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# St. Vincent & the Grenadines: La Soufrière Volcano

## Situation Report No. 07

As of 14 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

- Seismic activity at La Soufrière in Saint Vincent has remained low since the tremor associated with the explosion and ash venting on 22 April.<sup>1</sup>
- The volcano continues to be in a state of unrest, and escalation activity can still take place with little or no warning.<sup>2</sup>
- In the last 24 hours, only a few long-period earthquakes have been recorded. The volcano is at alert level **ORANGE**.
- As of 14 May, approximately **USD 6.9 million** (23 percent) has been mobilised 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.<sup>3</sup>
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines **WASH Sector Assessment** in Public Shelters was completed on 11 May and can be found [here](#).
- In collaboration with the UN RC Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, OCHA supported the elaboration of a Business Guide for the Private Sector, who may wish to support the response and relief efforts for Saint Vincent and contribute to the UN Global Funding Appeal. The guide can be found [here](#).



**84**

The Number of public shelters occupied.<sup>4</sup>

**4,430**

Estimated Number of displaced people in public shelters.<sup>5</sup>

**19,989**

Total Number of persons in private homes.<sup>6</sup>

**24,419**

Total Number of registered displaced people.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CDEMA Situation Report #28 10 May 2021

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Further information can be found on page 8

<sup>4</sup> CDEMA Situation Report #29 13 May 2021

<sup>5</sup> NEMO: National Evacuation Report (11/05/2021)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid



6,771 Number of displaced families in private homes.<sup>9</sup>



2,992 Number of displaced elderly persons.<sup>10</sup>



4,669 Number of displaced, vulnerable persons.<sup>11</sup>

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

The situation on the ground remains fluid and dynamic, and there are concerns regarding the shelters and persons' hesitancy to return home in fear of the unknown. The situation still requires some level of coordination as the rehabilitation and reconstruction processes begin to roll out. The Covid-19 outbreaks in 8 emergency shelters and relative increase in reported cases intertwined with vaccine hesitancy and refusal for SARS-CoV-2 screening at shelters are significant concerns to PAHO as these fuels' further transmission.<sup>8</sup>

As the UNEP/OCHA mission to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines concluded, below are some key highlights in their findings:

- There is a good volcano monitoring network (seismicity, deformation, gases), but one station was destroyed, communication problems exist, and some personnel are temporary (on rotation at Belmont Observatory).
- Wood and other natural materials are incorporated into the debris flow, causing retention of ash and other materials, increasing the potential for flash floods many days after the last rains. The topography and risk landscape will change with every rainfall until the situation becomes more stable, some communities may not return to normal life.
- Lahars will continue to be a major problem in much of the north for several years, even if the volcano stops erupting and roads are likely to be blocked at various times.
- Water demand is likely to be high during ash cleanup operations.

## GENERAL COORDINATION

On Friday, 14 May, the United States, through its Ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean Linda S. Tagliatela, announced USD 3.8 Million in emergency assistance for the volcano to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The Ambassador speaking in Kingstown said the donation which comes through USAID adds to the United States' ongoing commitment to the island and increases the United States' overall contribution to five million dollars. These funds will be provided to the humanitarian partners that include WFP, the International Red Cross, UNICEF, and PAHO and used for training and equipment, the renovation of shelters and warehouses, and a donation of two field hospitals available in case of further natural disasters.<sup>12</sup>

On 13 May, the Caribbean Development Partners Group - Disaster Management (CDPG-DM) met to continue coordinating the response, receive updates from partners and shift into recovery, noting the start of the hurricane season in June.

The WASH Sector Coordination Team consisting of a Coordinator and an Information Management Officer who are on the ground is liaising with the authorities (Public Health, Mobilization Unit) and WASH Partners. The team has a weekly WASH Sector meeting held every Thursday at 18:00 SVG time. The Coordination team gathers information on hygiene kits content and quantities to coordinate the distribution plan with the Dept. of Education (public shelters) and Dept. of Mobilization (private shelters). The team also supports the harmonization of hygiene training, promotional activities, and COVID-19 prevention messaging. The [WASH Sector Response Plan](#) is being re-aligned to insights gained from the Public Shelter Assessment data, other OEC sectors, and the Government WASH response.

<sup>8</sup> PAHO Situation Report #24 14 May 2021

<sup>9</sup> CDEMA Situation Report #29 13 May 2021

<sup>10</sup> PAHO Situation Report #24 14 May 2021

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> News 784

The UNEP/OCHA team in Saint Vincent debriefed with the Prime Minister on 8 May and handed in the first draft of the report to the Government. The Government circulated, and comments were received on 10 May. The team left Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on 11 May.

## UN HUMANITARIAN AND RECOVERY RESPONSE

### Early Recovery, Ash Clean-up, Equipment and Environmental Health

#### Needs:

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

#### Response:

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

#### Gaps & Constraints:

- Current information gap articulating needs.

