

This report was issued by UNOCHA's Fiji Office. It covers the period from 8.00pm 31/9/09 to 7.00 pm 01/10/09.

I. HIGHLIGHTS/KEY PRIORITIES

- **A total of 110 deaths in Samoa, and seven in Tonga, have now been reported.**
- **Emergency medical services are a priority need in both countries along with water, food, and shelter.**
- **Samoa has declared a “State of Disaster”. Tonga has declared Niuatoputapu a “Regional Area of Emergency”.**

II. Situation Overview

On 29 September at 06.48 hour local time, a powerful magnitude 8.0 Earthquake struck to the south of the main Samoan Island chain with its epicentre 190 km south of the Samoan capital of Apia. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre issued a series of Regional Tsunami Warning and related advisories. A series of quake-triggered tsunami waves hit American Samoa, Western Samoa, and the small northern island of Niuatoputapu in Tonga around 0700 hours local time. The quake and the high waves, some of which are said to be as high as 6 metres, have caused serious casualty and damages to the affected Pacific Island countries.

Samoa

As of 30 September, the Government of Samoa (GoS) reported 110 deaths and 146 injuries. The number is expected to rise as search and rescue operations are continuing.

GoS has declared a “State of Disaster” and is being assisted by foreign missions and the United Nations. Assessments and the distribution of relief have been mobilized by the National Disaster Council with assistance from international and local partners.

The worst affected areas are reported to be the South and South Eastern coast of the island of Upolu. Damage to family homes, community buildings, resorts, roads, power lines and water supply close to coastal areas has been widely reported. Oxfam NZ reports that the Poutasi hospital has been destroyed and that water supply and electricity are down in many of the affected areas. Some villages on Upolu, Monono and Savaii islands are still reported to be under water. Communications by email and telephone remain difficult.

Key needs identified at this point are water, food, shelter supplies and psychosocial support.

Tonga

The island of Niuatoputapu, located 400 miles north of Nuku'alofa, was struck at three minute intervals by three 6-metre waves at around 0700 hours local time on 29 September. Waves are reported to have traveled up to 600 metres inland. Nearby Niuafu'ou Island is unaffected due to high cliffs.

Seven people are reported dead, three are missing, four survivors are in a critical condition, and other survivors have sustained major injuries. The four critically injured people were scheduled to be airlifted to the nearest hospital today.

There is no potable water left on the island and major damage to crops due to the inundation of sea water is expected. Water storage facilities have also been destroyed.

The total population of Niuatoputapu is approximately 1,400. About 90% of houses are reported to have been destroyed in the villages of Hihifo and Falehau. The third village, Vaipoa, is reported to be relatively

unharmed. According to the 2006 census, the combined population of Hihifo and Falehau is approximately 700 people. Many displaced people are now assembling in the hall at the High School.

The only communication to the island is via the airport control tower and a yacht moored just offshore.

A Tongan Navy Patrol Boat carrying a medical team, counsellors, army engineers and supplies is expected to arrive in Niuatoputapu at 6pm tonight. Upon arrival, the Tonga Defence Service, who are in charge of the relief operation, will establish a command centre, assess the damage, and identify any further needs for assistance. The island also has a Red Cross depot of emergency supplies.

A French Frigate will be calling at Nukulofa on a goodwill mission and leaving again on Saturday (Tongan time) for to Niuatoputapu. It will be able to carry supplies.

Key needs identified at this point are medical assistance, food, water, shelter, non-food and sanitary items.

III. Humanitarian Needs and Response

Initial Assessment

Despite anecdotal evidence there is still a shortage of verifiable and quantifiable information in either country.

Samoa

- IFRC will dispatch a FACT team to Samoa. The team consists of technical experts of various sectors including WASH, health, logistics, relief, psychosocial, shelter and tracing.
- UNICEF will mobilize 4 staff to conduct a multi-sectoral initial assessment in conjunction with Save the Children New Zealand with a primary focus on evacuation centres.

Tonga

- The Tongan Defence service will conduct an assessment on Niuatoputapu.

Emergency Shelter

Tonga

- An aerial survey has reported that up to 90% of houses in the villages of Hihifo and Falehau have been damaged or destroyed.
- Relief stock on hand at the Tonga Red Cross Society Office in Niuatoputapu, as outlined below, will be distributed when Red Cross team arrives on 1 October. These supplies are unlikely to meet the total need of the population.

