Situation Report #3: Cyclone Pam, Vanuatu, March 2015

Situation Report – (period covered: March 13 to March 16)
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Background

14 March - Category 5 Cyclone Pam has caused widespread, severe damage and loss of life through the country of Vanuatu particularly in the Central and Southern regions, which experienced a direct hit. A State of Emergency has been declared for Shefa Province. This is likely to be extended to Tafea and other Provinces as information comes in. The storm made landfall in Vanuatu around 12:30am on 14 March. There are early reports of power outages, communication networks down, and many damaged homes and buildings. (Source: NDMO Sitrep 1 - Mar 14). Vanuatu includes over 80 smaller islands.

Below are highlights for the past 48 hours and significant updates. Download Full Sitrep #3 Report.

Needs:

16 March:

- via UNOCHA - There is a need for: logistics experts; light reconnaissance planes/helicopters; pilots; fuel to deliver supplies and conduct assessments; sea shipping to transport food, water, and rebuilding materials; management and supplies for evacuation centres; WASH services and supplies in evacuation centres and possibly rural areas; medical supplies; temporary morgue for Port Vila Central hospital; alternative cold-chain arrangement; emergency food relief; protection for women and children at evacuation centres; education supplies. (source)
- Via UNOCHA Sitrep 1 - Although Port Vila’s water supply is back online in at least some areas there are concerns for non-reticulated areas as well as the safety of drinking water. The provision of WASH services in the more than 25 evacuation areas is urgent, as is the assessment of WASH needs in rural areas in all affected provinces. (source)
- Assessment of Epi Island #Vanuatu pop:5,000+. No communication since Thurs 12th. Family missing. (Source)

Social Media Overview

As of March 16 8:00am there is a general lack of social media posts stemming from locals in Vanuatu and outlying islands, mostly due to the power and communication outages. A little information is being posted by overseas relatives who have been able to reach relatives or friends briefly by phone. Facebook pages are being used to share information by both locals in Port Vila with access and people overseas who have reached loved ones or trying to reconnect. A few locals in Port Vila are beginning to send out tweets. Oxfam’s representative in Vanuatu has been able to regularly tweet since prior to landfall of the cyclone. https://twitter.com/Colincvr
Facebook Highlights:
- [Vanuatu Cyclone Pam 2015](#) - this page includes pictures, news, messages about missing loved ones, and posts by people who have received some information from inside Vanuatu. For example, there is an ongoing conversation about Pentecost Island, Penama Province from a person who made brief contact with Digicel to find out the status. No records of deaths, but there are serious damages. ([source](#))
- [Vanuatu Cyclone Pam 2015 Find My Family](#) - this was created for people to post information about missing loved ones.
- [Humans of Vanuatu](#) - information and pictures from a local in Port Vila.
- [Pacific Island Living](#) - this page has shared information and news including news from resorts and tourist areas reporting their status.

Twitter Highlights from Last 48 Hours:
- Updates from concerned family Please assess damage of Epi Island #Vanuatu pop:5,000+. No communication since Thurs 12th.
- Care Australia released Aerial Photos ([Source](#))
- A person in Port Vila has tweeted about long wait lines for fuel on Kumul Highway and has said the line for diesel is longer than the line for unleaded. ([source](#))
- Another person in Port Vila who rode out the storm at the Holiday Inn has tweeted pictures of his family or friends working to repair the Vila Central Hospital. ([source](#))

Disaster Response Significant Updates in past 48 hours (most recent first)

16 March:
- 7:00am via Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team - Through Crowdsourcing effort of the OpenStreetMap community, the pre-disaster basemap of the affected areas (extent of 650km from north to south) is digitized rapidly from aerial imagery. [Data Exports are available here](#). The highways and residential area outbound have been added. House footprint are actually added. An effort is also made to geolocate the communication towers and identify fields for eventual helicopter landing.
- 3:00am Via NetHope - Communications - NetHope is currently working with the Emergency Telecommunication Cluster on assessing the information and communication technology (ICT) needs of the response community and working with its private sector partners to identify ways to meet those needs. NetHope can be contacted via [emergency@nethope.org](mailto:emergency@nethope.org)
- Via UNOCHA Sitrep #1 Mar 15 - There are five clusters: Health, WASH, Agriculture and Food Security, Logistics and Emergency Education. ([source](#))
- Via NDMO Sitrep #3 Mar 15 - Coordination -The National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) and five Provincial Emergency Operational Centres have now been activated.
- Via NDMO Sitrep #3 Mar 15 - Shelter/Evacuations - Six evacuation centres have been opened in Torba and Penama with 431 evacuees to date. Twenty Eight (28) evacuation centres have been opened on Efate with 1589 evacuees to date. Displacement is expected to rapidly increase given the widespread, severe damage to shelter and crops.

