

Tonga: Operation Niuatoputapu - day 4, 3 Oct 2009

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The families of the nine who perished in the Tsunami that struck Niuatoputapu on Wednesday 30th September 2009 have been informed and their names released locally.

Their names are:

1. Losalio Lefai
2. Sefo Lefai
3. Toni Lefai (child)
4. Tina Lefai (infant)
5. Kalolo Kivalu
6. Lesina Tupouto'a
7. Tu'ulomia Tavake
8. Heneli Losalu
9. Lupe Pukenga

Of the four critically injured that were evacuated on Thursday afternoon; three are in a stable condition in hospital and one under close supervision.

Authorities on the ground continue to provide assistance to the people of Niuatoputapu as well as providing coordination and support from Tongatapu.

A survey of the housing of the three villages on Niuatoputapu was conducted yesterday.

Falehau village

32 families left homeless.

28 families with damaged houses.

37 families with undamaged houses.

Vaipoa village

30 families left homeless.

6 families with damaged houses.

177 families with undamaged houses.

Hihifo village

132 families left homeless.

109 families with damaged houses.

75 families with undamaged houses.

The French navy ship FNS Revi is scheduled to depart for Niuatoputapu this evening and arrive on Monday 5th October. It will be transporting assistance from Australia, New Zealand and France. Local donations will be transported also.

The Tongan patrol boat VOEA Savea will depart for Niuatoputapu this evening at 6pm with relatives of the deceased, additional supplies, donated food and clothing, essential staff and equipment. It will arrive tomorrow evening.

An Australian chartered aircraft arrived today at 1pm with tents, generators, hurricane lamps, Oxfam buckets, blankets and tarpaulins.

Two French Casa aircraft will arrive this afternoon with medical equipment and a team of twenty medical staff from Tahiti and New Caledonia to assist in the operation.

New Zealand assistance will arrive tonight on a commercial flight with generators, tents, kitchen sets and first aid kits.

A New Zealand Air Force P3 Orion completed an aerial survey yesterday and reported no substantial damage to Niuafu'ou, Tafahi and Vava'u.

An assessment of the state of food crops on Niuatoputapu is being carried out today. The clearance of the runway and roads continue today.

Representatives from overseas governments and international organizations have offered their support and pledged their assistance to the people of Niuatoputapu.

The public response to the appeal for donations has been overwhelming with 40 tonnes of clothing and food collected so far.

Ends

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