### Education

#### Needs:

- 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:

- All school-age children in 83 of the 84 shelters are engaged in the Continuity of Learning Programme supported by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and UNICEF.
- The psycho-social support programme established in April continues to be implemented in joint collaboration with guidance counselors, social workers, and counselors from the Ministries of Education, Health, and National Mobilization. While the Return To Happiness programme forms the base of the programme, other tenets and activities have been incorporated to cater to the beneficiaries and contexts.
- The introduction of the informal Learning programme (Growing Through The Ashes) commenced on 10 May. This programme designed by teachers and Education Officers addressed the learning needs of students from preschoolers to Form 5.
- A blended programme is being implemented in shelters. It includes providing psycho-social support on Mondays and Wednesdays, and the Continuity of Learning programme is conducted on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.
- UNICEF supported the procurement of learning resources for shelter managers, supporting the RTH coordination. Teachers were assigned to the bands based on their availability and suitability for the various groups. Students' engagement in informal learning (based on play) has been activated in the shelters, supported by Ministries of Education and National Mobilization.

#### Gaps & Constraints:

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

### Food Security, Cash, Livelihoods and Agriculture

#### 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.

# 10.5K

Estimated Number of Farmers from the Red and Orange zone <sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Calculations on farmers in each zone were made based on the farmer registration before the crises (estimations of over 10,500 farmers in both the Red and Orange zone).

**Response:**

- The World Food Programme (WFP) is working with the Ministry of National Mobilisation, Social Development, Family, Gender Affairs, Persons with Disabilities and Youth (MoNM) to design and implement the Soufriere Relief Grant, which provides cash transfers to people affected by the disaster, including those in public shelters and staying at private homes. The first transfers began on 14 May to persons in private homes with vulnerable family members (e.g., elderly and chronically ill persons).
- WFP staff on the ground continue to support the MoNM with the ongoing household verification exercise of persons staying in private residences, which will provide a more detailed understanding of needs and vulnerabilities and inform the targeting of WFP's cash-based support programme. Beneficiary selection for the Soufriere Relief Grant is ongoing, and the payments will continue during the verification.
- WFP continues to assist the Government in strengthening its information management capacities for an effective and informed response. WFP's data and vulnerability expert is providing continued support to manage registration data from shelters, private homes, and hotels to create an overall national evacuee register and visualize data in a dashboard. WFP has also helped produce a shelter evacuee report with disaggregated data on evacuees, which highlighted food as a priority needs among evacuees.
- WFP is facilitating a government data working group and has trained all of its members on the digital data collection software Kobo and the analysis tool Power BI. The working group, which is composed of government stakeholders from various ministries and the Information Technology Services Division, reconciles and analyses data on evacuees, identifies information gaps, and explores potential solutions.
- WFP has donated crucial IT equipment to the Ministry of Education (85 tablets) to equip shelter managers to track evacuees as they leave the shelters and donated a laptop to the Ministry of Economic Planning to support data analysis. This is in addition to ten laptops and 50 tablets already donated to the MoNM to support data collection on evacuees
- The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has worked with the Ministry of Agriculture on proposals to develop immediate, medium- and long-term responses to the crisis; those proposals were submitted to the Cabinet for further consideration. Based on the proposals, the Government will allocate \$21.6 million Eastern Caribbean (EC) dollars for the agriculture sector with specific support to farmers and fishermen.
- The relocation of the Biotechnology lab (in-vitro center) from the Orange to the Green zone was proposed, and the Government will require international support. Another proposal was made for the Farmers Loan Programme to receive 5,000 EC dollars for each of the 40 small farmers identified for this programme and 15 large farms for investment (which would be included in the \$21.6 million EC dollars allocations).
- FAO is discussing a proposal with the Ministry of Agriculture to strengthen its data collection, analysis, and planning to address gaps and is supporting the development of a comprehensive roadmap for stakeholders (regional and international partners) to participate in the rehabilitation and recovery of the agriculture sector.
- FAO provided breeding stock, seeds, and planting materials to enhance rapid production in the agriculture sector and facilitated the allocation of \$100,000 EC dollars to support the livestock sector.
- FAO supports a security system, using temporary/low-voltage electrical fencing in temporary livestock and agriculture compounds.
- Other initiatives by FAO include the operationalisation of the palletisation center (or marketing center). The Government buys what is produced by small farmers and makes it available in combined food boxes to vulnerable people and shelters.

**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.
- Support Surveillance data collection.
- Emergency contraception is not available in the public system, not even in cases of sexual assault
- Access to SRH services by adolescents given the restrictive legal framework is a challenge

**3.4K**

Estimated Number of  
women of reproductive  
age <sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> UNFPA Situation Report #06 10 May 2021

- Further needs will be identified once the rapid SRH assessment of shelters is completed

