

Emergency appeal №: MDRVU011 Emergency appeal launched: 18/12/2024 Operational Strategy published: 12/01/2025	Glide №: EQ-2024-000227-VUT
Operation update #1 Date of issue: 05/02/2025	Timeframe covered by this update: From 18/12/2024 - 17/01/2025
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

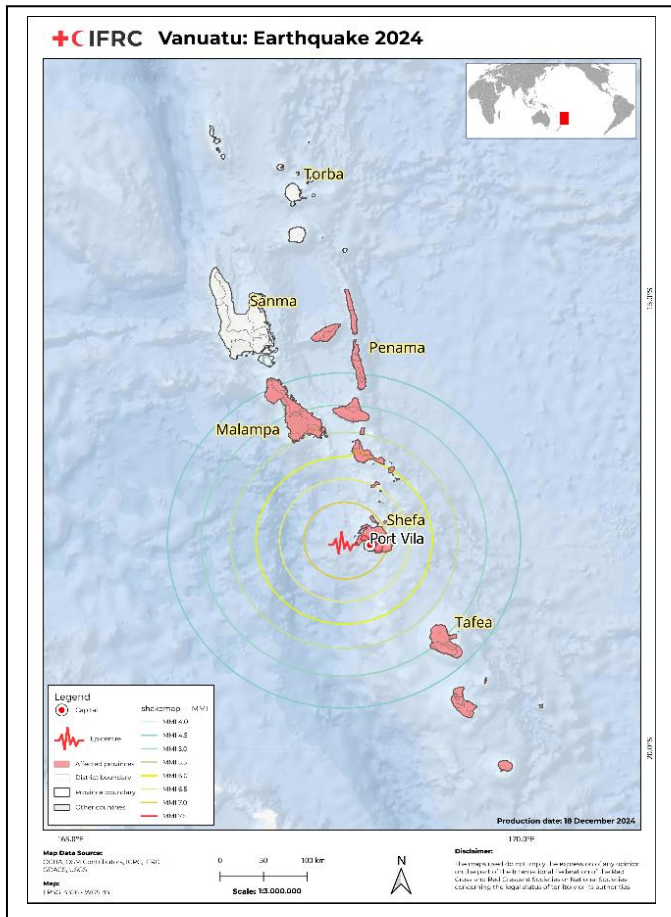


VRCS volunteers heading to communities to distribute donated bottled water to those whose water supplies have been impacted by the earthquake. Photo: IFRC

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.

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, at a depth of 57 kilometres, causing widespread damage. The earthquake triggered landslides, damaged buildings, and severely impacted infrastructure and essential services. Since then, multiple aftershocks, including 15 over magnitude 5.0 and one at 6.1, have increased the risk of further damage.

According to the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), approximately 80,000 people (25 per cent of Vanuatu’s population) were affected, with Efate and nearby islands worst hit. An estimated 36,000 people in Port Vila were directly affected.

The destruction disrupted telecommunications, electricity, and water supplies, heightening health risks, particularly for vulnerable populations. Port Vila’s main hospital, schools, and two major water reservoirs sustained severe damage, leaving thousands without medical care or clean water. Reservoir damage also caused flash floods in nearby homes.

Landslides and debris blocked roads and damaged airstrips, restricting access to affected areas. Some homes suffered severe damage, and the closure of a key wharf in Port Vila has disrupted shipping. The Tagabe bridge is now restricted to heavy vehicles, forcing detours, while rockfalls blocking

watercourses pose a flood risk.

Port Vila’s central business district has been cordoned off due to collapsed buildings, affecting businesses, vendors, and employment. 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 initially declared a seven-day State of Emergency, activated the National Emergency Operations Centre, and requested Red Cross assistance. The Vanuatu Red Cross Society (VRCS), with IFRC support, mobilized volunteers for 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 CHF 217M (VT29B) was needed for recovery efforts.¹

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

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

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 well being

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. As of 24 December, OCHA reported 2,435 displaced individuals staying in six evacuation centres and 67 host households.² Many will not return home soon due to structural damage, lack of services, and safety concerns. Overcrowding in temporary shelters increases 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 (VRCS) 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 NDMO 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

¹ Vanuatu Daily Post, 7 January 2025.

