

Papua New Guinea: Highlands Earthquake

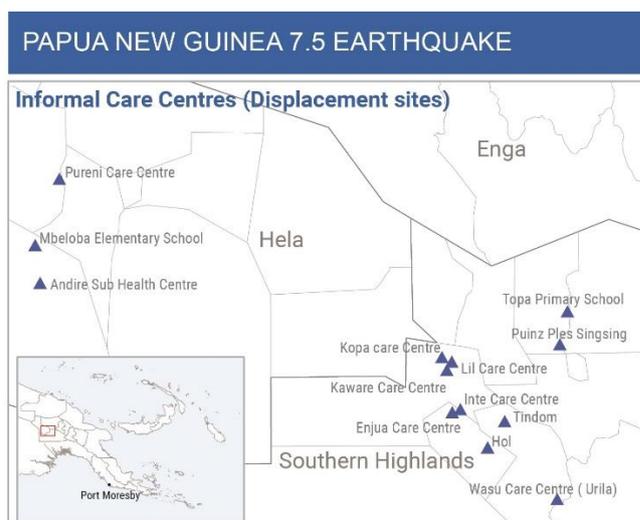
Situation Report No. 4

(as of 21 March 2018)

This report is produced by the National Disaster Centre, the Office of the Resident Coordinator and the United Nations Coordination and Assessment (UNDAC) Team in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It was issued by the Disaster Management Team Secretariat. It covers the period from 18 March to 21 March 2018. The next report will be issued on or around 27 March 2018.

Background

- According to IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), 6,444 households (34,153 people) are displaced in 39 communities and informal care centers.
- Almost 65 per cent of health facilities in Hela and Southern Highlands provinces are damaged and 32 per cent remain closed.
- To date, 87 villages have been reached with food supplies in Hela, Southern Highlands and Western provinces.
- Around 1,300 shelter and non-food items have been distributed in Southern Highlands and Hela provinces.
- All airports in the affected regions are open except for Huya and Komo airfields, which are only open to helicopters. The roads from Mt. Hagen to Tari and Tari to Mendi remain open. Nipa to Magarima and Tari and Komo roads are partially accessible. The road from Mendi to Moro remains closed.



Source: IOM, UNDAC, OCHA
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

270,000

people in need of assistance

87

villages reached with food

34,153

displaced people in 39 communities and care centers

269

schools in five LLGs (Hela) are damaged

Situation Overview

The National Disaster Centre (NDC) estimates that around 544,000 people have been affected in five provinces and that more than 270,000 people are in immediate need of assistance. Over 125,000 are children, of which 55,000 children are under the age of five.

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) teams completed assessments confirming that 6,444 households (34,153 people) are displaced in 39 communities and informal care centers. Current figures estimate that 10,000 houses have been damaged and need immediate shelter assistance.

In Hela Province, of the 31 health facilities (not including aid posts) 90 per cent have been damaged to some extent. In Southern Highlands Province, of the 46 facilities (not including aid posts) 45 per cent have been damaged. Significant gaps remain in sanitation and hygiene support, including hygiene messaging, for affected areas.

+ For more information, see "background on the crisis" at the end of the report

According to Education Management Information System (EMIS) data on schools and number of students in the seven most affected LLGs, over 34,000 school children are enrolled in 368 schools, of which more than 23,000 children are in the five most affected LLGs of Hela. Reports from the SMS Blast/RapidPro among school inspectors and some teachers identified that 269 of 439 schools in five LLGs in Hela are damaged. Provision and maintenance of water tanks, sanitation facilities, school buildings, learning materials and canvas for temporary shelter are the most pressing needs. In Southern Highlands, 42 schools have submitted damage reports to the Department of Education. The buildings of the Department of Education in both the provinces are badly damaged and most staff have not returned to work.

The toll-free trauma and crisis counselling hotline continues to receive calls from the affected areas. Calls cover issues, such as fear of aftershocks, people needing assistance but have not been reached, distress due to loss of property, concern for relatives and general confusion about the cause of the earthquake. Rumors and fear still have a huge influence on what people believe and how they can recover.

All airports in the affected regions are open except for Huya airstrip (Southern Highlands) and Komo airfield (Hela) which are only open to helicopters. The roads to Mt Hagen to Tari and Tari to Mendi remain open; there are reports on increasing traffic on these roads. The road from Nipa to Magarima and onward to Tari and Komo is only partially accessible and the road between Mendi and Moro remains closed.

