



# St. Vincent & the Grenadines: La Soufrière Volcano

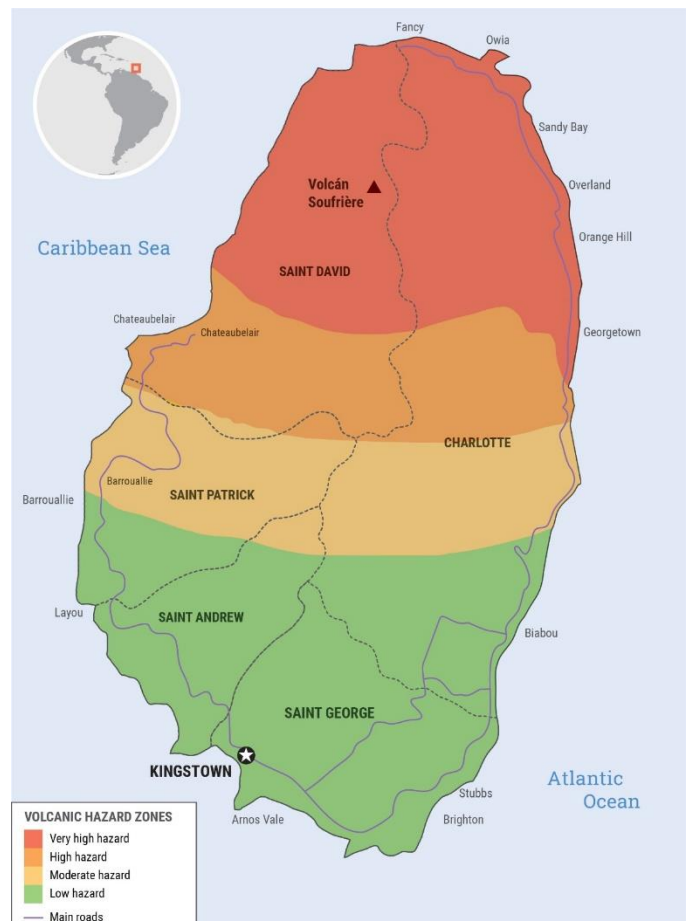
## Situation Report No. 04

As of 23 April 2021

This situation report is produced by the United Nations Sub-Regional Team (UNST) for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It is issued by the Office of the Resident Coordinator Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean with the support of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

### HIGHLIGHTS

- On **20 April 2021**, the United Nations for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean launched the United Nations Global Funding Appeal for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Didier Trebucq gave remarks, UN Resident Coordinator, the Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. Hon Ralph Gonsalves, Ms. Elizabeth Rielly, Executive Director, (ag) Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), and Dr. Didacus Jules, Director General, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission. The aim was to mobilise international solidarity and support to finance the urgent humanitarian and recovery needs that have arisen due to the Volcano La Soufrière. Playback of the event can be found [here](#), and the appeal document can be found [here](#). For additional information, please email: [tia.browne@un.org](mailto:tia.browne@un.org).
- On **22 April 2021**, CDEMA conducted a technical mission to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, including Ms. Elizabeth Riley, CDEMA's Executive Director (ag), and Mr. Daniel Best, Caribbean Development Bank's Director of Projects. Meetings and visits were scheduled with the Detail Damage Sectoral Assessment (DDSA) team, the CARICOM Disaster Relief Unit (CDRU), the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), and the Logistics Hub site at Arnos Vale old airport.<sup>1</sup>
- On **22 April 2021**, a high-level seismic tremor started at 11:09 am, generated by explosive activity, and lasted for about 20 minutes.<sup>2</sup>



**1,618**

Estimated number of displaced families in private homes<sup>3</sup>

**4,396**

Estimated number of displaced people in public shelters<sup>4</sup>

**6,790**

Estimated number of displaced people in private homes<sup>5</sup>

**11,186**

Total number of registered displaced people<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CDEMA Situation Report #21 22 April 2021

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> NEMO Shelter Report 22 April 2021