² <https://reliefweb.int/report/vanuatu/pacific-humanitarian-team-vanuatu-earthquake-situation-report-26-december-2024>

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.

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.

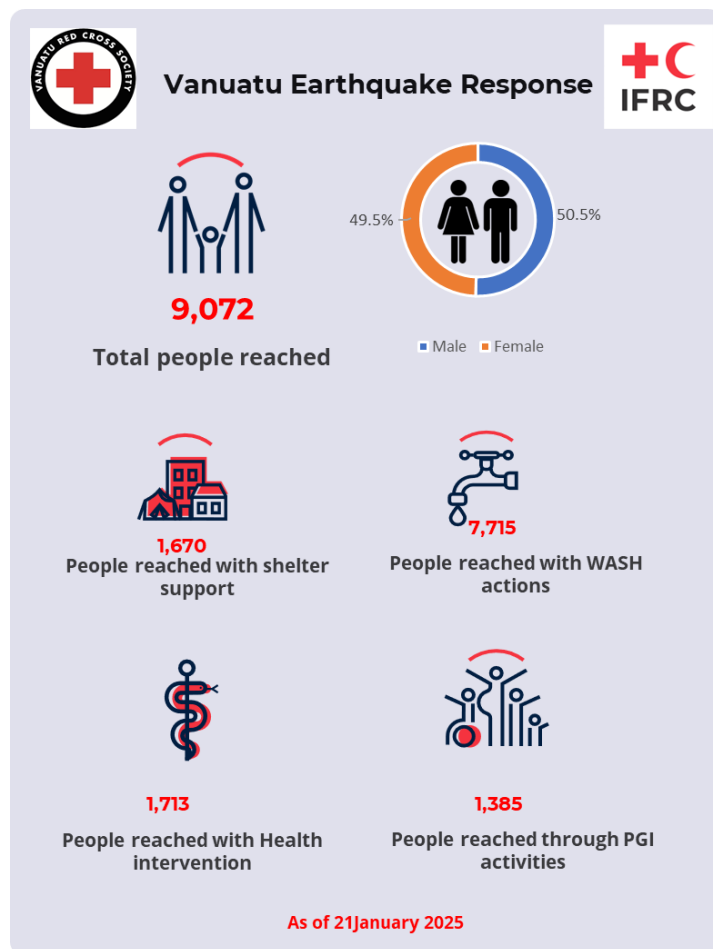
Table 1. Distribution of Emergency Relief Items by Area Council, as of 14 January 2025

Area Council	# HH	# Tarpaulin	# Shelter Tool Kits	# Kitchen sets	# Hygiene Kits	# Jerry cans	# Solar lanterns
Anamburu Ward	3	4	2	2	3	6	1
Erakor	30	22	4	18	12	50	5
Eratap	7	10	5	5	5	12	9
Freshwater Taseriki ward	18	28	1	12	5	14	13
Malorua	2	4	2	2	2	4	0
Mele	126	69	19	92	111	189	23
North Efate	2	2	0	1	1	2	1
Northern Ward	40	8	2	38	13	72	8
Pango	4	5	0	3	3	8	1
Tanvasoko	142	87	19	114	56	96	66
Total	374	239	54	287	211	453	127

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 21 January, VRCS has reached an estimated total of 9,072 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

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 17 January 2025, the Vanuatu Displacement and Evacuation Centre Management (DECM) cluster reported 315 people remained formally displaced. Of these, 39 were staying in two evacuation centres, while the remaining 364 were staying with 25 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.

On 7 January 2025, 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.

The assessments carried out by VRCS to date have identified that 13 per cent of houses have been destroyed and 43 per cent have been severely damaged. 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 as a result 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.

³ <https://publicsafetyqld.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/21c46b29f3f44209bbc7e0f07fb107d1>

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.

