

Tonga Tsunami SITREP

EVENT NAME: Tonga Tsunami	SITREP No: 4
From: National Emergency Management Office	Date/time: 1300 hrs, 20 th October 2009

Summary

Overview

A magnitude 8.3 earthquake occurred at 0648 hours on Wednesday 30 September 2009 190 km south of Apia. The earthquake triggered tsunami waves which impacted Samoa, American Samoa and the small northern island of Niuaotupapu in Tonga. The tsunami waves caused fatalities, casualties and serious damage to the affected Pacific Island countries.

The parameters of the earthquake are:

Origin time	—	Wednesday 30 September 2009 at 0648 hours
Coordinates	—	15.3°S, 171.0°@W
Focal depth	—	33 km
Location	—	Samoa Islands Region
Richter Magnitude	—	8.3

Proclamation status

A “state of emergency” was declared for Niuaotupapu by the acting Prime Minister, the Honourable Tuita on the 30th September at 3pm local time. The “state of emergency” remains in place.

Summary of response

The emergency response of this operation, led by Colonel Latu (TDS) is now in its final phases. Sufficient emergency shelter, food, water and clothing have been delivered to the islands to support the people in the immediate to short term. The New Zealand Navy Frigate the “Canterbury” on the 14th October 2009 delivered further supplies of food, clothing, water containers, vehicles, and diesel.

Fourteen (14) personnel from the frigate assisted with the clean up and recovery tasks on shore. Medical staff from the frigate provided assistance to the islands hospital staff and advice to the local inhabitants. It is planned to leave a small New Zealand Defence Force contingent behind to assist on the island with the frigate returning on Sunday the 18th October to provide further assistance in the clean up for a couple of days before departing for Nuku’alofa and returning to New Zealand.

The Tongan Naval patrol boat (Voea Neiafu) left Nuku’alofa Wednesday night (14th) with further supplies of food and diesel for Niuaotupapu.

The forward command centre on Niuaotupapu is located in the Niuaotupapu High School under the command of Lord Ma’afu; the National Controller.

Event Status

Tsunami

With the immediate needs of the affected people now met the focus of the Tongan Government is moving from response to recovery. A final briefing was held by the TDS at 10am on Friday the 16th October 2009.

This outlined the actions taken and the current position on the island.

An assessment of the damage and the estimated cost of recovery was presented to the government of Tonga on Thursday the 15th October. It is estimated that the cost or repairs/recovery will be in the vicinity of ToP\$18.3m

A number of offers of aid have been received by the Government of Tonga who are presently working through the projects and attempting to establish a list of priorities. This will then allow these offers to be accepted and formal requests to other agencies or Governments to be made for assistance.

A draft early recovery strategic framework has been prepared for submission later in the week to Cabinet for approval.

A meeting was held with donor agencies and Government's on Thursday 15th October to outline the damage assessment report and discuss the offers made by the donors.

The National Emergency Recovery committee met on Friday the 16th October to discuss this issue.

People

Evacuees:

- The immediate needs of the people have been met in regards to food, water, clothing and shelter.
- The Tongan Red Cross is continuing psycho-social counseling.
- CARITAS (lead by father Seluni) is continuing with trauma counseling for the affected families.
- Father Seluni took a number of young youths who were afraid of the sea as a result of the tsunami, to the sea where he had them beat the sea with a stick, then shake hands with it, in a make up gesture. This was an excellent move in the rehabilitation process of the youth who were last seen enjoying the sea.
- There are approx 50 residents living in a well equipped camp in the hills. NZDF staff connected a water tank for immediate access.
- A community consultation program has commenced to establish the preferred location, house and any other issues they may have. This expected to be completed by the 27th October.
- A large number of evacuees have been helping the TDS and NZDF staff in clean up activities on the island.
- The moral of the people on the island is excellent.

Damage

Buildings:

- The Canterbury provided staff to help with the clean up. Will off load heavy equipment (weather permitting) on Sunday 18th October to assist with debris clean up?
- A four person Ministry of Lands and Survey team will travel to island 20/21st to carry out a risk assessment and evaluation of new sites for the rebuilding of dwellings.
- The team will also carry out assessments of the partially damaged buildings to evaluate repairs, in order that the buildings can be used to provide shelter for the inhabitants should they need it during the up coming cyclone season.
- Unsafe buildings are being pulled down with the rubble being stacked for later disposal. Iron is being recycled by the locals and what can not be saved is being piled for the largest bonfire Niuatoputapu will have ever seen.
- Heavy equipment unloaded from the HMRNZN 'Canterbury' is aiding the clean up on the island.
- Builders from TDS and NZDF are assessing the damage on buildings and identifying those that can be repaired.