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid



156 registered displaced families in hotel accommodation<sup>7</sup>



503 volunteers in shelters<sup>8</sup>



About 200 (10%) of Ministry of Health staff are displaced and either living with family or in the shelter<sup>9</sup>

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

On 22 April 2021, a high-level seismic tremor started at 11:09 am, generated by explosive activity, and lasted for about 20 minutes. A vertical explosive eruption plume rose slowly above the crater, eventually reaching about 8 km. During the initial stages of the explosion, a base surge (pyroclastic density current) was seen moving down the volcano's western flank. Tremors continued, at a lower level, for the next two hours as the La Soufrière continued to vent ash,<sup>10</sup>

The Minister of Agriculture Saboto Caesar calculated the local agricultural losses at more than 150 million dollars due to the catastrophic situation. The Minister indicated that the state of emergency is affecting the availability of food and causing substantial negative impacts on family farming and micro-producers in the country.<sup>11</sup>

On 23 April 2021, Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves indicated that the number of persons applying for temporary evacuation overseas has risen. Most of those persons are not from the areas most affected by the La Soufrière Volcano. He said of the number of 1,017 persons who want to be temporarily displaced in OECS member countries, 230 were from the red zone, 159 from the orange zone, 48 are non-nationals, and 580 are people who are not from either danger zone.<sup>12</sup>

## GENERAL COORDINATION

To enhance the coordination of the UN Response, the United Nations Sub-Regional Team decided to create specialized sector groups to respond to Protection, Shelter and Housing, Health, WASH, Food Security, Livelihoods, and Cash Assistance. On 23 April, the Caribbean Development Partners Group - Disaster Management (CPDG-DM) met to discuss the response and receive updates from the various sectors.

UN Resident Coordinator Mr. Didier Trebucq, UNICEF Representative Mr. Aloys Kamuragiye, and WFP Representative and Country Director Mr. Regis Chapman traveled to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to review the UN response and plan any deployment of additional UN support.



From right to left: Mr. Regis Chapman, Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves, Mr. Didier Trebucq and Mr. Aloys Kamuragiye talking with residents.



From left to right: Mr. Aloys Kamuragiye and Mr. Didier Trebucq visiting a warehouse with relief supplies.

<sup>7</sup> NEMO Shelter Report 22 April 2021

<sup>8</sup> CDPG Meeting 23 April 2021

<sup>9</sup> PAHO Situation Report #14 22 April 2021

<sup>10</sup> NEMO La Soufrière Bulletin #75 22 April 6:00 pm

<sup>11</sup> Caribbean News Service

<sup>12</sup> Loops News Caribbean

The Protocol for Special Quarantine Arrangement: Working Quarantine - Humanitarian can be found [here](#).

## HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

### Early Recovery

#### Needs:

- Initial detailed sectoral assessment of the impact.
- Cleaning and clearing of ash and debris.

#### Response:

- The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) will have five (5) environmental experts with expertise in geology (volcanology, lahar/mudflows), ecotoxicology, and environmental pollution from Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the UK.
- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed an initial response and recovery plan focusing on three areas: housing and damage assessments, emergency employment, restoration and regeneration of farms, and forest impacted by the eruption. UNDP has mobilized USD 280,000 from its core resources to support coordination and assessment, recovery initiatives, and building resilience for long-term recovery in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
- UNDP is currently procuring the necessary equipment and tools for the emergency employment programme to support ash and debris removal.

#### Gaps & Constraints:

- Current information gap articulating needs.

### Education

#### Needs:

- Initial Education Needs Assessment.
- Safe temporary learning spaces, including the provision of water and sanitation facilities.
- Recreational kits and early childhood development kits.
- Psychosocial support for school children and teachers.

#### Response:

- UNICEF has supported the development of radio messages on mental health and posters for shelters.

#### Gaps & Constraints:

- Information gaps on current needs to enable an adequate response in educational interventions.

