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Saint Vincent and the Grenadines • OECS

St. Vincent & the Grenadines: La Soufrière Volcano

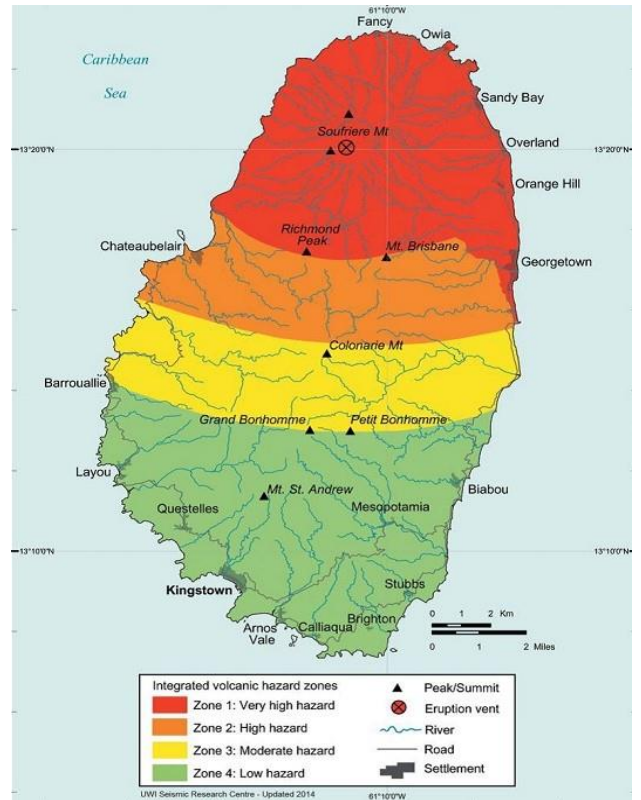
Situation Report No. 03

As of 14 April 2021

This situation report is produced by the United Nations Sub-Regional Team (UNST) for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It is issued by the Office of the Resident Coordinator for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean with the support of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

HIGHLIGHTS

- The volcano continues to erupt explosively and has now started to generate pyroclastic density currents that appear to have gone down valleys that drain towards the Rabacca River on the east coast of the island.¹
- Eighty-nine (89) shelters with more than 4,021 occupants are now activated. Registration of persons who have sought shelter with family and friends is ongoing, with 2,045 persons registered to date.²
- Four of the eight (8) seismic stations were lost, and new seismic stations will be installed when it is safe to do so. The remaining four (4) stations will provide the ability to monitor the activity and will be augmented by satellite imagery.³
- CDEMA has mobilized the Detailed Damage Sector Assessment (DDSA) team to support the Water, Health, and Agriculture damage assessment. UNICEF, PAHO, and FAO are expected to be part of the team.
- The UN system is increasing its deployment subsequent to the request for assistance received from Prime Minister Gonsalves, and besides WFP, PAHO/WHO already onsite, UNICEF, FAO, and UNEP experts are being deployed along with coordination support from the Resident Coordinator Office/OCHA.
- The UN Team for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean is preparing to launch a funding appeal for humanitarian and early recovery support in Saint Vincent and other affected neighbouring countries.



Source: Home (nemo.gov.vc)
The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

16-20K

Estimated people affected

2,045K

Estimated vulnerable people sheltering with family or friends⁴

4,021K

Estimated people in shelters⁵

89

Shelters for temporary accommodation have been activated⁶

¹ The University of the West Indies Seismic Research Centre 14 April 2021

² Ibid

³ CDEMA Situation Report #11 12 April 2021

⁴ CDEMA Situation Report #13 14 April 2021

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

SITUATION OVERVIEW

On 14 April, during a Press Conference held by the Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), Hon. Dr. Ralph E. Gonsalves pleaded with persons to leave the red zone. Over the last five days, 127 people have been rescued in Owia, a community located in the red zone, despite evacuation orders given last week.⁷

Concerning evacuees, cruise ships were preparing to take evacuees to other islands nearby. However, the Prime Minister indicated that while some individuals would like to leave, he believed that there was not a sufficient uptake of persons who wanted to leave Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.⁸

Extensive international media coverage coming out of the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) Didier Trebucq's brief to Journalist correspondents at the UN Headquarters today gave further visibility to SVG's emerging humanitarian crisis. During the Press Briefing, the RC highlighted the impact of the eruption and subsequent ashfall on neighbouring islands and the fact that this situation represents a "crisis within the crisis," given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In his exchange with the media, the RC underscored the need for a longer-term humanitarian and rehabilitative response and support from the international community for an announced UN funding appeal to meet immediate humanitarian needs and support early recovery over the next six months.

