

On January 15, an eruption of the Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha-apai underwater volcano caused a tsunami and ash fall in Tonga, with a 5km wide and 20km high plume of ash, steam and gas. The eruption was the biggest in Tonga in the past 30 years. Following the eruption, a tsunami wave of 1.2 metres hit the coastline in and around the capital city, Nuku'alofa, causing flooding and damage to buildings and infrastructure. The scale of the damage on the main island of Tongatapu, where the capital is located, and other outlying islands is still unclear at the time of reporting due to access and communication challenges (Source: OCHA).

## Reported Logistics Gaps and Needs

---

- Telecommunications are sporadic at best. Systems used are satellite phones and HF radios in some instances.
- Water and Air quality is compromised. Rainwater may not be safe to consume due to volcanic acidity therefore water is urgently needed. Australia and New Zealand defence force aircraft are committed to deliver water and other supplies (likely by air drops).
- The main airport Fua'amotu International Airport (TBU) is closed due to ash covering the runway. The Logistics Cluster has been informed that the runway is unlikely to be cleared yet (the earliest estimate indicated delays until Friday 21 January at most, as ash is 5-10 cm thick and only 200m of runway is able to be cleared each day).
- Assessments are currently ongoing to understand the extent of damage occurred on maritime ports and logistic infrastructures, including the road network and storage facilities.

## Coordination and Information Management

---

- The Pacific Logistics Cluster and partners are assessing needs and priorities but challenges to contact counterparts in Tonga continues. At this stage, the Logistics Cluster has not received any request of technical assistance or support for service delivery.
- The Secretariat of the South Pacific (SPC) is trying to establish communication with its Tongan counterpart to monitor the air quality. The main challenge remains the highly damaged telecommunication infrastructures.
- The Logistics Cluster and WFP Aviation are collecting and sharing all available information related to logistics facilities and transport options. The Logistics Cluster will continue responding to the numerous incoming requests of information, briefings, and updates. For more information, please visit the [Pacific Region Logistics Cluster webpage](#).
- On January 17, the WFP Logistics team (in Fiji) sent out an 'expression of interest' to partners regarding items to be airlifted to Fiji - waiting feedback from partners.
- The WFP Preparedness Team will provide partners with the updated [Pacific Logistics Mapping \(PALM\) reports](#) with information on emergency stock levels across the Pacific and a visual overview to support the response in Tonga. A PALM report of all stocks in Tonga was sent to OCHA.
- For more information on Unsolicited Bilateral Donations (UBDs) partners can refer to the guidance made by UNOCHA in collaboration with the Logistics Cluster and the Humanitarian Research Group (INSEAD): [https://emergency-log.weebly.com/uploads/2/5/2/4/25246358/ubd\\_report\\_eng\\_-\\_final\\_for\\_printing\\_2.pdf](https://emergency-log.weebly.com/uploads/2/5/2/4/25246358/ubd_report_eng_-_final_for_printing_2.pdf).

## Sea Transport

---

- HMAS Adelaide (ex-Brisbane) - the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is consolidating and preparing freight sent by partners to be loaded on HMAS Adelaide. The vessel will depart Friday, 21 January, for Tonga. Interested partners should contact Scott Dove - [scott.dove@thepalladiumgroup.com](mailto:scott.dove@thepalladiumgroup.com) (Palladium Brisbane DFA Warehouse); Krishnan Prathapan - [Krishan.Prathapan@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Krishan.Prathapan@dfat.gov.au) (DFAT). Sailing time from Australia is 6 days.
- [HMNZS Wellington](#) and HMNZ Aotearoa vessels with supplies and access clearing equipment have departed Auckland. Sailing time from NZ is 3 days.

## Air Transport

---

- WFP Pacific Humanitarian Air Service (PHAS) – WFP Aviation has some capacity to provide service delivery according to needs and demands. WFP Fiji and WFP Pacific Regional Bureau are working to assess available options (PHAS Contact: Matthew Donoghue - [matthew.donoghue@wfp.org](mailto:matthew.donoghue@wfp.org)).
- The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) is on standby, awaiting the airport to open in Tonga to fly relief items.
- The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) has a Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) [C-130H\(NZ\) Hercules](#) carrying aid supplies on standby to depart for Tonga today January 19 if the Tongatapu airport runway is cleared for landing. New Zealand is expected to organise multiple flights – to be confirmed.
- LifeFlight – A private organisation based in Suva is currently working on options to charter an aircraft from Fiji to Tonga to move specialized personnel, media and/or supplies as soon as the airport re-opens. For more information please contact: [anthony@lifeflightfiji.org](mailto:anthony@lifeflightfiji.org) / +679 8025453.

## Telecommunication services

---

- The overriding issue affecting responders is the lack of communications due to a damaged submarine cable. This cable, running between Tonga and Fiji over almost 300 kilometres, is reportedly severed in two places. The domestic section of this cable may be extremely difficult to repair as it is close to the eruption site. A cable repair vessel is due to sail from Papua New Guinea to Tonga to commence repairs which may take up to 2 weeks.
- Digicel – the main telecommunications service provider in Tonga – has partially restored its services on the main island of Tongatapu. Other islands are unable to communicate with each other.
- Engaging with regional actors and global partners, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) is assessing best options to support Tonga in re-establishing communications and supporting the relief efforts – ETC Focal Point is John Dovale: [john.dovale@wfp.org](mailto:john.dovale@wfp.org).

### Contacts

---

Stephen Aumua

WFP Fiji Preparedness Officer / Logistics  
Cluster Coordinator OIC

[stephen.aumua@wfp.org](mailto:stephen.aumua@wfp.org)