



# St. Vincent & the Grenadines: La Soufrière Volcano

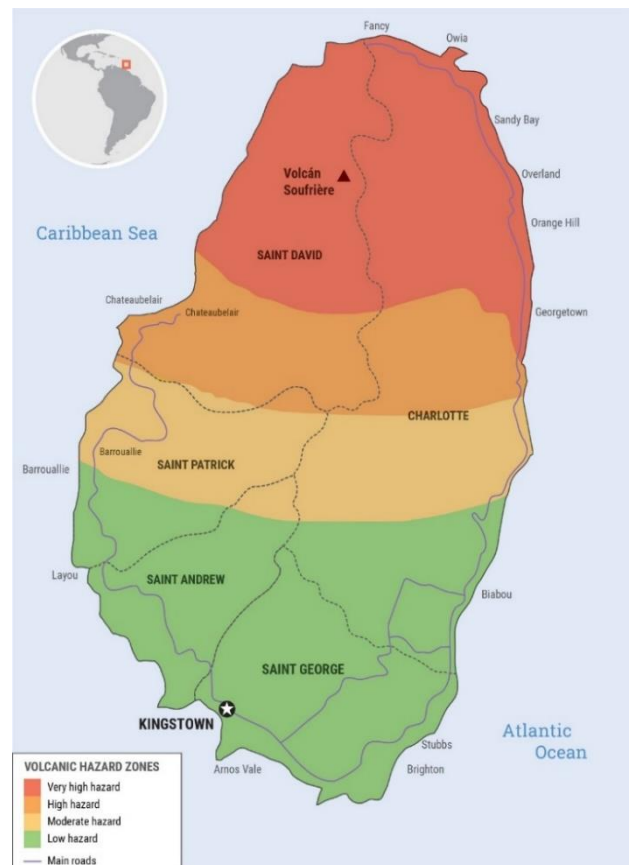
## Situation Report No. 05

As of 30 April 2021

This situation report is produced by the United Nations Sub-Regional Team (UNST) for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It is issued by the Office of the Resident Coordinator Office with the support of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

### HIGHLIGHTS

- On 29 April, rainfall resulted in flooding and landslides affecting residents and damaging housing infrastructure. Mudflows impacted the **RED** zone as ash deposits are thickest in those areas due to the absence of trees. There were reports of flooding and landslides in and around Kingstown and its surrounding areas, with three emergency shelters being flooding.<sup>1</sup>
- On 27 April, NEMO reported lahar flows within the river system in the **RED**, and **ORANGE** Volcano Hazard Zones from 9:00 am to 10:00 am. Lahars are a dense mixture of ash and water which occurs during heavy rain, which creates mudflows that destroy everything in their path and rush down the Volcano's slopes faster than a river.<sup>2</sup>
- The septic tanks of shelters are overwhelmed (no sewage system), chemical toilets are being used, but with insufficient suction vehicles.<sup>3</sup> Liquid and solid waste management pose a challenge for shelters. Many shelters receive food prepared off-site, suggesting volumes of waste related to food production.<sup>4</sup>
- 90% water** supply flow capacity island-wide has been restored, but many communities are not getting a constant supply. This poses a challenge for maintaining free chlorine residual levels. Large amounts of bottled water have been distributed, disturbing the previously functioning recycling system, and there are reports of increasing volumes of unsolicited aid shipments building up at the port.
- 100%** and **80%** loss of vegetation in the **RED** and **ORANGE** zones, respectively.<sup>5</sup> These zones closest to the Volcano are the main agricultural areas of the country.
- Argyle International Airport reopened on Saturday, 24 April 2021, with Cargo Terminal returning to normal operations from Friday, 23 April 2021. Some airlines (incl. American Airlines) postponed their services until 1 May 2021.