### Food Security and Livelihoods

#### Needs:

- Immediate food and basic needs.
- Loss of assets and livelihoods (crops, livestock, and fisheries).
- Insufficient food supplies in shelters to address needs for an extended period.
- Ongoing adverse socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic compounding the situation.
- Insufficient capacity of potential host countries to provide support to evacuees for medium- and long-term support.

# 20K

Estimated number of people to be at risk of food insecurity.

#### Response:

- The World Food Programme's (WFP) social protection, cash/voucher assistance, and delivery mechanisms' experts continue to provide technical assistance to the national social welfare and shelter subcommittees at the Emergency

Operations Centre to scale up the overall response, including cash/voucher and shock-responsive social protection. In partnership with the Ministry of National Mobilisation and Social Development, WFP has provided vouchers to approximately 150 vulnerable individuals to help them meet their essential needs.

- WFP has assisted the Government in digitalizing their existing data collection tools administered at the shelters and people living with families and friends. Government staff has been trained to manage the database. The digital registration data is being verified, and WFP will continue to support data collection, analytics, and needs assessments. WFP has provided equipment and technical assistance to expand the emergency call centre to process requests and manage information. 50 tablets, 10 laptops, and 17 phones were officially handed over to the Ministry of National Mobilisation to support the registration, assessment, and delivery of support to impacted persons
- WFP has been awarded USD 600,000 from the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to provide assistance through multipurpose cash assistance. WFP is exploring cash/voucher transfers through remittance agents, retailers, and national social protection systems to identify the fastest option to assist affected vulnerable households and individuals. WFP will lead this with technical support from UNICEF in the design and implementation of the intervention.
- WFP is supporting the overall coordination of food security, livelihoods, and cash interventions through the establishment of a technical working group co-chaired with FAO and the participation of UNICEF, UNDP, and other agencies.
- UNICEF is deploying two emergency social protection and cash specialists to support the assessment of vulnerability and needs for short- and medium-term income support; to provide technical support to design and implement child and nutrition-sensitive cash support through the national social protection system (including support on (including targeting, grievance/ feedback, monitoring, and evaluation) and to support the establishment of linkages between the different sectoral responses, such as linking cash and social protection to child protection, nutrition or other services in the short and longer-term.
- UNICEF continues to support the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) with the coordination of joint discussions between the Member States receiving evacuees to promote a coordinated and harmonized social protection response in the Member States taking in evacuees.
- Following requests by several OECS Member States, UNICEF is developing tools/ guidance with the OECS with inputs from the member states and other key partners to support governments in their response to the needs of the evacuees through the social protection system.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is providing field-level and remote technical support on damage and loss assessment, emergency animal health management, and response and recovery planning, including the use of geospatial data and tools.
- FAO is supporting the procurement of veterinary medical supplies (Antibiotics, Antiemetics, Antipyretics, Anti-inflammatories, Anti-parasitic, Supplements, Dextrose, and other supportive) to help maintain the health/sanitary status of affected livestock and general livestock maintenance supplies, including watering tools. Support is also being provided in constructing small ruminant pens and silage (preserved green forage fodder) bunkers.

#### Gaps & Constraints:

- Financial resources for cash transfers and food distributions.



#### Health

##### Needs:

- Health risks are increasing due to a combination with the current COVID-19 situation.
- Respiratory problems due to the impact of ash clouds over time. Ash plumes and sulfur dioxide have reached far enough to affect Barbados, Grenada, and Saint Lucia.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as masks, cleaning supplies, and gloves.
- Continued surveillance for Communicable Diseases.
- Conduct air quality assessments.
- Improved arrangements for the continuation of essential health services, especially for dialysis patients who have been displaced.
- COVID-19 test kits and laboratory supplies.
- Dignity kits for women and girls and RH rape kits.

##### Response:

- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) is conducting water quality assessments and strengthening of Health Emergency Operation Center, including support to establish alternative medical care sites.