GENERAL COORDINATION

To enhance coordination of the UN Response, the decision was taken by the United Nations Sub-Regional Team (UNST) to create specialized sector groups to respond to health and WASH, food security and livelihoods, shelter and protection needs. On 14 April, the Caribbean Development Partners Group - Disaster Management (CDPG-DM), co-chaired by the Executive Director of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and the UN RC for Barbados and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), met to discuss further deployment and the coordination of relief items. On 14 April, the United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETT) met to coordinate and discuss the UN response.

The UN for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean will launch a funding appeal to cover the immediate humanitarian and early recovery needs for the next six months for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines following the volcano eruption. Considering the impact of ashfall on neighbouring countries such as Barbados, the UN Funding appeal will seek to mobilise financial resources to support recovery efforts in all affected countries. As part of this appeal, the UN requested financial assistance from the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) in the areas of WASH and Cash Transfer to support families and the most vulnerable.

Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Dr. Simone Keizer-Beach, in a coordination meeting of the Caribbean Development Partners Group (CDPG) on 11 April 2021, informed that a 'working quarantine protocol' is now in effect for persons entering SVG as part of the humanitarian response. Persons with negative PCR test results obtained within 24 - 48 hours before travel will be allowed to commence work immediately. If a PCR test is done 72 hours before travel, the person will be allowed entry but will be required to take a PCR test upon entry and await the result before being approved to work. Proof of vaccination would be an asset. However, all persons will be required to wear masks and follow the protocols.⁹

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Early Recovery

Needs:

- Initial detailed sectoral assessment of the impact.
- Cleaning and clearing of ash and debris.

⁷ Loopnews-caribbean 14 April 2021

⁸ News784 13 April 2021

⁹ PAHO Situation Review La Soufrière Volcano Situation Report #5 13 April 2021

Response:

- In collaboration with the Government, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is preparing an emergency employment programme proposal to facilitate community cleanup of ash/ debris and the procurement of necessary equipment as soon as the cleanup can commence.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Current information gap articulating needs.

Education**Needs:**

- Initial Education Needs Assessment.
- Safe temporary learning spaces, including the provision of water and sanitation facilities.
- Recreational kits and early childhood development kits.
- Psychosocial support for school children and teachers.

Response:

- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supported the Return to Happiness training for teachers. Virtual training has been implemented over the past two months.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Information gaps on current needs to enable an adequate response in educational interventions.

Food Security and Livelihoods**Needs:**

- Immediate food and basic needs.
- Loss of assets and livelihoods (fisheries, agriculture).
- Insufficient food supplies in shelters to address needs for an extended period.
- Ongoing adverse socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic compounding the situation.
- Insufficient capacity of potential host countries to provide support to evacuees for medium- and long-term support.

20K

Estimated number of people to be at risk of food insecurity.

Response:

- The World Food Programme (WFP) is supporting the government to strengthen ongoing needs assessments to gather key information on the location of displaced people and evacuees, verification of vulnerability, and their immediate needs.
- With the Ministry of National Mobilization and Social Development, WFP will support the initial provision of vouchers to meet immediate and urgent needs while planning for scaled-up support.
- WFP is also supporting the digitalization of government's registration forms and providing training on the use of KoBo and other assessment tools/apps to capture disaggregated data on evacuees - with priorities in shelters - and other displaced persons who are being hosted in private homes and accommodation.
- To date, 43 staff from the Ministry of Education, lead ministry of the Shelter Management Subcommittee, shelter managers, and teachers have been trained in the use of digital forms.
- Efforts are ongoing to support the government to digitalize the registration processes of other sectors (e.g., welfare) to improve data collection and analytics.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is supporting infrastructure for animal shelters that can be later refigured as maternity or quarantine wards if the crisis continues.
- FAO is providing support with feed concentrates, importation of hay and molasses, additional water tanks, water, animal registration, and tagging.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Financial resources for cash transfers and food distributions.


