

# 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

## PAPUA NEW GUINEA: MOUNT TAVURVUR VOLCANO

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*The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 185 countries.*

### In Brief

**This Bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the situation and the information available at this time. Application to the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund is being considered. Further updates will be made available as assessment information comes in.**

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### The Situation

On Saturday (7 October), Mount Tavurvur situated on the outskirts of Rabaul (a town on the eastern tip of the New Britain Island) erupted with a blast that caused windows some 12 km (7.5 miles) away to shatter according to the UNOCHA situation report. Some 2,000 panicked residents (representing approximately 90 per cent of the local population) have been evacuated from areas experiencing heavy ash falls. The worst affected communities include Matupit, Bai, Nordup, Matalau, Rakunat, Koere and Rabuana. There have been reports of minor injuries.

The National Disaster Centre announced that 1,221 people from the towns of Matupit and Rabaul have been evacuated by sea to Vunapope Mission Station. Some evacuees have been moved to designated resettlement blocks at Sikut, Gelegele, Clifton and Warema which were established by the East New Britain Provincial Disaster Committee (PDC) after the 1994 explosive eruption. The local Red Cross branch reported that three main informal care centres have been established at Sikut, Tavuilu and Vunapope Catholic Mission where basic health, food and water services are provided. The PDC is conducting assessment, addressing food need and securing public infrastructure.

According to the Rabaul Volcanology Observatory (RVO), volcanic activity has subsided and continues to decline. Seismicity is at background levels and land deformation rates are low. Thin to moderate pinky-white haze emissions continue to be produced, rising to <1,000m and are being blown to the north. It is expected that effusive activity is likely to continue along with ash falls.

The government has declared state of emergency although this is likely to be lifted in the following days. Schools remain closed but commercial activities continue in Rabaul. Public security measures are tightened to ensure law and order.

A major concern is potable water due to insufficient transport links and contaminated local supplies. Immediate needs also include tarpaulins, water containers, facemasks and food within the affected communities and the informal care centres.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

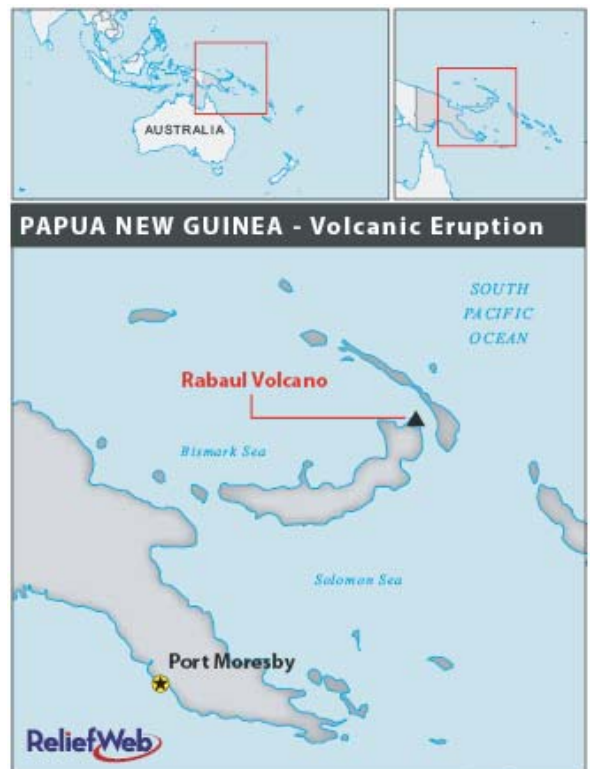
The Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society's (PNGRC) East New Britain (ENB) provincial branch immediately sent 20 volunteers to assist in evacuation, rescue and relief activities. The branch has conducted joint assessment with the PDC and is in close coordination with the local authorities. With the available emergency stock, the branch has distributed tarpaulins, water and water containers. Another three-member assessment team (including one FACT-trained) conducted rapid assessment and submitted to the headquarters a plan of action. A teleconference was also held between the branch, headquarters and the Federation.

Chaired by the PNGRCS secretary general, the emergency preparedness task force (EPTF) (recently formed as part of the Federation/Australian Red Cross supported disaster management programme) held a meeting today to finalize the PoA with the support of the Federation DM delegate. The EPTF is a multi-sectoral technical advisory body, mandated to prepare for, monitor and respond to the disaster. The task force is on standby and fully on alert for any potential deployment in the field.

Since the airport remains dysfunctional, the Federation will support local procurement of relief items. This includes tarpaulins for 100 displaced families, water containers for 400 displaced families and 500 face masks.

The Federation DM delegate is providing ongoing support to the PNGRCS in their relief initiatives and liaising with internal and external stakeholders. An informal coordination meeting was hosted at the Federation office with agencies like AUSAID, UNOCHA and UNICEF.

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*The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to achieve 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.*

*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.*

*For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>*