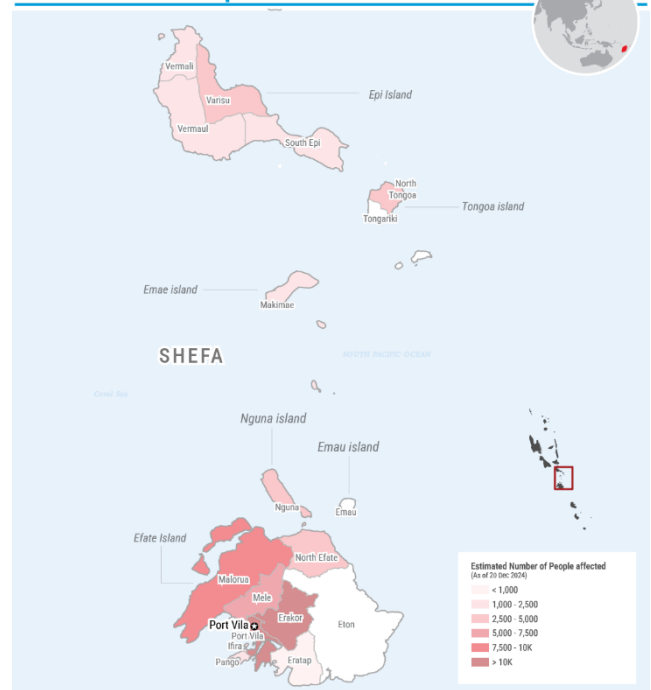


Highlights

- The Ministry of Health has confirmed 12 fatalities and 210 injuries, with 11 surgical cases currently admitted to Vanuatu Central Hospital (VCH).
- A total of **1,698** individuals have been temporarily displaced. **Eleven** evacuation centers are sheltering **1,206** people based on assessments, while others are staying with **31** host households.
- The Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT)'s Pacific Humanitarian Air Service (PHAS) flight landed in Port Vila today, bringing surge teams from UN agencies and humanitarian partners, along with relief items as part of the humanitarian cargo.
- The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) is fully operational in its temporary location, with national cluster response efforts ongoing, supported now by PHT and UNDAC surge personnels on the ground.
- Vanuatu Central Hospital (VCH) is urgently requesting coordinated surge support and the acquisition of essential medical supplies to address critical needs.
- Port Vila International Airport is scheduled to officially **reopen** on Sunday, 22 December, with commercial flights set to resume.

VANUATU - Earthquake



The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
Map Sources: HDX, UNCS, and USGS | Map created: 20 Dec 2024

Situation Overview

The situation in Vanuatu remains critical following the **7.3 magnitude** earthquake that struck on December 17, 2024. A state of emergency is still in effect, and the seven-day public curfew from 6 PM to 6 AM in the Nambatu area will end by 24 December. The Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department (VMGD) and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) continue to urge the public to remain vigilant as aftershocks persist.

Infrastructure damage is extensive, with landslides obstructing road access in Efate and the outer islands. **The Port Vila International Airport is scheduled to reopen to commercial flights tomorrow**, as the runway infrastructure has been certified safe and aviation fuel has been confirmed as uncontaminated. However, **road access to the seaport remains blocked**.

Telecommunication services are being restored gradually, however needs still remain. Domestic mobile phone communication is functioning but experiences intermittent disruptions, while Vodafone's international phone services (voice and SMS) remain stable. Internet services, however, are still down in Efate, complicating coordination efforts. Most banking services in Port Vila have been restored, although

some ATMs are still non-operational due to a lack of power access. Commercial services remain limited, with only one supermarket in the Nambatu area having reopened.

Impact and Needs

The Ministry of Health has confirmed **12 fatalities and 210 injuries, with 11 surgical cases admitted to Vanuatu Central Hospital (VCH)**. NEOC reports that **1,698 individuals are temporarily displaced**, residing in host households and evacuation centers, with some households accommodating up to 70 people.

Ongoing assessments are being conducted by the NDMO, Displacement and Evacuation Centre Management (DECM) cluster, Health cluster, WASH cluster, Education Cluster and Australian Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams. Key immediate needs include **access to clean water and improvements in health and hygiene conditions**. There is a rising risk of contamination, **raising concerns about potential increases in waterborne diseases**, including diarrheal cases. **Food shortages** have also been reported on assessments conducted by the Australian USAR teams in Freshwater and by HELPR-1 assessments in Ngurua.

