

Information bulletin



Tonga: Maritime Accident

Information bulletin n° 1
GLIDE no. **AC-2009-000151-TON**
6 August 2009

This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The International Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation. The Tonga Red Cross will, however, accept direct assistance to provide support to the affected population.

A maritime accident took place at 1.30 am local time on 6 August when a boat, the MV Princess Ashika, sunk. The boat was travelling from Nuku'alofa to Ha'afeva in the Ha'apai Islands group when it went down at approximately 20.24 S and 174.16 W northwest of Nuku'alofa. Media reports indicate that the boat was carrying up to 86 people, including crew and passengers. Tonga Red Cross is responding to the incident by providing immediate relief to the 53 people rescued from the accident and providing assistance in making contact with family members.

[<click here for detailed contact information, or here for a map which shows the location of the incident>](#)

The Situation

The MV Princess Ashika was travelling from Nuku'alofa to Ha'afeva when the boat sunk at approximately 1.30 am local time on Thursday, 6 August, with 86 passengers on board.

Maritime New Zealand's Rescue Coordination Centre (NZRCC) received a distress beacon alert from the vessel and immediately launched a search. NZRCC are cooperating closely with the Tongan Navy in the search and rescue efforts. The most recent information received indicates that 53 people have been rescued, 31 remain missing and two people died as a result of the accident. Rescue teams continue to try to locate survivors. Further information received indicates that the ship has split into two at the bottom of the sea.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Tonga Red Cross have launched a response through their branch in Ha'apai. Up to 20 volunteers are working closely with the Tongan Police Force to respond to the immediate needs of the 53 people rescued. The response so far includes the distribution of food, drinks and blankets. The Tonga Red Cross has also set up a Restoring Family Links unit which will operate around the clock to assist members of the Tongan community with locating family members that are thought to have been involved in the accident.

The pre-positioned relief supplies in Ha'apai has allowed Tonga Red Cross to respond immediately to the needs of the people affected. The Red Cross team in Ha'apai distributed 53 blankets, food, and drinking water to the survivors who were sheltered in a church in Panagai Ha'apai.

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

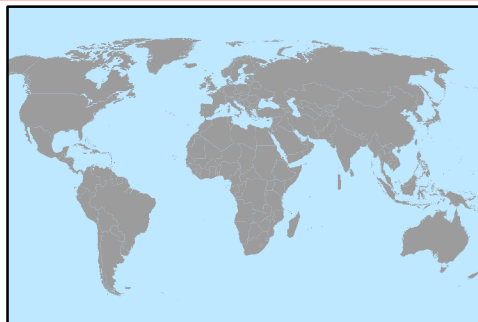
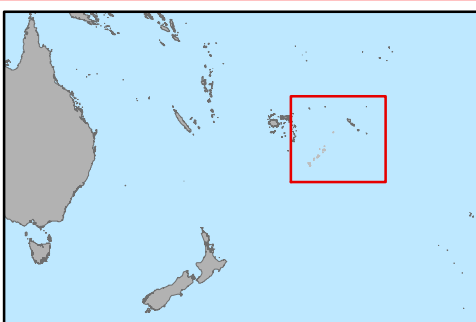
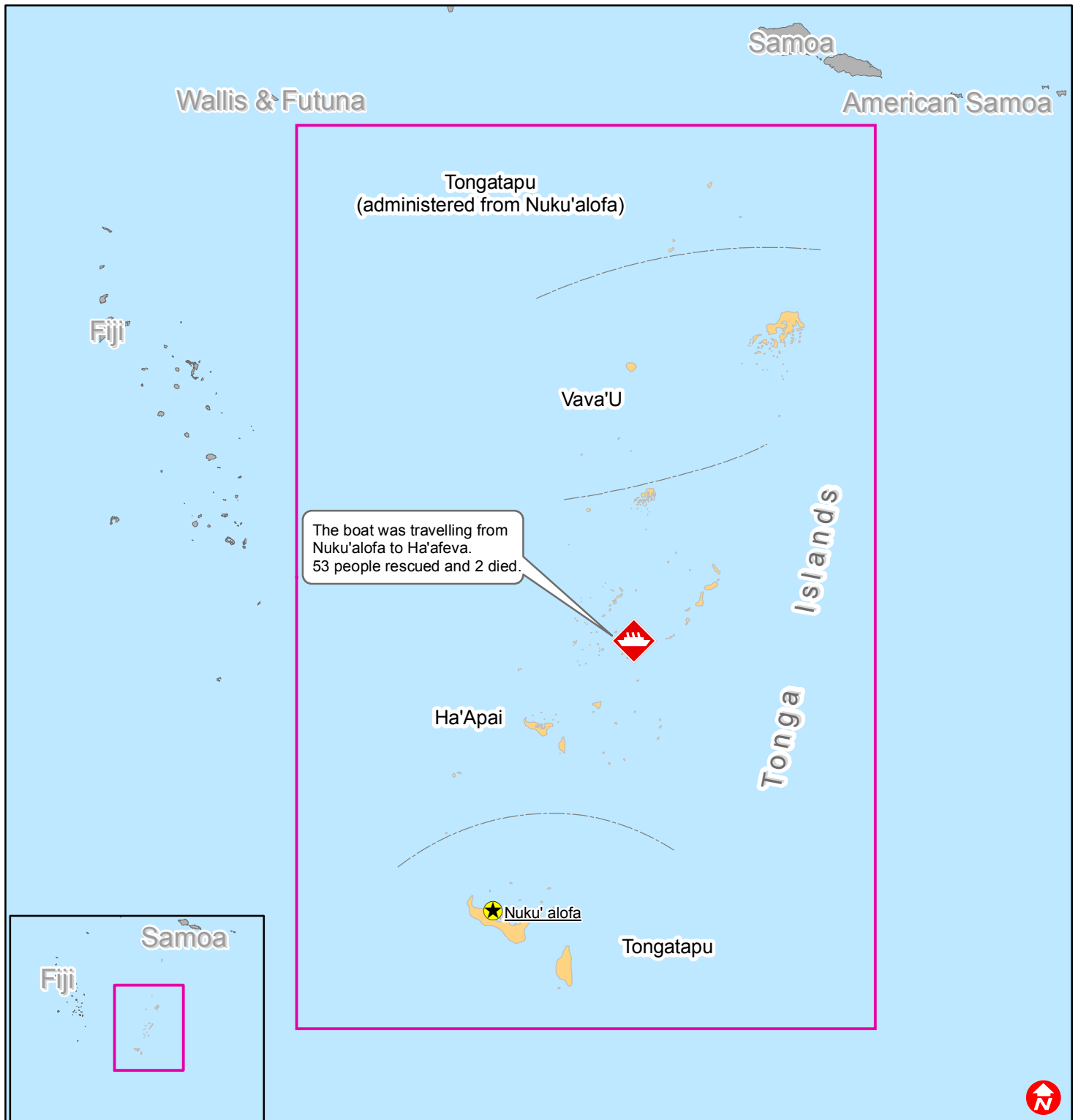
For further information specifically related to this report, please contact:

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[<map below; click here to return to the title page>](#)



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