

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

TONGA CYCLONE & FLOODING

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This Information Bulletin is for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time. The Federation has an annual regional appeal for the Pacific (01.40/2002).

The Situation

A tropical storm, originally heading towards Fiji and Samoa, has developed into Tropical Cyclone Waka over the Kingdom of Tonga in the southwest Pacific.

Tropical Cyclone Waka intensified on New Year's Eve with its centre averaging winds between 80 and 90 knots. Frequent heavy rain and thunderstorms, high seas and damaging swells affected Niuafu'ou and Niuatiputapu, in the northernmost island group. In the Va'vau, Ha'apai, Kotu and Nomuka groups there were gale force winds gusting up to 75 knots and heavy rain and thunderstorms squalls.

Tropical Cyclone Waka moved in a southeasterly direction at 8 knots. Widespread flooding, including sea flooding, throughout all of Tonga.

The Kingdom of Tonga is a narrow south/north 500 kilometre archipelago of 170 islands beginning just above the Tropic of Capricorn, 650 km southeast of Fiji. The islands form four groups: Va'vau, Ha'apai, Kotu and Nomuka. The Kingdom of Tonga has a landmass of 750 square kilometres with a population of 98,100. The majority of the population live a subsistent lifestyle and the country's economy is reliant on agriculture and tourism.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The International Federation's Regional Delegation in Suva is continuing to monitor the situation. Information is being gathered regularly from the Fiji Meteorology Centre in Nadi with confirmation from other sources. Mr Sione Taumoe'olau, Secretary General for the Tonga Red Cross Society, has been working closely with the National Disaster Committee in Tonga.

The Tonga Red Cross Society was recently involved in a Community Based Self-Reliance (CBSR) pilot programme. CBSR is a capacity building programme with a focus on high risk remote island communities.

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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