evacuation centre with a population of 21 people and 103 people with 14 host families. Many will return home to structural damage, lack of services, and safety concerns. Overcrowding in temporary shelters increased disease risks. The Education Cluster identified damage to school buildings and WASH infrastructure, delaying school reopening until 15 February. The trauma of the earthquake and aftershocks has left many, including children and caregivers, in need of urgent mental health and psychosocial support.

Risks & vulnerabilities - Pre-existing vulnerabilities, including poverty, malnutrition, and fragile health systems, have worsened. Women and girls face increased gender-based violence risks, while children's education remains disrupted due to damaged schools.

Summary of response

Overview of the host National Society and ongoing response

Vanuatu Red Cross Society is the largest humanitarian organisation in Vanuatu, present across the country and the only one with a parliamentary Act recognising its mandate. The Vanuatu Red Cross Act of 1982 recognizes VRCS as an independent, autonomous, non-governmental organization that is auxiliary to the authorities of the Republic of Vanuatu in the humanitarian field. As an auxiliary to the public authorities, VRCS maintains a strong relationship with the National Disaster Management Office and is a member of the National Disaster Council. VRCS also works closely with provincial and village disaster response personnel, with Community Disaster Climate Change Committees (CDCCCs) and with the Vanuatu Humanitarian Team (VHT), through its support to the Shelter Cluster, as co-lead and key partner, the WASH Cluster and Health Cluster.

VRCS has a long history of building community resilience to disaster risks, working with communities, the Government and partners to enhance preparedness and resilience to key hazards in one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. The Organization has six branches and four sub-branches following the decentralized structure of government in country, with around 360 active volunteers available for response, as well as staff in National Headquarters and Branches. It has an Emergency Response Team (ERT) of 120 members, a National Emergency Response Team (NERT) of 15, a Pacific Disaster Response Team (PDRT) of 5, and around 100 personnel trained in first aid. Volunteers are trained in DRR, shelter, first aid, health, and hygiene promotion. Some warehouses and preparedness containers are available now and more are needed at both national headquarters and branch levels.

² Vanuatu Daily Post, 7 January 2024

VRCS response

Following the 17 December 2024 earthquake, VRCS immediately deployed teams to complete assessments while simultaneously carrying out initial relief distributions of essential household items. Both household level and community level needs assessments were conducted. Having recently replenished the stocks which had been distributed during the Tropical Cyclone (TC) Lola response, VRCS was well placed to distribute emergency relief items to those impacted by the earthquake. In addition, partners contributed gifts in kind, including tarpaulins, shelter tool kits, kitchen sets, and hygiene kits which facilitated the rapid deployment of relief items to affected communities.

Table 1. Distribution of Emergency Relief Items by Area Council, as of 7 February 2025

Area Councils	# HH	# Tarpaulin	# Shelter Tool Kits	# Kitchen Kits	# Solar Lanterns	# Jerry Cans 10L	# Hygiene Kit	# Rope	# Carton Water (18L)
Anamburu ward	3	4	2	2	1	6	3	0	0
Central ward	34	42	0	0	4	0	27	4	15
Erakor AC	32	24	5	19	8	52	13	0	19
Eratap AC	344	170	51	206	97	423	139	37	6
Freshwater tasiriki	26	29	5	18	15	22	10	0	10
Malorua	4	7	3	4	0	8	4	0	0
Mele	132	72	19	97	23	195	116	0	0
Melemaat	3	0	0	0	2	0	0		5
North Efate	962	2	0	16	17	10	10	0	957
Northern Ward	562	326	25	198	38	676	280	137	47
Pango	4	5	0	3	1	8	3	0	0
Southern Ward	1	0	0	0	0	0	0		2
Tanvasoko	152	87	18	116	69	111	63	0	6
Grand Total	2,259	768	128	679	275	1,511	668	178	1,067

As co-lead of the National Shelter Cluster, the VRCS assisted the NDMO in mapping out the Shelter response strategy and ensured that VRCS coordinated with other agencies participating in the response. Some key hygiene promotion messages were shared alongside the distribution of essential household items. VRCS staff and volunteers also provided Psychological First Aid assistance, including at the hospitals, two prisons and in targeted communities.

More detailed assessment data is now being collected. In addition to information about physical damage, the assessments are collecting information needed to assess eligibility for multi-purpose cash grants. VRCS is finalizing multipurpose cash grants for displaced families and those who lost income. It also assisted with a national nutrition assessment. To ensure inclusivity, VRCS partnered with the Vanuatu Society for People with Disabilities to deliver aid to vulnerable households. It also provided Restoring Family Links (RFL) support and gender-based violence awareness to the affected people.

As of 7 February, VRCS has reached an estimated total of **11,295 people** with the support of its partners, including the IFRC.

National Response

The NDMO is the operational arm of the Disaster Risk management framework and as such leads the response at the national level through the activation of the National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC). During emergency responses when a State of Emergency is declared, the National Controller assumes a higher position than the NEOC. The NDMO is tasked with ensuring the formulation and implementation of response plans. To support the national government's preparedness and response efforts, Vanuatu has adopted a cluster system, where each cluster is led by a ministry of the national government and co-led by correspondent INGO and the Vanuatu Red Cross Society, with IFRC support.