- Via NDMO Sitrep #3 Mar 15 - Logistics/Aviation - Via NDMO Sitrep #3 published Mar 15 - The Port Vila Airport terminal, towers and airfield are badly flooded and will not be able to accept civilian flights for about two weeks, at which time they will recommence day flights only. The airport can receive aircraft in support of emergency operations however they will need assistance with security, once these flights begin arriving.

- Via UNOCHA - Shefa Province has been declared a state of emergency. There are 6 confirmed fatalities. About 90% of structures in Efate have been damaged or destroyed. More than 2,000 people are sheltering in over 25 evacuation centres in Efate, Torba, and Penama. Commercial flights in and out of Port Vila are still grounded, but military relief flights are landing. The Vanuatu Humanitarian Team is supporting the government-led response and is holding regular cluster meetings with in-country partners. A UNDAC team is arriving in Port Vila on 16 March, and OCHA’s Pacific Humanitarian Team is also deploying. WFP has deployed a logistics expert. Debris and damage to roads is hampering relief assessment and distribution. (source)

15 March:
- Via WFP Emergency Telecommunications Cluster - ETC Sitrep #1 covering March 14-15 - ETC Coordinator and Technical Specialist have deployed to Vanuatu to conduct assessments with partners and coordinate the interagency ICT response. Five Telecoms Sans Frontieres (TSF) responders are en route to support UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) and the NDMO, carrying 7x BGANS, routers, access points and satellite phones. TSF aims to provide basic satellite communications services to humanitarians. Five Telecoms Sans Frontieres (TSF) responders are en route to support UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) and the NDMO, carrying 7x BGANS, routers, access points and satellite phones. TSF aims to provide basic satellite communications services to humanitarians. The World Food Programme (WFP) is packing 16 generators to deploy to support power need. (source)

- 5:00pm: There are signs that fuel supplies, especially diesel are dwindling. “We’ve been in a queue that goes on forever on Kumul Highway for more than an hour waiting for petrol.” (source) “The attendant at Pacific just told us the queue for petrol started this morning and has been endless since.” (source) “We’re lucky we’re on unleaded fuel. The queue on the highway for diesel fuel is beyond long.” (source)

- Via ReliefWeb - UNOCHA Sitrep 1 published (source)
- Video of devastation in Mele Village, a large village outside Port Vila. (source)

- 5:00pm - Via Digicel Vanuatu - A jpg map has been posted on Digicel FaceBook with red circles of areas where service has been restored. Digicel advises the public to follow them in FaceBook for official updates on further restorals. Digicel also advises that while service may be restored, power remains out and cell phones may be dead (source).

- via NDMO Report #3 - as of 14 March, UNELCO reports that electricity is out everywhere and over 80% of power lines have been damaged. It will take several weeks before power can be restored.

- Via ABC News Australia - Vanuatu's president Baldwin Lonsdale has called for emergency aid from abroad. Peter Walton, head of international programs for the Red Cross in Vanuatu reports that the humanitarian needs are enormous. Shelter, food and water are urgent priorities right now. (source)

- Via UNOCHA - A United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team is expected arrive in Port Vila on the evening of 15 March. OCHA will also deploy three staff with information management, public information and humanitarian coordination expertise on 15 March. (source)

- Via Volunteer Service Abroad - All our volunteers and staff in Port Vila and Santo now confirmed safe (19 of 23 people total). We have had text messages from several volunteers in Port Vila tonight, who say, for them, cellphones are now working (at least some of the time). We also have volunteers in Pentecost, Malekula and Tanna, where communications are still down. (source)

- 5:45am: via American able to reach relatives in Port Vila by phone - People in Port Vila are wandering around sleeping wherever they can find shelter. Standing in the Beverly Hills area of Vila you can see 360 degrees all over the city because everything is knocked down. TVL has one tower for mobile working, near the hill going up from Vila town to Namba 2. All neighborhoods near the airport and the airport itself are severely damaged beyond repair. People in Vila are boiling water as it is unsafe to drink from the tap. People are worried about water supplies and food shortages due to destruction of gardens. (source)

- 3:00am: Via Convoy of Hope - Convoy of Hope is deploying a disaster response team to Vanuatu (source)

End of Report
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