



Photo: Jacqueline de Gaillande / VRCS

# Tropical Cyclone Pam 2015

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE REPORT

VANUATU RED CROSS SOCIETY | PO BOX 618, PORT VILA





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## Message from the CEO

On the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of March, category-5 Tropical Cyclone Pam cut a path of destruction through the islands of Vanuatu. A country already struggling with low income levels, lack of access to water and sanitation and heavily reliant on agriculture, Vanuatu was facing its largest natural disaster on record.

At Vanuatu Red Cross, we dealt with enormous challenges in our response; our office was flooded, we had little communications, no running water for three days and no power for two weeks. We also faced major difficulties accessing funds as the banks' operating systems were down for the first two weeks following the cyclone.

Despite all of this, we began our response immediately. We worked in partnership with the National Disaster Management Office, the Vanuatu Humanitarian Team and local NGOs. We worked in eight different areas at the same time - receiving disaster relief on the tarmac at Bauerfield Airport; deploying on Tanna, North Efate and Shepherds Islands; managing ten evacuation centres; setting up the Nomad unit at Mele village; conducting assessments and distribution in parts of the capital and attending daily meetings with NDMO and the various clusters.

In the office we had 25 international delegates, 200 volunteers, all of our staff and some of our board members all working together. We were able to reach 30,000 affected people, distributing relief items using planes, helicopters, boats, barges, pick-up trucks and flat-bed trucks.

I am proud of what has been achieved so far; we have witnessed the Red Cross Movement in action with the IFRC and so many of our sister National Societies providing support to VRCS. The professionalism and expertise of the international delegates who arrived to assist the Society was outstanding and the team at VRCS has worked around the clock since day one - I congratulate them and thank them for their drive and commitment.



The scale of this disaster means that it will take years for the country to return to how it was before TC Pam. However, the people of Vanuatu have shown great resilience and I am confident that we will recover, as long as we work together to overcome the challenges ahead.

Jacqueline de Gaillande

CEO, Vanuatu Red Cross Society



## About This Report

This report details the activities of the Red Cross in the immediate aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Pam. It covers approximately the first month of operations when the focus was on assessment of damage and distribution of relief.

The emergency response activities in this report were a combined effort from Vanuatu Red Cross Society, the International Federation of Red Cross, French Red Cross, Australian Red Cross and New Zealand Red Cross.

## Impact

On the 13th of March 2015, Tropical Cyclone Pam hit the northern and central islands of Vanuatu. The category-5 storm brought winds of 250km/hr with gusts up to 320 km/hr. Winds and flooding destroyed homes, uprooted trees, ruined crops and caused considerable damage to infrastructure. Continuing into March 14th, the cyclone travelled south through the archipelago causing further massive devastation in the southern islands of Vanuatu.

11 people were killed and approximately 66,000 lost their homes. Widespread crop damage, in a country where the majority of the population rely on subsistence farming, is a significant issue. In total, 188,000 people were affected by Cyclone Pam, approximately 70% of the total population.



Photo: Dickinson Peta / VRCS

## Timeline of Response


- 
- Prior to TC Pam** VRCS prepared their response. Evacuation centres were prepared and evacuations undertaken.
  - 14<sup>th</sup> March** Vanuatu Red Cross in Port Vila responded immediately performing initial assessments of damage in the capital, checking on evacuation centres and registering evacuees.
  - 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> March** VRCS takes delivery of relief supplies sent by Australian Aid, NZAid and France.
  - 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> March** Teams from IFRC, FACT and the Emergency Response Unit are deployed to Vanuatu. VRCS participates in NDMO coordinated cluster meetings and undertakes assessments in affected areas.
  - 19<sup>th</sup> March** VRCS are the first organization in Vanuatu to distribute relief supplies. The first delivery of relief items goes to Eton village in east Efate, one of the worst affected areas in the country. From this point on distributions continue on a daily basis.
  - 21<sup>st</sup> March** Two NOMAD water purification units are set up in Efate and Tanna.
  - 31<sup>st</sup> March** Cargo plane arrives carrying 43 tons of additional relief supplies from the IFRC warehouse in Kuala Lumpur.
  - 4<sup>th</sup> April** Distribution of majority of relief supplies completed.
  - 10<sup>th</sup> April** VRCS donates 5,400 mosquito nets to the Ministry of Health
  - 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> April** VRCS attends IFRC meeting in Suva to plan long-term recovery operations across the 5 countries affected by TC Pam.