Hospitals in Port Vila are under considerable strain due to structural damage. The Ministry of Health has scaled down the use of the Vanuatu Mobile Force (VMF) Clinic for earthquake victims, while clinical services have been strategically reduced to redeploy healthcare workers to support those affected by the earthquake. Progress has been made in restoring services at VCH, including the supply of water. **The new building at VCH has been certified structurally safe by engineers** and the facility has mostly been cleaned, except for patient records. However, **VCH urgently requests coordinated surge support and the acquisition of essential medical supplies. Power and WASH facilities have not yet been restored in all healthcare facilities**, undermining the availability of medical services.

Response efforts

NEOC is conducting Community Assessments and Area Council Assessments in collaboration with the Shefa Province Government Council. The national cluster response, supported by the humanitarian community, is ongoing. **A live database maintained by the NDMO on evacuation sites and shelter houses is expected to be issued by today's close of business**. These assessments will guide the cluster response, including the deployment of Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) by the Shefa Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).

The PHT is actively supporting the government-led response to the recent earthquake in Vanuatu. In addition to the humanitarian community which has been responding from day one, **surge teams and humanitarian cargo arrived in Port Vila through the PHAS flight today**. This deployment includes humanitarian personnel and critical relief supplies to address immediate needs on the ground, reinforcing the national response efforts.

A total of **35** humanitarian personnel include IFRC, IOM, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), OCHA, Oxfam, SPC, SPREP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO arrived with this flight. The flight also carried two members from UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team and an environmental emergencies specialist. In total 10 UNDAC members and operational support partners are expected to be on the ground, in addition to 3 emergency environment specialists providing remote support.

The PHT is assisting the national cluster response by embedding staff within the NDMO and relevant line ministries. OCHA is coordinating international humanitarian assistance in Vanuatu, with the UNDAC team traveling to Port Vila.

WHO, UNICEF, and UNFPA are playing crucial roles in supporting the Ministry of Health. UNFPA has set up tents for maternity patients at VCH, while UNICEF has established four tents to manage patient overflow and deployed child protection teams to support doctors and families. Additionally, Global Response (HELPR-1) provides additional tents to VCH.

The Vanuatu Business Resilience Council (VBRC) continues to lead the private sector in restoring commercial services while facilitating the restoration of water and power supplies through collaboration with UNELCO and banking services. UNELCO reports that 57 per cent of its drinking water network has been restored. Private companies are also contributing to the clearance of road blockages.

Local and global businesses wishing to support the response to the Vanuatu earthquake are advised to contact the Vanuatu Business Resilience Council (VBRC) at info@vbrc.vu. VBRC is a Member Network of the OCHA-UNDP Connecting Business Initiative and has been designated as the lead for private sector engagement and coordination.

UNOSAT's Emergency Mapping Service (EMS) has been activated to support satellite-derived damage assessments following the earthquake in Vanuatu. On behalf of OCHA, UNOSAT has triggered the Space Charter and is collaborating with organizations like Copernicus, LINZ, GNS Science, and Fire and Emergency New Zealand to coordinate satellite analysis and prioritize areas of interest (AOIs). As new satellite imagery becomes available, analysis and products will be updated regularly and can be accessed via the following links: [Vanuatu Map Products](#), [UNOSAT Live Web Map - M7.3 Earthquake](#), and [GDACS-Satellite Mapping Coordination System](#). These resources will also be shared through UNOSAT's mailing lists to ensure timely updates for stakeholders.

Key Humanitarian Priorities

- **Health Services:** Strengthen medical response, including mobile health units and functional temporary operating facilities.
- **WASH:** Ensure effective cluster coordination and provide affected communities with safe water, hygiene kits (including menstrual hygiene management supplies), emergency latrines with handwashing facilities, and targeted awareness campaigns on safe water and hygiene practices through various channels.
- **Shelter and Protection:** Establish and equip safe shelters for displaced populations, provide targeted support to vulnerable groups, and ensure safe, dignified living conditions through improved site and cluster coordination. Provide MHPSS for children, ensure safety in evacuation centers, and support parents with guidance, safe spaces, and referral systems for additional care.
- **Food and Water Supply:** Distribute food aid and ensure access to clean drinking water, especially with damaged water reserves.
- **Logistics and Communication:** Restore transport and communication systems to improve response capacity.
- **Personal Protection Equipment and Environmental Specialist:** Assess the environmental threat of damaged buildings with hazardous linkages.

Contact Information

For more information, please contact OCHA Office of the Pacific Islands:

Olga Prorovskaya, Head of Office, prorovskaya@un.org, +679 999 1664

Katalaine Duaibe, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, katalaine.duaibe@un.org, +679 9981073