

This report was issued by OCHA New York, with inputs from OCHA Fiji and OCHA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. It covers the period from 5 October, 6 a.m., to 7 October, 7 p.m. The next report will be issued around 8 October.

I. HIGHLIGHTS/KEY PRIORITIES

- **A powerful earthquake struck the south of the main Samoan Island chain on 29 September. A series of quake-triggered tsunami waves that followed hit American Samoa, Samoa, and the small northern island of Niuatoputapu in Tonga.**
- **Death toll in Samoa is 137, with 310 people injured and six still missing.**
- **About 3,200 people (640 families) have been left homeless in Samoa.**
- **The Government of Samoa has downgraded the situation from a “State of Disaster” to a “State of Emergency”.**
- **A national burial service for the victims will be held in Samoa on 8 October.**
- **Humanitarian response in both Samoa and Tonga is transitioning from relief to early recovery. Potable water continues to be the priority concern.**
- **In an all members state meeting at UN Headquarters in New York, the Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes briefed on Asia Pacific disasters including situations in Samoa and Tonga.**

II. Situation Overview

In the morning of 29 September 2009, a powerful earthquake struck south of the main Samoan Island chain with its epicentre 190 kilometres south of the Samoan capital of Apia. Few minutes later, as warned by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre, a series of quake-triggered tsunami waves hit American Samoa, Samoa, and the small northern island of Niuatoputapu in Tonga. The tsunami waves, some of which are said to have been as high as 6 metres, caused fatalities, casualties and serious damage to the Pacific Island countries.

Samoa

The death toll in Samoa now stands at 137, with the majority of the victims being female, young or elderly. About 310 people were injured and treated in hospital, and six still missing. Assessments by the Samoan Red Cross (SRC) indicate that 40 villages have been affected along the south-eastern coast, with 20 villages completely destroyed by tsunami waves. Approximately 3,200 people (640 families) have been left homeless. People are living in makeshift shelters in their gardens on higher grounds and with host families. The Government of Samoa (GoS) estimated the cost of damage to infrastructure, public and private properties at around Samoan tala 380 million (approximately US\$ 150 million).

The relief effort is focussed in two locations: (1) the southern coast of Upolu, where the most significant damage was sustained, and (2) the small island of Manono, where infrastructure and water supply were damaged. The GoS, assisted by Australia and New Zealand, is repairing the water system.

Samoa has downgraded the situation from a state of “disaster” to an “emergency”. Traditional community structures and the system of traditional leadership “matai” assisted greatly in the response, facilitating affected families to quickly find support from other family members or neighbours in the community.

A national burial and service for the victims will be held in Samoa on 8 October. So far, nine families have accepted the offer for burial in mass graves.

Tonga

A total of nine deaths have been reported, with 465 people affected and more than 300 people left homeless as a result of the tsunami that struck the island of Niuatoputapu. Eighty houses have been destroyed and an additional 56 houses were damaged although they were considered repairable.

The situation in Tonga appears to be stabilizing. The Tongan Red Cross (TRC) reported that the priority needs of survivors are water and shelter, and added that immediate relief needs of those affected would be met by existing resources.

While the “state of emergency” is still in effect, a government assessment mission planned to commence on 7 October will clarify whether the “state of emergency” can be lifted. The mission will also assess gaps in relief and identify early recovery needs. Potential gap areas are sanitation or other specialized needs such as women and children’s health. The Government of Tonga (GoT) anticipates that they would know more about this subject within three to four days. Priority areas for early recovery activities are likely to be WASH, shelter, and health infrastructure, psychosocial support, and fishing.

Coordination of humanitarian activities has been ably managed by the Government supported by the FRANZ collaboration mechanism, which is an arrangement among Australia, New Zealand and France to respond to disasters in the Pacific. The UN Resident Coordinator, together with the UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, Mr. Jordan Ryan, are also in Tonga to support early recovery initiatives.

III. Humanitarian Needs and Response

Initial Assessment

Samoa

- A comprehensive multi-sector assessment will not take place as planned, as much information has already been collected. WHO, the Health Cluster lead, will support national authorities with the collation of health data that was collected in the first response phase. WASH and Education Clusters will continue to work with counterparts of respective line ministries with ongoing operations and assessments. The outcome of these initial assessments is expected by 7 October.
- The Early Recovery Cluster is conducting an inter-agency assessment, focusing on recovery of livelihoods, agriculture and reconstruction and livelihoods, with the support from agencies with a protection mandate.
- The SRC is undertaking an assessment of the situation on Manono Island. The Government of New Zealand will facilitate a helicopter access to Manono on 6 October.

