





St. Vincent & the Grenadines: La Soufrière Volcano

Flash Update No. 02

This flash update is produced by OCHA Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the period from March to April 2021. OCHA will continue to monitor the present situation.

 **16 - 20k**
Estimated number of affected persons/evacuees

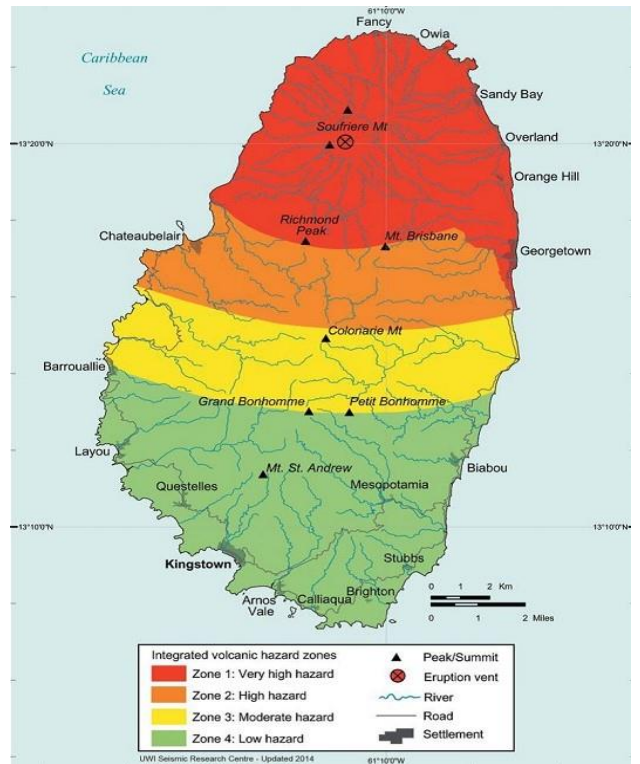
 **2,318** Persons
in shelters

 **110,696**
Potentially affected due to island wide shut off in water supply ¹

 **\$8.7M**
Approximately required to support the response (US\$) ²

HIGHLIGHTS

- On 9 April at 8:41 am an explosive eruption began at the La Soufrière Volcano in Saint. Vincent. This is a culmination of the seismic activity that began on April 8 and ash plumes of up to 20,000 feet were observed heading east.³ Satellite imagery can be seen [here](#).
- On April 9, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) indicated that sixty-two (62) shelters were occupied with 2,318 persons and eight (8) other shelters are activated but unoccupied. There is an undisclosed number of self-evacuees, who went to family and friends. These numbers are expected to change in the coming days. On April 8 over 600 persons were also evacuated through the use of maritime assets.
- On 8 April 2021, Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves issued an immediate evacuation order for those persons living in the red zones and raised the alert level to red, indicating that an eruption is in progress or likely without warning.⁴
- On 8 April 2021, seismic activity at La Soufrière Volcano changed significantly when the seismic station closest to the summit began recording low-level seismic tremors. The volcano entered a heightened period of activity indicative of a fresh batch of magma either near to or approaching the surface. The possibility for activity to move to an explosive phase increased significantly. There is also a possibility of concurrent volcanic/seismic unrest in other neighboring islands.



Source: [Home \(nemo.gov.vc\)](http://Home(nemo.gov.vc))
The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

¹ The assumption is that the total population will be affected due to complete shut off of water supply on the entire island.

² CDEMA CPDG Disaster Meeting April 9, 2021

³ La Soufriere Bulletin #53 APRIL 09, 2021

⁴ NEMO La Soufriere Bulletin #52 April 08, 2021

FORECASTED IMPACTS and NEEDS

Food Security: It is expected that people displaced from the RED area will require support since there will be extensive damage on crops from ash fallout.

