



St. Vincent & the Grenadines: La Soufrière Volcano

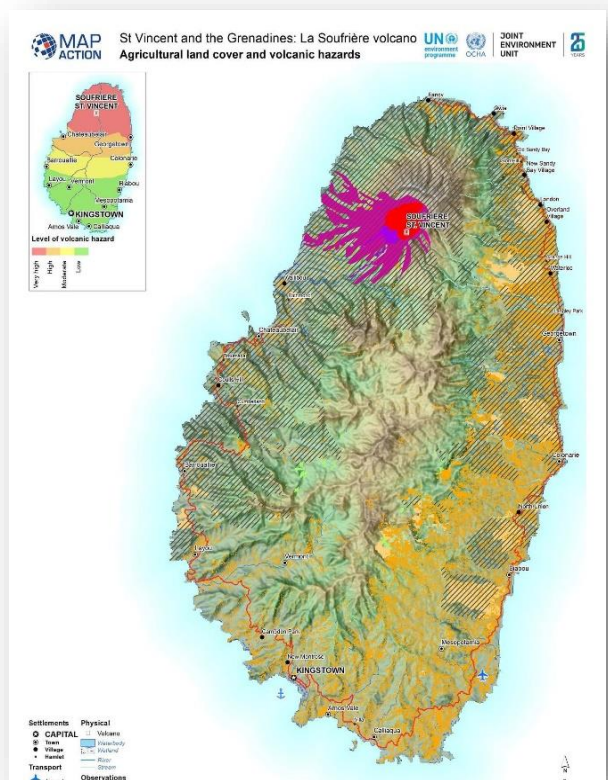
Situation Report No. 06

As of 8 May 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 with the support of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

HIGHLIGHTS

- Lahars (mudflows) continue to pose a dangerous threat to the river valleys surrounding the volcano, including Wallibou and Rabacca. Mudflows observed over the past several days have contained boulders up to 5m (15 feet) in diameter.¹
- On 6 May, officials announced that the alert level of La Soufriere changed to **ORANGE** or pre-explosive eruption state. The UWI Seismic Research Centre said on 6 May that Seismic activity at La Soufrière has remained low since the tremor associated with the explosion and ash venting on 22 April.²
- At alert level **ORANGE**, the volcano may resume explosions with less than twenty-four hours of notice.
- Approximately **USD 6.2 million** (21 percent) has been raised under the **USD 29.2 million** UN Global Funding Appeal launched on 20 April to support Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. This total includes both funds repurposed and mobilized by UN agencies, as well as pipeline funding.
- The **cash and environment guidance** has been finalised. The guidance looks at environmental considerations on possible cash and voucher assistance in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. It will be disseminated to cash and voucher contacts, cash actors, and the Ministry of Social Mobilisation in Saint Vincent. For more information, click [here](#).
- United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) produced a preliminary report of the ash observed over Barbados after La Soufrière volcanic eruption in Saint Vincent. You can download this report from [here](#).



85

The number of public shelters occupied.³

4,429

Estimated number of displaced people in public shelters.⁴



21 cases of COVID-19 in shelters, including 4 in private homes.⁵



13 evacuated health facilities (2 hospitals, all others are clinics).⁶

¹ CDEMA Situation Report No. 27 6 May 2021

² NEMO Press Release 6 May 2021

³ CDEMA Situation Report #27 6 May 2021

⁴ Ibid

⁵ PAHO Situation Report 6 May 2021

⁶ Ibid

GENERAL COORDINATION

On 6 May, the decision was taken to lower the Volcanic Alert Level from Red to Orange. Lead Scientist Roderick Stewart indicated that the recommendation was made because there have been no explosions at the volcano since 22 April. The number of volcanic earthquakes recorded has also decreased significantly. The lowering of the Volcano Alert Level to Orange means that residents who evacuated from the Yellow and Orange zones can now return to their communities to resume living in the comfort of their homes. The communities of Chateaubelair, Fitz-Hughes, and all communities in the Red Volcano hazard zone remain restricted.⁷ With respect to the active shelters, the NEMOs Director indicated that around 50 children (primary school-aged and teenagers) were left alone at the emergency shelters for periods of time.⁸

For the past few days, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines experienced moderate-heavy showers, thunderstorms, and gusty winds. As a result, a Flash-flood Watch is in effect and will remain until 12:00 pm on 9 May.