WASH

During the earthquake, two of the large water reservoirs in the Ohlen area, which supply water to Port Vila, were destroyed, resulting in flash flooding that impacted houses in the Ohlen area. However, another reservoir had recently been constructed and has continued to supply water to Port Vila. Following the earthquake, the government advised residents to refrain from drinking water from the supply due to the risk of contamination from 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 shops. Plant repairs are in progress, and production has resumed.

On 7 January 2025, 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 that more than 50 per cent of sites lacked an improved drinking water source, while 7 did not have sufficient water available⁶. During community visits, VRCS has observed damage to both community and household water infrastructure. Some water 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 collated by the WASH cluster and shared with its members.

Health

On 7 January 2025, 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 are likely 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 2025 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 3 February 2025. It has been identified that some schools will require WASH repairs in order to reopen safely. 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

⁶https://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&usg=AOvVaw1NwLMgnC-A8rfmSM9phLvw

⁷ <https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/GE2412/S00101/pma-deploys-pacmat-mental-health-team-to-vanuatu-following-7.3-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

All RFL inquiries received following the earthquake have been resolved. There is one ICRC tracing case at this time. It has been reported that there has been an increase in violence against women since the earthquake. On 9 January 2025, 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 The Australian Red Cross has previously donated some assistive devices which were handed over to the Ministry of Health, but there is further need.

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

At this time, 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.


¹⁰ <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/world/538510/more-assaults-of-women-since-vanuatu-earthquake-police-chief>

¹¹ <https://pmn.co.nz/read/pacific-region/report-reveals-gender-violence-risks-after-vanuatu-earthquake>

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&usg=AOvVaw1NwLMgnc-A8rfmSM9phLvw

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL REPORT

STRATEGIC SECTORS OF INTERVENTION

 Shelter, Housing and Settlements	Total People reached	1,670	
	Female > 18: 455	Female < 18: 372	
	Male > 18: 463	Male < 18: 380	
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>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of people reached with shelter support.¹³</i>	1,670	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 1,670 people (843 male and 827 female) through shelter support, including emergency shelter assistance and the distribution of essential household items.

Distribution of emergency shelter and household items

VRCS has been actively conducting assessments on behalf of the NDMO. As of 14 January 2025, a total of 442 households have been assessed. In response to the earthquake, distributions to affected homes have been carried out as detailed below:

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

Area Council	# Households	# Tarpaulins	# Shelter Tool Kits	# Kitchen Sets
Anamburu Ward	3	4	2	2
Erakor	23	22	4	18
Eratap	6	10	5	5
Freshwater Taseriki ward	18	28	1	12
Malorua	2	4	2	2
Mele	107	69	19	92
North Efate	2	2	0	1
Northern Ward	40	8	2	38
Pango	4	5	0	3
Tanvasoko	129	87	19	114
Total	334	239	54	287

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


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).

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



VRCS staff and volunteers distribute essential relief supplies to a family on Lelepa Island, who have been sheltering under a tarpaulin after their home was damaged. (Photo: IFRC)

 Livelihoods	Total People reached	0	
	Female > 18: 0	Female < 18: 0	
	Male > 18: 0	Male < 18: 0	
Objective:	<i>Communities whose livelihoods are affected have their livelihoods restored and strengthened.</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of people reached with livelihoods support</i>	0	1,500

It has been identified that those needing livelihoods support work in a variety of 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 also reduced incomes from subsistence farming and fishing. In some cases, land has been damaged by landslides, and some farmers and fishermen have experienced difficulties accessing markets to sell

their produce. However, livelihoods recovery activities have yet to commence and remain subject to the availability of funding.



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 people provided with unconditional cash assistance	0	10,000

As of reporting period, VRCS, in collaboration with the national Cash Working Group, is preparing to distribute multi-purpose cash grants. Assessments are ongoing, with payments starting once funds are available.

Multi-Purpose Cash Grants Distribution

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

The previous agreement with Digicel has been extended to 31 December 2025 to enable multi-purpose 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 multi-purpose cash grants to be issued through other financial service providers. The Financial Service Provider (FSP) tender documents are currently under review by IFRC and are pending technical approval.