Funding

As of 14 March 2018, around US\$48.7 million has been pledged in bilateral contributions, including from six Member States (Australia, China, European Union, Japan, New Zealand, United States), with the majority being provided by private companies. The Government has allocated US\$138.8 million (PGK450 million) towards relief, recovery and reconstruction efforts. The IFRC has released US\$220,064 (CHF 209,398) from the Disaster Emergency Relief Fund (DREF) to support their response operations.

In addition to funding, significant bilateral assistance, particularly from Australia, New Zealand, Oil Search, EXXON and Mission Aviation Fellowship, in logistical support and military assets provides a critical lifeline for many remote communities

Humanitarian Response

Education

Needs:

- Maintenance of water tanks, sanitation facilities and school buildings that have been damaged or destroyed.
- Learning materials
- Canvas and tarpaulins for temporary shelters and establishment of safe temporary learning spaces, including WASH facilities and incentives for teachers and volunteers running the spaces.
- Psychosocial support to school children and teachers.
- Awareness raising on WASH, DRR and child protection.

100
school-in-a-box kits
prepositioned

Response:

- Partners have arrived to set up safe temporary learning spaces (STLS) for children in affected provinces.
- Ten early childhood development (ECD) kits and ten recreational kits have been sent to Mt. Hagen; two are already in Mendi.
- One safe space for children and women has been set up within the Catholic Diocese of Mendi.
- 31 volunteers have been trained on the use of ECD kits, recreational kits and on running safe spaces.
- 40 ECD kits, 40 recreational kits and 100 school-in-a-box kits are ready for airlift to Tari and Mendi.

Gaps & Constraints:

- The total number of school children affected, and schools damaged in the LLGs remains unclear.
- In Mendi, there is no one to coordinate in the Provincial Department of Education.



Food Security & Livelihoods

Needs:

- An estimated 143,000 people (74,000 male, 68,000 female) have been rendered food insecure by the earthquake due to landslides destroying food gardens.
- The latest mVAM report indicates that up to 64,000 people were experiencing extreme food insecure conditions before the earthquake events.
- Affected communities are unable to reach remaining food gardens or gather bush food e.g. seasonal nut karuka (edible pandanus nut) due to persisting aftershocks.

87

villages reached with food supplies

Response:

- To date 87 villages have been reached with food supplies in Hela, Southern Highlands and Western provinces.
- Supplied food items include rice, tinned fish and beef, bottled water, biscuits, cooking oil, and flour.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Availability of food relief supplies and humanitarian access including lack of road access, limited aircraft assets and remoteness of communities continues to hamper the provision of food relief to affected communities.
- Around 101,000 people (52,000 male and 49,000 female) yet to receive food relief assistance.
- Lack of quality data of actual food insecurity remains a challenge.



Health / Nutrition

Needs:

- Strengthened coverage of public health interventions due to high risk of epidemic prone diseases and outbreaks, particularly in care centers.
- Safe drinking water and dissemination of key WASH messages.
- Counselling and physiological first aid to traumatized health workers.
- Therapeutic feeding centers at hospitals, health centers and community care centers.
- Orientation and training of health workers on treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and infant and young child feeding in emergencies including counselling and support for breastfeeding.

32

diarrheal cases reported

Response:

- The early warning, alert and response surveillance system plan and budget has been set up and included in the National Department of Health's (NDOH) emergency response plan.
- Preparations for establishing safe spaces for women and children are ongoing. Tents, tarpaulins, water purification tablets, hygiene kits, blankets and learning kits have been prepositioned. Training of carers and service providers on psychosocial first aid in Mendi has commenced.
- Reports of diarrheal cases among 32 children at the Urila care center in the Nipa-Kutubu district are being managed with no new cases to date.
- Integrated recovery programming is beginning in Dodomona (Western), Mougulu (Western), Huiya (Hela) and Walagu (Southern Highlands) which will include a strong WASH and health components.
- Essential nutrients, equipment and other supplies including therapeutic food and milk to treat up to 500 children has been delivered.
- Additional nutritional supplies, including Vitamin A, ready-to-use therapeutic foods, and therapeutic milk is arriving in country.
- Public service announcements on nutrition practices are ongoing.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Communicable disease and nutrition surveillance and reporting.
- Sufficient number of trained health staff on the management of SAM.
- Inaccessibility to many of the care centers to establish therapeutic feeding centers for treatment of SAM.