- PAHO is assisting with the coordination of personnel for the provision of mental health and psychosocial support.
- PAHO is working to ensure the maintenance of essential health services, including coordinating with Primary Health Clinics.
- Support with shelter management, including assisting with set up in line with shelter management guidelines in the context of COVID-19.
- Support MoH with H-EOC, storage, medical supplies, medication (including NCD kits), PPEs, COVID-19 test kits, laboratory supplies, and logistics.
- UNICEF has provided support to the Ministry of Education and NEMO on developing posters and radio messages on precautions to take during ash fall and precautions to protect oneself from COVID-19.

#### Gaps & Constraints:

- Limited capability for dialysis (2 beds) and oncology services (Georgetown Health Care facilities evacuated).
- Reported increase in diseases of the respiratory system at the Accident and Emergency Department.
- Insufficient storage capacity for supplies.
- Heightened risk of COVID-19 transmissions. On average, only 6-8 persons per shelter have been vaccinated upon admission.
- Access to health care services for evacuees in neighboring countries.
- Demographics on persons in shelters in terms of age, sex, and gender, not yet disaggregated.

## Protection

#### Needs:

- Safe spaces/centres for children, women, and vulnerable people.
- Child protection and violence prevention and response services.
- Active engagement and capacity building of shelter managers to mitigate Gender-Based Violence (GBV) risks inside the shelters.
- Dignity Kits to cover women and girls' basic hygiene needs.
- GBV in emergency response services and case management services, safe referrals, and particularly the capacity to respond to incidents of sexual violence through clinical management of rape (CMR) services.
- GBV Referral Pathways to be updated and disseminated among service providers and distributing key Information, Communication and Education (IEC) materials to the affected communities.
- Specialized Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) emergency services.

# 7.6K

Estimated number of women and girls evacuated <sup>13</sup>

#### Response:

- The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) continues gender-responsive support.
- UN Women will be sending 1,500-2,000 hygiene kits to the National Gender Machinery and the Caribbean women leadership branch in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
- In collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women met with the NGMS in Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia, and Grenada to determine any specific support needed, considering the pledged support to SVG.
- UNFPA supported the Gender Affairs Division to complete GBV Safety Audits in 62 of the 88 emergency shelters. The findings will be shared with the relevant sectors for further action.
- UNICEF supported child protection data mapping continues with 910 children identified - 452 boys, 444 girls, and 14 un-known to date across 58 shelters and 140 private homes. 4 children were unaccompanied, and family reunification efforts are underway.
- UNICEF has provided 30 recreational kits to cover 2,700 children, 50,000 face mask s (in collaboration with PAHO), and 200 hygiene kits to SVG to support the rollout of the Return to Happiness programming set up of child-friendly spaces in shelters where space is available. Forty (40) volunteers have been mobilized to date and trained to facilitate programming in these spaces.
- UNICEF continues to offer free e-counseling support to the entire population via a multilingual virtual service that has been popularized on social media platforms.
- UNICEF continues to provide remote technical support to strengthen child protection referral pathways and mainstream child protection standards across all sectors.

<sup>13</sup> Based on total female population being evacuated from the RED and ORANGE zone.

- UNICEF has supported the development of messages on child protection for radio, social media. Radio messages reach approximately 30,000 persons, and each social media message has reached approximately 5,000 persons across the different platforms. Posters are in the process of being produced for the shelters.

#### Gaps & Constraints:

- Significant loss of analytical, diagnostic, and storage capacity at the hospital located in the red zone.
- Information gaps on sex and age disaggregated data to inform needs analysis.
- Data collection systems are weak and unreliable, and needs are being assessed by a limited number of staff relying heavily on support from volunteers.
- Need for improved tools and protocols for displaced/evacuated people from SVG.
- Potential for family separation, posing risks for vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied and separated children, persons living with disabilities, pregnant women, single female heads of household, and women traveling alone.
- Urgent concerns related to the lack of GBV awareness and mitigation actions in the setup of emergency shelters, posing serious risks for women and girls.
- Concerns for the potential increase in SEA by service providers, humanitarian actors, and security forces, as women seem to be reaching out only to shelter management (often absent from shelters) for support. There is also the fact of the lack of female police officers in emergency shelters.