<sup>1</sup> Loop News Caribbean

<sup>2</sup> NEMO 27 April 2021

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Environment Programme Situation Report No. 2 26 April 2021

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

**85**

The number of public shelters occupied.<sup>6</sup>

**4,456**

Estimated number of displaced people in public shelters.<sup>7</sup>

**17,932**

Estimated number of displaced people in private homes.<sup>8</sup>

**22,440**

The total number of registered displaced people.<sup>9</sup>

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

The RED and ORANGE zones can continue to be impacted by mudflows as ash deposits are thickest in these areas, and the absence of trees means that all the material will find its way down the valleys. Flooding and landslides in and around Kingstown and its environs and other areas prone to landslides and flooding can also keep occurring. In addition, the flash flood risk may persist even after the cessation of the rainfall, as the mass movements in the hilltop may produce river blockages, which may lead to water build-up and then flash floods. Additionally, the mosquito population may increase several days after the rains subside, with local issues including Chikungunya, Dengue, and Zika.<sup>10</sup>

On 28 April, it was reported that five COVID-19 cases had been confirmed at an emergency shelter in Stubbs. Shelter occupants were refusing to take the COVID-19 tests despite confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases. The Prime Minister has urged persons to get tested, especially those persons in shelters.<sup>11</sup>

The International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers (IAMAT) reported that the air quality in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is considered moderately unsafe in accordance with the WHO guidelines. The country's annual mean concentration of PM2.5 is 22 µg/m3, exceeding the recommended maximum of 10 µg/m3.<sup>12</sup>

## GENERAL COORDINATION

On 29 April, the Caribbean Development Partners Group - Disaster Management (CDPG-DM), co-chaired by the Executive Director of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and the UN RC for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean States, met to continue coordinating the response. During this meeting, the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH) provided the CDPG with a briefing on the excess rainfall affecting Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. On 27 April, the United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETT) met to discuss operational gaps and challenges in response to the Volcano.

The Detail Damage Sectoral Assessment (DDSA) report is being finalised after being presented to the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Members of the DDSA team are addressing the initial feedback received from the Government representatives.<sup>13</sup>

**The Protocol for Special Quarantine Arrangement: Working Quarantine - Humanitarian can be found [here](#).**

## UN HUMANITARIAN AND RECOVERY RESPONSE

### Early Recovery

#### Needs:

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

#### Response:

- UNDP has procured essential equipment and tools for the emergency employment programme to support ash and debris removal. Discussions with the Government will commence soon relating to the specifics of this initiative.

<sup>6</sup> CDEMA Situation Report#26 29 April 2021

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Environment Programme Situation Report #3 30 April 2021

<sup>11</sup> [Five C-19 cases at emergency shelter; occupants resisting testing – iWitness News \(iwnsvg.com\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> Source: [Saint Vincent & the Grenadines: Air Pollution | IAMAT](#)

<sup>13</sup> CDEMA Situation Report No. 26 29 April 2021

**Gaps & Constraints:**

- Current information gap on needs.
- There is a need to consider what is an appropriate building design that balances low environmental impact and low energy needs. In the volcanic context of the country, this will become a challenge for the reconstruction.
- There will be a cost in environmental and financial terms, even for places not directly affected by the Volcano. This cost will have to be reflected in the analysis of the costs of reconstruction.
- While it was reported elsewhere that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was leading on air quality assessments and coordination, this is not the case, and air quality assessments continue to be a gap during the response.

**Education****Needs:**

- Initial Education Needs Assessment.
- Safe temporary learning spaces, including the provision of water and sanitation facilities.
- Training for teachers to teach in the shelter environment and for delivery of blended education.
- Teaching-learning support for the preparation of exams.

**Response:**

- UNICEF has supported the development of radio messages on mental health and posters for shelters.