The transfer value of the multi-purpose cash grants has been determined and agreed upon with the Cash Working Group (VT 20,200). It was calculated with consideration of the Vanuatu minimum wage and the amount distributed during previous disaster responses.¹⁴

The initial distribution of multi-purpose cash grants is scheduled to occur in the next 2–3 weeks. The initial payments will be made to:

- Those who were severely injured during the earthquake (based on assessments and advice from the Ministry of Health);
- Those living in targeted communities whose sleeping houses have been severely damaged or destroyed (based on assessments), including those displaced for an extended period due to damage; and/or
- Those who were previously working in a defined area within the Central Business District who have lost their jobs or whose hours have been significantly reduced.

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

On 9 January 2025, eight volunteers were trained in cash assessments (four female, four male). Assessments are currently in progress to identify the initial beneficiaries of multi-purpose 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	1,713
	Female > 18: 466	Female < 18: 382
	Male > 18: 476	Male < 18: 389

Objective: *To prevent further harm or injury and support the ongoing health and well-being of affected communities.*

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>	33	1,600
	<i>Number of communities covered regularly with mobile health units or health outreach activities.</i>	0 ¹⁵	12
	<i>Number of people covered with hygiene promotion activities.</i>	900	10,000

As of reporting period, VRCS has reached 1,713 people (865 male and 848 female) through health interventions, including PFA, hygiene promotion and blood donation awareness.

Provision of PFA and Health Support

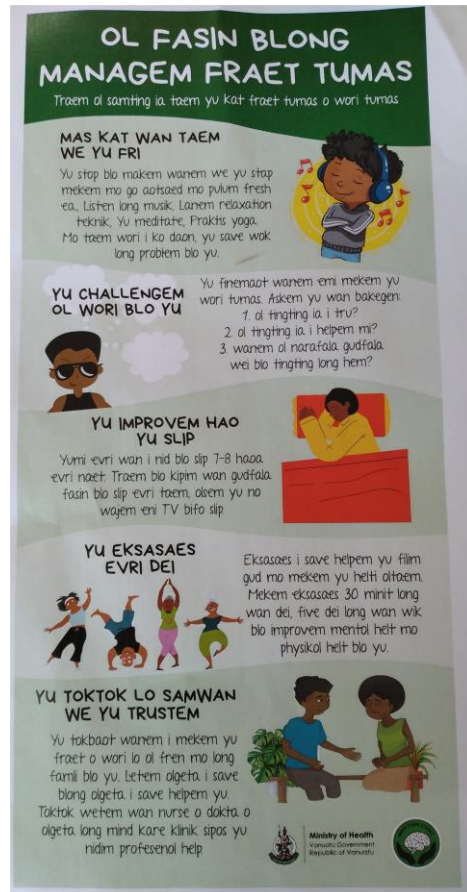
On the day of the earthquake, two VRCS staff and one volunteer immediately went to Vanuatu Central Hospital, where they provided PFA to 15 injured individuals (eight women and seven men). As of 8 January 2025, two PFA training sessions have been conducted within VRCS, increasing the organization's capacity by training five staff and five volunteers to support the response. In addition, VRCS staff have been conducting community assessments covering health needs, including PFA, RFL, and PGI needs. Furthermore, these assessments had reached 60 people (37 men and 23 women) living in areas between Mangaliuliu and Siviri. Recognizing that many VRCS staff and volunteers have been personally and professionally affected by the earthquake, a PFA awareness and self-care event was held on 8 January 2025, with 29 participants (13 men and 16 women).

Additionally, PFA awareness sessions have been conducted in three communities—Erangorango, Blacksand, and Melewaisi—reaching a total of 41 people (10 men, 12 women, 11 boys, and 8 girls). Additionally, PFA support is being provided on an individual basis where needs are identified during other response activities.

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.



