

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

VANUATU: VOLCANIC ERUPTION

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This Information Bulletin is intended for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

The Situation

The active volcano on the island of Lopevi erupted around noon on 8 June 2001, causing a cloud of heavy volcanic dust and ashes to descend over the islands of Paama, Ambrym, Malekula and Epi. The entire population of nearby Paama, the worst affected island, was forced to stay in doors until the next morning because of falling acid ashes. Several strong earth tremors were subsequently reported. Some 800 people out of the Paama island population of 1,600 are considered at particularly high risk (children and the elderly). The villages of Luli and Lulep on Paama have no health clinics and could face serious health problems. The acid ashes have affected wells on which most of the population in the affected area depend for drinking water.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

Two First Aid instructors of the Vanuatu Red Cross Society (VRCS) were on Paama Island at the time of the eruption conducting First Aid courses. The VRCS is monitoring the situation in close cooperation with the Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office (NDMO). In response to the results of initial needs assessment by the NDMO, the VRCS sent 460 water containers on 10 June to Paama Island, each filled with 10 litres of safe clean water. The VRCS has also provided First Aid kits and water purification tablets to the affected population. All the Society's resources are on standby for possible further assistance.

Needs

The immediate needs of clean water, food, and medical supplies are being covered locally. External assistance is not considered necessary at this moment. The VRCS has been requested by the Vanuatu Government to provide 400 additional 5 litre water containers. The Government is providing food and medical supplies (the Ministry of Health). The Vanuatu Government is coordinating arrangements for transportation and logistics with local ships, with the assistance and support of the Australian and New Zealand Governments.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

For further details please contact:

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All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

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