Photo: Madeline Wilson / IFRC

## Emergency Response

The Vanuatu Red Cross Society's response began before the cyclone arrived. Initial forecasts predicted that Tropical Cyclone Pam would take a path between Vanuatu and Fiji remaining hundreds of kilometres from the islands of Vanuatu. VRCS monitored the situation closely and as TC Pam grew in size and strength it became clear that this 'monster' cyclone was headed directly for Vanuatu.

It was all hands on deck for the preparations. The disaster management team made logistical preparations in anticipation of post-cyclone needs, participated in the identification and assessment of evacuation centres and, in cooperation with the NDMO, assisted in the evacuation of people in low-lying areas prone to flooding. The VRCS staff were briefed and an emergency evacuation plan developed for each staff member. As the yellow alert was issued, many staff were sent home with a core group relocating to the National Disaster Management Office to work through the cyclone.



The challenges facing the Vanuatu Red Cross following the cyclone were immense. Communications, power and water were cut. Logistical coordination was extremely difficult. For the first few days it was impossible to know the full scale of the devastation on the outer islands.

Many of the Vanuatu Red Cross staff and volunteers had lost their homes but they worked tirelessly to help the affected communities. VRCS took on the management of 10 evacuation centres. Immediately following the cyclone, a Field Assessment Coordination Team (FACT), a team from the Emergency Response Unit and delegates from the IFRC were deployed to assist the National Society in the emergency response. These teams brought experts in logistics, operations, emergency shelter, health, information management and communications to provide support to VRCS.

30,000  
people reached by  
Red Cross activities  
across

14  
islands



Photo: Dickinson Tevi / VRCS



Photo: Jacqueline de Gaillande / VRCS

## Relief Distribution

Distribution of relief was targeted to the areas worst-affected by the cyclone. These included Paama island, the Shepherd islands, the offshore islands north of Efate island, parts of rural Efate, parts of the capital Port Vila and the north of Tanna island. These areas were assigned to VRCS by the National Disaster Management Office.

In the period immediately following the cyclone, VRCS supplied food relief to people in evacuation centres. Tarpaulins and shelter tool kits were distributed to address the emergency shelter needs of the many thousands of people who had lost their homes.

Staff in the branches worked with the provincial governments to distribute the pre-positioned relief stock.

### Distribution by numbers

**4327**

households  
assisted

**11,938**

tarpaulins

**5,794**

water storage  
containers

**105**

tonnes of  
rice

**3,452**

shelter tool kits





Photo: Jacqueline de Gaillande / VRCS

18 days after the cyclone hit, the IFRC chartered a cargo plane to deliver 43 tons of relief supplies from the Red Cross warehouse in Kuala Lumpur. This included 1600 hygiene kits, 1052 kitchen sets and 2565 shelter tool kits. Distribution of these items began the following day.

Further distributions also included relief supplies such as solar lanterns, jerry cans, sleeping mats and blankets.

There were significant logistical challenges with the response spread across 14 islands and damage to transport infrastructure significant. Supplies were transported by boat, plane, helicopter and truck, however was necessary to reach those in need.

## Total relief distribution by island

Details regarding total distributions can be found below. Households received a combination of items based on assessed needs.

	households	shelter tool kit	tarpaulin	jerry can (10L)	jerry can (20L)	hygiene kit	bucket	kitchen set	sleeping mat	blanket	solar lamp	mosquito net	rice (25kg)	latrines
VRCS	4,321	3,452	7,398	5,565	229	3,453	16	2,190	5,117	2,127	2,718	119	50	10
Buninga	23	23	60	46		31		31	31	50	30			
Efate	1,867	1,232	2,452	1,363	229	1,218		567	989	698	58	119		
Emae	279	185	644	504		188		205	250		411			
Emao	128	128	201	201		128		20	256	40	128			
Lelepa	18	11	11											
Malekula	54	54	108			54		54	108		54			
Makira	31	41	70	41		41		41	41		41		50	
Mataso	20	20	40	40		20		20	20		20			
Moso	16		32	16		16	16	16		32				
Nguna	180	147	307	306		150		48	194	116	227			
Paama	425	379	865	873		369			871	866	433			
Pele	35	35	77	70		35			70		35			
Tanna	1,080	1,031	2,221	1,865		1,041		1,031	2,067		1,065			10
Tongariki	55	55	110	120		55		55	100	100	60			
Tongoa	110	111	200	120		107		102	120	225	156			
Other*			4540				1960	21					4161	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,321</b>	<b>3,452</b>	<b>11,938</b>	<b>5,565</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>3,453</b>	<b>1,976</b>	<b>2,211</b>	<b>5,117</b>	<b>2,127</b>	<b>2,718</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>4,211</b>	<b>10</b>

