



THE KINGDOM OF TONGA
NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE
NATIONAL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE

SITUATION REPORT

Event: **Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai Volcanic Eruption**
Sit Rep No: **05**
Date: **17 January 2022** Period: **11am Mon 17th Jan – 10am Tues 18th Jan 2022**

This situation report released by the National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) is to inform operational partners on current situation of secondary effect of the Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai (HTHH) Volcanic eruption. This Situation report (Sitrep) covers the period stated above. Frequency of reports will depend on availability of new information and evolving operation.

Highlights

- The National Emergency Operations Centre was activated on Friday 14th January 2022 following a tsunami marine warning and Tonga Geological Services reports of increased volcanic activity.
- HTHH volcano erupted at approx. 5.20pm on Sat 15 Jan 2022 which also triggered a mass evacuation.
- The tsunami warning was cancelled before midday today (17 Jan 2022)
- Communication including internet remains significantly hindered.
- Ha'apai District Emergency Operations Centre made contact with Tongatapu on 17th Jan 2022, for the first time since 15th Jan 2022.
- The Government of Tonga is organising the vessel *MV Late* to travel to Ha'apai with relief supplies and personnel to distribute and also conduct assessments.
- Initial Damage Assessments (IDA) commenced on Sun 16 Jan 2022 targeting impacted coastal areas across Tongatapu.
- Preliminary results of IDA from Tongatapu (4 communities) and 'Eua show:
 - 33 Completely damaged households
 - 117 severely damaged households
 - 74 moderately damaged household
- To date, NEMO has distributed 8,883L and Tonga Red Cross advised they have distributed 1870L.
- As of midday today, there have been 3 reported deaths.
- Vava'u has been in contact today and low on diesel



Background

The Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai (HTHH) volcanic activity commenced on 20 December 2021 and was immediately heightened to red for aviation. Tonga Geological Services monitored the volcanic activity providing public health advice from 20 December 2021 until 2 January 2022. Environmental and public health warnings were provided about the potential of water contamination from the ash fall and potential of acid rain in Ha'apai. Advice included information on potential of fish poisoning due to volcanic fluid polluting the ocean and raising awareness on the hazardous areas surrounding the islands and ensuring the public kept clear of these areas. TGS continued to monitor HTHH and noted that there was no activity from 2nd January to 11th January 2022.

On 14th January 2022 TGS reissued an alert at 7am, following increased volcanic activity as Tongatapu and 'Eua communities were impacted by the smell of sulfur.

On 14th January 2022, Tonga Met issued a Tsunami Marine warning from the National Tsunami Warning Centre at 11.12am directly to the public. The warning was cancelled for Vava'u and Ongo Niua in the evening of Friday 14th Jan 2022 and for the remainder of Tonga on Sat 15th Jan 2022 in the morning.

Current situation

- The HTHH volcanic eruption followed by the tsunami warning triggered an immediate evacuation of communities on 15th January 2022.
- The National Emergency Operations Centre has been activated since 14th January 2022 due to the tsunami marine warning issued.
- Communities sought safety during the tsunami and further volcanic eruptions on the night of the 15th January 2022 at evacuation centres (church halls, community halls)
- There have been 26 priority requests over the last 24 hours. Of these, water remains the highest request, power generators has also been requested for water supply and also for a family with a young child with a disability to blend the child's food.
- Based on the preliminary results of the Initial Damage Assessment and the quantity of relief items being distributed, the following stock is running low and will need to be restocked as soon as possible. The following items are (1) Kitchen Kits, (2) Hygiene Kits, (3) Dignity Kits, (4) Tents for family of 6 members, (5) Tarpaulin, (6) Shelter Tool kits, (7) Dust removal tools (water blasters, shovels), (8) Chainsaws.

