

Information bulletin Pacific: Tropical Cyclone Gita

Date of disaster: 12 February 2018

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This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and information available at this time. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is coordinating discussions with National Societies of the countries affected by Tropical Cyclone Gita, and monitoring the evolving situation.

[< click here for detailed contact information >](#)

The situation

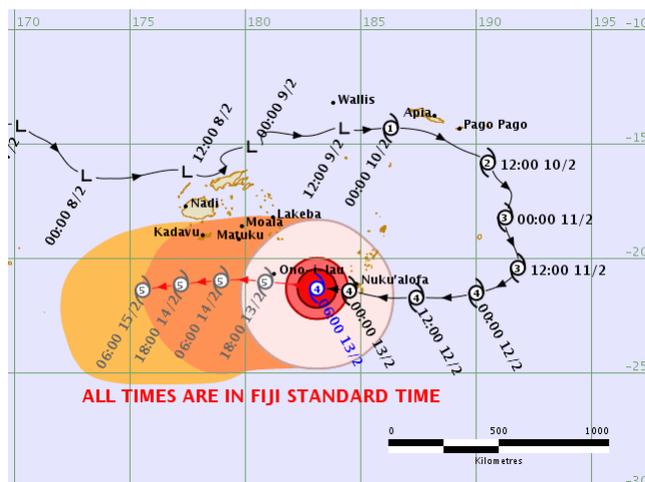
Tropical Cyclone (TC) Gita was initially monitored over the Pacific waters as a Tropical Depression 07F (TD07F) analyzed southeast of Vanuatu. TD07F was later upgraded to a Tropical Cyclone Category 1 as it moved South South-East affecting Samoa with heavy rain, causing flooding, and gusty winds of between 39-54 miles per hour from Friday 9 February 2018.

TC Gita increased to Category 2 as it moved towards Niue on Saturday 10 February. As of early Monday morning 12 February 2018, the system continued west intensifying to a Category 4 as it approached Tonga waters in the early evening. Close to the center of the cyclone, TC Gita recorded winds of 205km/hour with momentary gusts of up to 285km/hour.

A tropical cyclone warning is in force for Tonga's Vava'u group. Gale force wind or destructive wind warnings are in force for Ha'apai and Niufo'ou groups in Tonga. A State of Emergency was declared by the Government of Tonga at 10 am on Monday 12 February for initially one month.

In Fiji, a cyclone alert has been issued for the Southern Lau Island Group, Kadavu and smaller islands in Fiji where the cyclone is expected to be passing through these waters on the 13 of February. This will continue as Tropical Cyclone Category 4 as it approaches further South-West from Fiji.

Whilst in Samoa, the Government of Samoa stated a Declaration of Disaster for 48 hours starting on 10 February. TC Gita caused extensive flooding in low lying, coastal and river areas around Savai'i and Upolu. There were damages on vegetation and power was also disrupted. There was widespread flooding especially in the Vaisigano catchment area.



TC Gita Forecast Track Map issued by Fiji Meteorological Services on 13 February 2018

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Samoa

In response to the upgraded TDO7 to TC Gita, Samoa Red Cross Society (SRCS) worked with the National Emergency Management Office, activated 76 volunteers and assisted registration in seven evacuation centres. The SRCS distributed blankets and clothes targeting most vulnerable people in the evacuation centres.



*Samoa Red Cross Volunteers undertaking household assessments in Apia, 12 February 2018.
Photo: Samoa Red Cross Society*

Fiji

In its preparation for TC Gita, Fiji Red Cross Society (FRCS) staff and volunteers were briefed, and teams have been identified for stand by and potential response.

Tonga

On 10 February Tonga Red Cross Society (TRCS) disaster management officer (DMO) having been informed of the situation at headquarters had begun coordinating with branches and monitoring the situation on a continuous basis.

All stocks have been updated and eighty volunteers have been mobilized. The TRCS assets such as phones and laptops have been charged in preparation. Volunteers are assisting the police with evacuation of people from low lying areas and mobilizing teams to carry out situation overview. Assessments are being conducted in collaboration with the government.

The island of Tongatapu and Eua, in the Tongatapu Group of Islands, are reported to be the most affected with a population of approximately 80,000 people (13,000 households) in TC Gita's path.

In supporting Tonga Red Cross, the IFRC country cluster support team (CCST) in Suva is monitoring the situation and providing updates and technical support. Additionally, partner National Societies New Zealand Red Cross and Australian Red Cross are on standby to support response efforts.

Ahead of the tropical cyclone, the IFRC CCST Suva office activated its Emergency Operation Centre on 9 February. The CCST is working closely with the National Societies of Samoa, Fiji and Tonga and disseminating updates to the regional office and Movement partners. With TC Gita expected to have most impact in Tonga and significant humanitarian needs, IFRC is working closely with TRCS on rapid assessments and a request for IFRC disaster response emergency fund (DREF).

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **IFRC country cluster support team (CCST) in Suva**
 - Lemau Afamasaga, disaster preparedness manager; phone: (679) 999 2470; lemau.afamasaga@ifrc.org
 - Hanna Butler, communication manager, phone: (679) 998 0166; hanna.butler@ifrc.org
 - Kathryn Clarkson, head of CCST; phone: (679) 999 2485; kathryn.clarkson@ifrc.org
- **IFRC Asia Pacific regional office in Kuala Lumpur; phone: +603 9207 5700**
 - Martin Faller, deputy regional director, martin.faller@ifrc.org
 - Nelson Castano, head of disaster and crisis prevention, response and recovery (DCPRR), nelson.castano@ifrc.org
 - Johanna Arvo, surge operations coordinator, mobile: +6019 272 6114, johanna.arvo@ifrc.org
 - Riku Ässämäki, regional logistics coordinator, mobile: +6012 298 9752; riku.assamaki@ifrc.org
 - Rosemarie North, regional communications manager; mobile: +60 12 230 8451; rosemarie.north@ifrc.org
 - Sophia Keri, resource mobilization in emergencies coordinator; sophia.keri@ifrc.org
 - Clarence Sim, planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER) manager; clarence.sim@ifrc.org

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, **encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives,
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote **social inclusion**
and a culture of
non-violence and **peace.**
