

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Solomon Islands: Floods

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A week of heavy rainfall from 29 January 2009 caused flooding in parts of the Solomon Islands. The impact was most severe in the northwest of Guadalcanal Province, while damage was also sustained in other parts of Guadalcanal as well as in some communities in Malaita, Central and Makira Provinces.

Utilizing its own capacities (and with technical assistance from the Australian and New Zealand Red Cross Societies), the Solomon Islands Red Cross Society is liaising with the national disaster management office and the Guadalcanal provincial disaster committee to respond to immediate relief needs generated by the emergency in the northwest of Guadalcanal island. The Solomon Islands Red Cross Society deployed emergency response team members from a number of its branches to join assessment teams coordinated by the GPDC and has initiated distribution of family kits and water containers.



Emergency response team members returning home after conducting a needs assessment at Visale, West Guadalcanal. SIRCS.

The situation

From 29 February, a week-long intensive and persistent rainfall caused major damage in the northwest Guadalcanal area from Tamboko to Maravovo (Sahalu ward), affecting an estimated 7,000 people. Up to ten deaths have been confirmed in western Guadalcanal, where heavy rain and steep terrain combined to create flash floods and some people are still reported as missing. Initial assessment reports highlight damage primarily to food gardens and water supplies. Damage to other infrastructure is limited but several key bridges suffered damage - limiting road access to Tamboko (20 kilometres west of Honiara, the national capital) and the Mbokokimbo river (50 kilometres to the east) and necessitating the transportation of supplies to the worst affected areas by sea.

On 9 February, the Solomon Islands Red Cross Society (SIRCS) deployed four emergency response team members to join seven teams sent by the GPDC to eastern Guadalcanal to assess the impact of the heavy rainfall. In east Guadalcanal, the nature of the local terrain limited damage to low lying areas in river plains and largely affected food gardens planted alongside river banks. The seven teams returned to Honiara with assessment data on 12 February. Analysis of the assessment results indicates priority needs relating to clean water, rehabilitation of water facilities, prevention of waterborne diseases and ensuring adequate food supplies while livelihoods and infrastructure are rebuilt.

Coordination

The national disaster management office (NDMO) and the Guadalcanal provincial disaster committee (GPDC) are coordinating emergency relief in Guadalcanal. Working closely with the NDMO and GPDC, staff of the Suva-

based regional office of the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) is assisting collation of all information provided by different partners involved in this emergency operation.

SIRCS maintains dialogue and regular consultation with its partners to ensure that assessment and the provision of relief support are conducted in a coherent and coordinated manner. The SIRCS Secretary General maintains links with its partners including UNOCHA, AusAID, NZAID, Oxfam International, Save the Children, World Vision, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Guadalcanal Provincial representatives, Australian Red Cross, New Zealand Red Cross and the International Federation's Pacific regional office, to share information about what the SIRCS is doing and receive information on partners' actions. SIRCS will continue to maintain links with its partners, ensuring that its assessment results, relief distribution coverage areas, information and data are shared with other partners and to ensure that targeted beneficiaries receive necessary relief assistance in a well-coordinated manner.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since 29 January 2009, the Solomon Islands Red Cross Society has been responding to the Guadalcanal floods. In an initial assessment, the SIRCS disaster management officer and a volunteer boarded a Royal Solomon Islands patrol boat with other stakeholder partners and relevant government institutions to conduct sectoral assessment of the situation from Ruavatu in the east to Selwyn College in west Guadalcanal. Following this, the SIRCS deployed six emergency response team (ERT) members to undertake detailed assessments with GPDC coordinated teams in the most severely affected areas of northwest Guadalcanal.

Despite logistical constraints and severe weather conditions that hindered response throughout the week of the floods, SIRCS was able to reach most of the affected families. With the help of a New Zealand Red Cross information technology communication team (who were already in the country to conduct a training workshop) to set up a Red Cross' communication system, SIRCS successfully received reports from the emergency response teams in the field through high frequency radio three times a day. Local Red Cross teams have completed distribution of non-food items (including tarpaulins, family kits, water cans and clothes) to 150 of the most vulnerable affected families so far. This will be followed by a distribution of shelter kits and livelihood tools to selected families.