Health: Sulfur dioxide gases is of concern mainly to the people in the surrounding area. There is need to develop modeling for impact of gases, especially due to the impact of ash clouds over time. Ash plumes and sulfur dioxide may cause extensive disruptions and ash fallout could reach as far as Barbados. This may cause further respiratory irritations and complications for individuals in COVID-19 isolation centres as well as people with sensitive airways such as children, older adults, and people with lung disease such as asthma. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as masks, cleaning supplies, gloves, and additional surveillance are still required. The SVG Ministry of Health has yet to confirm the need for medical hospitals and has initiated the process of PCR testing and vaccination of persons in shelters.

Shelter: Shelters do not have auxiliary electricity supply which poses a potential issue should there be a power outage. The National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) has published the final list of **105** emergency shelters that will be used by communities evacuated from the RED and ORANGE zones. It has been indicated that evacuees will continue to follow all COVID-19 protocols with the regular usage of masks, temperature checks and emergency spacing to allow for social distancing amongst families. While vaccination to enter the shelters is not mandatory, vaccinations are being requested for persons going to the hotel shelters. There are bilateral discussions with neighboring countries regarding the reception and provision of temporary support for displaced persons, including shelter, feeding and social services, medical and school arrangements, COVID-19 protocols, and immigration procedures.

WASH: The Central Water and Sewerage Authority (CWSA) have shut down water supply from all systems given the conditions of the ash fallout. The Government has indicated that they will require a lot of bottle water as initial supplies.

Protection: In most of the shelters identified (public schools and churches), the bathrooms, and shower facilities are not adequate. Women and children may require additional support if there is an overcrowding of shelters and there is a possibility of an increase of endemic infectious diseases amidst an ongoing pandemic.

Logistics: The UWI Seismic Research Institute stated that helicopter support is needed for essential deployment of equipment on the volcano and to facilitate the movement of field staff. The Argyle International Airport and AIA Cargo Terminal are also currently closed until further notice.

COORDINATION AND RESPONSE

Coordination

- The Caribbean Development Partners Group for Disaster Management was convened, as well as, an ad hoc meeting with the United Nations Sub-Regional Team to discuss the UNs potential response.
- PM Ralph Gonsalves indicated that Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, and Grenada will be ready by Sunday to receive evacuees.
- CDEMA has activated its regional support operation and is providing technical assistance to NEMO with Evacuation and Logistics Planning.
- Cruise ships are being used as offshore facilities for evacuees.
- UNETT has prepared a complementary contingency plan to support Gov efforts.

Response

- PAHO is currently assessing the health situation and supporting the Barbados Defense Force (Emergency Medical Team - EMT) by providing supplies, mainly masks, so they are equipped in case of deployment. The Emergency Team are on standby and the WASH Expert is available if needed. PAHO is collaborating with UNICEF on WASH, as well as, IOM and WFP on shelter and logistics respectively.