**Gaps & Constraints:**

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

**Food Security and Livelihoods****Needs:**

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

**20K**

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

**Response:**

- The World Food Programme (WFP) continues to work with the Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development, Family, Gender Affairs, Persons with Disabilities and Youth (MoNM) to implement a cash-based transfer programme to support those affected by the disaster. The programme will focus on meeting immediate essential needs and demonstrating how systems utilized in emergency support (for example, data collection) can strengthen and expand social assistance in the future and make it more shock responsive. WFP and UNICEF are also engaging on the ground to ensure that the complaints and response mechanisms can link to referral and protection processes to ensure optimal linkages to enhance future social protection.
- WFP is supporting the MoNM with the upcoming household verification exercise of persons staying in private residences to provide a more detailed understanding of needs and vulnerabilities, which will inform the targeting of the planned cash-based programme. Working with the MoNM, WFP has designed and coded a rapid, digital data collection tool, including inputs from UNICEF and FAO, and started training supervisors and approximately 80 enumerators from the Youth Empowerment Service (YES) programme to facilitate the process. The launch of the household verification exercise is anticipated for the week of 3 May.
- WFP continues to support the Government in collecting and processing data on evacuees. In addition to digitizing the existing data collection tool used in shelters and training enumerators and call center workers on its use, WFP's vulnerability and data expert is supporting a government working group that coordinates data on evacuees. WFP is also consulting with the Government on a beneficiary management system.
- WFP aims to further strengthen coordination by hiring an information management practitioner. Support provided will include coordination between the UN technical work group on Food Security, Livelihoods and Cash, the Government, and other actors on the ground. There are currently eight (8) WFP staff members on the ground (programme, logistics, vulnerability analysis, and the Representative a.i.).

- UNICEF has two social protection and cash (plus services) specialists on the ground to support the Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development, Family, Gender Affairs, Youth, Housing, and Informal Human Settlement, as a continuation of the COVID-19 support and to partner with the WFP on the design and implementation of the CERF.
- UNICEF is also supporting the assessment of vulnerability and needs for short- and medium-term income support and will assist the Ministry in the design and implementation of cash transfer provision through the national social protection system beyond initial relief efforts.
- The Ministry has requested UNICEF's support to establish linkages between cash and psychosocial support, and protection and other social services, as needed, for immediate comprehensive support. Additionally, the Ministry has requested support for the smooth transition to the country's social service infrastructure, strengthening the Ministry's existing "Social Protection Preparedness and Response Plan" and overall social protection system.

#### Gaps & Constraints:

- Financial resources for cash transfers and food distributions.

## Health

#### Needs:

- Improve Health Information Services with respect to Supply Chain Management.
- Support HEOC and coordination of health support.
- Health Risk communication.
- Vector control.
- Clean-up operations in health care facilities.
- Damage assessments of health care facilities.
- WASH expertise.
- Air quality evaluation.
- Support Surveillance data collection.

#### Response:

- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) will pay for the rental of the proposed location for the temporary Health EOC and support health emergency coordination with the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and MoH Health Disaster Coordinator.
- PAHO delivered 400 bottles of 60 Aquatabs (8.68 a.i.) to CWSA and donated 90 000 Aquatabs 3mg/l to the MOH Environmental Health department for household use.
- PAHO supported deep clean operations at Evesham Health Centre to facilitate opening on 29 April 2021.
- PAHO facilitated the transportation of ash samples, coordinated with UNEP and IVHHN, and promoted health communication messaging, including the printing of posters (COVID-19 vaccination, use of water, cleaning of ash) for health care facilities and shelters.
- PAHO organized logistics of PCR test kits and laboratory supplies to arrive with Regional Security System (RSS) on 30 April 2021. Facilitated donation by CDEMA of 40,000 medical gloves.

#### Gaps & Constraints:

- Limited capability for dialysis and oncology services.
- Heightened risk of COVID-19 transmissions.
- Access to health care services for evacuees in neighboring countries.
- Demographics on persons in shelters in terms of age, sex, and gender, not yet disaggregated.

## Protection

#### Needs:

- Safe spaces/centres for children, women, and vulnerable people.
- Child protection and violence prevention and response services.
- Active engagement and capacity building of shelter managers to mitigate Gender-Based Violence (GBV) risks.
- Specialized Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) emergency services for evacuees in shelters and private homes, as well as response workers.

# 7.6K

Estimated number of women and girls evacuated <sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Based on total female population being evacuated from the RED and ORANGE zone.