VRCS staff provided psychosocial support and Restoring Family Links assistance to people in the low risk correctional facility. (Photo: IFRC)



Flyers printed for the Ministry of Health promoted physical and mental wellbeing. (Photo: IFRC)

Hygiene Promotion and Health Support to Hospitals

In the early response phase, key hygiene promotion messages, such as handwashing, were integrated into other household support activities, reaching approximately 900 people.

To assist the Vanuatu Central Hospital, VRCS deployed 15 volunteers to support cleanup operations and assist with unpacking and storing medical supplies during the week following the earthquake. VRCS has also responded to additional requests for volunteer support. Furthermore, VRCS has assisted the Ministry of Health by printing and distributing two mental health awareness flyers for the ministry.

Nutrition Assessment and Awareness

The nutrition sub-cluster conducted a rapid nutrition assessment across 12 communities, with VRCS contributing four trained volunteers (two men and two women). These volunteers participated in training before conducting awareness sessions and MUAC (mid-upper arm circumference) screenings for children.

The assessment report, published on 2 January 2025, found no cases of severe acute malnutrition. However, one out of 122 children aged 6–59 months was identified with moderate acute malnutrition, while three others were at higher risk. Mothers of affected children received nutrition information, and follow-up monitoring is anticipated.

Partnership with UNICEF for Nutrition, Health, and WASH Activities

VRCS has entered into an agreement with UNICEF to support nutrition, health, and WASH activities. Under this agreement, UNICEF will provide nutritional supplements and training for VRCS volunteers before distribution begins. The distribution is expected to commence in late January.

Blood Donation Awareness and Drives

A total of 700 people in Anamburu and Fresh Wota communities have been reached through blood donation awareness activities. As a result, 28 individuals have donated blood through VRCS-organized blood drives, which were supported by the Vanuatu Blood Service. A third blood drive is planned in Pango on 24 January, with additional blood awareness activities and further donation drives being coordinated in close collaboration with the blood service.

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

Coordination with Health and Nutrition Clusters

Throughout the response, VRCS has been closely collaborating with other actors, initially as part of the Health Cluster and, more recently, as an active participant in the Health Subcommittee and Nutrition Subcommittee.

	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	Total People reached	7,715
		Female > 18: 2,100	Female < 18: 1,719
		Male > 18: 2,143	Male < 18: 1,753

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>	7,715 ¹⁶	8,000
	<i>Number of sanitation facilities constructed or rehabilitated.</i>	0	100

As of reporting period, VRCS has reached 7,715 people (3,896 male and 3,819 female) through WASH interventions, including safe water distribution, Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) and WASH items.

Water Treatment and Distribution

¹⁶ Water treatment and tanking 5,000; Bottled water distribution 1,330; WASH essential household items 1,385.

During the emergency response phase, VRCS and the French Red Cross (PIROPS) collaborated to establish water treatment operations using two NOMAD water treatment machines loaned by PIROPS. Between the onset of operations and 1 January 2025, a total of 76,000 litres of water was treated.

Water trucking was conducted by VRCS (33,000 litres), World Vision (8,000 litres), and the Department of Water (35,000 litres). The treated water was distributed through various channels, including filling community water tanks, direct collection by community members, and household deliveries. This initiative reached six communities, benefiting an estimated 5,000 people¹⁷.

Distribution of Bottled Water and WASH Items

On 8 and 9 January 2025, VRCS received a donation of 19,000 bottles (1.5 litres each) of water from Coca-Cola. These bottled water supplies are being distributed to communities still experiencing water shortages, based on needs identified by the WASH Cluster.

As of 21 January, distributions have been completed in the following locations:

- Bellevue: 7 households
- Siviri: 108 households
- Sama: 54 households
- Emua: 69 households (to date)

Additionally, 165 cartons of bottled water have been delivered to the women's prison and the high-, medium-, and low-risk prisons to ensure access to clean drinking water for detainees.