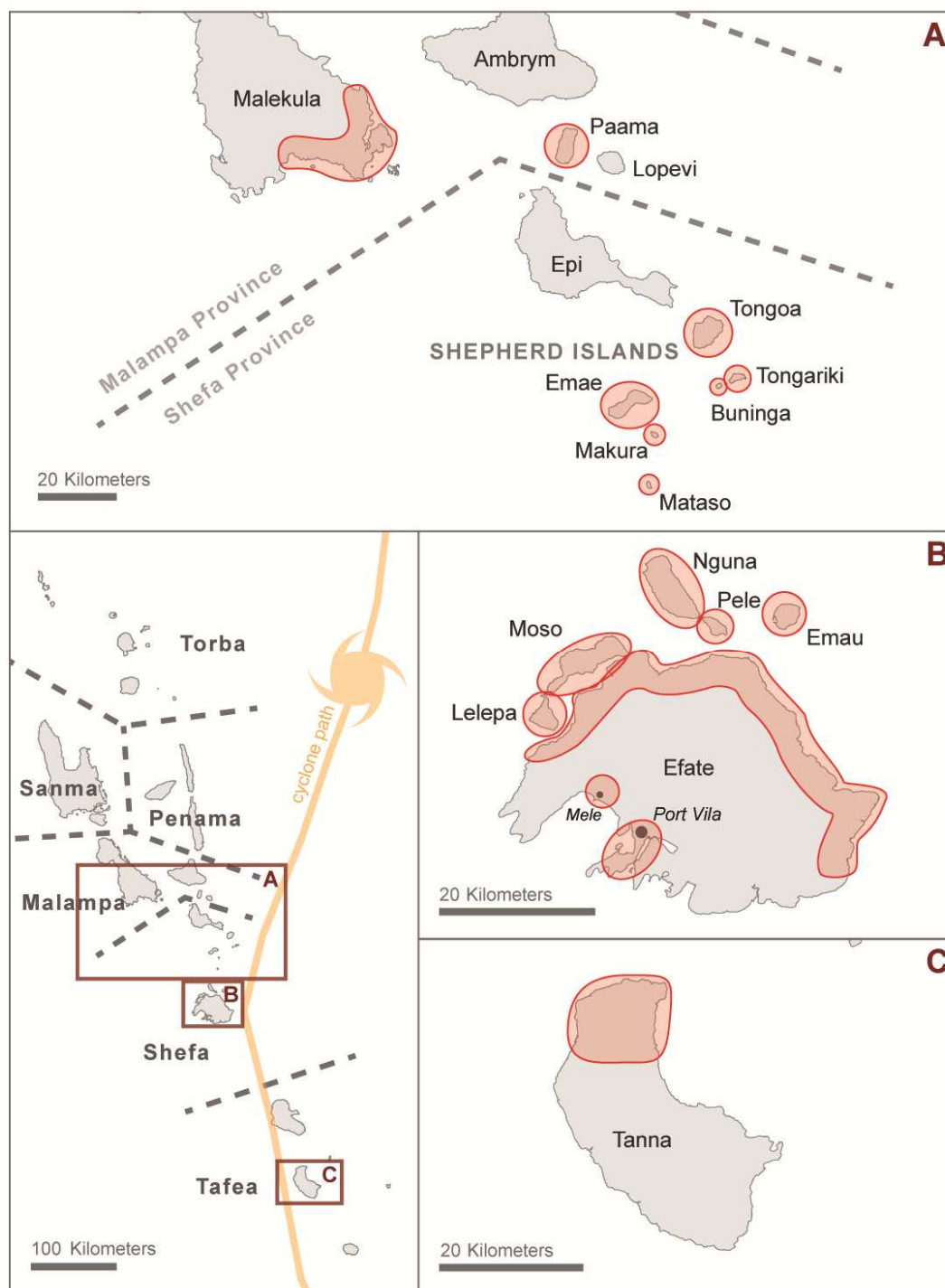
\*Some Red Cross stock has been distributed through other organisations (ADRA, Caritas, Relief International, Save the Children, WFP and World Vision) based on operational presence and assessed needs in different areas



Photo: Jacqueline de Gaillande / VRCS



## Areas of Distribution



Maps developed by IFRC

## Water and Sanitation Hygiene (WASH)

VRCS, with the support of the French Red Cross, set up Nomad water purification units in Mele village on Efate and in north Tanna. On average, these units were purifying 22,000 litres of water per day.