The national society is also engaged with improving access to clean water. A 'Nomad Water Purification Module', capable of filtering up to 5,000 litres of water every hour (together with additional water containers) has been donated by the Australian Red Cross and this will be deployed to the field on 14 February, under the supervision of an Australian Red Cross water and sanitation technician. The deployment of the water purification module will coincide with the dissemination of health and hygiene information within catchment communities.

SIRCS is in the process of purchasing basic garden and shelter-building tools for flood affected communities. Building tools will assist families whose houses were destroyed to erect shelters, while basic garden tools will assist subsistence communities to recover their livelihoods.

National disaster response team (NDRT) members that include headquarters and branch staff as well as selected volunteers have been instrumental in the operation, applying skills acquired from previous trainings. In addition to NDRT members, Honiara-based volunteers and the Tamboko emergency response team have been deployed to assess needs and distribute non-food items to communities affected within Sahalu ward and northwest Guadalcanal, while four other emergency response team members assessed needs in the eastern Guadalcanal (mainly the plains) area.

As of 13 February 2009, the Solomon Islands Red Cross Society has distributed the following relief items in West Guadalcanal Province.

Summary of distributed relief items (as at 13.02.09)

Village name		Tarp & rope	Water container	Kettles	Bed linen	Sleeping mat	Lamp	Cooking sets	Clothing
No		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Vatukakabo	16	8	16	76	37	16	16	27
2	Mataruka	16	7	14	62	35	14	14	21
3	Verasaba - Takaboru	21	12	14	84	43	15	28	26

4	Takaboru Sasa	6	0	0	0	0	1	0	6
5	Vatukalau	0	61	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	Takaboru (Main)	5	26	28	6	3	2	28	2
7	Vatusi	24	17	8	105	26	18	18	15
8	Talangia	13	7	10	52	23	10	10	16
9	Matoba	2	1	1	4	2	0	0	0
10	Barevo	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	Paru	3	1	1	13	7	2	1	6
12	Vanagobuli	2	1	1	4	2	1	1	0
13	Tina (West Wing Visale)	2	1	1	4	2	1	1	0
14	Tanamao (Chapuri)	2	1	1	0	2	1	1	0
15	Vura	18	16	7	27	26	9	12	18
16	Taluloki	2	6	5	10	4	2	5	0
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	Total	150	165	107	447	212	92	135	137

In addition to the items indicated above, 1,212 bottles of water have been distributed throughout the affected areas in the northwest of Guadalcanal.

How we work

All International Federation 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 is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

