Tonga – Volcano and Tsunami
MARCH 4, 2022

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

- **85,000**  
  Estimated Number of People Affected by the Volcanic Eruption and Tsunami  
  **GoT – January 2022**

- **2,390**  
  Estimated Number of People Displaced by the Volcanic Eruption and Tsunami  
  **IOM – February 2022**

- **50,000**  
  Estimated Number of People in Need of WASH Support  
  **UN – January 2022**

- **4**  
  Number of Deaths due to the Volcanic Eruption and Tsunami  
  **GoT – February 2022**

- **85,000**  
  Estimated Number of People Affected by the Volcanic Eruption and Tsunami  
  **GoT – January 2022**

- **2,390**  
  Estimated Number of People Displaced by the Volcanic Eruption and Tsunami  
  **IOM – February 2022**

- **50,000**  
  Estimated Number of People in Need of WASH Support  
  **UN – January 2022**

- **4**  
  Number of Deaths due to the Volcanic Eruption and Tsunami  
  **GoT – February 2022**

- **Communities in Tonga will require humanitarian assistance through at least mid-2022, relief actors report. Recent assessments conducted by the World Bank indicate that agriculture, food, livelihood, protection, shelter, and WASH assistance remain priority needs across Tonga.**

- **Rapid transmission of COVID-19 prompts widespread restrictions, hindering relief actors’ ability to deliver critical humanitarian assistance.**

- **USAID/BHA partners CARE and FAO commence agriculture, shelter, and WASH support for affected populations across Tonga, particularly on ‘Eua Island and in the Tongatapu and Ha’apai island groups.**

TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USAID/BHA¹</th>
<th>2,500,000²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$2,500,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)
² Funding figures reflect committed and obligated funding as of March 4, 2022. Total comprises a subset of the $2.6 million in publicly announced USAID/BHA funding to the Tonga volcano and tsunami response.
**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**Damage and Needs Assessments Ongoing Following the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha’apai Volcanic Eruption**

The eruption of Tonga’s Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha’apai Volcano—located approximately 43 miles northwest of Tonga’s capital city of Nuku’alofa, Tongatapu Island—and subsequent tsunami had resulted in four deaths, while approximately 2,400 people remained displaced, across Tonga as of mid-February, the Government of Tonga (GoT) reports. In addition, the eruption and tsunami damaged or destroyed at least 2,900 structures, including nearly 300 houses, as well as resulted in an estimated $90.4 million in damage, according to recent assessments by the UN Satellite Center and World Bank. Agriculture, food, livelihood, protection, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance remain priority needs among affected individuals. Impacted communities will likely require multiple years to recover from the disaster, and relief actors anticipate that populations in Tonga will continue to require humanitarian assistance, particularly food security and livelihood support, through at least mid-2022. Additionally, localized flooding in Tongatapu following heavy rainfall in early February has compounded some needs.

Damage to WASH infrastructure remains a primary challenge following the disasters, according to the GoT. However, recent chemical analysis of the volcanic ash conducted by an international group of scientists—including U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) representatives, in coordination with USAID/BHA—found that collected rainwater is safe to drink if following standard precautions, such as boiling.

Meanwhile, the eruptions and tsunami affected nearly 85 percent of agricultural households in Tonga, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Relief actors note that the availability of safe water is sufficient for livestock care but that acidic ashfall could lead to inshore fishing and reef damage, which may affect fishing-based livelihoods; assessments remain ongoing to fully understand the impacts of the disasters on Tonga’s agricultural systems.

**Operators Repair Fiji–Tonga Undersea Communications Cable**

Operators concluded repairs to severed sections of the Fiji–Tonga undersea communications cable on February 22, largely restoring telecommunications services for populations on Tongatapu, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) reports. Previously, damage to two sections of the international communications cable had significantly restricted telecommunications services across Tonga, hampering coordination among the GoT, affected populations, and relief actors.

---

3 The ETC is the coordinating body for emergency telecommunications activities, comprising UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders. The ETC in the Pacific region is led by USAID/BHA partner the UN World Food Program (WFP).
As of February 22, approximately 90 percent of data, SMS, and voice services were restored on Tongatapu. However, communications between Tongatapu and outlying islands, including the Ha’apai and Vava’u island groups, remained challenging due to persisting damage to Tonga’s domestic undersea communications cable, which may require between six and nine months for repair. USAID/BHA continues to support the UN World Food Program (WFP) as ETC lead to bolster the availability of telecommunications services countrywide.