Needs analysis

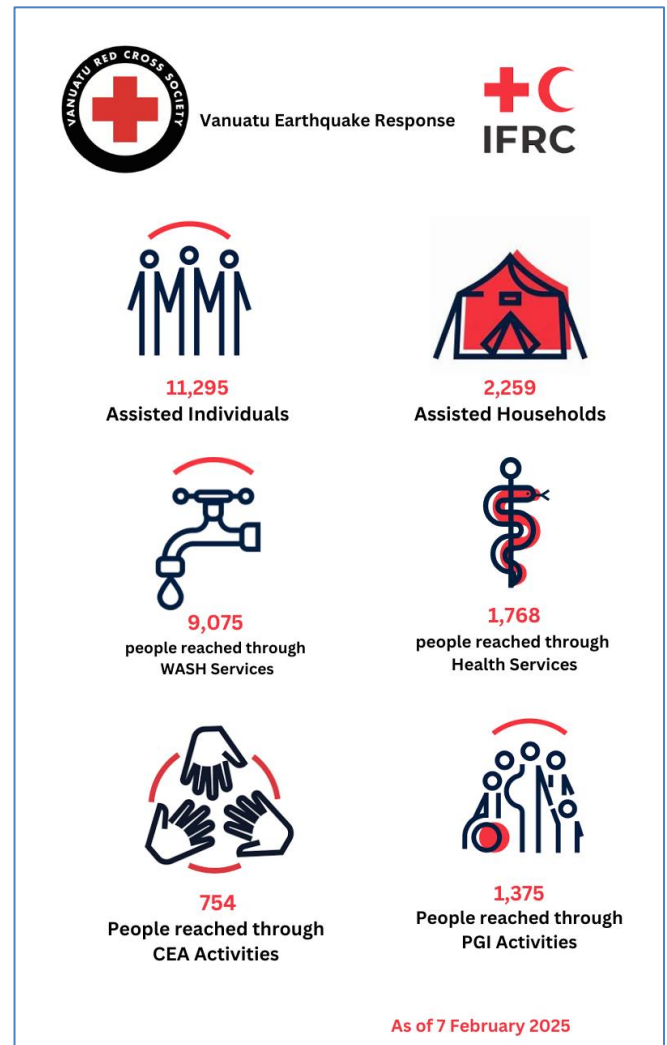
VRCS has been conducting household level assessments for shelter, health and community level assessments relating to WASH since December 2024. The household level assessments gather basic information about damage and household composition, taking account of PGI considerations. It is expected that the assessment process will continue into February 2025. As of 7 February 2025, the Vanuatu Displacement and Evacuation Centre Management (DECM) cluster reported 124 people remained formally displaced. Of these, 21 were staying in one evacuation centres, while the remaining 103 were staying with 14 host households. It is likely that there are others who are displaced and staying with family and friends. It identified water, food, medical supplies, and shelter kits as key needs for those who had been displaced.

Shelter and Settlements

A Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) deployed from Australia and New Zealand between 20 and 25 December 2024 carried out 1,421 rapid building assessments. These included 207 houses on Efate Efate.³ Of those houses, 9 were identified as totally destroyed, 34 were seriously damaged, 50 were moderately damaged, and the remaining 114 had suffered minor damage.

Since the earthquake on 17 December, the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) reported that 570 houses had been identified as damaged. The PHT identified that a key need for families with damaged homes is support in accessing structural assessments. Many of those whose homes have been assessed as needing repairs to be safe for habitation require assistance to progress the repairs.

During assessments, it was identified that some people are staying in makeshift or temporary accommodation to remain close to their homes and communities and to protect their homes and belongings.



³ [QFD Damage Assessment Dashboard](#)

The assessments carried out by VRCS to date have identified that 7 per cent of houses have been destroyed and 60 per cent have been severely damaged, and 33 per cent have moderate damage. However, this reflects the approach adopted during the early phase of the operation, whereby VRCS prioritized reaching those living in the most significantly damaged houses and the most vulnerable households first to respond to immediate needs as rapidly as possible. The assessment process now being adopted by VRCS has much broader coverage.

Livelihoods and basic needs

The Household Income and Expenditure 2019-2020 NSDP Baseline Survey identified that 83 per cent of households in Shefa province received employment income, and 65 per cent of Shefa households received income from primary production. On 14 January 2025, the Vanuatu Business Review reported that more than 200 businesses in the Port Vila Central Business District had been affected by the cordon surrounding the CBD.⁴ Some businesses, such as banks, have started operating from other locations. Some people who previously worked in the CBD have found other sources of income. However, it is estimated that hundreds of people have lost their jobs.

Other livelihood impacts have included loss of income from agriculture due to land damage and difficulties accessing land and markets. Those involved in other activities, such as fishing and handicrafts, have also been affected, with some facing difficulties accessing markets. While no data is available, it is anticipated that the landslide blocking the road to the main port will have also impacted livelihoods. Additionally, there is potential for income from tourism to decline in the coming months because of the earthquake. Vanuatu Red Cross is planning household-level assessments to identify the impacts on livelihoods as a precursor to developing a livelihoods programme.

The Household Income and Expenditure 2019-2020 NSDP Baseline Survey also identified that 23 per cent of households nationwide had received remittances in the previous 12 months.⁵ Over half of the remittances were from Port Vila, with fewer than 25 per cent coming from overseas. Accordingly, there is potential for the livelihood impacts of the earthquake to affect households in other provinces.

The loss of income has severely impacted people's ability to meet their basic needs. With reduced or completely lost earnings, many are struggling to afford essential food items, leading to increased food insecurity and reliance on coping mechanisms such as reducing meal sizes or skipping meals altogether. This precarious situation underscores the urgent need for Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) and Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) to help vulnerable families bridge the gap and ensure their basic needs are met.

