



St. Vincent & the Grenadines: La Soufrière Volcano

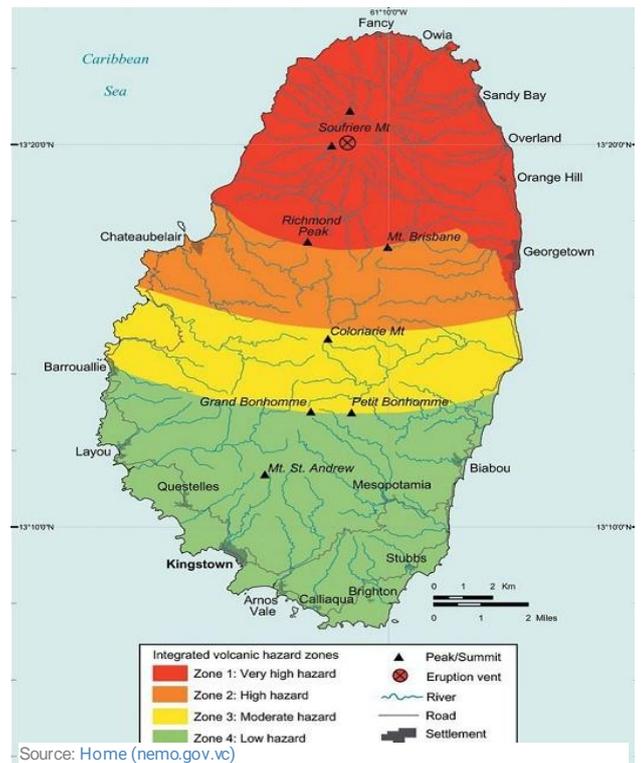
Situation Report No. 02

As of 11 April 2021

This situation report is produced by the UN Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean Country Emergency Technical Team (UNETT) in collaboration with humanitarian partners on behalf of the United Nations Subregional Team (UNST). It is issued by the Office of the Resident Coordinator for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean with the support of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

HIGHLIGHTS

- As of 11 April, intervals between tremors have lasted between 1.5 to 3 hours. Based on visual observations and satellite imagery, the intervals are associated with periods of explosive activity or enhanced venting of the volcano. Explosions and accompanying ashfall, of similar or larger magnitude, are likely to continue to occur over the next few days.¹ Satellite imagery can be seen [here](#).
- 54% of shelters lack basic services such as water, hygiene, and sanitation (WASH) and 63% of emergency shelters show increasing presence of unaccompanied women and girls.²
- On 11 April, Saint Vincent experienced a massive power outage around 1:00 am following another explosive event. This poses serious challenges for shelters that do not have auxiliary power.
- The United Nations at the request of the Prime Minister Hon Dr Ralph E. Gonsalves activated a mechanism to mobilize a team of experts that includes volcanologist or environmental toxicologists through UNEP to develop and implement a plan for debris management including cleanup of ashes and promote environmental health and safety.
- PAHO and WFP personnel have been deployed to support health and humanitarian efforts.
- Airports in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are closed and there is a limited availability of maritime assets.



Source: Home (nemo.gov.vc)

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

30

Approximately 30 villages evacuated³

16-20K

Estimated number of people affected

3.5K

Estimated number of people in shelters

85

Shelters have been activated⁴

¹ The University of the West Indies Seismic Research Centre 11 April 2021

² Field Assessment conducted by the Gender Affairs Division in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on 10 April 2021.

³ PAHO Situation Review La Soufrière Volcano Situation Report #3 11 April 2021

⁴ CDEMA Situation Report #10 11 April 2021

SITUATION OVERVIEW

On 11 April, NEMO indicated that there were pyroclastic flows (pyroclast is a cloud of hot ash and rock) at La Soufrière Volcano and possible destruction and devastation of communities close to the volcano. The current activity pattern is similar to that of the 1902 eruption and implies that the eruptions will cause more damage and destruction.

On 11 April, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) indicated that eighty-five (85) shelters were occupied with approximately 3,586 people. There is an undisclosed number of self-evacuees, who are staying with family and friends.⁵

On 9 April at approximately 8:41 am, the La Soufrière volcano entered an explosive eruptive phase with the first column of ash as high as 10 km.