Tonga

- The assessment team deployed by the GoT will begin identifying reconstruction needs on 6 October.

Logistics

Samoa

- Roads have been restored and relief items from SRC and Samoa disaster management office have been distributed.
- UNDAC team is mapping the distribution of relief supplies by the Government, SRC and Caritas to the affected communities via distribution centers.

Tonga

- The chief pilot of Chathams Pacific, who has made several trips to Niuatoputapu, has advised that the runway is serviceable up to 1,000 metres.
- The Tonga Army has 43 personnel on the ground assisting the initial distribution phase. They will temporarily remain on location to assist with the clean-up.

Emergency Shelter

Samoa

- The SRC continues to distribute tents and tarpaulins to around 1,500 families and to assemble tool kits.

- The Government of New Zealand has offered to deliver recovery supplies such as roofing iron using the navy ship, HMNZS Canterbury.

Tonga

- The TRC has received 50 tents from New Zealand and 30 from within Tonga. There is a need for additional 100 tents.
- In addition to a small warehouse of Australian emergency supplies that were already in place in Niuatoputapu, Australia's immediate response included the provision of emergency supplies including tents, generators and hurricane lamps. These supplies arrived in Nuku'alofa on 3 October and were immediately transported to the French navy ship REVI for delivery in Niuatoputapu on 5 October.

Education

Samoa

- GoS reported that five schools have been severely damaged in two districts. While children affected have been allocated to other schools in the vicinity, temporary schooling facilities may need to be considered.
- Save the Children and UNICEF are planning to provide assistance to the Ministry of Education.
- School has restarted in Samoa on 5 October.

Tonga

- Three primary schools and one high school on Niuatoputapu are in good condition and schooling is expected to resume shortly.

Emergency Telecoms

Samoa

- The Telecommunications sector has recovered rapidly. On 5 October, SamoaTel mobilized three vans equipped with telephone lines to allow free calls to friends and families.

Food and Nutrition

Samoa

- Availability and distribution of food have been organised by the Government, SRC and NGOs. There are reports of a shortage of tools, stoves and kitchen utensils to cook the distributed food.
- UNICEF is planning a food basket monitoring survey to assess the specific nutritional situation.

Tonga

- Immediate food needs are reported to have been met. Most crops appear to have been planted on high ground and are relatively unaffected. Aerial assessment shows significant soil run-off, which clouded the reef, possibly reducing the ability to source fish and shellfish.
- Livestock, especially pigs, mostly survived. However, damage to the breadfruit trees and lack of a regular ferry service have meant shortages of imported goods. Some people have lost their vehicles, making access to food crops difficult in some cases.

Health

Samoa

- WHO will provide a specialist to the Ministry of Health (MoH) to manage the information flow generated by the tsunami response. A microbiologist will also be seconded to the MoH. WHO and UNICEF will support strengthened surveillance system.
- The New Zealand medical team continues to perform surgical procedures in Apia hospital. New Zealand civilian health staff continue to work with the Samoan National Health Services to determine further health staff and clinical requirements as the focus shifts towards limiting the spread of infectious and communicable diseases.
- Thirty-five Australian emergency and medical personnel returned to Australia on 4 October. In the meantime, 73 Australian emergency and medical personnel remain in Samoa to provide assessment, communications, transport, logistics and accommodation support.
- On 5 October, Australia supported the set up of three field clinics in Lalomanu, Fusi and Poutasi to assist communities for three days.

- A shipment of tetanus immunoglobulin will be transported by air to Samoa on 6 October to meet a request from the MoH.
- UNFPA has sent 1,000 hygiene kits from its warehouse in Fiji to arrive in Samoa on 6 October.
- SRC and Save the Children are working with the Government to coordinate the delivery of psycho-social support to the affected population.
- UNICEF is planning to vaccinate 11,000 children in Samoa against diseases like measles.

Tonga

- On 5 October, TRC will begin providing psycho-social support to the affected population, including those who are sheltering in the hills and have not yet returned to coastal areas.
- A private Australian medical team, who were in Tonga at the time of the disaster, are assisting Tongan authorities to treat the seriously injured at the Vaiola Hospital in Nuku'alofa.