WASH

During the earthquake, the two of the large water reservoirs in the Ohlen area, which supply water to Port Vila, were destroyed, resulting in flash flooding impacting houses in the Ohlen area. However, another reservoir had recently been constructed, which has continued to supply water to Port Vila. Following the earthquake, the government advised residents to refrain from drinking water from the water supply due to the risk of contamination due to leaks or breaks. Many residents are purchasing water due to concerns regarding water safety. Damage to the main water bottling plant in Vanuatu (which is close to the Port Vila airport) significantly reduced the supply of bottled water and, at times, it has not been possible to purchase bottled water in the shops. Plant repairs are in progress and production has resumed.

Since the earthquake on 17 December, the PHT reported that rapid assessments by the Department of Water Resources (DoWR) and UNICEF in 11 communities, 4 evacuation centres, and 2 schools identified more than 50 per cent of sites lacked an improved drinking water source, while 7 did not have sufficient water available.⁶ During community visits, VRCS has observed damages to both community and household water infrastructure. Some water

⁴ <https://vbr.vu/news/recovery-efforts-begin-in-port-vila-cbd-but-over-200-businesses-still-affected/>

⁵ https://vbos.gov.vu/sites/default/files/Income_Expenditure.pdf, p20

⁶ [Pacific Humanitarian Team - Situation Report](#)

tanks have shifted off or along concrete slabs and, in some cases, downpipes and guttering have been damaged. Given the magnitude of the earthquake, it is likely that underground septic tanks have also been damaged. WASH cluster members, including VRCS, are currently conducting a coordinated survey of WASH impacts from the earthquake. The data will be collected by the WASH cluster and shared with its members.

Health

Since the earthquake on 17 December, the PHT reported that the 13 health facilities in affected areas were functional, although some required minor repairs. The Pacific Medical Association (PMA) deployed a medical assistance team to Vanuatu on 27 December 2024 to provide mental health and psychosocial support services to affected communities.⁷ Ongoing aftershocks continue to exacerbate the mental health impacts of the earthquake. There are limited professional mental health services available in Vanuatu, with the Ministry of Health's Mind Care unit being responsible for mental health care across the country. In addition, stigma associated with mental health issues may discourage some people from seeking assistance. The Nutrition sub-cluster (including VRCS) undertook a nutrition rapid assessment in 12 communities. The report which was published on 2 January indicated that there were no identified cases of severe acute malnutrition. However, 1 of the 122 children aged 6-59 months screened had moderate acute malnutrition and 3 of the children were at higher risks of moderate acute malnutrition.

Education

The Ministry of Education and Training has assessed over 200 schools and identified that 45 schools were partially or completely damaged as a result of the earthquake.⁸ It is estimated it will cost over US\$8 million (over CHF 7.2 million) to rebuild damaged schools.⁹ Nevertheless it is currently expected that schools will reopen on the scheduled date of 15 February. It has been identified that some schools will require WASH repairs in order to reopen safely and some schools will require the installation of tents to be used as temporary classrooms. YRCS is partnering with UNICEF and the Ministry of Education and Training with VRCS volunteers installing tents provided by UNICEF. Earthquake impacts may make it harder for some families to meet school fee charges. For example, families may have reduced income or have incurred costs in replacing or repairing assets.

PGI

All RFL enquiries received following the earthquake have been resolved. There was ICRC tracing case, and that case has been resolved.

It has been reported that there has been an increase in violence against women since the earthquake. On 9 January, it was reported that police had responded to almost 50 cases of assault and around 10 cases of other gender-based violence.¹⁰ Those who have been displaced and/or those living in poorly lit areas are at increased risk.¹¹ As with most major disasters, there is a need for support for those facing gender-based violence.

On 7 January, the PHT reported a need for more assistance devices to support people living with disabilities.¹² Australian Red Cross has previously donated some assistive devices which were handed over to the Ministry of Health, but there is further need.

⁷ <https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/GE2412/S00101/pma-deploys-pacmat-mental-health-team-to-vanuatu-following-73-magnitude-earthquake.htm>

⁸ https://www.dailypost.vu/news/moet-principals-team-up-to-open-schools-on-february-3-post-earthquake/article_e277d6c0-4523-5388-885e-d937ca44f4c6.html

⁹ <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/world/538510/more-assaults-of-women-since-vanuatu-earthquake-police-chief>

¹⁰ <https://pmn.co.nz/read/pacific-region/report-reveals-gender-violence-risks-after-vanuatu-earthquake>

¹¹ https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://reliefweb.int/report/vanuatu/pacific-humanitarian-team-vanuatu-earthquake-situation-report-7-january-2025&ved=2ahUKEwiQnpPS9_2KaxVm1DgGHdMrD1sQFnoECBcQAw&usq=AOvVaw1NwLMgnC-A8rfmSM9phLvw

¹² https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://reliefweb.int/report/vanuatu/pacific-humanitarian-team-vanuatu-earthquake-situation-report-7-january-2025&ved=2ahUKEwiQnpPS9_2KaxVm1DgGHdMrD1sQFnoECBcQAw&usq=AOvVaw1NwLMgnC-A8rfmSM9phLvw

Operational risk assessment

The operational risks remain unchanged from those outlined in the [Operational Strategy](#) issued on 12 January 2025. Vanuatu continues to experience aftershocks. So far, all but one of the aftershocks has been below magnitude 5.0 on the Richter scale. While funding coverage has improved since the publication of the Operational Strategy, it remains insufficient to fully meet the immediate and long-term needs of the affected population. Limited funding is constraining the scale and speed of humanitarian interventions, particularly in critical areas such as shelter, and livelihood recovery. Additional financial support is urgently needed to ensure that response efforts can be sustained and expanded to reach all vulnerable communities.