On 8 April, seismic activity at La Soufrière Volcano changed significantly when the seismic station closest to the summit began recording low-level seismic tremors. The volcano entered a heightened period of activity indicative of a fresh batch of magma either near to or approaching the surface. On 8 April, following significant seismic activity, there was an explosive event at the volcano site. Following an emergency meeting of Cabinet and the National Emergency Council, the alert level was raised to RED and an Evacuation Order Issued.

GENERAL COORDINATION

On 9 April, ad hoc United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETT) and United Nations Sub-Regional Team (UNST) meetings were called by the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) to review and further a joint UN response, pre-positioning of support, and experts for deployment. The UN also continues to consider funding appeal options to support the response upon request by the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Coordination mechanisms have been activated by the RC and coordination with CDEMA's Regional Response Mechanism (RRM)/Regional Coordination Centre (RCC) is ongoing. The Caribbean Development Partners Group - Disaster Management (CPDG-DM), which is co-chaired by the Executive Director of CDEMA and the UN RC for Barbados and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), have been convened daily since 9 April.

On 11 April, during a Press Conference the Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), Hon Dr Ralph E. Gonsalves, thank the UN for their support. He indicated he had received calls from the UN Secretary General Mr. Antonio Guterres and the UN Resident Coordinator in Barbados and the OECS Mr. Didier Trebucq indicating the full commitment of the UN system support to the Government and people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, including to mobilize the support of the international community.

UN agencies are expected to join the Detailed Damage Assessment (DDSA) being coordinated by CDEMA.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Early Recovery

Needs:

- Initial detailed sectoral assessment of the impact.
- Cleaning and clearing of ash and debris.

Response:

- At the request of the Prime Minister Hon Dr Ralph E. Gonsalves, a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) team of experts is being mobilize. This team includes volcanologist/environmental toxicologists who will develop and implement a plan for cleanup, disposal of ashes and address environmental health concerns.
- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) stands ready to support post-disaster assessments and technical support on recovery activities. A team is on standby for deployment if needed.
- UNDP is also preparing a Cash-for-Work programme proposal for approval with the aim to facilitate community clean-up of ashes and buying necessary equipment as soon as the clean-up can commence.

⁵ CDEMA Situation Report No.10 11 April 2021

- The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has offered to provide a comprehensive assessment of the economic, social, environmental, and infrastructural impact of the volcanic eruption on SVG, including recommendations for resilient recovery, if deemed necessary by the government.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Current information gap articulating needs.

Education

Needs:

- Initial Education Needs Assessment.
- Safe temporary learning spaces, including provision of water and sanitation facilities.
- Recreational kits and early childhood development kits.
- Psychosocial support for school children and teachers.

Response:

- Funds from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) were transferred to the Ministry of National Mobilization (MNM) for Return to Happiness (face-to-face) training for teachers and community members. Virtual training has been implemented over the past two months.
- Support has been provided to replenish Return to Happiness kits and the expansion of existing UNICEF-supported hot lines to provide psychosocial support.
- UNICEF supported CDEMA, NEMO and the Ministry of Education with preparedness messages/posters and is supporting education-specific messages.
- UNICEF has prepositioned a total of 30 school-in-a-box kits, as well as recreational and early childhood development (ECD) kits with CDEMA, available for immediate transportation, depending on the outcomes of the current Needs Assessments.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Information gaps on current needs to enable an adequate response in education interventions.

Food Security

Needs:

- Immediate food and basic needs.
- Loss of assets and livelihoods (fisheries, agriculture).
- Insufficient food supplies in shelters to address needs for an extended period of time.
- Ongoing adverse socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic compounding the situation.
- Insufficient capacity of potential host countries to provide support to evacuees for medium- and long-term support.

20K

Estimated number of people to be at risk of food insecurity.

Response:

- Through CDEMA, WFP has received a request from NEMO to provide food and cash assistance to up to 20,000 affected people in shelters, housed with families and friends as well as those that may be evacuated to neighboring countries.
- WFP technical support to design and implement shock-responsive social protection programmes in SVG and host countries receiving evacuees was communicated to the Ministry of National Mobilisation in SVG and the OECS Secretariat.
- WFP has on standby 2,800 Meals, Ready-to-Eat (MREs) to address the specific/immediate needs of vulnerable people and those living in shelters that could be airlifted if needed, once airports are operational.
- Two WFP staff with expertise in food security, cash, social protection, and vulnerability analysis are en route to SVG and should arrive late on 11 April. Staff will provide planning, coordination, and information management support to national stakeholders, including the design of food distributions, considering COVID-19 protocols and restrictions, and cash assistance through the social protection sector or other means.
- Based on needs, UNICEF will support immediate in-kind support for the most vulnerable families, preferably with national protection systems. Based on existing work with the OECS Social Protection Committee, UNICEF is in

contact with the Government and the World Bank in support of shock-responsive social protection. Within this context, UNICEF is liaising with the Ministry of National Mobilization and Social Development and other countries/territories hosting evacuees to identify cash-based support needed and ways to leverage national social protection systems.