As of 14 January 2025, VRCS has distributed the following WASH items:

Table 3. Distribution of WASH Items by Area Council

Area Council	No. of households	No. of jerry cans	No. of hygiene kits
Anamburu Ward	3	6	3
Erakor	25	50	12
Eratap	6	12	5
Freshwater Taseriki ward	10	14	5
Malorua	2	4	2
Mele	120	189	111
North Efate	1	2	1
Northern Ward	40	72	13
Pango	4	8	3
Tanvasoko	66	96	56
Total	277	453	211

MHM Support

Days for Girls(<https://www.daysforgirls.org/>), an Australia-based charity, has provided an in-kind donation of 1,000 Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) kits for distribution to girls and women aged 11–19 years. To

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.


expand this initiative, VRCS plans to locally procure an additional 500 kits, resources permitting. Each kit will be supplemented with essential hygiene items, including:

- A bucket
- Body soap
- Laundry soap
- A washing line and clothes pegs

MHM training will be conducted for VRCS staff and volunteers before the distribution, which is scheduled to take place in late January across 12 assigned communities, as well as other affected areas.

WASH Assessments and Coordination

As part of its role within the WASH Cluster, VRCS has been assigned 12 communities for WASH-related interventions. WASH assessments have been conducted in these communities using an assessment tool developed by the Department of Water in collaboration with the WASH Cluster. The findings from these assessments are expected to be released by the WASH Cluster in the coming days.

	Protection, Gender and Inclusion	Total People reached	1,385
		Female > 18: 376	Female < 18: 309
		Male > 18: 385	Male < 18: 315
Objective:	<i>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</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<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

As of reporting period, VRCS has reached 1,385 people (700 male and 685 female) through PGI interventions, including awareness-raising, support for people with disabilities and solar lights distribution.

Identifying and Supporting Vulnerable Households

During assessments, VRCS collected information to identify households impacted by the earthquake with specific vulnerabilities, including people living with disabilities, female-headed households, and pregnant or lactating mothers. This data has been instrumental in tailoring response efforts to meet the needs of those most at risk.

In the first week following the earthquake, VRCS staff and volunteers provided direct support to a remote community that suffered loss of life due to a landslide. Additionally, RFL support was extended to individuals in hospital—including those injured in the earthquake—who faced challenges in reconnecting with their families.

Protection and Gender-Based Violence Awareness

To address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) concerns, VRCS provided information on available assistance services to affected groups, including those living in the evacuation centre in Waisisi. Approximately 200 people were reached through this initiative.

Support for People Living with Disabilities

To ensure equitable access to emergency relief, VRCS partnered with the Vanuatu Society for People with Disabilities (VSPD) and the Ministry of Justice to deliver emergency relief items directly to households with people living with disabilities. Between 10 and 14 January, VRCS and VSPD delivered relief items to 110 people across five communities, eliminating the need for these households to travel to central distribution sites. This effort was in addition to previous distributions to 48 households with individuals living with disabilities.

On 9 January 2025, VRCS received disability assistance devices from Australian Red Cross, including three wheelchairs, crutches, and other home assistance equipment. These will be distributed by the Ministry of Health physiotherapy clinic.

RFL Services

As of 14 January 2025, VRCS had received 43 international RFL enquiries, the majority of which were resolved as families restored contact themselves once telecommunications were re-established. Additionally, two cases were resolved by VRCS field teams during their visits, while one tracing case remains open for a missing person. The RFL service continues to be advertised via the VRCS Facebook page to ensure accessibility for those in need.

Support for Correctional Facilities

In January, VRCS and IFRC staff visited medium- and low-risk correctional facilities, engaging with prison officers and representatives of the prisoners. During the visits, VRCS provided Psychological First Aid (PFA) support to individuals bereaved by the earthquake. Following these engagements, the VRCS health team shared first aid information with prison staff to support detainees with medical conditions.

Distribution of Solar Lights

As of 14 January 2025, VRCS has distributed solar lights to affected communities as shown below:

Table 4. Distribution of Solar Lanterns by Area Council

Area Council	#HH	# Solar lantern
Anamburu Ward	1	1
Erakor	3	5
Eratap	7	9
Freshwater Taseriki ward	10	13
Mele	21	23
North Efate	1	1
Northern Ward	6	8
Pango	1	1
Tanvasoko	64	66
Total	114	127

Cluster and Coordination Engagement

VRCS actively participates in the Gender and Protection Cluster, the Disability Sub-Cluster, and the Displacement Cluster to ensure a coordinated and inclusive response.