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Update on the strategy


To date, the emergency appeal coverage is 28 per cent, including bilateral contributions. Accordingly, while there is an ongoing need for all of the priority actions detailed in the Operational Strategy, VRCS has discussed priorities in the event that coverage does not increase significantly.

If coverage remains low, VRCS may put on hold most of the priority actions previously planned for the Education sector and Environmental Sustainability enabling area. It is also possible that some of the CVA programme would need to be scaled back by tightening the criteria, thereby reaching a smaller number of households and/or putting on hold the proposed Cash for Health, Cash for Livelihoods, and Cash Support for Education activities. Health activities, including those associated with Community-Based Health and First Aid training, may also need to be scaled back.

It is too early in the operation to determine the likely impacts on output and outcome targets. However, current indications suggest that the total number of people reached will be well below the initial target of 50,000 and likely below 15,000.

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL REPORT

STRATEGIC SECTORS OF INTERVENTION

	Shelter, Housing and Settlements	Total People reached	3,326
		Female > 18: 905	Female < 18: 741
		Male > 18: 924	Male < 18: 756
Objective:	<i>Communities in disaster- and crisis-affected areas restore and strengthen their safety, well-being and longer-term recovery through shelter and settlement solutions.</i>		
	Indicator	Actual	Target

Key indicators:	<i>Number of people reached with shelter support.¹³</i>	3,325	20,000
	<i>Number of people who attended contextualized training/ awareness-raising sessions on safe shelter</i>	0	525

As of reporting period, VRCS has reached 3,326 people (1,680 male and 1,646 female) through shelter support, including emergency shelter assistance and the distribution of essential household items.

VRCS has conducted assessments for 474 households using the assessment form from the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), with 1,333 additional households assessed by VRCS using VRCS assessment forms. To date, distributions to homes affected by the earthquake are as follows:

Table 2. Distribution of Shelter and Household Items by Area Council

Area Council	# Households	# Tarpaulin	# Shelter Tool Kit	# Kitchen Kits	# Rope
Anamburu ward	3	4	2	2	
Central ward	30	42			4
Erakor AC	14	24	5	19	
Eratap AC	152	170	51	206	37
Freshwater tasiriki	20	29	5	18	
Malorua	4	7	3	4	
Mele	50	72	19	97	
North Efate	2	2		16	
Northern Ward	308	326	25	198	137
Pango	4	5		3	
Tanvasoko	78	87	18	116	
Total	665	768	128	679	178

VRCS staff and volunteers also provided households with guidance on the proper use of tarpaulins, ensuring they were used effectively as needed. At the same time, there were distributions of hygiene kits, jerry cans and solar lights (refer to WASH and PGI sectors below).

Additionally, donations of gifts in kind received from generous members of the community, including food and household items, have been passed on to evacuation centers for the assistance of those who were displaced.



A VRCS volunteer distributing tarpaulins to targeted households in Teouma Community, Eratap area council (Photo: IFRC)

¹³ This indicator measures the number of people reached through shelter support, including emergency shelter assistance and the distribution of essential household items.



Livelihoods

Total People reached

0

Female > 18: 0

Female < 18: 0

Male > 18: 0

Male < 18: 0

Objective:

Communities whose livelihoods are affected have their livelihoods restored and strengthened.

Key indicators:

Indicator

Actual

Target

Number of people reached with livelihoods support

0

1,500

It has been identified that those needing livelihoods support work in a number of different sectors. In addition to those whose businesses, market stalls and other workplaces are located in the Central Business District (currently cordoned off), the earthquake has reduced incomes from subsistence farming and fishing. In some cases, land has been damaged by landslides and some farmers and fishermen have had difficulty accessing markets to sell their produce.

Livelihood questions were included into assessment forms in Kobo and inputted data from the assessment teams is being analysed and beneficiary lists are being created for the cash interventions planned.



Multi-purpose Cash

Total People reached

0

Female > 18: 0

Female < 18: 0

Male > 18: 0

Male < 18: 0

Objective:

Communities affected by the earthquake have their basic household needs fulfilled, minimizing the possibility of resorting to negative coping mechanisms to meet those needs.

Key indicators:

Indicator

Actual

Target

Number of households provided with unconditional cash assistance

0

1,500

VRCS has been participating in the national Cash Working Group (which includes at least 6 international agencies). It has been identified that there are no other actors proposing to provide multi-purpose cash grants other than IOM. It is possible that IOM and VRCS could work together in this area.

The previous agreement with Digicel has been extended to 31 December 2025 to enable multipurpose cash grant distributions to commence as quickly as possible. The application of the IFRC Exceptional Approval has been completed and approved. In parallel, VRCS is developing a framework agreement to enable multipurpose cash grants to be issued through other financial services providers. The Financial Service Provider (FSP) tender documents are currently under review by IFRC and pending technical approval.

The transfer value of the multi-purpose cash grants has been determined and agreed with the Cash Working Group (VT20,200). It was calculated with regard to the Vanuatu minimum wage and the amount distributed during previous disaster responses.¹⁴

The initial distribution of multipurpose cash grants which is scheduled to occur in the next 2-3 weeks. The initial payments will be to:

- Those who were severely injured during the earthquake (based on assessments and advice from the Ministry of Health);
- Those households whose houses were significantly or totally destroyed during the earthquake
- Those families with a member who worked at the Port Vila town (a defined area within the Central Business District) and their source of income were significantly impacted due to the earthquake

On 9 January 2025, 8 volunteers were trained in cash assessments (4 female, 4 male). Assessments are currently in progress to identify the initial beneficiaries of multipurpose cash grants. This will be followed shortly by the registration and payment process (subject to sufficient available funds on hand).