**Needs:**

- Ensure targeted response, services and information reach the most vulnerable and marginalized, including women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and survivors of violence.
- Communication with communities, including information, on causes of earthquakes (to dispel rumours of links to sorcery), where to get relief and services, and to collect feedback, and accountability complaints.
- Additional psychosocial support and stress counselling staff for Family Support Centres at Provincial Hospitals

500

calls to counselling hotline

Response:

- A national telephone counselling service received over 500 calls from people (including children) in affected areas seeking information, support, trauma counselling, as well as complaints.
- Gender and protection mainstreaming support to ongoing assessments and plans.
- Joint field missions in Hela and Southern Highlands are ongoing to prepare for GBV and child protection response and prevention activities.
- Rapid gender assessment in remote displacement sites is ongoing.
- Audio alerts across mobile phones in all affected areas, facilitated by Digicel, and bi-weekly text messages are being sent to 100,000 people with self-care and response updates.
- Flyers with common messages are being shared (eg. What is an earthquake?) and community leaders are participating, translating messages into local languages, such as Huli.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Limited information is available on gender and protection issues.

**Shelter / Camp Coordination and Camp Management****Needs:**

- Around 10,000 homes have been damaged and need shelter assistance.
- The displaced population has been categorized into three groups, with the first two being immediate priorities for response:
 - village destroyed with no possibility of return to area of origin, requires relocation or settlement at the current location;
 - shelter completely or partially destroyed but could return to reconstruct and repair shelters; and
 - households or individuals temporarily in care centres that moved out of their places of habitual residence due to safety concerns but can return when declared safe.

1,333

shelter and NFIs distributed

Response:

- 2,000 shelter and non-food items are in the country and 1,333 have been distributed in Southern Highlands and Hela provinces.
- Around 85 villages have been reached with shelter and NFI supplies, including tarpaulins, shelter kits, tents, rope and nails.
- Over 2,900 households have been registered to receive shelter assistance in 19 communities and care centres in Southern Highlands Province.
- Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) teams completed assessments confirming 6,444 households displaced (34,153 people) in 39 communities and informal care centers
- 60-meter tents have been delivered to the Government and prioritized for schools, health facilities, teacher accommodation and host families.
- Cluster agencies are working on recovery strategies in the worst affected areas that will include education and training on building techniques, DRR and integration of WASH at the household level.

Gaps & Constraints:

- 8,000 shelter NFIs kits are urgently required.
- Continuous rainfall and aftershocks pose increased landslide risk especially for houses located on the mountain ridges.

- Lack of road access, limited aircraft assets and remoteness of communities continue to hamper the provision of emergency shelter to affected communities.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Needs:

- Access to adequate hygiene facilities and clean drinking water.
- Repair or rebuild community and institutional rainwater storage infrastructure damaged or destroyed.
- WASH facilities and interventions in care centres.

1,200
water containers
distributed

Response:

- 74 villages have been reached with water and 45 villages have been reached with WASH NFIs, including 1,200 water containers, as well as water purification supplies and soap.
- 400 hygiene kits have been distributed.
- Partners are moving into rehabilitation of existing water supply systems.

Gaps & Constraints:

- There is a lack of verified information on water quality at remaining water sources.

General Coordination

The Government is leading the response operation and has welcomed the support of humanitarian partners. The National Disaster Committee (NDComm) and relevant sub-committee have been mobilized to develop the national response strategy. The National Disaster Centre (NDC) coordinates assessments and relief operations. On 1 March, the Government appointed an Emergency Controller to lead the National Emergency Disaster Restoration Team in overseeing the relief and recovery efforts.

The Government has established two Forward Operating Bases (FOBs), one in Mt Hagen led by the Western Highlands Provincial Disaster Coordinator, and one in Moro is led by the Provincial Administrator. The Government has further established Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) in the capitals of Hela and Southern Highlands provinces, Tari and Mendi respectively. Provincial Administrators have assumed leadership in coordinating provincial responses.

Humanitarian partners are encouraged to register on www.humanitarian.id and actively use the dedicated earthquake response window on www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/papua-new-guinea to access the meeting calendar and latest updates.

Background on the crisis

On 26 February 2018, at 3:44am local time, an earthquake measuring M7.5 hit the Highlands region of Papua New Guinea (PNG), with its epicentre located 30 km south of Tari town, Hela Province. The tremor was the largest earthquake recorded in the region since a similar event in 1922. A series of strong aftershocks, including a M6.7 quake on 8 March in the same area and a M6.8 quake off the coast of New Ireland, caused widespread panic amongst the communities. According to preliminary estimates and based on latest earthquake intensity mapping, around 544,000 people in five provinces were affected and more than 270,000 people are in immediate need of assistance.

For further information, please contact:

PNG Disaster Management Secretariat, dmt.pg@one.un.org, and UNDAC Team, undacpng2018@undac.org

For more information, please visit <http://pngndc.gov.pg/> or <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/papua-new-guinea>.
To be added or deleted from this Sit Rep mailing list, please e-mail: undacpng2018@undac.org