#### Response:

- Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) has developed a tool to be used for “Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Rapid Mapping Evaluation.” The survey will be shared with key stakeholders, and it will provide information on who is doing where, when, and doing what (4Ws) developing and maintaining sustainable coordination structures, including Government and civil society stakeholders. The tool will be useful in identifying gaps in the MHPSS response to enable coordinated action and referral.
- PAHO financially supported the temporary relocation of the Health EOC from the current location and assisted in the health emergency coordination led by the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and Ministry of Health (MoH) Health Disaster Coordinator.
- Additional health supplies and commodities storage/logistics facility for MoH operation is still being explored, to be located next to Health EOC. As requested by MoH and in collaboration with UNEP, IVHNN, and UNU, draft a concept note on Air quality evaluation, including short, mid, and long-term recommendations. The final draft was shared with MOH (Monday 10 May 2021) and is awaiting discussion this week.
- PAHO provided support in close collaboration with the Shelter working group to shelters assessments, including the use of a new App.
- Provision of (medical) supplies according to the Health Needs List from MoH and delivery of three NCD kits and training on the usage of these kits is in progress.
- PAHO is preparing a shipment of additional N95 masks, face shields, and gowns as requested by MoH.
- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is providing technical support to the Family Planning/Maternal health coordinator of the MoH to address the Sexual & Reproductive Health (SRH) needs.
- UNFPA is supporting the rapid SRH needs assessment in shelters and is guiding the shelters' mapping of nearest health facilities. A total of 40 shelters have been completed, and analysis is underway.
- UNFPA, in coordination with OECS, is facilitating a four-day Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) training for an SRH workshop, which also includes the development of a MISP readiness assessment and action plan.

#### 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.
- Ensure law enforcement personnel in shelters are also female and that all of them are trained on PSEA and sign a Code of Conduct.
- Targeted distributions for women and girls, including Dignity Kits.
- Ensure women and girls are included in decision-making around the shelters, encouraging women-led support groups.

#### Response:

- UNFPA supported Gender Affairs Division in conducting a GBV Safety Audit in 83/88 public shelters and developed a report submitted to the Government for review on 6 May.
- UNFPA has developed quick guidance on the safe distribution of the 400 Dignity Kits; 169/400 kits have been distributed so far.

#### Gaps & Constraints:

- Data collection systems are weak and unreliable, and needs are being assessed by a limited number of staff relying heavily on support from volunteers.

## Shelter, Housing and Infrastructure

### 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.
- In the emergency shelters, tensions are building up. The crowded environment increases the threats of the spread of the COVID-19 virus, mental health issues, and general safety and protection in general.
- The repairs and cleanup of homes and settlements need to be prepared and planned in a government approach addressing housing, accessibility, education, utilities, livelihood, healthcare, etc.
- 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. Additional “Flow Monitoring” is recommended. 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.

### Response

- International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is developing an approach to address the transitional shelter needs for 160 essential health workers and their families. This will likely contain a cash-based intervention component that complements the technical and potential legal shelter support to the families.
- IOM brings in an emergency shelter (CCCM) specialist and a housing specialist/ team leader.

### Gaps & Constraints:

- The shelter sector and the recovery phase in general in the UN Funding Appeal is the most underfunded sector.
- Additional funding needs to be secured to prepare the shelters and houses in SVG for the hurricane season.

## Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

### Needs:

- Emergency water trucking in 15 public shelters in case of water disruption.
- Increased water storage capacity in 15 public shelters for emergency preparedness.
- Rehabilitation and maintenance in sanitation facilities in public shelters.
- Promote hygiene awareness and messaging in public and private shelters.
- WASH needs in private shelters are still to be identified through partner assessments.
- Preparedness plan for Hurricane season and low COVID-19 testing and vaccine uptake.
- 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:

- IOM distributed 1,250 hygiene kits.
- International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) distributed 600 cleaning kits to families residing in private shelters and continues hygiene promotion and COVID-19 prevention messaging.

### Gaps & Constraints:

- The physical ability of returnees to clean the shelters.
- COVID-19 and hygiene promotion and awareness-raising for infection prevention and control and healthy behavior practice.
- Concerns are raised from the mobilisation department regarding 200 displaced health workers from the Red zone.
- Concerns are raised from the public health department for the conditions and protocols of supplies storage (such as bottled water).

## Logistics

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**Needs:**

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

**Response:**

- The World Food Programme (WFP) continues providing common logistics services and assets to ensure that critical relief quickly reaches those in need and complements WFP's food security and livelihoods efforts.
- WFP is assisting with the receipt, clearing, and transport of container shipments from various donors to the logistics hub at the decommissioned Arnos Vale/E. T. Joshua Airport. The hub, which WFP and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and national counterparts established, allows for the receipt, storage, packing, and onward transport of relief supplies.
- WFP has conducted a full inventory of the Arnos Vale Logistics hub, which will give NEMO full oversight of available stocks at the hub to match requests from shelters. WFP is working to do further inventories of other distribution points.
- WFP has launched the CDEMA Logistics System (CLS) at the logistics hub. The CLS, developed by WFP in cooperation with CDEMA, registers, tracks, and gives visibility to available assets and relief items across the region. WFP and NEMO have appointed CLS operators at the EOC who WFP trained to support service requests and processing in order to speed up the dispatching of relief items to shelters.
- WFP also continues to support the transport of relief cargo from Barbados to St. Vincent at no cost to partners and is in the process of registering an additional vessel.

**Constraints:**

- Availability of maritime assets.

# 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](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 WASH LAC](#)