Tongatapu focus

- NEMO commenced Initial Damage assessments (IDAs) targetting directly affected communities in the coastal areas.
- Patangata, Kanokupolu and 'Ahau were the first villages to be assessed, followed by Kolomotu'a (Sopu), Maka, Nukuleka, Talafo'ou, Nautoka, Manuka, Kolonga, Afa, Niutoua.
- From initial relief and damage assessment efforts, five communities have been identified as being directly stricken having significant damage to households in coastal areas a. 'Ahau, 'Atata, 'Eueiki, Kanokupolu, and Patangata communities are also at significant risk of being displaced due to the impact and exposure, following the eruption - tsunami. Noting, the IDA for 'Eueiki & 'Atata has yet to be conducted.

Preliminary data from the IDA

House damage				
	Completely damaged	Severely damaged	Moderately damaged	Minor Damage
Kolomotua	8	20	19	21
Kanakupolu	21	35	8	1
‘Ahau	0	2	2	1
Patangata	2	15	17	0
TOTAL	31	72	46	23

- Tonga Water Board continue the maintenance of Sopa and Ma’ufanga and advise that most urban areas has been reported and the main supplier is currently on low pressure. Further activity to resolve this will continue tomorrow.
- Tonga Power Ltd (TPL) advised that the power supply for Toulake to ‘Anana has been resolved. Currently TPL are clearing the roads and will focus on Hihifo, Hahake and Vaheloto.
- NEMO has received donations from the Church of Latter Day Saints for non-food items and food items

‘Eua Update

- ‘Eua District Emergency Operations Centre (DEOC) Manager has been requested to have an audience His Majesty King Tupou VI at 6pm today.
- ‘Eua DEOC Manager advised that evacuees have returned home and the evacuation centres are now empty. Further updates from ‘Eua.
- Urgent MOH needs are: water, food and masks as well as medication supplies. The hospital is currently only accepting emergency cases. There is up to 4 pregnant women that they need to get to Tongatapu for scans
- Initial assessment in ‘Eua found:

Number of Completely Damaged Households	Number of Severely Damaged Household	Number of Moderately Damaged Households
2	45	28

- TRCS will distribute kitchen kits and tarpaulins, as required.
- MOI to assess roads and wharf, though MOI does not have enough equipment to do job
- Police have restricted access to Ohonua, with only residents and visitors to the Cemetery allowed. MOH to spray cemetery. People need to move their family to Pangai Cemetery, currently awaiting CEO of Lands approval of piece of land
- ‘Eua ferry is now available for supplies to be sent to ‘Eua

Ha’apai Update

- Ha’apai DEOC advised that there was severe damage to the causeway (‘Ahanga) and damage to the coastal areas and households from Pangai to Hihifo.
- Initial identified urgent needs for Ha’apai are
 - (1) drinking water, (2) masks (3) safety glasses (4) vests (5) clothes (6) desalinator
- Vessel *MV Late* departed for Otumu’omu’a (Ha’apai Group) today 18th January with relief items from NEMO.
- Tonga Red Cross Society provided:
 - 3100Ltrs (22 x 10Ltr and 144 x 20L) of water.
- TRCS has stocks in Ha’apai and on various islands so will check the status of these

- NEMO provided :
 - Non-food items –
 - 100 Hygiene kits,
 - 100 Kitchen Kits,
 - 100 Tarpaulins
 - 45 tents
 - 2 desalination units
 - Food items
 - Tinned fish x 150 boxes
 - Tinned corned beef x 150 boxes
 - Crackers x300 boxes
 - Flour 25 kg x 150 bags
 - Sugar 25kg x 100 bags
 - Water – 3,000 Ltrs
 - Water – 20L x 70 bottles

Vava'u Update

- Vava'u District Emergency Operations Centre has contacted NEOC for the first time and advise that no damage n Vava'u though diesel stocks are low and they will run out by Sunday.

Cluster Response

- A Full Cluster meeting was held at 11am on Tuesday 18 January 2021. Details of the Cluster update will be provided in the next SitRep.

Further updates

NEMO will provide the next SitRep at the next meeting or within 24 hours or as the situation may evolve, as determined by NEMC.