 Health & Care <i>(Mental Health and psychosocial support / Community Health / Medical Services)</i>	Total People reached	3,280	
	Female > 18: 893	Female < 18: 731	
	Male > 18: 911	Male < 18: 745	
Objective:	<i>To prevent further harm or injury and support the ongoing health and well-being of affected communities.</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of people who received individualized psychosocial support, including Psychological First Aid (PFA), by a trained staff member or volunteer.</i>	754	1,600
	<i>Number of communities covered regularly with mobile health units or health outreach activities.</i>	17 ¹⁵	12
	<i>Number of people covered with hygiene promotion activities.</i>	1,640	10,000

As of the reporting period, VRCS has reached 3,280 people (1,656 males and 1,624 females) through health interventions, including psychological first aid (PFA), hygiene promotion, and blood donation awareness.

On the day of the earthquake, two VRCS staff members and one volunteer went directly from the office to Vanuatu Central Hospital, where they provided PFA support to 15 injured individuals (8 women and 7 men).

¹⁴ At this time the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) for Vanuatu has not been determined.

¹⁵ This figure refers to the number of identified target communities. It excludes the communities where the VRCS have been providing hygiene promotion in conjunction with other activities such as PGI, shelter etc.

Mobile health units and outreach activities, including First Aid, PFA, and blood donation awareness, have reached various communities, such as Vila Central Hospital, VRCS office, Blacksand, Correctional Centers, Eratap, Mele Waisi, Erangorango, Ohlen, Agatis, Mangaliliu, Tagabe, Clubpipik, Ekipe Village, Bukura, Namburu, Freshwota, and Etas. These efforts, which included community awareness presentations and outreach activities, aimed to improve health services and provide essential support in these areas.

As of 7 February, two Psychological First Aid trainings have been conducted within VRCS, strengthening the capacity of five staff members and five volunteers to support the response. Trained staff and volunteers have been providing PFA in six communities, assessing health, Restoring Family Links (RFL), and Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) needs. By 7 February, they had reached 125 people (63 males and 62 females) through personal interactions and small group meetings in Mangaliliu, Blacksand, Erangorango, Mele, Eratap, and Siviri. Additionally, individual PFA support is being provided where needs are identified during other activities.

VRCS staff and volunteers were also affected by the earthquake. On 8 January 2025, 29 staff members and volunteers attended a PFA orientation session designed to equip them with skills to care for themselves and their colleagues.

Early in the response, key messages on hygiene promotion (e.g., handwashing) were shared alongside other household support activities, reaching an estimated 1,640 people.

VRCS supported Vanuatu Central Hospital by deploying 15 volunteers to assist with cleanup efforts, unpacking, and storing medical supplies in the week following the earthquake. VRCS has also responded to additional requests for volunteer support. Additionally, VRCS supported the Ministry of Health by printing copies of two mental health-related flyers for distribution.

The nutrition sub-cluster conducted a rapid nutrition assessment in 12 communities. VRCS contributed by providing four trained volunteers (two males and two females), who conducted awareness-raising sessions and Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) screenings. The assessment report, published on 2 January, found no cases of severe acute malnutrition. However, one of the 122 children (aged 6–59 months) screened was identified with moderate acute malnutrition, and three children were at risk of developing it. Assessors provided nutrition information to the children's mothers, and follow-up monitoring is anticipated.

VRCS has entered into an agreement with UNICEF to support nutrition, health, and WASH activities. UNICEF will provide nutritional supplements and training to volunteers before distribution, which is expected to begin in late January.


A total of 700 individuals in Anamburu and Fresh Wota communities have been reached through blood donation awareness campaigns. As a result, 28 people have donated blood units through VRCS-organized blood drives in collaboration with the blood service. A third blood drive is scheduled to take place in Pango on 24 January 2025. Further blood donation awareness activities and coordination with the blood service are ongoing to plan additional blood drives as needed.



A community member in Manplas receiving essential relief items from Vanuatu Red Cross (Photo: IFRC)

The Australian Red Cross has donated blood donation supplies to VRCS to support the Ministry of Health's Blood Service. These supplies, which were critically low in Vanuatu, were officially handed over to the Ministry on 15 January.

Throughout the response, VRCS has collaborated closely with other humanitarian actors, initially as part of the Health Cluster and more recently as a participant in the Health and Nutrition subcommittees.

	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	Total People reached	8,396
		Female > 18: 2,286	Female < 18: 1,870
		Male > 18: 2,332	Male < 18: 1,908

Objective: *To restore access to WASH facilities, to reduce water-related diseases in affected communities and to protect the vulnerable.*

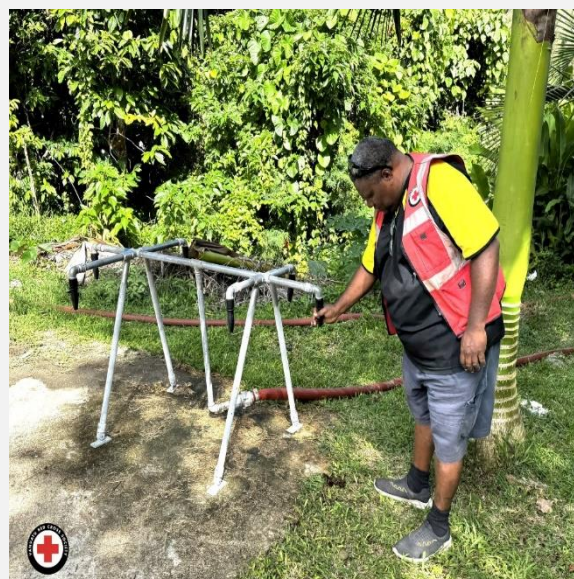
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of people reached with WASH actions in emergency response</i>	8,386 ¹⁶	8,000
	<i>Number of sanitation facilities constructed or rehabilitated</i>	0	100

As of reporting period, VRCS has reached 8,396 people (4,240 male and 4,156 female) through WASH interventions, including safe water distribution, Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) and WASH items.