**Response:**

- The National Gender Machinery (NGM) distributed 138 Dignity kits from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) on 24 April 2021 on the Leeward side of Saint Vincent as part of a Partner Agreement to provide relief to 650 families.
- UN Women also provided 502 hygiene kits to the National Gender Machinery on 23 April 2021 to be distributed during the week of 3 May 2021.
- UNICEF's technical support of the Child Protection Needs Assessment continues. To date, 1,111 children and adolescents under 18 years in 65 shelters, and 140 in private homes, have been assessed; 567 males and 544 females; 6 unaccompanied and separated children have been identified, 4 of whom have been united with families; 11 children with disabilities are being monitored. The assessment is also providing age disaggregated data to facilitate the design of age-appropriate interventions.
- UNICEF has provided 30 recreational kits to cover 2,700 children and direct cash support to Government for the roll-out of the psychosocial programme *Return to Happiness*, effective 3 May 2021. All shelters now have risk communication information posted to ensure that caregivers, children, and adolescents know key self-protection tips and know-how to report any child protection violations.
- The Ministry of National Mobilisation, FLOW, and UNICEF commenced SMS messaging to reach caregivers about the importance of careful supervision of their children in shelters, homes, and communities

**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 volunteers.
- Need for improved tools and protocols for displaced/evacuated people from SVG.


**Shelter**
**Needs:**

- There is a need to strengthen the information management and registration of the evacuees to monitor movements, especially to mitigate the spread of Covid-19.
- There is a need for strengthened coordination of ongoing and planned assessments and collection/dissemination of uniform and disaggregated data.

**>20%**of the population is displaced<sup>15</sup>**Response**

- There are 734 volunteers providing support in the emergency shelters.
- There is one hotel facility sheltering people with special needs.
- The Emergency Shelter Management Subcommittee meets regularly with the shelter managers.

**Gaps & Constraints:**

- Plans need to be developed for dignified shelter solutions for likely protracted displacement of evacuated people and need to reopen schools and churches.
- The total (planned) capacity of the shelters is 5,000. It is observed that an increasing number of persons are transferring from private accommodation into public shelters. COVID-19 mitigation measures reduce the capacity of the shelters.
- Capacity development and technical assistance for shelter managers to mitigate GBV in emergency shelters, including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA).
- Evacuees entering shelters, or leaving for nearby countries, should be vaccinated with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.


**Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene**
**Needs:**

- Emergency water trucking/distribution to areas without supply.
- Increase/upgrade water infrastructure in shelters, communities, and healthcare facilities.
- Household and shelter water storage and treatment capacity.
- Safe drinking water, including chemical and biological water quality testing, testing kits, treatment, distribution, and water storage items to ensure continuous safe water supply to households and shelters

<sup>15</sup> NEMO Shelter Report 29 April 2021



- Emergency latrines (with gender, age/children, and disability considerations) and excreta emptying and safe disposal services.
- Increased number of shower facilities and laundry spaces in shelters, including drainage and menstrual hygiene considerations.
- Lighting around WASH facilities.
- Solid and liquid waste management and bins provision.
- Family hygiene kits (including menstrual hygiene, nappies, masks, etc.)
- Cleaning kits for environmental health at the shelter and household levels.
- Essential lifesaving and risk-associated COVID-19 and hygiene awareness campaigns and messages, including menstrual hygiene management.
- Hygiene promotion and behavior change material for shelters.
- Drainage around WASH facilities in view of rains and storms that have begun.

