

Alert Level 4

51 evacuation centres in Santo housing 5,500 people

Evacuees in Santo expected to reach 7,000+

1,800 people in evacuation centres and community homes in Pentecost

1,900 people in evacuation centres and community homes in Maewo

3 Gender and Protection staff on the ground in Santo

1. Gender Based Violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse risks

- Men are leaving their wives and children during the day and often at night, leaving women and girls vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.
- An influx of different responders on the ground exacerbates the risks.
- Evacuees are not currently unaware of the support and referral systems available.
- GBV support and referral systems in Santo, Maewo and Pentecost do not have the capacity to cope.

2. Child protection risks

- Unsupervised children are reported in evacuation centres, at high risk of exploitation and abuse.
- Children and youth unable to attend school are bored and in need of targeted activities.
- It is unclear how 283 final year students placed in 10 schools in Santo will be reunited with their families, who are spread across the three islands.

3. Lack of services for People with Disabilities (PWD)

- Many people with disabilities were evacuated without their assistive devices.
- The majority of evacuation centres are not disability accessible.
- PWD are being separated from their families and carers against their will.
- The burden on the host community to accommodate the needs of PWD without adequate knowledge or resourcing puts PWD at risk of neglect and abuse.
- Lack of data on PWD means it is difficult for Gender and Protection partners to ensure that evacuation centres and host communities have support to meet the needs of PWD.

4. General lack of safety, protection and dignity of displaced and host communities

- Evacuation centres in Santo are overcrowded. People are sleeping outside and do not have privacy or adequate hygiene facilities, particularly menstruation hygiene management kits, babies' nappies and bathing facilities.
- Limited oversight and absence of police or security services in Pentecost and Maewo increases the risk of conflict between the host communities and the evacuees.

5. Overloaded or lack of health services

- The number of pregnant and lactating women and newborn babies needing urgent medical care and support is unknown.
- Trauma is affecting the health of the affected population, with evacuees are going multiple days without bathing due to anxiety.
- Neglected and unaccompanied children are at a high risk of malnutrition and health conditions, as they may not be receiving enough food and water.
- Health services and resources on Maewo and Pentecost are insufficient to respond to evacuees' needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) prevention



- Urgently conduct protection monitoring and mobilise local service providers (particularly Vanuatu Women’s Centre) to assist GBV survivors.
- Conduct training with stakeholders (including VMF, Police, local leaders, humanitarian responders) on Code of Conduct, GBV, and prevention of SEA. Training should include sessions on managing disclosures and referral pathways.
- Mobilise additional service support on Pentecost and Maewo.

Child protection



- Conduct child mapping to identify and report unaccompanied minors.
- Establish Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) and train and mobilise youth to manage the CFS.

People with Disabilities (PWD)



- Conduct a needs assessment, consulting with PWD to identify their urgent needs.
- Conduct training for responders to ensure they understand how to consult with and respond to PWD.
- Build temporary ramps for evacuation centres and ensure that WASH facilities are disability accessible.
- Mobilise Disabled Peoples Organisation (DPOs) to Maewo and Pentecost to support any communities hosting PWD and ensure that PWD needs are being met.
- Urgently mobilise a physiotherapist to attend to the PWD in the evacuation centres and provide new assistive devices for PWD to increase the independence of the PWD and decrease the burden on the carer, families and/or host communities.

General safety, protection and dignity of displaced and host communities



- Distribute Safety and Dignity kits (lava lava, solar lights, underwear, nappies, and menstruation hygiene management) to displaced persons and host communities.
- Appoint a Gender and Protection representative to the PEOC to ensure that all clusters and EOC members on the ground in Santo are responding to and considering gender and protection issues.
- Conduct a rapid vulnerability analysis to identify gender and protection issues that need to be addressed within shelter planning, including immediate temporary arrangements, as well as longer term resettlement.

Health services



- Provide psychosocial support to displaced populations.
- Provision of SRH awareness and services