During the emergency response phase, VRCS and the French Red Cross (PIROPS) collaborated to establish water treatment services using two NOMAD water treatment machines loaned by PIROPS. One VRCS staff member and one volunteer were trained by PIROPS to operate and maintain the NOMAD machines. From 24 December 2024 to 1 January 2025, they treated 76,000 litres of water, which was subsequently distributed by VRCS (33,000 litres), World Vision (8,000 litres), and the Department of Water (35,000 litres).

The treated water was used to fill community water tanks, while in other cases, community members collected water directly or received household water deliveries. This activity reached six communities, benefiting an estimated 5,000 people¹⁷.

On 8 and 9 January, VRCS received 1,600 cases of bottled water (12 x 1.5-litre bottles per case) donated by Coca-Cola. Based on



VRCS Wash Officer checking taps at NOMAD station, Teouma area (Photo: IFRC)

¹⁶ Water treatment and tanking reaching 5,817 people; Cartons of water distributed to 1,067 people; WASH essential household items to 1,511 people.

¹⁷ Estimate based on total volume delivered divided by 15L, which roughly equates to 50% of the estimated number of houses in the communities supported x 5 people per household.

WASH Cluster information and VRCS assessments, bottled water was distributed to 902 households in communities still experiencing water shortages.

Additionally, VRCS provided water trucking services to 1,013 households in three communities and installed a water tank at Eratap Primary School. Furthermore, 165 cartons of bottled water were delivered to the women's prison and high-, medium-, and low-risk prisons.

As of 7 February, VRCS has distributed the following WASH items:

Table 3. Distribution of WASH Items by Area Council

Area Councils	# Households	# Jerry Cans 10L	# Hygiene Kit
Anamburu ward	3	6	3
Central ward	27		27
Erakor AC	26	52	13
Eratap AC	208	423	139
Freshwater tasiriki	11	22	10
Malorua	4	8	4
Mele	121	195	116
North Efate	10	10	10
Northern Ward	282	676	280
Pango	4	8	3
Tanvasoko	56	111	63
Grand Total	752	1511	668

Days for Girls (<https://www.daysforgirls.org/>), a charity based in Australia, provided gifts in kind which will enable VRCS to distribute Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) kits to 1,000 girls/women aged 11-19 years. If resources permit, VRCS is planning to purchase a further 500 kits locally and to augment these kits with a bucket, body soap, laundry soap, a washing line and clothes pegs for each kit. It is planned to distribute the kits in the 12 assigned communities along with other affected communities in late January. MHM training will be provided to staff and volunteers prior to distribution.

As part of the WASH cluster, VRCS has been assigned 12 identified communities for WASH activities, and has conducted WASH assessments for these communities using a form developed by the Department of Water in conjunction with the WASH cluster.



Protection, Gender and Inclusion

Total People reached	1,375
Female > 18: 375	Female < 18: 306
Male > 18: 382	Male < 18: 312

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

	Indicator	Actual	Target
Key indicators:	<i>National Society has adopted IFRC Integrity line (or similar internal Hotline and Case Management System) and is promoting and using it to record and respond to safeguarding cases.</i>	1	1

During assessments, VRCS collected information to identify households impacted by the earthquake that may have specific vulnerabilities, such as people living with disabilities, female-headed households, and pregnant or lactating mothers.

In the first week following the earthquake, VRCS staff and volunteers visited and supported a remote community where several people had been bereaved due to a landslide. During the same period, Restoring Family Links (RFL) support was provided to hospital patients, including those injured in the earthquake, who faced challenges reaching family members.

Information about sexual and gender-based violence, including ways to access assistance, was provided to groups in one community (Waisisi), including those living in the evacuation center, reaching approximately 200 people.

VRCS has endeavored to ensure that people living with disabilities do not miss out on emergency relief distributions by partnering with the Vanuatu Society for People with Disabilities (VSPD) and the Ministry of Justice. Between 10 and 14 January, VRCS and VSPD delivered emergency relief items to the homes of 110 people with disabilities across five communities, eliminating the need for them to travel to a central distribution site. This support was in addition to emergency relief items previously provided to 48 households with members living with disabilities.

As of 7 February, VRCS has received 43 international Restoring Family Links (RFL) inquiries, the majority of which have been resolved as families restored contact themselves once telecommunications were reinstated. Two cases were resolved by VRCS during field visits, while one tracing case remains open for a missing person. The RFL service continues to be advertised on the VRCS Facebook page.

In January, VRCS and IFRC staff visited medium- and low-risk correctional facilities, meeting with prison officers and prisoner representatives. VRCS provided PFA support to some individuals in the facility who were bereaved due to the earthquake. Following the visit, the health team provided first aid information to prison staff to support residents with medical conditions.



Community members registering to receive relief assistance (Photo: IFRC)


On 9 January, VRCS received disability assistance devices from the Australian Red Cross, including three wheelchairs, crutches, and other home assistance devices. These will be distributed by the Ministry of Health physiotherapy clinic.

