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Information bulletin

Solomon Islands: Earthquake and Tsunami

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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



Providing NOMAD filtered water to affected people
Photo Cred: SIRC

[<click here to view the map of the affected area, or here for detailed contact information>](#)

Summary

At approximately 12:12 pm on 6 February, an 8.0 magnitude undersea earthquake occurred 33km west-southwest of the Santa Cruz Islands and generated a tsunami in the Temotu Province of the Solomon Islands. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) reported that the earthquake had a depth of 28.7 kilometres. Following the original earthquake and tsunami, there have been more than 130 aftershocks. At least nine of these aftershocks have been 6.0 magnitude or higher, with two above 7.0 magnitude.

A number of villages in the Solomon Islands' southeastern province of Temotu (approximate population of 20,000) have suffered extensive damage. The earthquake and tsunami destroyed (completely and partially) more than 600 homes, affecting up to 3,500 people and causing the death of 10 individuals.

The Solomon Islands Red Cross (SIRC) is working closely with the government and other partners to conduct assessments, coordinate relief distributions, produce safe drinking water, assist with

emergency shelters, establish tracing services (Restoring Family Links) and provide psychosocial support.

The Situation

Of the confirmed 3,329 people displaced, most people have moved to higher ground utilizing shelter materials provided by the SIRC and other agencies. Others are being accommodated by relatives, friends, or at schools and churches serving as temporary shelters in Lata (population 2,300), the capital of Temotu Province. The issue of displaced communities remains a concern as many people are still camping in the hills due to ongoing seismic activity. Walking to reach all of the displaced people is demanding for the insufficient number of SIRC volunteers available for the operation. Many of these temporary settlements have poor sanitation capacity and are far from water sources. Therefore, good health and hygiene practices are being actively promoted. Security is well managed in these locations.

The water supply in Lata was significantly damaged, affecting the entire population. Although the town water supply to Graciosa Bay and Lata has been repaired, access to safe water supply and sanitation of affected communities remains a major concern.

The terminal building at Lata Airport and the Lata wharf both sustained damages but are now operational. The Lata wharf will require further repairs to ensure its long-term safety and functionality.

The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) believes there are no more gaps in the immediate relief supplies required. However, the prepositioned stocks of the Solomon Islands Government and NGOs in Honiara and Lata have been depleted and support is being sought to replenish these stocks.



Giving hygiene promotion messages to displaced people settled on higher ground.
Photo Cred: SIRC

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The SIRC Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) was activated on 6 February with 20 staff upon receiving early warning information from the National Emergency Operation Centre. On 7 February, SIRC dispatched a team of nine from Honiara to Lata on the SIG Patrol Boat. The team included a technical communications support delegate from the Australian Red Cross and a water and sanitation engineer delegate from the French Red Cross.

On 12 February, the Provincial EOC (PEOC) was relocated from the provincial office to the new NDMO office which is a few metres from the Lata wharf and next to the SIRC branch office. The SIRC team in Lata has engaged two vehicles (8 ton and 3 ton) to be used for distribution of water to the camps and affected communities. One motorized canoe is currently being used to carry out assessments and the delivery of relief supplies to communities on Santa Cruz and its surrounding islands.

SIRC is coordinating logistics and response with the NDMO and other agencies such as World Vision and Oxfam. The SIRC logistics team continues to work with the multi-agency warehouse and Relief Distribution Centre (RDC) at the Courthouse. Dispatch and distribution of emergency relief supplies continues.

SIRC priorities include the provision of safe drinking water to the affected communities via the NOMAD system, as well as recommendations of longer-term water solutions. Based on in-depth assessments in Santa Cruz, other priorities include the distribution of relief items, hygiene promotion, first aid, tracing services, temporary shelter and message dissemination.

Additional details of SIRC response activities are as follows:

Communication and Coordination

- To facilitate a good communications structure, SIRC has established a forward command base at its branch in Lata with a team deployed from Honiara. This team is also facilitating rapid damage and needs assessment for provision of urgent relief supplies to the most affected villages.
- Assessment reports are continually shared by SIRC with national and international partners.
- SIRC personnel are in regular communication with the IFRC Pacific regional office and with partner Red Cross national societies.
- The National Society's Secretary General and Disaster Management Officer are attending meetings of the National Disaster Operations Committee to provide updates of SIRC response activities.
- All agencies have been instructed by the Director of the NMDO to work closely with the PEOC in coordinating all assessments and distributions.

Assessments

- Assessment teams are being deployed to the affected areas with satellite phones. The assessment details and identified needs are immediately communicated back to the PEOC so that distributions can be initiated.
- SIRC assessment teams travelled as far as Nangu (southeast on the Santa Cruz Island) and have assessed all communities up to Malo (islands outside of Lata).
- A summary of the assessment findings will soon be completed and distributed.

Distributions of Non-Food Items (NFIs)

- Initial distributions of SIRC relief stocks have been conducted from the prepositioned storage centre in Lata and also from Honira (HQ).
- All agencies have worked together with PEOC on a distribution plan to ensure proper coordination so that the most vulnerable populations are reached.
- To date, almost 90 per cent of the affected communities have received NFIs, while waiting for the main distribution.
- PEOC now has a distribution plan for non-food items (NFIs) and water delivery.

Emergency Shelter

- The emergency shelter expert from SIRC conducted an emergency shelter training on 15 February for a total of 20 participants, including all the SIRC volunteers as well as representatives from World Vision and Oxfam.
- The SIRC shelter training consists of an introduction to the shelter kits and basic construction techniques for emergency shelter.
- Shelter needs are still being defined and it is anticipated that SIRC may continue to support the shelter cluster (IDP welfare cluster) through the provision of training in emergency shelter.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

- NOMAD water production (which produces 5,000 litres per hour) and distribution have been effective, but water delivery by truck and boat is problematic.
- Thus far, the team has distributed 35,000 litres of purified water.
- Hygiene promotion has been conducted using IEC materials and flipcharts from SIRC.