## Shelter

#### Needs:

- According to NEMO, on 22 April, an estimated 11,186 people are currently displaced, including 200 health workers reported by PAHO.
- 6,790 displaced persons are residing in private homes (1,618 families) and 4,396 persons in public shelters.
- There is one hotel facility sheltering people with special needs
- There is a need for strengthened coordination of ongoing and planned assessments and collection/dissemination of uniform and disaggregated data.

85

Shelters are occupied <sup>14</sup>

#### Response

- Ministry of Education, International Organisation for Migration (IOM), and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) co-chaired a shelter and housing working group meeting on 22 April 2021, held weekly on Thursdays.
- WFP provides technical Information Management support to the Ministry of Mobilisation and Ministry of Housing to collect the displaced population data.
- PAHO and the Ministry of Health are frequently visiting the shelters for health support
- UNFPA conducted a GBV Safety Audit in the emergency shelters.
- In a combined effort, UNICEF and PAHO supported the provision of steady water supply systems.
- The police and defense force of SVG are providing security services to the shelters.
- UNICEF is preparing a Return to Happiness, child-friendly space program for the shelters.
- IOM has contracted a full-time Shelter and Housing coordinator who will start working remotely and travel to SVG as soon as he is medically cleared. An Emergency Shelter Management specialist and a Shelter/Housing/Protection specialist arrived in SVG. A remote Emergency Response Coordinator supports them.
- IOM is transporting 1,200 hygiene kits and debris cleaning materials/equipment from Trinidad & Tobago.
- Through the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), the IFRC is planning to support the SVGRC to assist 700 families in informal/private accommodations by providing cleaning kits, hygiene kits, kitchen sets, jerrycans, blankets, and COVID-19 PPE.
- Caritas is conducting a shelter/housing assessment and deploying a response coordinator.

#### Gaps & Constraints:

- Plans need to be developed for dignified shelter solutions for likely protracted displacement of evacuated people and need to re-open schools and churches.
- Not all persons have left the Red and Orange zones, and the displaced population is tempted to visit their place of origin to inspect the status or pick up possession.

<sup>14</sup> NEMO Shelter Report 22 April 2021

- The total (planned) capacity of the shelters is 5,000. It is observed that an increasing number of persons are transferring from private accommodation into public shelters. COVID-19 mitigation measures reduce the capacity of the shelters.
- There is a need for clothing, hygiene kits, child and adult entertainment like games, the internet, and television.
- There is a need for additional (temporary) toilets and shower facilities in the emergency shelters
- There is a need for additional planning and management of evacuations, including providing information to affected populations and communities (potentially) hosting evacuees.
- The incorporation of COVID-19 protocols and child protection needs and concerns are incorporated in all shelter activities.
- Establishment of safe spaces and activities for children in the community, such as recreational activities.
- Establishing systems in shelters/for shelter managers to increase awareness of sexual and physical violence against men, women, boys, and girls, including risks, consequences, and support services.
- Capacity development and technical assistance for shelter managers to mitigate GBV in emergency shelters, including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), by mainstreaming key minimum actions related to GBV and SRH service provision, including, but not limited to, safe referrals to services.
- Evacuees entering shelters, or leaving for nearby countries, should be vaccinated with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

## Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

### Needs:

- Emergency water supply to shelters and communities.
- Emergency water trucking/distribution to areas without supply.
- Increase/upgrade water infrastructure in communities and healthcare facilities.
- Household and shelter water storage and safe treatment capacity.
- Safe drinking water, including chemical and biological water quality testing, treatment, distribution, and water storage items.
- Emergency latrines (with gender, age/children, and disability considerations) and excreta emptying and safe disposal services.
- Lighting around WASH facilities.
- Solid waste management both in situ and emptying and disposal services.
- Family hygiene kits (including menstrual hygiene, nappies, masks, etc.)
- Cleaning kits for environmental health at the shelter and household levels
- Essential lifesaving and risk-associated COVID-19 and hygiene awareness messages, including menstrual hygiene management.