As it relates to the ongoing vaccinations in Saint Vincent, it has been reported that the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has ordered 50,000 doses of the Russia-developed Sputnik-V COVID-19 vaccine.⁹

LA SOUFRIERE VOLCANO HAZARD ALERT LEVEL

ALERT LEVEL
ORANGE

SYMPTOMS Highly elevated level of seismicity or fumarolic activity or both or other unusual symptoms observed. Eruptions may occur with less than 24 hour's notice.

ACTION: SCIENTIST

- Monitoring system continuously manned.
- Regular visual inspection of potential vent areas.
- Continuous ground deformation and hydrothermal monitoring.
- Daily assessment reports to civil authorities.

ACTION: CIVIL AUTHORITIES

- Coordinate evacuation (if necessary) based on hazard zones.
- Entry to the restricted access zone by scientists will be permitted after evaluation on a case by case basis.
- Organise regular radio and television announcements.

ALERT LEVEL TABLE FOR ONSHORE VOLCANOES IN THE EC

OFFICIAL SOURCE

UWI SEISMIC
SEISMIC

UWI SEISMIC @uwiseismic @nemovg

VOLCANO READY

GENERAL COORDINATION

The UN Environmental team is finalising its mission to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and initial findings have been shared with the Government. A first draft of the report will be prepared and handed over next week. While the team is not working to assess the air quality, some highlights include air pollution recommendations. Additionally, highlights point out that in the Red zone, the impacts of ashes could last for years. Ash should not be used as landfill material, and management should closely monitor its disposal and storage. Roofs have fallen with the increased weight because of rainfall, causing more people to be displaced from their homes. In terms of disaster waste, there are many plastic bottles, especially in shelters. It was noted that the dimensions of the response could positively impact the environment if it is handled carefully. Loss of farmer's livelihoods could be further exacerbated due to the impact of ash on fields. The topography and landscape will change with every rainfall, while lahars will continue throughout the rainy season of 2021 and for several years even if the volcano stops erupting.

UN HUMANITARIAN AND RECOVERY 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:

- This emergency has severely affected children's education, not only for displaced children but also close to 30,000 students, whose learning is disrupted as more than half of the 88 public shelters are educational institutions. UNICEF, in coordination with the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders and partners, are completing plans to implement

⁷ NEMO Press Release 6 May 2021

⁸ Loop News Caribbean

⁹ The Gleaner 3 May 2021

a programme that allows for the continuity of learning during this disaster period, and which will include plans from the outset to medium-term interventions.

- The psychosocial support and *Return to Happiness* programme have commenced with children in the primary and secondary sector in all shelters or other temporary learning environments. Children will participate in activities that include art and craft, drama, music, etc., which promote their expression of self and representation of the world through various media.

Gaps & Constraints:

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

Food Security and Livelihoods

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.

Response:

- The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has finalised the first batch of procurement for livestock essentials (shelter construction materials, livestock maintenance tools, tanks and waterers, and masks).
- Detailed Damage Sectoral Assessment (DDSA) for agriculture has been submitted and is being reviewed by different stakeholders.
- FAO conducted a complementary satellite-based assessment of damages (on croplands and infrastructure) using sentinel 1 and 2 satellite data. The results were presented to the Government and will be integrated into the updated version of the DDSA and the Livelihoods Baseline Assessment reports that are being finalised together with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Caribbean Development Bank.
- The United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) continues to work with the Government to implement referral mechanisms for the protection and other services.
- The World Food Programme (WFP) staff on the ground continue to support the Ministry of National Mobilisation, Social Development, Family, Gender Affairs, Persons with Disabilities and Youth (MoNM) with the ongoing household verification exercise of persons staying in private residences. The assessment will provide a more detailed understanding of needs and vulnerabilities and inform the targeting of WFP's planned cash-based support programme. WFP has trained approximately 92 enumerators, including 16 supervisors, on the data collection tool and process. The ongoing verification exercise, which is being conducted over the phone, will be complemented by field visits in the future.
- WFP continues to work with the MoNM to put a cash-based transfer programme in place to support those affected by the disaster, including people in public shelters and those staying at private homes. The planned support will be provided through a combination of cash transfers and supermarket vouchers. WFP is working on the operational aspects to ensure the delivery of cash transfers across the island, and the process has been tested successfully.
- WFP continues to support the Government in strengthening its information management capacities. WFP has trained ministry staff on the data visualisation, and analysis tool Power BI. WFP's vulnerability and data expert continues to support a government working group that coordinates data on evacuees, including those in public shelters. This data will help inform WFP's planned cash-based transfer programme.
- In continuous support to MoNM's social protection/cash response, UNICEF is providing technical assistance to the Ministry on the island, supporting ongoing assessments, including the regular updating of the verification and needs assessment questionnaire of all those in private homes, together with WFP. UNICEF is further supporting the identification and establishment of required linkages between the immediate cash-based response and essential services, including psychosocial support. UNICEF is also supporting MoNM to finalise its social protection plan, as part of which UNICEF will provide technical and financial support to close existing coverage gaps in the immediate parallel relief grant/response through the social protection system and support the complementarity and effective transition from relief to national social protection programmes. The team will also be working with MoNM to review relief and social protection provision during the response to inform a clear transition strategy going forward and has also offered to support a coherent communication and outreach effort promoting clear two-way communication options for MoNM and those in need as well as linking key hygiene, protection, and nutrition-related messages, and maximising efficiencies across sectors.

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.
- Support Surveillance data collection.

5.8K

Estimated number of
women of reproductive
age ¹⁰

Response:

- Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) to support the purchase of vector control items for shelters and supported the cleanup operation at Evesham Health Centre to facilitate dialysis services.
- PAHO continues the damage assessments of the WASH situation in health care facilities based on Ministry of Health (MoH) priorities and supporting MHPSS (Mental Health and Psychosocial Support) activities. There are plans for a 1-week visit (May 8-15, 2021) of the PAHO MHPSS advisor being made in close collaboration with the MoH.
- As requested by MoH, PAHO, and in collaboration with UNEP, IVHNN, and UNU, draft a concept note on Air quality evaluation, including short, mid, and long-term recommendations. A final draft was expected to be shared on Friday, 7 May 2021, for discussion with MoH.
- PAHO provided a template (PAHO Field manual annex 16) for the shelter assessment App that the Shelter Group currently uses. 5 Shelter assessment groups aim to visit all 85 shelters.
- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Head Office has approved and is processing three Reproductive Health Kits #3.
- UNFPA has facilitated a Shelter Rapid Checklist to assess access to SRH and support the mapping of nearest health facilities to the shelters.
- UNFPA has provided risk communication materials SRH/GBV to the Ministry of Health and key stakeholders to be disseminated at the shelters.
- The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN) are interested in bringing an expert on MHPSS to work alongside the UN health sector group to coordinate with PAHO.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Heightened risk of COVID-19 transmissions.


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.
- Specialised Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) emergency services for evacuees in shelters, private homes, and response workers.

Response:

- UNFPA continues to provide regular GBViE technical assistance support to the Gender Affairs Division and is currently supporting the updating of existing GBV referral pathways and GBV 4W service mapping.
- UNFPA trained staff/volunteers have assessed 80/88 emergency shelters to date, and a GBV Safety Audit report is being drafted by UNFPA and presented during the Protection Working Group (PWG).
- UNICEF continues to support the Ministry of National Mobilisation, Social Development, Local Government, Gender Affairs, Family Affairs, Housing, and Informal Settlement (MoNM) with the ongoing Child Protection Needs Assessment among evacuated families. As of 5 May 2021, 1,225 children were assessed by national authorities – 1,085 registered in 71 shelters and 140 registered in private homes. Amidst official reports of temporary spikes in

¹⁰ UNFPA Situation Report #05 3 May 2021

unsupervised children in shelters when some caregivers venture into the unsafe zones to assess the state of their homes, systems to eliminate such neglect are being put in place. Meanwhile, the families of two unaccompanied and separated children are still being traced.