- Collaboration with WFP and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is in place to also consider the possibility of starting a parallel cash-based support system, if necessary. It is expected to align with national systems so that any parallel response can then refer beneficiaries to more sustainable support beyond the immediate aftermath.
- Two months ago, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) distributed ten 1,000-gallon water tanks for use in livestock evacuation centers and supported the preparation of agriculture sector volcano eruption anticipatory action, preparedness, and response protocols.
- Three FAO staff (sub-regional and regional) with expertise in emergency animal health, risk/vulnerability assessment, disaster impact assessment, and emergency response are providing very close virtual technical support to the Ministry of Agriculture. An FAO National Correspondent with expertise in animal health is also providing field-level technical and coordination support.
- FAO is also currently liaising with the Government to support the following: Retrofitting and construction of additional livestock evacuation shelters; maintenance of the nutritional status of livestock in evacuation centers; and veterinary support to ensure the sanitary status of livestock in evacuation centers. Support is being targeted to small ruminants and swine in and evacuated from, the red and orange zones.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Financial resources for cash transfers and food distributions.

Health

Needs:

- Increased health risk due to combination with current COVID-19 situation.
- Respiratory problems due to the impact of ash clouds over time. Ash plumes and sulfur dioxide have reached far enough to affect Barbados, Grenada, and Saint Lucia.
- There is a need to develop modeling for the impact of gases.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as masks, cleaning supplies, and gloves as well as additional surveillance are still required.
- The Ministry of Health has yet to confirm the need for medical hospitals and has initiated the process of PCR testing and vaccination of people in shelters.
- Shortage of family planning and dignity kits for women and girls.

Response:

- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) will be conducting a damage assessment of health facilities including assessing structural and functional integrity of facilities, as well as, assessing water quality.
- PAHO is working to strengthen the health emergency operation centres including support to establish alternative medical care sites.
- PAHO is providing support to the Ministry of Health (MoH) for coordination of international health response.
- PAHO is assisting with the coordination of personnel for the provision of psychosocial support.
- PAHO is ensuring the maintenance of essential health services, including coordination with the Primary Health Care facilities.
- PAHO is supporting shelter management including assisting with set up in line with shelter management guidelines in the context of COVID-19.
- PAHO facilitated the shipment of 100,000 masks from Barbados to SVG.
- PAHO is supporting infection prevention control through the provision of PPEs and medical masks.
- PAHO has cleared a container with 60,000 masks, 7,000 N95, and 60,000 gowns to be delivered to Barbados Defense Force.
- PAHO is working to identify available funding for immediate use, availability of military shipping in the region (CMCOORD), and available supplies from Panama.
- PAHO is working to identify support for psychosocial support/protection in shelters.
- PAHO is providing support to Public Health promotion, provision of communications material, and review of updated COVID-19 protocols for evacuees and deployment of aid workers as shared by CARPHA.
- Prepositioning of noncommunicable diseases (NCD) kits.

- Finalize preparations for PAHO Response Team: Five PAHO consultants already stationed in SVG, a WASH expert deployed on 11 April, an epidemiologist, and two logistics experts.
- Ongoing discussions with PAHO and hospitals in French Overseas Territories to provide services for burns, trauma, and respiratory services.
- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is liaising with the Ministry of Health to address the sexual and reproductive health needs identified.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Availability of syndromic surveillance, health services, and air quality experts.