As of 7 February, VRCS had distributed solar lights as follows:

Table 4. Distribution of Solar Lanterns by Area Council

Area Council	# Households	# Solar Lantern
Anamburu ward	1	1
Central ward	2	4
Erakor AC	5	8
Eratap AC	79	97
Freshwater tasiriki	11	15
Mele	21	23
Melemaat	1	2
North Efate	3	17
Northern Ward	36	38
Pango	1	1
Tanvasoko	66	69
Grand Total	226	275

VRCS has also participated in the Gender Protection Cluster, the Disability Sub-Cluster and the Displacement Cluster.

	Community Engagement and Accountability	Total People reached	0
		Female > 18: 0	Female < 18: 0
		Male > 18: 0	Male < 18: 0
Objective:	<i>To support the operation to understand community needs, priorities, and context, and to support meaningful community participation in the response</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator <i>Number of methods used to enable communities to participate in planning and managing services, programmes and operations</i>	Actual 4	Target 4

VRCS operates a hotline for Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA). In addition, community members may contact VRCS through email or Facebook. VRCS has also set up a reception table in front of VRCS headquarters to assist any community members regarding local needs.

VRCS maintains an active Facebook page. In the 28 days to 7 February, 12 new posts relating to the Vanuatu earthquake reached 25,016 people, and attracted 1,334 reactions, 82 shares and 119 comments.

Information obtained during the assessment phase will help inform the operation. In addition, it is planned to conduct post distribution monitoring of shelter activities as operations continue to provide information for ongoing continuous improvement.



Risk Reduction, climate adaptation and Recovery

Total People reached	0
Female > 18: 0	Female < 18: 0
Male > 18: 0	Male < 18: 0

Objective: *Reduce the vulnerability of communities to future earthquakes and other disasters*

VRCS staff and volunteers are adopting a multi-hazard approach to planning the response and recovery activities.



Education

Total People reached	0
Female > 18: 0	Female < 18: 0
Male > 18: 0	Male < 18: 0

Objective: *Support safe access to education for affected school children and students and strengthen the education system's capacity for disaster preparedness and response*

During discussions with community members, some individuals affected by the earthquake expressed concerns about their ability to pay school fees once schools reopen in February. The Operational Strategy included provisions for school fee support in three schools in areas significantly impacted by the earthquake, alongside WASH “quick fix” activities targeting the same schools. However, due to low appeal coverage, these activities are unlikely to proceed.

Some schools require safe learning spaces due to damage to buildings. UNICEF has offered to provide tents for this purpose, and it has been agreed that VRCS will provide volunteers to set them up. VRCS volunteers participating in this activity received training on 23 January. So far, VRCS has helped erect 27 tents in 9 schools.

Enabling approaches



National Society Strengthening

Objective: *By the end of the operation, the VRCS has enhanced its response and resilience capacity and has not harmed its long-term development and future sustainability.*

Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>National Society covers health, accident and death compensation for all of its volunteers</i>	No	Yes
	<i>Number of paid staff</i>	37	39

VRCS's 2024 insurance cover, which was for 150 volunteers due to resource constraints, expired on 31 December 2024. VRCS has requested insurance cover for all of its 360 volunteers for 2025.



Community members receiving non-food items (NFI) with VRCS volunteers in Ohlen Mataso community (Photo: IFRC)

To date, VRCS has already deployed approximately 100 volunteers in Shefa province to support the earthquake response. The availability of experienced and well-trained volunteers within VRCS has been critical to the current response. Not only have the VRCS volunteers been a key component of the Red Cross response, VRCS has also provided volunteer support to other agencies, including the Vanuatu Central Hospital, UNICEF, and the Vanuatu Society for People with Disabilities.

As indicated above, staff and volunteers have participated in a number of briefings and trainings as part of the response, including in the areas of shelter, CVA, health, PGI and RFL

Rapid assessments of the national society headquarters have identified a need for significant repairs following the earthquake. As a result, it is currently proposed to relocate the stock containers currently situated at the national headquarters site to another location and then build a basic building to accommodate VRCS staff during the repair phase. The building would later be used for various purposes including training volunteers. It is expected that a tender will be issued for design and project

management of the building shortly.

To support both this response and future responses, it is proposed to upgrade the VRCS website to enable donors to make donations directly through the website. Photos and videos are currently being obtained for inclusion in the website.



Coordination and Partnerships

Objective:

Develop an efficient and coordinated approach with all stakeholders involved.

The Government of Vanuatu has been leading the earthquake response. Multiple clusters were initially activated, including shelter, logistics, WASH and others. As usual, IFRC co-led the shelter cluster and VRCS/IFRC participated in other clusters.

Following the end of the State of Emergency on 24 December 2024, the Vanuatu government commenced a recovery phase with a new structure overseen by the Recovery and Resilience Operation Centre (ROC), which comes under the National Recovery and Resilience Committee. This marked an end to the formal cluster arrangements. However, there is a similar structure of committees and subcommittees with responsibility for overseeing various sectoral components, e.g. health, education services. These committees and subcommittees have started to meet and VRCS and IFRC are participating in relevant groups.

VRCS also collaborates with other agencies through the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT).

There has been engagement with local and international not-for-profit agencies regarding specific activities. For example, VRCS worked in collaboration with the Vanuatu Society for People with Disabilities (VSPD) regarding the distribution of emergency relief stocks and other items to households with people living with disabilities. Ministries have provided assistance in identifying and reaching members of affected people (e.g. the Vanuatu Department of Corrective Services facilitated the visit to the low-risk correctional facility).

Partners have provided considerable support, both financially and in kind (refer to section D).



Shelter Cluster Coordination

Objective:

Humanitarian Shelter and Settlements are well coordinated, supporting a comprehensive, quality, coherent, and consistent. Shelter and Settlements response co-led by VRCS with support from IFRC.