**Relief Actors Adapt to Rising COVID-19 Cases, Restrictions in Tonga**

Since early February, the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has expanded across Tonga, with more than 350 confirmed cases recorded as of March 2, the UN World Health Organization (WHO) reports. Approximately 67 percent of Tonga’s population is fully vaccinated, according to the GoT Ministry of Health (MoH). However, health authorities have reported a rapid spread of COVID-19 in recent days. To address rising transmission across Tonga, the Government of New Zealand is delivering 9,300 doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, as well as personal protective equipment (PPE) and other medical supplies to support health care workers, the UN reports. In addition, with USAID/BHA support, the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) is delivering approximately 15,000 COVID-19 antigen rapid-diagnostic testing kits and PPE, among other relief other supplies, to health care facilities across Tonga.

Meanwhile, the GoT extended the State of Emergency for the volcanic eruption and the State of Public Health Emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic until March 14. The restrictions, intended to mitigate the spread of disease, include school closures, designated shopping hours, and a curfew, among other measures across Tongatapu and Vava’u islands, as well as movement restrictions in Ha’apai and ‘Eua island groups, where no cases have been recorded to date. As a result, humanitarian organizations continue to adapt to deliver timely assistance to affected communities. Certain COVID-19 mitigation measures—such as the suspension of all inter-island shipping and a mandatory 72-hour quarantine for all imported relief supplies upon arrival in Tongan ports—have resulted in some challenges coordinating assistance and addressing urgent humanitarian needs. However, the Tonga National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) continues to coordinate with international relief actors to deliver assistance through a modified, contact-free distribution system. As of February 26, NEMO and partners had distributed approximately 380,000 gallons of safe drinking water to affected populations, as well as provided more than 9,000 food assistance provisions, and 12,000 non-food items to more than 510 households under home quarantine for COVID-19.

**USAID/BHA Partners CARE and FAO Commence Relief Activities, Aiming to Reach Thousands with Agriculture, Shelter, and WASH Support**

With USAID/BHA support, CARE is delivering agriculture, shelter, and WASH support for communities affected by the eruption and tsunami through its local partners. The non-governmental organization (NGO)—in coordination with local partners—is restoring community and household rainwater collection systems; providing material and technical support for shelter repairs; supporting the re-establishment of household gardens; and disseminating messages regarding ash cleanup, ash-related health hazards, and COVID-19 prevention best practices to benefit approximately 15,000 people. Additionally, USAID/BHA partner the FAO is working with GoT officials to support land clearance efforts, distributing agricultural equipment and tools, providing livestock inputs and supplies, and bolstering small-scale fishing to support livelihoods. As an estimated 80 to 90 percent of the Tongan population was engaged in agricultural livelihoods prior to the volcanic eruption, and related damage could result in significant disruptions to household food and livelihood security, according to FAO.
NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL, AND U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATIONS
The GoT, with support from relief actors, continues efforts to fully restore telecommunications across Tonga. As ETC and Logistics Cluster lead, USAID/BHA partner WFP is coordinating the deployment of ETC commodities, including Broadband Global Area Networks, satellite phones, and two-way satellite ground stations—also known as VSATs—to augment the availability of telecommunications services. Additionally, the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), with in partnership with USAID/BHA, recently deployed seven satellite terminals—known as Chatty Beetles—to the GoT which enable text messaging in areas with limited connectivity to disseminate hydrometeorological and other sudden-onset disaster information to remote locations, also deployed related communications equipment, such as mobile and fixed antennas and batteries.

HCIMA AND LOGISTICS
USAID/BHA partners the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and WFP have provided humanitarian coordination, information management, and assessment (HCIMA) and logistics support for humanitarian and early recovery operations in Tonga. With USAID/BHA funds, OCHA is strengthening strategic coordination through the GoT, UN, Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT), and cluster system. Ten clusters have been activated to respond to humanitarian needs related to the eruptions and tsunami in Tonga, and OCHA is helping ensure an evidence-based approach to meeting needs in the country. USAID/BHA funding has also enabled iMMAP, an NGO that provides information management services to humanitarian and development organizations, to deploy staff to facilitate OCHA-led coordination, information management, and operations.

FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS
In coordination with NEMO, USAID/BHA partner WFP continues to lead regional food security coordination efforts, with additional support from FAO, the PHT, and local NGOs. As of February 18, the Pacific Community—an international development organization governed by 27 member states, including the United States and Tonga—had delivered more than 1.3 metric tons of maize and vegetable seeds to bolster food security.
among agricultural households, according to the UN. NEMO had also distributed more than 14,200 food items, including fish, flour, rice, and other commodities, to affected households as of February 22. Additionally, USAID/BHA partner Act for Peace is bolstering the recovery of vulnerable community members living with a disability through multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA), to reduce the additional barriers to participate in livelihood opportunities that these community members may face.

HEALTH AND PROTECTION

Nearly all of the 85,000 individuals directly affected by the eruption and tsunami, including more than 32,000 children, require health or protection assistance, according to initial GoT assessments. With USAID/BHA support, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)—through the Tonga Red Cross Society (TRCS)—is distributing hundreds of dignity kits to women and girls to address hygiene and protection needs. Both UNICEF and TRCS are also conducting psychosocial support interventions to help affected populations cope with volcano- and tsunami-related stressors. USAID/BHA partner the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) has delivered more than 1,500 dignity kits and is providing integrated sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence response services on Nomuka and Tongatapu islands, in coordination with the MoH and local NGOs.

WASH

USAID/BHA is supporting Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and local partner Caritas, and UNICEF to deliver WASH supplies to thousands of affected households across ‘Eua, Ha’apai, Tongatapu, and Vava’u. As of February 10, TRCS had distributed approximately 150 hygiene kits and nearly 1,800 gallons of water across Tonga, benefitting more than 10,000 individuals. The relief organization is also distributing fuel in coordination with NEMO to enable water pumping systems across the island. With USAID/BHA support, UNICEF will work to repair WASH facilities in communities, health care facilities, and schools to restore access to safe drinking water and distribute fuel to enable functioning of water pumping systems across the island. In total, relief actors—including GoT authorities, international humanitarian organizations, among other actors—have reached approximately 30,600 individuals had received WASH assistance across Tonga, according to the UN, as of February 10.

EARLY RECOVERY AND RISK REDUCTION

While immediate response efforts continue, the GoT and partner organizations are also prioritizing strategies to facilitate economic and social recovery in Tonga. Given Tonga’s extreme vulnerability to disasters, USAID/BHA supports preparedness and disaster risk reduction programming in Tonga and across the Pacific to help the GoT and local communities prepare for future disasters.
USAID/BHA is supporting NOAA to deploy tsunami data collection equipment to the GoT to bolster future tsunami warning forecast models. Additionally, the USAID–USGS Volcano Disaster Assistance Program (VDAP) has shipped volcano monitoring equipment to New Zealand and plans to deploy international experts to install the equipment in Tonga at the request of the Tongan Geological Service. This equipment includes a seismic station to detect volcano-related earthquakes, an infrasound array to detect explosions, and supporting equipment for installation and data transfer to monitor all of Tonga’s volcanoes.

### USAID HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TONGA VOLCANO AND TSUNAMI RESPONSE IN FY 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementing Partner</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Act for Peace</td>
<td>Agriculture, MPCA, Protection, WASH</td>
<td>Countrywide</td>
<td>$375,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>Agriculture, Shelter and Settlements, WASH</td>
<td>Countrywide</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRS</td>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>Countrywide</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFRC</td>
<td>Health, WASH</td>
<td>Countrywide</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCHA</td>
<td>HCIMA</td>
<td>Countrywide</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Countrywide</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>Health, Protection, WASH</td>
<td>Countrywide</td>
<td>$425,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING**

| TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING | $2,500,000 |

**TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TONGA VOLCANO AND TSUNAMI RESPONSE IN FY 2022**

| $2,500,000 |

1 Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of March 4, 2022.

### PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at interaction.org.

- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.

- More information can be found at:
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: cidi.org
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at reliefweb.int.

---

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)