Protection

Needs:

- Safe spaces/centres for children, women, and vulnerable people.
- Child protection and sorcery accusation-related violence prevention and response services.
- Eleven emergency shelters were assessed to date, hosting approximately 589 affected people (approximately half of which are women and girls).
- As of 11 April, preliminary data collected shows increasing protection concerns for the affected population, where 54% of shelters lack basic services such as water, hygiene, and sanitation (WASH), and 54% of assessed shelters are only registering heads of households.⁷
- Potential of family separation, posing risks for particularly vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied and separated children, people living with disabilities, pregnant women, single heads of household, and women traveling alone,
- The elderly and those facing serious health issues, including grave respiratory issues worsened by the amount of ashfall.
- GBV risks have been identified in assessed shelters lacking basic protection services, where 63% of emergency shelters show increasing presence of unaccompanied women and girls, with the tendency being for single women/heads of households not to be placed in specially protected areas, leaving them at risk of GBV, including sexual violence, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), physical violence and intimate partner violence.⁸
- Shelters assessed do not have the capacity to provide emergency support in response to sexual violence cases, including clinical management of rape services. Concerns for the potential increase in SEA by service providers, humanitarian actors, and security forces, as women seem to be reaching out only to shelter management (often absent from shelters) for any support.
- Assessed shelters are not registering women separately from their male partners, leaving them at increased risks of being excluded from lifesaving aid and key information services, as well as further risks of experiencing GBV, including SEA, survival sex, and trafficking.⁹
- Psychological first aid and referral services for the most marginalized and vulnerable groups.
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) emergency services are urgently requested by the affected population in emergency shelters, but also by Government staff responding to the emergency, where increasing levels of stress are being reported.

7.6K

Estimated number of women and girls evacuated⁶

Response:

- UNFPA donated 400 dignity kits for women and families to the Bureau of Gender Affairs. 614 dignity kits are prepositioned in Antigua and Barbuda and 250 in Barbados.
- UNFPA engaged with partners in Barbados, Grenada, and St. Lucia for support required to host SVG evacuees.
- UNFPA remotely provides daily Gender-based Violence in Emergencies (GBViE) technical assistance support to the Gender Affairs Division, including an ongoing GBV Safety Audit in emergency shelters, an update on GBV referral pathways, and the implementation of sexual and reproductive health (SRH)/GBV mainstreaming guidelines for emergency shelters. A GBV rapid assessment commenced on 10 April and so far, 11 emergency shelters have been assessed.

⁶ Based on total female population being evacuated from the RED and ORANGE zone.

⁷ Field Assessment conducted by the Gender Affairs Division in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on 10 April 2021.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid

- UNWomen has provided support to the Bureau of Gender Affairs with a cash transfer to support 650 families for two months. Additionally, 150 protection kits, 250 food hampers, and PPEs have been provided.
- UNWomen has reached out to National Gender Machineryes (NGM) in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, and Saint Lucia to determine any support required by SVG evacuees.
- UNWomen awaits further assessments by NGM in SVG and is ready to support assessments on the ground with analysis and guiding personnel to support gender responsiveness of assessment tools.
- UNWomen is ready to support CDEMA assessments on the ground by providing support with the collation of data to support sex disaggregation and gender/social vulnerability analyses.
- UNICEF also provided Child Protection in Emergency training materials to the NEMO Shelter Management Cluster and is in discussion on collaboration with IFRC for the provision of technical assistance.
- UNICEF has expanded an online-24-hour psychosocial support service.
- The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNICEF are coordinating with the OECS on the issue of displaced/evacuated people from SVG, including a focus on strengthening child and social protection for displaced people.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Information gaps on sex and age disaggregated data to inform needs analysis.
- Data collection systems are weak and unreliable, and needs are being assessed by a limited number of staff relying heavily on support from untrained volunteers.
- Need for improved tools and protocols for displaced/evacuated people from SVG.

Shelter

Needs:

- An estimated 20,000 people are displaced of which an increasing number is moving abroad and in need of shelter and protection.
- Shelters do not have an auxiliary electricity supply which poses a potential issue due to power outage.
- Provision of temporary support for displaced people, including shelter, feeding and social services, medical and school arrangements, COVID-19 protocols, and immigration procedures.

85

Shelters are occupied ¹⁰

Response:

- IOM has a Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) coordinator on standby to coordinate the sector and collaborate with the local initiatives in SVG.
- IOM is in the process of mobilizing 1,200 hygiene kits and 400 kitchen sets from stocks in Haiti and is seeking support for their transportation.
- IOM is planning to provide support in the management of emergency shelters through a remote specialist/trainer. More information is needed about the situation in shelters in light of the increased risk of GBV and possible protracted displacement.
- IOM is planning to monitor needs and to track the movements of affected people with its Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) methodology in SVG and neighboring countries. A DTM specialist is on standby.
- IOM, at the request of the OECS Committee, is assisting Immigration Officers with the registration of people evacuated to other countries and the digitization of their registration. IOM can deploy Integrated Border Management specialists.
- Preparedness for virtual child-friendly spaces in shelters has been conducted by UNICEF.
- PPE support was provided to 1,000 people by UNICEF.