VRCS staff worked with the VSPD and the Ministry of Health to distribute both essential household items, food, and other supplies to families of people living with disabilities. (Photo: IFRC)



Community Engagement and Accountability

Total People reached

0

Female > 18: 0

Female < 18: **0**

Male > 18: 0

Male < 18: 0

Objective:

To support the operation to understand community needs, priorities, and context, and to support meaningful community participation in the response

Key indicators:

Indicator

Number of methods used to enable communities to participate in planning and managing services, programmes and operations

Actual

4

Target

4

Hotline and Communication Channels


VRCS operates a hotline for CEA, providing an accessible platform for community members to share concerns, ask questions, and provide feedback. Additionally, community members may contact VRCS via email or Facebook, and in some cases, individuals have visited the VRCS office to discuss local needs directly.


Social Media Engagement

VRCS actively maintains a Facebook page to disseminate information and engage with communities. As of 13 January 2025, approximately 20 posts related to the Vanuatu earthquake had been shared. Over the 28-day period leading up to 13 January, these posts reached 53,883 people and generated 5,512 reactions, 608 shares, and 374 comments, demonstrating strong engagement from the community.

Use of Assessment Data and Monitoring

Information gathered during the assessment phase will be used to guide the ongoing operation, ensuring that response efforts remain aligned with community needs. Additionally, post-distribution monitoring (PDM) of shelter activities is planned for late January to early February to assess the effectiveness and impact of the assistance provided.

 Risk Reduction, climate adaptation and Recovery	Total People reached	0	
	Female > 18: 0	Female < 18: 0	
	Male > 18: 0	Male < 18: 0	
Objective:	<i>Reduce the vulnerability of communities to future earthquakes and other disasters</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Number of people reached with disaster risk reduction</i>	0	50,000
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:	<i>Support safe access to education for affected school children and students and strengthen the education system's capacity for disaster preparedness and response</i>		

School Fee Support

During discussions with community members, it was identified that some families affected by the earthquake are concerned about their ability to pay school fees once schools reopen in February. The Operational Strategy included provisions for school fee support for three schools located in areas significantly impacted by the earthquake. Additionally, WASH "quick fix" activities were planned for these same schools. However, due to low appeal coverage, it is currently unlikely that these activities will proceed as initially planned.

Provision of Safe Learning Spaces

Several schools have also been identified as needing safe spaces for learning, as their buildings have been damaged by the earthquake. UNICEF has generously offered to provide tents to serve as temporary classrooms. VRCS has agreed to support this effort by providing volunteers to assist with the erection of the tents. On 23 January 2025, the volunteers involved in this activity underwent training to ensure proper installation and safety.

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

Insurance Coverage and Volunteer Deployment

The 2024 insurance cover for 150 VRCS volunteers expired on 31 December 2024, due to resource constraints. VRCS has requested an insurance cover extension for all 360 volunteers in 2025 to ensure adequate protection for its dedicated team.

As of reporting period, approximately 100 volunteers have been deployed across Shefa province to support the earthquake response efforts. The availability of experienced and well-trained volunteers within VRCS has been crucial to the success of the ongoing response. In addition to their role within the Red Cross response, VRCS volunteers have provided essential support to other agencies, including Vanuatu Central Hospital, UNICEF, and the Vanuatu Society for People with Disabilities.

Staff and volunteers have actively participated in a variety of briefings and trainings related to the response. These include critical areas such as shelter, cash and voucher assistance (CVA), health, PGI, and RFL.

National Society Headquarters Repairs and Relocation

Following a rapid assessment of the VRCS national society headquarters, it was identified that the building requires significant repairs due to the earthquake's impact. Consequently, it is proposed to relocate stock containers from the headquarters site to an alternative location. A basic building will be constructed to temporarily house VRCS staff during the repair phase. Once the repairs are complete, this building will be repurposed for various uses, including volunteer training. A tender is expected to be issued soon for the design and project management of the new facility.