#### Response:

- The Central Water and Sewerage Authority of Saint Vincent and The Grenadines (CWSA) has been inspecting and removing ash from treatment plants. Approximately 90% flow capacity restored island wide.
- The WASH sector has established a response monitoring dashboard, tracked the WASH supplies requests versus donations, and established water quality testing mechanisms for sector-wide consolidation. The WASH sector has been coordinating closely with the water, sewerage, and public health authorities to ensure complementarity.
- The free chlorine residual levels in the public supply system have increased and mostly reached the recommended 0.5 mg/L standard.
- Water quality testing for chemical and biological parameters has been completed by authorities and WASH sector partners, including regional accredited laboratories.
- In addition to previous reports, new WASH supplies have been delivered/donated by partners:
  - The French Red Cross provided 55 tons of bottled water.
  - WASCO Saint Lucia Donated 74,000 gallons of bulk water.
  - French Red Cross provided 1300 bottles of alcohol gel, 400 boxes of surgical masks (50 per box), 1000 boxes of sanitizer wipes (30 per box), 150 FFP2 masks (10 per box), 58 boxes of gloves(100 per box), 50 boxes of gowns (10 per box).
  - IFRC donated 500 cleaning kits.

#### Gaps & Constraints:

- Areas without continuous water supply, including shelters.
- Lack of accredited laboratories for chemical water quality testing.
- Lack of water quality test kits for public health officers.
- Water flushing, filtering, and treatment (chlorine) at the water supply level.
- Water supply-demand and pressure management to allow for equitable access across the water network leakages in the water pipes and tanks at shelters.
- Low chlorine residual in the water at some sites.
- Water security concerns (theft), including inequities in utilization of water supplies with stressed systems.
- Campaign and awareness-raising around water consumption and excessive use.
- Sanitation, laundry, shower facilities, and lighting in shelters are inadequate as they are designed for schools and need to be increased and upgraded.
- In shelters, adapted sanitation is required, including for persons with special needs, children, and sex-segregated.
- Inadequate quantities of hygiene and cleaning supplies for environmental sanitation and ash removal.
- Menstrual hygiene management supplies and services for women and girls in shelters.
- Coordinated fecal and solid waste management to service shelters.
- COVID-19 and hygiene promotion and awareness-raising for infection prevention and control and healthy behaviour practice.

## Logistics

#### Needs:

- Coordination of supply and distribution of relief items.
- Additional storage capacity for incoming relief.

**Response:**

- WFP is assisting the Government by providing logistics assets and common logistics services to ensure that food and other relief items reach the people who need them most and complement WFP efforts in food security and livelihoods.
- WFP continues to support the establishment and operation of a national logistic hub at the E.T. Joshua Airport to store and manage incoming supplies. Three mobile storage units and two prefabricated offices dispatched by WFP are operational and running, with the first cargo having been received on 24 April.
- WFP has airlifted additional equipment for the logistics hub (5 x mobile storage units, 4 x generators, 2 x lighting /generators, 2 x prefabricated offices) from the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) Panama to St. Vincent on 29 April. The new setup will increase the warehouse storage from 7,750 square feet to approximately 22,400 square feet.
- WFP has facilitated a consultation among core parties involved in the general distribution to shelters and households with displaced persons to better understand systems and processes for streamlining operations and improving communication flows. The meeting was chaired by Superintendent Sylvan McIntyre of Grenada, who the CDEMA Coordinating Unit deployed to support the national disaster office under the Regional Response Mechanism (RRM).
- WFP has introduced the CDEMA Logistics System (CLS) to national stakeholders and is engaging with the Government on the system's launch. The online system, developed by WFP in cooperation with CDEMA, registers, tracks, and gives visibility to available assets and relief items across the region. WFP has implemented training sessions for key national and regional stakeholders in-country on the CDEMA Logistics System (CLS), including the SVG Cadet Forces and CARICOM Disaster Relief Unit (CDRU) command staff.

**Constraints:**

- Evacuation and transportation capacity.
- Availability of maritime assets.

## UN FUNDING APPEAL

Following the UN Global Funding Appeal that was launched on 20 April 2021, UN agencies' disaggregated list of projects and intended interventions for funding of humanitarian and recovery activities will be published soon.

For more information on contribution to the UN Funding Appeal, please visit UN Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean website [here](#) or contact Tia Browne, Development Coordination Officer, Partnerships and Development Finance, with the Resident Coordinator Office via email: [tia.browne@un.org](mailto:tia.browne@un.org) or mobile +1 (246) 832-6107.

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