FRC also facilitated training for VRCS volunteers in basic hygiene promotion. These volunteers were then able to conduct hygiene promotion activities in the communities visited. Basic hygiene is vitally important to decreasing the spread of disease in post-disaster situations.



Photo: Dickinson Tevi / VRCS

**29,440**  
people were  
provided with  
clean water and  
collection  
containers

## Restoring Family Links

For over a week following the cyclone, communications to many of the affected outer islands were down. Concerned families in Port Vila and overseas sought help from Vanuatu Red Cross to reconnect with their family members. During the first month following TC Pam, VRCS received 327 enquiries. 65 links were restored by Vanuatu Red Cross, 132 cases were closed due to the parties establishing contact themselves.



VRCS also visited detainees at the correctional centres in Port Vila. The majority of the detainees had not had a chance to contact their families for over 2 weeks following the cyclone. VRCS assisted 59 detainees to contact their families.

## Branches

TC Pam affected 22 different islands across Vanuatu. The VRCS branch staff and volunteers were vital to the emergency response.

- TAFEA branch** In Tanna, one of the worst hit islands, the branch office sustained severe damage. This did not stop the work of the branch where staff and volunteers partnered with the provincial government to distribute pre-positioned relief supplies from the VRCS stock.
- PENAMA branch** Six volunteers from the Penama branch conducted assessments on Pentecost and Ambae islands.
- SANMA branch** Volunteers from the Sanma branch were deployed to Pentecost to assist the provincial government with distribution of relief supplies.
- MALAMPA branch** The Malampa branch officer conducted a WASH assessment on the island of Paama.

Photo: Madeline Wilson / IFRC





Photo: Jacqueline de Gaillande / VRCS

## Volunteers

Vanuatu Red Cross also called on its large network of volunteers in Port Vila. 243 volunteers were mobilized in the first two weeks after the cyclone. Over 100 new volunteers registered at HQ. Volunteers assisted in the collection and distribution of relief supplies, the completion of needs assessments and logistics operations. The Red Cross response would not have been possible without them.

Over **100** new volunteers registered with VRCS in the fortnight following TC Pam



## International Delegates

The delegates listed below worked with Vanuatu Red Cross in the first month following TC Pam.



Frido Hendricks  
Netherlands Red Cross



Florent Chane  
IFRC



Michael Gloeckle  
Australian Red Cross



Pascal Guillotion  
French Red Cross



Douglas Clark  
NZ Red Cross



Nicolas Verdy  
Canadian Red Cross

Madeline Wilson	Australian Red Cross	Peter Lawther	Australian Red Cross
Daniel Joseph	IFRC	Don Wallace	NZ Red Cross
Mariano Griva	Australian Red Cross	Yves Mignot	French Red Cross (New Caledonia)
Catherine Harris	Australian Red Cross	Landry Laufolitoga	French Red Cross (New Caledonia)
Inoke Taufa	Tonga Red Cross	Katia Cateine	French Red Cross (New Caledonia)
Anne-Maree Delaney	IFRC	Ludovic Noellat	French Red Cross (New Caledonia)
Hanna Butler	NZ Red Cross	Jean Michel Delathiere	French Red Cross (New Caledonia)
John Manley	American Red Cross	Sarah Chedorge	French Red Cross (New Caledonia)
Ludovic Arnault	French Red Cross	Laurence Daniel	French Red Cross (New Caledonia)
Sagaitu Josaia	Fiji Red Cross	Nathalie Vian	French Red Cross (New Caledonia)
Finau Limolua	IFRC	Anushka Gokul	IFRC
Ana Zarkovic	IFRC	Arturo Garcia Fernandez	French Red Cross
Raphael Bonnaud	French Red Cross		

## Financial Overview

### IFRC Appeal

The IFRC appeal has raised over CHF 5.7 million (approximately VT650 million). This money will be distributed between the affected countries - Kiribati, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. It is expected that Vanuatu will receive CHF 4.7 million (VT530 million). This funding will be managed by IFRC to deliver recovery programs over the next 18 months.

More information regarding the IFRC TC Pam appeal can be found here: <http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/responding/ongoing-operations/tropical-cyclone-pam/>



Photo: Jacqueline de Gaillande / VRCS





Photo: Jacqueline de Gaillande / VRCS

## Direct Donations

VRCS received direct donations from the following organizations and individuals in the period to April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The total amount received in direct donations was VT15,337,888.

New Zealand Red Cross  
Chinese Red Cross (via Embassy)  
Bahai Association of Vanuatu  
Cook Islands Red Cross  
Samoa Red Cross  
Wendy Gimmitt  
Michael Parson  
Charlie Pierce  
Private Donor (Yao Store)

In addition to these cash donations, VRCS received a number of generous in-kind donations.