Telecommunications:

- The landline telephone system will not be completely established until the sites for the relocation of houses has been completed.
- Mobile services are working but there is limited internet capability.

Hospitals/Medical Care Facilities:

- The hospital is working out of the Church of the Latter Day Saints. Should a shift be required a field hospital may need to be set up. The Church is happy to accommodate in the short term.
- The Ministry of Lands survey team will assess a possible new site for the location of the new hospital.
- The hospital has sufficient basic supplies, medicines to meet its present needs but required is the general equipment for a hospital to function properly. (examining table, beds, drugs cabinet, sheets, trolley's, photocopying machine, kitchen ware etc)
- Trauma and psycho-social counselling by CARITAS and Tongan Red Cross is continuing.
- Medical surveys are still being carried out by medical staff.
- 3 NZDF medical staff is helping on the ground and in the hospital.
- Hospital sanitation arrangements are very good.
- Medical staff checked the injuries from a couple of Tsunami victims. Healing well. Will visit the 50 locals living in the hills to check on their medical conditions.

Water supply

- There is sufficient emergency water supply to meet the needs of the inhabitants.
- Once the relocation site for the houses has been established long term replacement of the reticulated supply pipes can be commenced.
- Health and sanitation of the locals is being constantly watched and monitored by the Government of Tonga.

Sanitation

- Disposal of solid waste disposal has been greatly helped by the staff from the 'Canterbury'
- An 11 person NZDF combined with TDS and community members have cleaned up debris form a large area, creating a large pile for later removal.
- NZDF and TDS personal have located and covered 27 septic tanks.
- The "Canterbury returned on Sunday the 18th, off loaded staff and heavy equipment and will spend the next 4 days helping in the continued clean up the rest of the debris on the island.

Education

- Hihifo GPS primary school has been assessed with the best option to be, knocking down what is left and rebuilding.
- School is continuing out of temporary accommodation.
- School supplies are available to start education but will need complete replacement, which is underway with donor agencies.

Government Offices

- These are still housed in the Niuatoputapu High School. Consideration is being given to erecting temporary accommodation (hopefully with prefab building equipment supplied by Australia) to house all Government offices. A one stop shop type of arrangement.

Transport

Roads:

- Roads have now been cleared and are accessible

Airport:

- Preliminary examination has revealed that the damage to the airport buildings/structures was not as bad as first thought. Cracking was seen in some walls and this may have been caused by the earthquake.
- The runway is clear and Air Chathams have resumed normal flights to the island.
- Chartered flight to Niuatoputapu on Tuesday 20th October took four Ministry of Lands and Survey Staff and two Ministry of Works engineers to assess the site relocation areas.

Ports:

- The wharf is accessible but long term the armouring of the wharf requires repair.

Response activities**Tongan Government and responding agencies**

- The Government of Tonga, in His Majesty's Cabinet Decision No. 919 of the 15th October 2009, noted the "Assessment report of Niuatoputapu Tsunami Damages" and endorsed the work into the priority issues identified requiring assistance over the next 4 weeks. The Government also noted the long term issues raised in the report.
- The draft "Early Recovery Strategic Framework" will be presented to the Government of Tonga on Friday 23rd October for consideration and sign off.
- The Government of Tonga is in the process of identifying donor agencies/Governments (who have offered assistance) against the identified needs of the communities on Niuatoputapu.

Relief supplies/Financial assistance

- Donations are still being received but no where near the amount received within the first two weeks.
- Supplies of Tongan flour and sugar are the main requirements of the people on the affected islands.
- The Westpac bank of Tonga is still maintaining the relief account for the residents of Niuatoputapu that donations can be paid into should people still wish to contribute.

Engineering

- A team of 4 surveyors from the Ministry of Lands and Survey plus 2 engineers from the Ministry of Works flew to Niuatoputapu on Tuesday the 20th to begin an assessment of the relocation site and community consultation about the movement.

NEOC Status**NEOC Contacts**

The Disaster Management Office has been activated in support of the event. Contact details for the DMO are:

National Emergency Management Office,
Telephone: 26-340
Email: makai@kalianet.to
Fax: 28 220/25 440

This will be the last Situation Report as the responses phase is winding down with recovery talking over.