- The *Return to Happiness* programme was officially launched across the public shelters on 3 May to support children's mental health and psychosocial support. Implementation across shelters is uneven but improving. This art and music-based programming will be integral to the imminent restart of formal learning. Meanwhile, UNICEF is working in parallel with NGO partners to set up mobile community-based, child-friendly spaces to provide regular, structured activities for affected children in communities. In addition, UNICEF, MoNM, and the Ministry of Tourism, Sports, and Culture are designing a psychosocial support intervention to provide creative healing therapy within selected communities for caregivers and wider community members. This process will include messaging around the prevention and response to gender-based violence and children's protection.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Due to the flooding, there were challenges with the distribution of dignity kits.
- 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 Saint Vincent.

Shelter

Needs:

- With the prolonged displacement of households, especially from the Red zone, there is a need for funding and activities for more dignified (transitional) shelter solutions for those in (over) crowded emergency shelters and some host families.
- The Government expressed a need for shelter assistance for the families of displaced healthcare workers and other essential staff.
- With the Volcano Alert Level change to Orange, families from the Orange zone are likely to return home. Monitoring of this flow is required to determine the location of the needs. Vulnerable families in the Orange zone need support with the restoration and cleaning of their homes and potential transportation.
- There is a need to start planning for the closure and proper decommissioning of the emergency shelters. Closed shelters need to be left behind in good shape to cater to their original function and to be emergency shelters for the hurricane season.
- There is a need for strengthened coordination of ongoing and planned assessments and collection/dissemination of uniform and disaggregated data.

Response

- International Organisation for Migration (IOM) coordinates with Government and other agencies on assessments and considers deploying a cash-based "rental support and durable solutions" expert.
- IOM is developing a proposal supporting the Government by providing transitional shelter solutions for essential workers and vulnerable households that cannot return home shortly.
- IOM has shipped Non-Food Items to Saint Vincent and cleaning equipment, including shovels, power washers, leaf blowers, generators, boots, etc.

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
- 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:

- UNICEF has conducted 85 shelter assessments in 5 regions of Saint. Vincent, primarily in the Green zone. The purpose of the surveys was to describe the characteristics of the shelters' current state and gain more understanding of gaps in WASH related needs for Government and humanitarian response. The data is being used to paint a picture of water quantity, water quality, hygiene practices, and WASH infrastructure in shelter-in-use. The survey project, carried out between 4-6 May 2021, was a continuation of the CDEMA surveys completed in April by PAHO and UNICEF. These initial efforts were instrumental in informing and contextualising the design of this larger survey effort. UNICEF provided mobile devices and ARC GIS technology to tag quantitative and qualitative data (photos) to shelters by location. Initial observations were presented to the CDPG and WASH sector partners on 6 May 2021 in advance of meetings with government stakeholders and partners to validate results. Results will inform the WASH Sector Response plan this coming week. In the meantime, UNICEF is prioritising vulnerable populations based on assessment data for the immediate distribution of WASH and Dignity kits provided by CDEMA. Hygiene promotion activities will accompany the kits. Additionally, ongoing support of CWSA's rehabilitation efforts is on standby (if needed) in the Orange and Red zones.

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 utilisation 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 continues to assist the Government by providing logistics assets and common logistics services to ensure that food and other relief items reach the people who need it most and complement WFP efforts in food security and livelihoods. The Arnos Vale Logistics Hub, co-set up and co-operated by WFP, is now fully operational and receiving incoming relief goods daily. WFP is assisting with the receipt, clearing, and transport of incoming relief supplies from various donors and is conducting a full inventory of existing stocks.
- WFP continues training key government and CARICOM Disaster Relief Unit (CDRU) personnel on the CDEMA Logistics System (CLS). There are plans to train a group of cadets based on a training of trainers' model. The CLS, developed by WFP in cooperation with CDEMA, registers, tracks, and gives visibility to available assets and relief

items across the region. Demonstrations of the system have been made to NEMO, and approximately 50 distribution centres have been uploaded to the CLS online testing platform.

- WFP is mobilising additional staff in support of the response on the ground, including an emergency coordinator and potential surge staff from CDEMA. WFP currently has nine staff members deployed on the ground.

Constraints:

- Availability of maritime assets.

UN FUNDING APPEAL

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 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