As of 7 February, IFRC had co-led 10 shelter cluster meetings. The work of the cluster has helped promote a coordinated approach to shelter response activities. As part of its work, the cluster has developed objectives and engaged with the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning.

Following the end of the State of Emergency, VRCS has been assisting with the establishment of the new Shelter Technical Working Group. VRCS has provided input to the development of the Terms of Reference for the technical working group. This group will review semi-permanent shelter designs previously developed during cyclone responses and develop a single design which also takes into account earthquake and other risks.

The Shelter Cluster holds fortnightly coordination meetings in collaboration with the DECM Cluster to ensure effective planning and response. In preparation for the cyclone season, preparedness messages were developed to enhance community resilience.

To support recovery efforts, a technical working group has been established, along with two technical meetings focused on key recovery initiatives. A Household Baseline Damage Assessment (HBDA), funded by UNDP and led by the Shelter Cluster, will play a critical role in informing the Recovery Plan.

Additionally, the Shelter Cluster is collaborating with partners to develop Building SMART Houses messaging, ensuring that housing reconstruction aligns with sustainable, cost-effective, and disaster-resilient principles.



Secretariat Services

Objective:

To work in collaboration with the National Society and have clear definition and clarification of roles and responsibilities essential for efficient and effective results in this response.

IFRC Country Cluster Delegation (CCD) and the Asia Pacific Regional Office (APRO) have provided a wide range of support to this operation.

- Deployment of personnel to support health/first aid, disaster management, administration and other areas
- Managing surge personnel deployments
- Development of the mobilization table and seeking support for in kind gifts
- Seeking financial support for the operation and pledge establishment
- Support for tender processes
- Providing technical assistance as needed.

As of 7 February, there had been a total of 13 surge delegates deployed under the Rapid Response Management System, including in the areas of operations management (4), shelter cluster coordination (2), Restoring Family Links (1), Cash and Voucher Assistance (1), Communications (1), PMER (1), Procurement and Logistics (1), and Finance (2).

D. FUNDING

As of 22 January, total hard and soft pledges for the support of this operation totaled CHF 1,299,871 (26 per cent coverage). There is also bilateral funding of at around CHF 144,497, bringing total coverage to 28 per cent.

Fed-wide coverage	Funding Requirement (CHF)	Amount Raised (CHF)	Funding Gap (CHF)	Coverage (%)
Total Secretariat Contribution	5 mil	1,299,871	3,700,129	26%
Total bilateral contributions to Fed-Wide Appeal	0.2 mil	144,497	55,503	72%
Total Fed-wide contribution (Secretariat+bilateral)	5.2 mil	1,444,368	3,755,632	28%

The operation has been supported by the donation of relief stocks from Australian Red Cross (ARC), DFAT through ARC, the French government and French Red Cross (PIROPS).

Table 5. In Kind Donations of Emergency Relief Items Donations

Items	Australian RC	DFAT/ARC	French RC/PIROPS	French Government	Total
Tarpaulins	300	545	200	200	1,245
Shelter tool kits		288	200	100	588
Kitchen sets	300		200	104	604
Hygiene kits	288			100	388
Jerry cans			400	200	600
Solar lamps				300	300

As indicated above there have been other gifts in kind, such as menstrual hygiene management kits and bottled water.

IFRC has prepared a mobilisation table: Vanuatu Earthquake - [MDRVU012](#). Contributions to the mobilization table would be welcome.

There has also been support through the release of personnel to work in country, including from the American Red Cross, Australian Red Cross, Austrian Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross, Fiji Red Cross, New Zealand Red Cross, Samoa

Red Cross and Tonga Red Cross. Many of these National Societies have also provided financial support to enable the surge support.

Bilateral personnel support was provided by the New Zealand Red Cross (IT) to support the establishment of satellite communications and the French Red Cross (PIROPS) for WASH support, particularly relating to water treatment and trucking and first aid. PIROPS also loaned two NOMAD water treatment machines to support the operation.

Contact information

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

At the Vanuatu Red Cross Society:

- Dickinson Tevi, Secretary General; email: sg@redcrossvanuatu.com
- Augustine Garae, Head of Disaster Management: disaster.coordinator@redcrossvanuatu.com

At the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation Suva:

- Katie Greenwood, Head of Delegation Country Cluster Delegation Suva; email: katie.greenwood@ifrc.org
- Finau Leveni, Deputy Head of Country Delegation/Head of Programmes; email: finau.leveni@ifrc.org
- Mark McCaul, Disaster Risk Management Manager; email: mark.mccaul@ifrc.org

At the IFRC Asia-Pacific Regional Office in Kuala Lumpur:

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- Felipe Delcid, Lead of Evolving Crises and Disasters; email: felipe.delcid@ifrc.org
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- Afrhill Rances, Communications Manager; email: afrhill.rances@ifrc.org

At IFRC Geneva:

- Christina Duschl, Senior Officer Operations Coordination; email: christina.duschl@ifrc.org

For IFRC Resource Mobilisation and Pledges support:

- Maz Afiah Mohammad Khairul Azmi, Partnerships-in-Emergencies; email: PartnershipsEA.AP@ifrc.org

For In-Kind Donations and Mobilisation table support:

- Nuraiza Khairuddin, Manager – Regional Logistics Unit; email: nuraiza.khairuddin@ifrc.org

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

- Mursidi Unir, PMER in Emergencies Coordinator, email: mursidi.unir@ifrc.org

Reference documents



Click here for:

- [Previous Appeals and updates](#)
- [Operational 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.