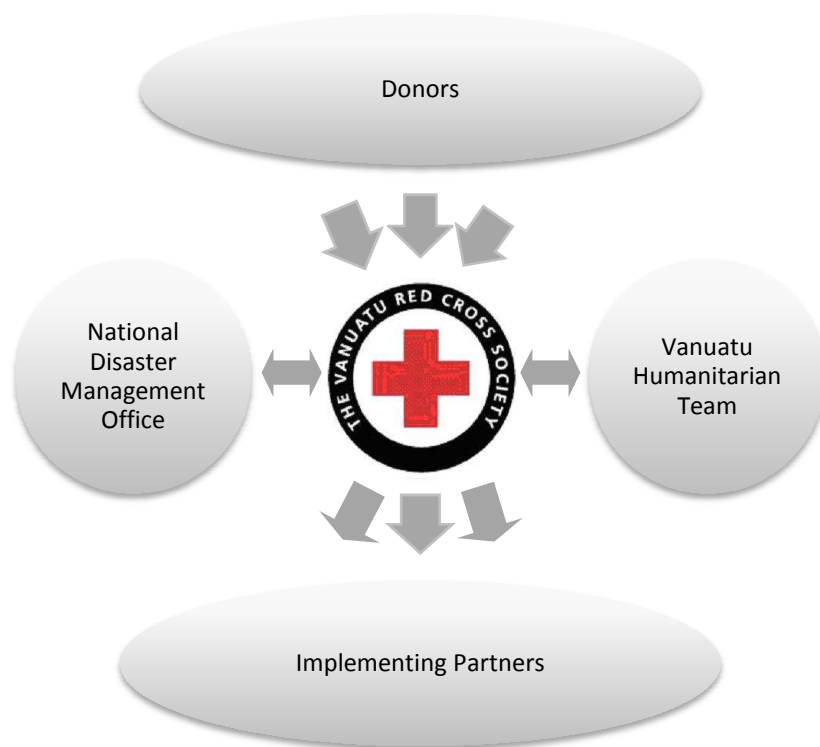
## Other International Appeals

The Australian Red Cross and the New Zealand Red Cross also launched appeals following TC Pam. The New Zealand Red Cross raised NZD\$1.5 million (approximately VT120 million) and the Australian Red Cross raised over AUD\$6 million (approximately VT500 million). These appeals covered all countries affected by Cyclone Pam, it has not yet been determined how much of those funds will be allocated to relief activities in Vanuatu.

## Our partners in action

In response to the devastation brought by TC Pam, Vanuatu Red Cross Society received an unprecedented amount of support, both financial and in-kind. Support came from the IFRC, partner national societies, foreign governments, private organizations and individuals. The Australian government, for the first time in the Pacific, provided assistance directly to the National Society.

### How Red Cross distribution worked



VRCS worked with the National Disaster Management Office and the Vanuatu Humanitarian Team to coordinate distribution of all relief items received by VRCS. Vanuatu Red Cross then worked with a number of partners including ADRA, CARE International, Save the Children, Samaritan's Purse and World Vision, among others, to ensure that all the relief supplies were distributed as intended. The support and cooperation of these partners allowed us to reach more people in period immediately following the cyclone.



## Thankyou

The Vanuatu Red Cross wishes to thank all who were involved and all who supported us in the TC Pam emergency response. The remarkable generosity of our supporters – individuals, businesses, partner national societies and the IFRC – drives our ability to provide relief to the people of Vanuatu in this time of need.

## Moving Forward

As the distribution of emergency relief supplies comes to an end, Vanuatu Red Cross, with the support of the IFRC and partner National Societies, is looking towards the recovery phase of the operation. The early recovery period will extend until June to allow time for final distributions, thorough needs assessments and for the Society to plan the most effective programs for helping the people of Vanuatu to recover.

VRCS will continue to focus on the areas targeted during distribution in line with the plan set out by the National Disaster Management Office.



#ourprinciples  
inaction



# Humanity

Humanidad Humanité الإنسانية



# Impartiality

Imparcialidad Impartialité عدم التحيز



# Neutrality

Neutralidad Neutralité الحياد



# Independence

Independencia Indépendance الاستقلال



# Voluntary service

Voluntariado Volontariat الخدمة التطوعية



# Unity

Unidad Unité الوحدة



# Universality

Universalidad Universalité العالمية

Our shared commitment to serve the most vulnerable people everywhere,  
now and in the future.



[www.fundamentalprinciples.today](http://www.fundamentalprinciples.today)







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