### Response:

- UNICEF provided several tons of WASH supplies (water tanks – 5,000L for a total of 9,000 persons, 1,600 x water containers, chlorine/water treatment, and 680 hygiene and dignity kits (for families of 5 over one month including menstrual hygiene products).
- UNICEF WASH Expert and PAHO supported the DDSA team to conduct the Rapid Needs, and Damage Assessments in WASH, Shelters, Communities, and Health Care Facilities, led by CDEMA completed on 21 April.
- UNICEF and the WASH sector working group developed a WASH assessment ([assessment here](#)) and installed the forms on the WASH assessor's mobiles for real-time assessment data results. Data is available from the assessments on the WASH website. (<https://www.washlac.com/eng/la-soufriere>)
- UNICEF supports the WASH sector coordination with a Regional WASH Sector Coordinator, Regional WASH Information Management Specialist, and an additional WASH Information Management Specialist and supported the development of a draft monitoring tool for the WASH sector partners will provide an overview of supplies in shelters and communities.
- In partnership, PAHO and UNICEF facilitated the water quality testing sampling, and Caribbean Water And Wastewater Association (CWWA) and The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) are supporting water quality testing samples for the processing of chemical and biological parameters.
- UNICEF and PAHO donated masks - 50,000 for shelters and 50,000 for Health Care Facilities.
- French Red Cross sent 500 hygiene COVID-19 Kits.

**Gaps & Constraints:**

- Lack of water supply at shelters requiring emergency water supply production, distribution, and treatment.
- Lack of accredited laboratories for chemical water quality testing.
- Water flushing, filtering, and treatment (chlorine) at the water supply level.
- Water supply-demand and pressure management to allow for equitable access across the water network leakages in the water pipes and tanks at shelters.
- Low chlorine residual in the water at some sites.
- Water security concerns (theft), including inequities in utilization of water supplies with stressed systems.
- Sanitation, laundry, and shower facilities in shelters are inadequate as they are designed for schools with poor lighting.
- Water for toilet flushing.
- In shelters, adapted sanitation includes persons with special needs, children, and sex-segregated.
- Inadequate quantities of hygiene and cleaning supplies for environmental sanitation and ash removal.
- Menstrual hygiene management supplies and services.
- Coordinated and support fecal and solid waste management to service shelters.

**🚚 Logistics****Response:**

- WFP, in partnership with CDEMA, has provided a number of logistical assets to augment national capacities. These include 2 Mobile Storage Units (MSUs), a 7 MT truck, two generators, 3 MT forklifts, and additional spare parts and equipment.
- WFP will support the establishment of the MSUs at the former airport, which will serve as a logistics hub for the storage and management of incoming relief supplies.
- WFP has chartered a vessel to transport cargo from Barbados to St. Vincent at no cost to partners. Additional equipment (incl. truck, forklift, another MSU, prefabricated offices) is being dispatched from Barbados to support relief efforts. Other UN agencies such as PAHO have also announced the shipment of items to St. Vincent on the chartered vessel.
- Plans are underway to launch the CDEMA Logistics System (CLS), developed with the support of WFP, to support national authorities to register, track and monitor incoming cargo at the national and regional level. WFP is rolling out training for relevant national stakeholders on how to use the system. The planned launch of the CLS will facilitate practical knowledge and skills sharing for current and future use beyond this emergency.
- WFP is supporting improved logistical coordination among actors, including through humanitarian-civil-military-coordination. As part of the Multinational Caribbean Coordination Cell (MNCCC), WFP liaises between the MNCCC and the national Emergency Operations Center to convey updates, offers of assistance, and register military support.

**Constraints:**

- Evacuation and transportation capacity.
- Availability of maritime assets.

**Further information and updates**

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines WASH Sector meeting #4: [SVG WASH Sector presentation\\_April 19 2021](#)

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For more information, please visit [Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency - CDEMA National Emergency Management Organization \(NEMO\)](#) - [The University of the West Indies Seismic Research Centre PAHO Situation Reports](#)