

*This report was issued by UNOCHA's Fiji Office. It covers the period from 11.30am 30/9/09 to 8.00 pm 30/9/09.*

## **I. HIGHLIGHTS/KEY PRIORITIES**

- **Death toll in Western Samoa has risen to 62 and is expected to rise**
- **Northern Tonga also affected with 6 confirmed dead. A State of Emergency has been declared for Niuatoputapu**
- **Western Samoa has declared a State of Disaster and requested assistance from foreign missions and the United Nations.**

## **II. Situation Overview**

A destructive Tsunami has struck American Samoa, Western Samoa, and the small northern island of Niuatoputapu in Tonga.

### **Western Samoa**

Western Samoa has declared a State of Disaster and requested assistance from foreign missions and the United Nations. 62 people are now confirmed dead and 142 confirmed injured. However, the Samoan NDMO believes that up to 100 people may have been killed with many more injured and displaced. Widespread damage to houses and infrastructure has occurred. However, UNDP Samoa reports that major roads on Upolu Island are not too damaged.

In many instances, relatives from Apia are driving to affected areas to collect injured family members and bring them to Apia hospital. Caritas Australia reports that they have converted the Pastoral Centre at Logoipulotu in Savaii to an emergency medical centre. It is also reported that many families are providing shelter to relatives who may have had their homes damaged or destroyed.

Eye witness reports suggest that looters have entered some resorts but there are no reports of widespread looting at this point.

### **Tonga**

The Government of Tonga has declared a State of Emergency for Niuatoputapu, the closest island to Samoa (about 400 miles North of Nuku'alofa). The total population of Niuatoputapu is approximately 1,000 people. Tonga Defence Services have confirmed that 6 people are dead and 4 missing. Widespread damage is also reported, including to the hospital, which the New Zealand Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management reports have been destroyed, and many coastal villages.

The Australian vessel – the Voea Neiafu – will depart Nuku'alofa at 1900 local time tonight (30 September Fiji time). Its estimated arrival time in Niuatoputapu is 1900 local tomorrow (1 October Fiji Time). The ship will take food, stores (tents, tarpaulins etc.), medical supplies, a 5-person civilian medical team, one Tonga Red Cross personnel and a two-person media team.

### **American Samoa**

There are 19 reported, but unconfirmed fatalities, in Pago Pago, the capital. US President Barack Obama has declared a "Major Disaster" and FEMA are coordinating a response.

### **Clear Areas**

Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Niue, and Fiji have not suffered major damage as a result of the Tsunami.

## Initial Assessment

NZAID have mobilised a P3 Orion which is expected to reach Samoa on the evening of 30 September (Fiji Time) to conduct a flyover and surveillance of Upolu and Savaii.

Both the Samoan Red Cross Society and Caritas have mobilized assessments teams to Southern Upolu.

OXFAM are gathering information gathering through their partner agency in Samoa, Women in Business

## III. Humanitarian Needs and Response

### Emergency Shelter

- Many Samoan families are providing shelter to relatives who have been affected by the Tsunami, however, there is likely to be substantial emergency shelter requirements in Samoa and also potentially in Tonga.
- The Samoa Red Cross Society (SRCS) has mobilized 130 volunteers who are mainly conducting the registration of evacuees and providing water and relief distribution. A family tracing service has been made available and activities have been commenced to help re-establish family links

### Emergency Telecoms

- The Samoa NDMO has requested additional Satellite phone airtime as a matter of urgency
- Telecoms Sans Frontieres has offered their assistance

### Food and Nutrition

- There is the potential for both short and long term food shortages in both Samoa and Tonga. No reports regarding this have been received as of yet.
- A ship carrying food has been dispatched in Tonga and is expected to reach Niuatoputapu tomorrow morning.

### Health

- Emergency medical needs have been reported in Samoa. The medical situation in Tonga is unknown
- Currently many families in Upolu are transporting their relatives to Apia. Caritas has converted the Pastoral Centre at Logoipulotu in Savaii to an emergency medical centre.
- There is a reported shortage of medical staff. It is likely that a shortage of medical equipment and supplies will arise

### Logistics

- Upolu roads and the Apia airport have not reported any damage. There have been no reports received of damage to Savaii roads.

### Protection

- There have been reports of looting in tourist areas in Samoa.

### Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

- UNICEF is reviewing its prepositioned relief items in Suva and focusing on pre-identified gap areas to support.

### Cross-Cluster/Sector Issues

- NZ Red Cross is coordinating with NZAID, and ready to dispatch 100 First Aid kits, 500 water containers and 500 tarpaulins. The size of this equipment needs to be confirmed. The Red Cross assessment team will distribute the First Aid kits. A NZ Red Cross delegate will be deployed to Samoa to provide support to SRCS. NZ is also planning to dispatch medical kits and relief items with the NZ C130, pending authorization from the Samoa government. Both the NZ and Australian Governments are considering dispatching medical teams within a few days. Oxfam are ready to dispatch emergency pre-positioned stocks from Brisbane, which includes mainly WASH items such as mosquito nets, hygiene kits, jerry cans. They have sufficient stock to cover a population of 10,000 available immediately.

Australia has offered assistance including tents, helicopters, and medical teams.

*The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors.*

#### IV. Coordination

- NZHC (and AHC) in Apia have received from Samoan MFAT a formal written request for assistance.
- NZAID/NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade have established a crisis centre to co-ordinate NZ response.
- Samoa Red Cross have called a board meeting and are planning their response.
- The IFRC in Suva and KL are on standby as are Save the Children Australia and New Zealand.
- Oxfam Australia are on standby.
- OCHA continues to provide information to PHT partners as it becomes available.
- The National Disaster Council in Samoa met with UN partners at 4pm this afternoon (30 September Fiji time)
- A NZAID staff member and media advisor, and MFAT consular emergency response staff are being deployed to Samoa to assist with relief efforts
- Air New Zealand flight to Apia at 1415 was upgraded to allow more passengers.
- Oxfam will dispatch Renzo Benfatto to Samoa, who has offered to lead the formation of the WASH cluster if necessary.
- An UNDAC team has been requested and will be deployed.
- A SOPAC staff member will deploy to coordinate scientific survey teams.

#### VI. Contact

##### **OCHA Pacific - RDRA**

Peter Muller  
[peter.muller@undp.org](mailto:peter.muller@undp.org)  
Tel +679-331 6761  
Mob +679-999 1664

##### **New York**

Aditee Maskey  
Asia-Pacific Section  
Coordination and Response  
Division  
UN Office for the Coordination  
of Humanitarian Affairs  
Phone: 1-917-367-9899  
BB: 1-917-602-0212  
E-Mail: [maskeya@un.org](mailto:maskeya@un.org)

##### **OCHA Regional Office Asia**

Pacific  
Ms. Yindee Lertcharoenchok  
Humanitarian Affairs Analyst  
(Disaster Response)  
Tel: +66 (0) 2288 2437  
[lertcharoenchok@un.org](mailto:lertcharoenchok@un.org)