○ Blankets	200
○ Cooking set :2 pots, plates, spoon, etc	100
○ Hurricane Lamp	100
○ Plastic bucket	100
○ Tarpaulins 6mx4m	200
○ Water container 20lts	65

Emergency Telecoms

Samoa

- Communication remains difficult.
- Telecoms Sans Frontieres will arrive 2 October to help provide emergency communication network.

Food and Nutrition

Tonga

- A food shortage is likely on Niuatoputapu. This is also likely to be a long term issue due to reported crop damage.
- A boat, carrying 20 bags each of flour and sugar, generators, tents, cooking sets, and water containers, is expected to reach the island by 1800 hour on 1 October (Tongan Time).

Samoa

- Initial reports from agencies conducting assessments suggest a shortage of food.

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- UNICEF is deploying a health and nutrition expert to Samoa.

Health

Tonga

- Radio reports from Niuatoputapu have requested emergency medical services.
- Australia has 12 heart surgeons, anaesthetists, and nurses in Nuku'alofa who have offered to go to Niuatoputapu if required.
- WHO will deploy a staff member to their Tonga office to fill the gap due to the absence of their Country Liaison Officer (CLO). The new CLO will coordinate with the Ministry of Health to provide disaster response assistance.

Samoa

- There are reports of overcrowding in many hospitals. Initial reports suggest that emergency medical services are an immediate need.
- Medecins Sans Frontieres has mobilized a team comprising of a Nurse, Psychologist and Logistician, who will arrive in Apia at 11.50am on Friday 2 October (Samoa time)

Protection

Samoa

- There have been no protection issues reported to date.
- The Pacific Humanitarian Protection Group is dispatching a Senior Protection Officer and the Head of OHCHR to Samoa in order to make sure that protection is well mainstreamed into the disaster response and protection issues are sufficiently addressed from the early stage of the disaster.
- One of the priority areas is protection of displaced populations in evacuation centers, emergency shelters and in host families and ensuring equal distribution of relief items according to the identified needs.
- UNICEF is dispatching two staff with expertise in child protection, health and HIV/AIDS.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

Samoa

- UNICEF is deploying a WASH expert from their NY office, who will play the role of WASH Cluster Coordinator.

IV. Coordination

Tonga

- A daily media briefing will be held at 11:00am at the National Disaster Management Office. Operation Niuatoputapu is being coordinated by Col. Siamelie Latu of the Tonga Defence Service.
- There has not been an official request for international assistance. The Tongan Government is working with the Australian and New Zealand Governments on a bilateral basis.

Samoa

A four-member UNDAC team led by OCHA Regional Disaster Response Advisor, Peter Muller, has arrived in Samoa. The team will work in support to the UN Country Team and Government systems in coordinating the response. A support unit of the Asia Pacific Humanitarian Partner is scheduled to arrive on 1 October to support the UNDAC team.

V. Funding and International Assistance

Samoa

In response to Samoa's request, the Australian Government will send medical personnel and urgently needed disaster relief supplies. A chartered aircraft was scheduled to depart on 1 October with medical personnel. The flight will also carry Australian Government personnel from AusAID, Emergency Management Australia, the Australian Federal Police and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

A Defence C-130 Hercules aircraft carrying humanitarian supplies will leave on 2 October. The package of support includes disaster relief items such as tents, tarpaulins, blankets, mosquito nets and water containers. The response is part of a \$2 million initial package of support to help Samoa respond to the immediate

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aftermath of the tsunami. Australia has announced its readiness to offer further assistance to Samoa and other Pacific countries.

At the request of Samoa, New Zealand is sending a team of Army medics to join a civilian medical team that left on an Air Force Hercules on 30 September. Included in the flight are temporary morgue facilities, tents, stretchers and medical and food supplies. Several police officers skilled in body identification are also deployed with the team. The Government of New Zealand has announced it is ready to do all it could to help Samoa deal with the unfolding disaster both for the immediate and long-term needs.

The Navy frigate Canterbury is being prepared and likely to be sent next week once the needs of the GoS are clear. The New Zealand Government has made an immediate aid donation to Samoa and Tonga of \$NZ1 million. The money will go to the islands' governments, the Red Cross and other non-governmental organizations.

The European Commission has announced it will provide 150,000 euros in initial emergency aid.

Tonga

The Government of Tonga intends to issue a local appeal over the radio at lunch time today for residents of Tongatapu to donate basic items of food, bedding and clothing.

VI. Contact

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