Restoration of Family Links (RFL)

- SIRC has established support for RFL from its forward base in Lata. Thus far, messages have been given out with contacts and location (which is the SIRC EOC).
- Consultations have been made with the Lata Telekom to provide landline connections to serve this purpose from the SIRC EOC office.
- A press release for Honiara has been updated and disseminated with local messaging developed in both English and pidgin.

Psychosocial Support

- SIRC identified the need for psychosocial support for communities that have lost everything and experienced trauma.
- SIRC is discussing the need with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and other partners who are interested in mobilizing teams for psychological support. Oxfam and Save the Children are also discussing support options.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **Solomon Islands Red Cross:** Secretary General, Ms Joanne Zoleveke, mobile phone :+677 749 9662; email: secgen@redcross.org.sb.
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All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#) and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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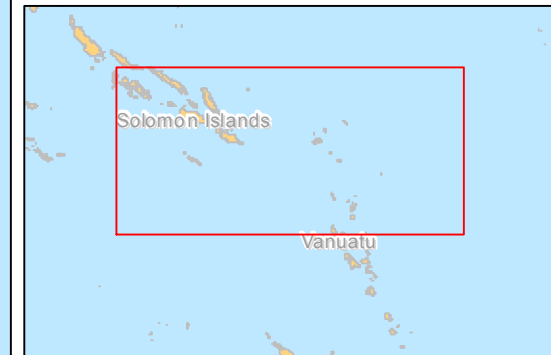
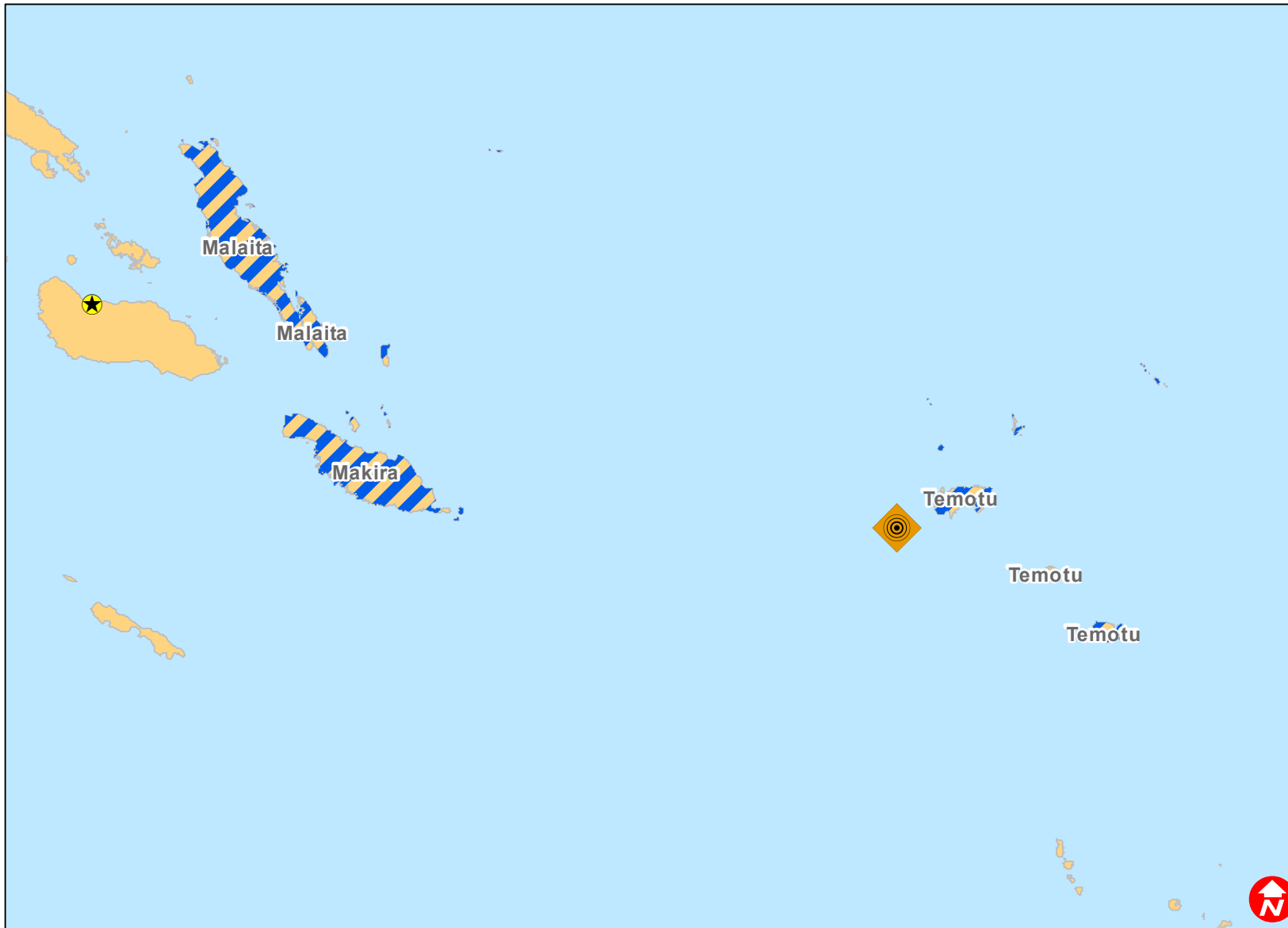


The IFRC's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.



Solomon Islands



-  Earthquake
-  Affected States