Health
Needs:

- Health risks are increasing due to a combination with the current COVID-19 situation.
- Respiratory problems due to the impact of ash clouds over time. Ash plumes and sulfur dioxide have reached far enough to affect Barbados, Grenada, and Saint Lucia.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as masks, cleaning supplies, gloves, and additional surveillance is still required.
- Shortage of family planning and dignity kits for women and girls.

Response:

- The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) will be continuing to conduct a damage assessment of health facilities, including assessing the structural and functional integrity of facilities and assessing water quality.
- PAHO will identify water tank and pump requirements for Health Clinics in the green zone.
- PAHO will purchase 50 water tanks, 50 water pumps and 50 Oxygen cylinders, NCD kits, 17 additional residual chlorine testing kits (HACH CN70).
- PAHO to deliver 60,000 masks, 7,000 N95, and 60,000 gowns to Barbados Defense Force.
- Facilitate shipment of 100,000 masks to Ministry of Health in Saint Vincent from PAHO Office Barbados. Transportation to be identified in coordination with WFP and CDEMA.
- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is providing technical guidance to ensure access of population in shelters to family planning, Sexually Transmitted Infections treatment, Clinical Management of Rape, ART for Persons Living with HIV, among other interventions.
- UNFPA is supporting the Ministry of Health to procure Rape kits to be distributed in each district.
- UNFPA has facilitated a Shelter Rapid Checklist to assess access to sexual reproductive health and support the mapping of nearest health facilities to the shelters.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Heightened risk of COVID-19 transmissions. On average, only 6-8 persons per shelter have been vaccinated upon admission.
- Demographics on persons in shelters in terms of age, sex, and gender, not yet disaggregated.
- Inadequate access to safe drinking water and water for domestic use (toilet and washing).


Protection
Needs:

- Safe spaces/centres for children, women, and vulnerable people.
- Child protection a violence prevention and response services.
- Active engagement and capacity building of shelter managers to mitigate GBV risks inside the shelters.
- Dignity Kits to cover women and girls' basic hygiene needs.
- GBV in emergency response services and case management services, safe referrals, and particularly the capacity to respond to incidents of sexual violence through clinical management of rape (CMR) services.
- GBV Referral Pathways to be updated and disseminated among service providers and distributing key Information, Communication and Education (IEC) materials to the affected communities.
- Specialized Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) emergency services.

7.6K

Estimated number of
women and girls
evacuated ¹⁰

Response:

- UNFPA remotely provides daily GBViE technical assistance support to the Gender Affairs Division, including an ongoing GBV Safety Audit in emergency shelters.

¹⁰ Based on total female population being evacuated from the RED and ORANGE zone.

- UNFPA facilitated an orientation session for ten staff and volunteers conducting the GBV Safety Audit in emergency shelters.
- UNFPA provides technical assistance to the Gender Affairs Division in updating existing GBV referral pathways and GBV 4W service mapping.
- UNFPA widely shared guidance on integrating SRH and GBV Considerations in Emergency Shelters and is engaging with CDEMA and relevant NGM in providing technical assistance for the implementation.
- UN Women held a meeting with the National Gender Machinery from Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Saint Lucia, and Grenada to determine if they need support regarding the incoming evacuees.
- UN Women awaits further assessments by NGM in SVG and is ready to support assessments on the ground with analysis and guiding personnel to ensure gender responsiveness of assessment tools.
- The OECS inquired about the Gender Equality Coordination group having a meeting to address the situation. As secretariat UN Women consulted the co-chairs, and a meeting was convened on 14 April 2021.
- UNICEF will support the Shelter Safety Audit to ensure that girls' and boys' concerns are included in the GBV Safety Audit.
- UNICEF provides remote Child Protection in Emergencies (CPiE) technical assistance support to the Child Development Division of the Ministry of National Mobilization (MNM). This includes strengthening CP referral pathways and protocols, streamlining and building capacity on CP rapid assessment and data capture tools for CP monitoring, and establishing Child Friendly Spaces and child protection mainstreaming in emergency shelters.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Information gaps on sex and age disaggregated data to inform needs analysis.
- Data collection systems are weak and unreliable, and needs are being assessed by a limited number of staff relying heavily on support from volunteers.
- Need for improved tools and protocols for displaced/evacuated people from SVG.
- Potential for family separation, posing risks for vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied and separated children, persons living with disabilities, pregnant women, single female heads of household, and women traveling alone,
- Urgent concerns related to the lack of GBV awareness and mitigation actions in the setup of emergency shelters, posing serious risks for women and girls.
- Concerns for the potential increase in SEA by service providers, humanitarian actors, and security forces, as women seem to be reaching out only to shelter management (often absent from shelters) for support. There is also the fact of the lack of female police officers in emergency shelters.