Gaps & Constraints:

- There is a need for additional planning and management of evacuations, including the provision of information to affected populations and communities that are (potentially) hosting evacuees.
- The incorporation of COVID-19 protocols and child protection needs and concerns are incorporated in all shelter activities.
- Establishment of safe spaces and activities for children in the community, such as recreational activities.
- Establishment of systems in shelters/shelter managers to increase their awareness of sexual and physical violence against men, women, boys, and girls, including risks, consequences, and support services.

¹⁰ CDEMA Situation Report #10 11 April 2021

- Evacuees entering shelters, or leaving for nearby countries, should be vaccinated with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Need for safe water and food in shelters, Medical Oxygen Cylinders, and PPEs.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

Needs:

- Safe drinking water and water storage items.
- Emergency latrines (with gender and disability considerations).
- Hygiene supplies.
- Basic lifesaving and risk-associated hygiene awareness messages, including menstrual hygiene management.

Response:

- UNICEF provided several tons of WASH supplies (water tanks - 5,000L, collapsible water containers, dignity kits, chlorine water treatment). These supplies were transported within 24-hours through CDEMA and the Barbados Defense Force and will benefit 9,000 people with access to safe water and hygiene services.
- The Emergency Team and UNICEF WASH in emergency specialists are on standby. The WASH expert is available if needed to provide technical support in assessment and coordination.
- PAHO is collaborating with UNICEF on WASH. PAHO WASH expert arrives in SVG on 11 April.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Proper distribution use and monitoring of the delivered WASH supplies, as well as the adequate provisioning of safe water, basic sanitation, and critical hygiene items.
- Sanitation measures and hygiene supplies for shelters, including emergency latrines.
- Safe drinking water and water storage items remain a challenge, as the Water Authority has closed the water system as a preventive measure against the ashfall.
- Specific attention to safe and adequate menstrual hygiene management solutions for girls in shelters.

Emergency Telecommunications

Response:

- The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is ready to provide ICT-assisted-emergency BGAN phones and upon review, any other emergency ICT support that may be needed.
- ITU will work with the Government to introduce WINLINK, which is emergency equipment using a radio that allows personnel on the ground to remain connected during an emergency response.
- ITU, in collaboration with UNICEF, will be enhancing school connectivity through GIGA.
- ITU is prepared to work with the Government and other key players to help minimize misinformation and improve mental health, especially among youth.
- WFP can make available portable VSATS to support first responders and potentially extend access to affected communities.

Constraints:

- Lack of data and information on ICT needs.
- Power to support ICT, especially in remote and rural areas.

Logistics

Response:

- In coordination with CDEMA, WFP is planning to scale up its logistical response to reinforce national and regional relief efforts, including the provision of common services (air, sea, and ground transport) based on need, warehouse facilities, cargo tracking, coordination, and information management.
- WFP logistical assets (trucks, forklifts, generators, prefabs, etc.) are available in Barbados and Mobile Storage Units (MSUs) and other equipment to establish logistics hubs can be dispatched from the Sub-Regional Focal Point countries or the WFP-managed United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) in Panama.

- A WFP Logistics Officer is en-route to Saint Vincent and is expected to arrive in-country late on 11 April. Additional surge capacity staff is on standby at WFP's Caribbean Office in Barbados to provide logistics and end-to-end supply chain management support.
- A WFP Officer is expected to be seconded to CDEMA to provide information management and other support.
- A WFP Civil-Military (CIV-MIL) Officer is also supporting the CIV-MIL Multinational Caribbean Coordination Cell (MNCCC) to identify and coordinate the tasking of foreign military assets.

Constraints:

- The University of the West Indies (UWI) Seismic Research Institute stated that helicopter support is needed for the essential deployment of equipment to the volcano as well as to facilitate the movement of field staff.
- The Argyle International Airport and AIA Cargo Terminal are currently closed until further notice.
- Closure of Grantley Adams International Airport in Barbados
- Evacuation and transportation capacity.
- Availability of maritime assets.
- Dutch navy ship HNLMS Pelikaan and HMS navy ship both in maintenance and not available on short notice.

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For more information, please visit [Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency - CDEMA National Emergency Management Organization \(NEMO\)](#) - [The University of the West Indies Seismic Research Centre](#)