Protection

Samoa

- Protection concerns are being mainstreamed into the preparations for the early recovery assessment, due to be carried out from 6 to 7 October. Participants in the Early Recovery Cluster agreed that assessment teams should include women, young people, government and non-government participants. The teams will ensure to speak to a cross-section of the community, including women and young people.
- The Protection Cluster is concerned that the groups, which are providing psycho-social support in the affected community, are not taking a unified approach and that it may be too early to begin trauma counselling. There is no clear system of identifying counsellors for the communities to officially find out who they are talking to.
- There appears to be no system for tracking and registering children who are separated from their immediate families. This poses a risk for children to be exposed to abusive situations without the knowledge of authorities or communities. The Protection Cluster will raise this concern with the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development and Red Cross. It will also distribute the Code of Conduct for Child Protection for humanitarian workers and design key messages for communities on how to keep families together.
- The Protection Cluster continues to receive information suggesting uneven aid distribution and aid diversion.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

Samoa

- Family water storage is still a priority in the relief distribution. In the meantime, government agencies are working hard to repair water systems.
- New Zealand navy divers reconnected the water mains to Manono Island on 4 October. However, the water is not yet up to the drinking standard. The divers are yet to carry out an assessment of the water tanks on Manono Island.
- A rapid environmental assessment coordinated by UNESCO indicated that solid waste is a problem, with rubble, cars and other machinery dispersed over a large area of coastal and mangrove land. Removing the debris is a challenge. Furthermore, there is a number of small spills from machinery and oil and fuel drums that are leaking on agricultural lands.
- Detailed water and sanitation assessments are ongoing. The results are expected in coming days.

Tonga

- NZAID reported that fresh water is now available, with the bores cleared of debris, flushed and water pumps repaired. As a result, the French vessel, Revi, equipped with a desalination plant, is no longer required to produce fresh water.
- Tonga Defence Service is distributing 20 Rotomould tanks in strategic locations in the villages, so people have immediate access to water. A longer term solution will be necessary.
- TRC reported that the island's water systems were damaged beyond repair and the New Zealand Red Cross has offered to deliver a water purification machine to generate sufficient drinking water.

Early Recovery

Samoa

- The GoS has endorsed the need to move on to the early recovery phase.
- Government ministries, assisted by international partners, are undertaking a socio-economic assessment to learn about early recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction for education, health, environment, infrastructure, tourism, and agriculture and food security. The Government has requested UNDP to develop a recovery plan in consultation with cluster partners and UNISDR by next week.
- Australia is supporting early requests from the Samoan Government to assess the impacts of the tsunami on the key income-earning tourist industry. The Australian Government has made funds available for a tourism assessment by a local firm, KVA.
- Asian Development Bank advisers for infrastructure and education as well as a UNICEF education specialist will arrive on 6 October.
- Australia is in discussions with New Zealand and other donors to coordinate the long-term reconstruction assistance.

Tonga

- Tafahi Island, which is 9 kilometres north of Niuatoputapu, is mostly unaffected. However, four fishing boats have been reported lost. It is likely that the boats might be damaged on Niuatoputapu.
- AusAID deployed a disaster expert to Niuatoputapu to assist the GoT with the reconstruction needs assessment.

IV. Coordination

Samoa

- Clusters are operational and are planning response as well as recovery actions in coordination with government counterparts.
- UNDAC set up a website with postings of cluster information, maps and disaster aerial imageries (<http://www.pacificdisaster.net:8080/Plone>).

Tonga

- Coordination of humanitarian activities is ably managed by the Government's own coordination mechanism, supported by the FRANZ collaboration mechanism.

V. Funding

Samoa

- In addition to the European euro 150,000 (approximately US\$ 220,000) of fast track humanitarian funding made available to Samoa and Tonga, the European Union will provide US\$ 2 million for recovery.
- The Samoan Government encouraged donors to provide assistance in funds, rather than in-kind contributions.
- The Japan International Cooperation Agency is arranging to dispatch emergency relief items worth Japanese yen 20 million (equivalent to US\$ 220,000). This includes 30 tents, 170 tarpaulins, 900 plastic jerry cans, 300 sleeping mattresses, 400 blankets, and five water purifiers.

Tonga

- On 3 October, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs announced Australian dollar 1 million package of support (approximately US\$ 874,000) to help relief and recovery efforts on the island of Niuatoputapu.

All humanitarian partners including donors and recipient agencies are encouraged to inform FTS of cash and in-kind contributions by sending an email to: fts@reliefweb.int.

VI. Contact

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