- ITU is ready to provide ICT-assisted-emergency BGAN phones and upon review any other emergency assistive ICT support as may be determined.
- WFP has been in contact with the Ministry of National Mobilization and Social Development in Saint Vincent to support implementing food and basic needs assessment, including distribution points. In-kind and cash support, ready-to-eat meals and food kits that are available upon request. Technical assistance for recovery and resilience is available and experts on food security and livelihoods are ready to be deployed. WFP can provide common logistics services including storage facilities and response assets from Barbados. Air and sea bridge and emergency telecoms equipment are also available. Logistics and supply chain staff are on stand-by to support emergency response and relief supply tracking.
- UNFPA donated 400 dignity kits for women and families to the Bureau of Gender Affairs and has been supporting CDEMA directly on statistics and common data sets including GIS mapping. Surge deployment from Barbados and Jamaica are ready to be deployed.
- UNWomen has provided support to the Bureau of Gender Affairs with a cash transfer to support 650 families for a period of two months. Additionally, 150 protection kits, 250 food hammers and PPE have been provided.
- UNICEF with support from CDEMA has provided collapsible water tanks for water storage, chlorine drums for water treatment, WASH, and dignity kits. Additionally, UNICEF has prepositioned items in Barbados, Antigua & Barbuda, and Trinidad & Tobago, through CDEMA. These supplies include collapsible water bladders (9 x 5,000 liters; 3 x 1,500 liters, 1,500 x 10 liters collapsible water containers (HH use), purification tablets; and 750 dignity kits preposition. Action will be for transportation to locations as required by Needs Assessment. UNICEF is awaiting feedback from Ministry of Education, as water tanks for schools used as shelters might be needed. There is a request for 150 portable toilets which is an ongoing conversation with CDEMA and NEMO.
- UNICEF funds were transferred to the Ministry of National Mobilisation (MNM) for Return to Happiness (face-to-face) training, for teachers and community members. Training (virtual) was implemented over the past 2 months. Support has been provided to replenish Return to Happiness kits and the expansion of existing UNICEF supported hot lines to provide psychosocial support. Preparedness for virtual child-friendly spaces in shelter arrangements has been conducted and UNICEF awaits a request from MNM for PPE for some shelters. UNICEF is also liaising with the Ministry of National Mobilisation & Social Development on cash-based support while the International Federation of the Red Cross has 300 cards that can be charged.
- IOM indicated support available in shelter management trainings and monitoring and tracking of the affected people. IOM at the request of immigration can potentially support the registration of people moving to other countries.
- FAO two months ago distributed ten 1,000 gallon water tanks for use in livestock evacuation centers and supported preparation of agriculture sector volcano eruption anticipatory action, preparedness, and response protocols. FAO is liaising with the Government to support on: the retrofitting/construction of livestock emergency shelters; pre-positioning/provisions for livestock feed, water and medicaments; identification/facilitation of procurement for critical livestock feed components and medicaments that may have to be imported; technical support to AA, preparedness, impacts need assessment and technical advice on animal emergency health measures.
- UNDP can provide support in post-disaster assessments and provide technical support on recovery activities. A team is on standby ready to deploy if needed and satellite phones have been provided to UNDP staff in Saint Vincent.
- Red Cross National Society (NS) through CDRTS and other community groups assisted NEMO with conducting an evacuation needs assessment in the red and orange zones. RCNS coordinated with NEMO in line with their roles and responsibilities under the National Volcano Response Plan, assisting in the erection of signs at evacuation sites, muster points and transport points and facilitating the preparation of grab and go evacuation bags.
- IFRC has been coordinating with the NS on preparedness activities and closely monitoring updates and information messages from the Government, CDEMA and other partner organizations. Coordination between Americas Regional Office (ARO) and Country Cluster Delegation as well as sharing of an information messages.
- French armed forces are able to provide a naval ship to carry goods from any Leewards or Windward islands and Barbados to St Vincent.

Gaps and Constraints

There is a possibility of concurrent volcanic/seismic unrest in other neighboring islands.⁵ As part of the response there is an estimated \$8.7 million USD funding requirement with \$220k USD already mobilized and a funding gap of over \$8.4 million USD.

Security Situation

The Commissioner of Police in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines stated that the security situation there was under control. There is no expectation of looting in areas where persons have been evacuated.

COVID-19 and Deployment

In the event of deployment of humanitarian personnel exceptions and waivers for the quarantine period would be considered on a case-by-case basis. Some exceptions have been made for persons who are supporting under working quarantine guidelines set by the Ministry of Health.

Coordination of Supplies

To support the coordination of relief supplies, CDEMA has provided the below link to assist:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rhFtMDxhv14y4UhjjpR4GXVV0i74t62/view>

List of immediate supply items being requested

- Water tanks due to the shutdown of the water systems from ash flow
- Bottle water
- 5-gallon buckets, COTS and mattresses.
- 30k blankets and sleeping mats.
- Kitchen items
- PPE which includes masks and googles
- Hygiene kits
- Food supplies
- Cleaning supplies
- Disposable food containers

For further information, please contact:

Carol Sanchez, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, sanchez21@un.org, Tel: +1 (246) 467-6111, Cell +1 (246) 832-6111

Randy Warner, Information Management Assistant, randy.warner@un.org, Tel: +1 (246) 467-6113, Cell +1 (246) 836-6113

For more information, please visit [Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency - CDEMA National Emergency Management Organization \(NEMO\)](#)