Website Upgrade for Future Support and Donations

To support the ongoing earthquake response and future operations, VRCS plans to upgrade its website. This upgrade will enable donors to make direct contributions through the site. Currently, photos and videos are being gathered for inclusion on the website, which will help to raise awareness and encourage further support.



Coordination and Partnerships

Objective:

Develop an efficient and coordinated approach with all stakeholders involved.

Government-Led Response and Transition to Recovery Phase

The Government of Vanuatu has taken the lead in coordinating the earthquake response. Initially, several clusters were activated, including shelter, logistics, WASH, and others. As per the standard operational framework, IFRC co-ordinated the shelter cluster, with VRCS/IFRC participating in other relevant clusters.

Following the conclusion of the State of Emergency on 24 December 2024, the government transitioned into the recovery phase. This phase is overseen by the Recovery and Resilience Operation Centre (ROC), which is part of the National Recovery and Resilience Committee. The end of the formal cluster arrangements marked the beginning of a new structure with committees and subcommittees that oversee various sectoral components, such as health and education services.

These committees have started meeting, and VRCS and IFRC are actively participating in the relevant groups, ensuring continued support and coordination in the recovery process.

Collaboration with Other Agencies and Partners

VRCS collaborates closely with other agencies as part of the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT), working together to enhance the effectiveness of the response and recovery efforts.

There has been ongoing engagement with local and international non-profit agencies to support specific activities. For instance, VRCS worked alongside the Vanuatu Society for People with Disabilities (VSPD) to ensure the distribution of emergency relief stocks and other essential items to households with individuals living with disabilities. Additionally, various ministries have provided crucial assistance in identifying and reaching affected populations. For example, the Vanuatu Department of Corrective Services facilitated VRCS's visit to the low-risk correctional facility, ensuring support for individuals there.

Partner Support

Partners have provided substantial support, both financially and in-kind, to bolster the response and recovery efforts (details on partner contributions can be found below).



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.

Shelter Cluster Coordination

As of 14 January 2025, 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.

Support for Shelter Technical Working Group

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



Secretariat Services

Objective:

Ensure excellent coordination, quality assurance, and accountability support to the VRCS.

Key indicators:

Indicator

Actual

Target

Number of evaluations conducted for the operation

0

1

IFRC Support for the Operation

IFRC issued a DREF loan of CHF 750,000 to support the operation on 18 December 2024. Both the 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 24 January 2025, there had been a total of 11 surge delegates deployed under the Rapid Response Management System, including in the areas of operations management (3), shelter cluster coordination (2), Restoring Family Links (1), Cash and Voucher Assistance (1), Communications (1), PMER (1) and Finance (2).

D. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

As of 22 January 2025, total hard and soft pledges for this operation amounted to CHF 1,299,871 (26 per cent coverage). Additionally, bilateral funding of approximately CHF 144,432 brings the total coverage to 28 per cent.

The operation has also received support through the donation of relief stocks from the Australian Red Cross (ARC), DFAT through ARC, the French government, and the French Red Cross (PIROPS).

Table 5. In kind donations of Emergency Relief Items

<i>Items</i>	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

In addition to the previously mentioned contributions, other gifts in kind have included menstrual hygiene management kits and bottled water.

The IFRC has prepared a mobilisation table: [Vanuatu Earthquake - MDRVU012](#). Contributions to this table are welcomed.

Support has also been provided through the deployment of personnel to work in-country, including representatives 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 facilitate surge deployments.

Bilateral personnel support was extended by the New Zealand Red Cross (IT) to establish satellite communications, while the French Red Cross (PIROPS) provided WASH support, particularly in water treatment, trucking, and first aid. Additionally, PIROPS loaned two NOMAD water treatment machines to support the response efforts.

Contact information

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

At Vanuatu Red Cross Society

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

At IFRC Country Cluster Delegation Suva

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

Reference documents



Click here for:

- [Emergency Appeal](#)
- [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.