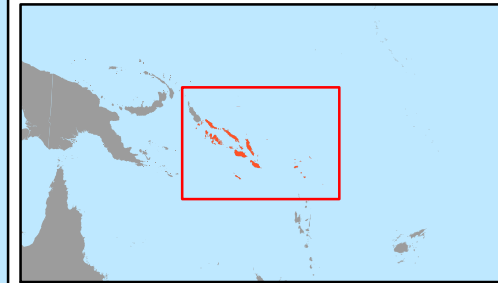
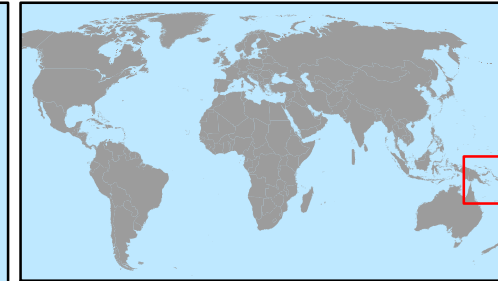
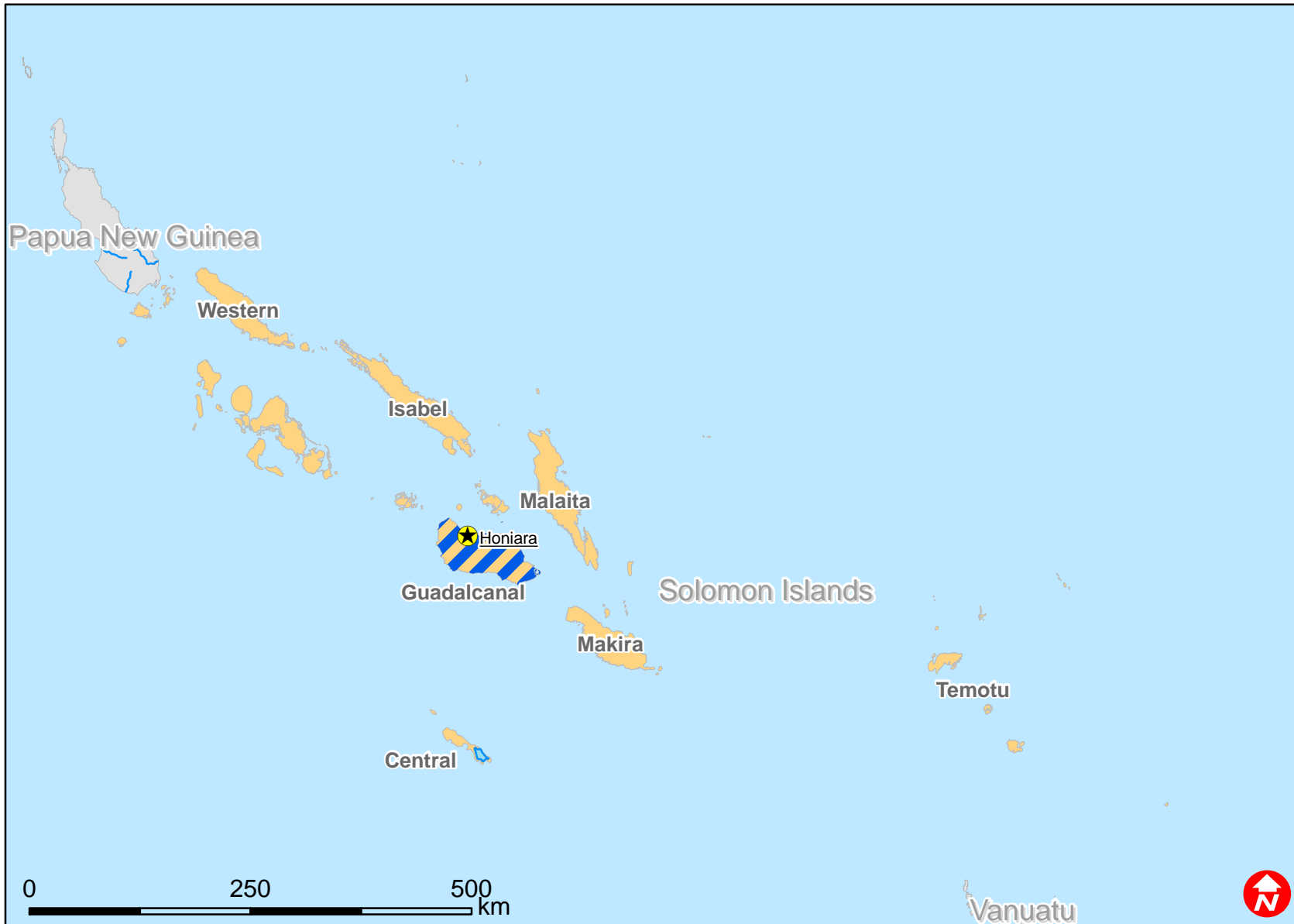
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- Asia Pacific Zone office in Malaysia: Disaster management unit: Mr. Daniel Bolaños (Regional disaster response delegate), email: daniel.bolanos@ifrc.org; mobile; +60 12 283 7305

<Map of the affected areas below; please click here to return to title page>



Solomon Islands: Floods



- Affected island
- Capitals
- Rivers
- Lakes