Shelter

Needs:

- An estimated 20,000 people are displaced, of which an increasing number require shelter and protection.
- Provision of temporary support for displaced persons, including shelter, food and social services, medical and school arrangements, COVID-19 protocols, and immigration procedures.

89

Shelters are occupied ¹¹

Response

- UNFPA shared Guidance for the Integration of Sexual and Reproductive health (SRH) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) considerations in Emergency Shelters.
- UNFPA is providing technical assistance to CDEMA and National Gender Machineries in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, St. Lucia, Dominica, Barbados and Antigua, and Barbuda.

Gaps & Constraints:

- There is a need for additional planning and management of evacuations, including providing information to affected populations and communities (potentially) hosting evacuees.
- The incorporation of COVID-19 protocols and child protection needs and concerns are incorporated in all shelter activities.
- Establishment of safe spaces and activities for children in the community, such as recreational activities.

¹¹ CDEMA Situation Report #13 14 April 2021

- Establishing systems in shelters/for shelter managers to increase awareness of sexual and physical violence against men, women, boys, and girls, including risks, consequences, and support services.
- Capacity development and technical assistance for shelter managers to mitigate GBV in emergency shelters, including SEA, by mainstreaming key minimum actions related to GBV and SRH service provision, including, but not limited to, safe referrals to services.
- Evacuees entering shelters, or leaving for nearby countries, should be vaccinated with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

Needs:

- Safe drinking water, including chemical and biological water quality testing, treatment, distribution, and water storage items.
- Emergency latrines (with gender and disability considerations) and emptying and safe disposal services.
- Hygiene supplies and environmental cleaning, including menstrual hygiene supplies.
- Essential lifesaving and risk-associated COVID-19 and hygiene awareness messages, including menstrual hygiene management.

Response:

- UNICEF provided several tons of WASH supplies (water tanks - 5,000L, collapsible water containers, dignity kits, chlorine water treatment), nine (9) latrine add-ons for children, and disabled persons' squatting plates. These supplies were transported within 24-hours through CDEMA and the Barbados Defense Force and will benefit 9,000 people with access to safe water and hygiene services.
- PAHO donated portable water test kits, chlorine tablets for industrial use and domestic use.
- Water samples have been sent to Trinidad and Saint Lucia for testing of 10 parameters given the ashfall.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Chemical and biological water quality testing capacity in the country, requiring shipping water samples to accredited laboratories
- Proper distribution use and monitoring of the delivered WASH supplies and the adequate provisioning of safe water, basic sanitation, and necessary hygiene items.
- Sanitation measures and hygiene supplies for shelters, including emergency latrines and environmental cleaning supplies and campaigns.
- Specific attention to safe and adequate menstrual hygiene management solutions for women and girls in shelters.

Logistics

Response:

- In coordination with CDEMA, WFP is dispatching a seven MT truck, two Mobile Storage Units (MSUs), two generators, forklifts, and other equipment via commercial vessel to SVG. Assets will be made available to national authorities to augment logistical capacities.
- WFP is also chartering a 500 MT vessel to transport relief cargo between Barbados and SVG. The vessel will be made available to the broader humanitarian community, and a first rotation is expected to commence later this week /early next week.
- A WFP Logistics Officer is working closely with the transport/logistics Emergency Support Function (ESF) at the NEOC to provide logistical support. This includes the provision of equipment and staff training in using the CDEMA Logistics System to track incoming relief cargo. A request was also made for potential support vis-a-vis handle cargo at other locations/member states utilised as additional logistics staging areas.
- A WFP Civ-Mil Officer has arrived in Saint Vincent, and additional surge staff capacity is on standby.

Constraints:

- Closure of the Argyle International Airport and AIA Cargo Terminal in Saint Vincent.
- Closure of the Grantley Adams International Airport in Barbados.
- Evacuation and transportation capacity.
- Availability of maritime assets.

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For more information, please visit [Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency - CDEMA National Emergency Management Organization \(NEMO\)](#) - [The University of the West Indies Seismic Research Centre PAHO Situation Reports](#)