



Timor-Leste: Floods

UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO)

Flash Update No. 3 (As of 9 April 2021)

This report is produced by RCO Timor-Leste in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It is issued by UN Timor-Leste. It covers the period from 8 to 9 April 2021. The next report will be issued on or around 12 April 2021.

HIGHLIGHTS

- On 8 April, the Government of Timor-Leste declared a state of calamity in Dili for a period of 30 days and requested for international assistance to the flood response.
- According to the latest official figures (9 April) from the Secretariat of State for Civil Protection, a total of 2,315 households – or 13,554 people – have been temporarily displaced by the floods. The displaced are in the 40 evacuation facilities across Dili and in the communities.
- To date, a total of 42 fatalities (including 14 who are still missing and presumed dead) have been recorded.
- The Government has so far allocated USD 1.451 million from the 2021 State Budget for the flood response.
- According to the Secretariat of State for Civil Protection, flood recovery support will be required in 12 municipalities. The damages in the 12 affected municipalities – including Oecusse - still need to be assessed.
- The first meeting of the humanitarian partners was held on 9 April, chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator. Over 80 humanitarian actors were present.



12

Municipalities affected (out of 13 municipalities)

13,554

Temporary displaced people in Dili

40

Evacuation facilities in Dili

42

Fatalities

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Heavy rains across the country from 29 March to 4 April have resulted in flash floods and landslides affecting a total of 12 municipalities to varying degrees, with the capital Dili and the surrounding low-lying areas the worst affected. To date, a total of 42 fatalities have been recorded in Dili (22), Ainaro (10), Aileu (2), Manatuto (5), and Viqueque (3).

According to the latest official figures, there are 13,554 displaced individuals – or 2,315 households - in 40 evacuation facilities in Dili municipality. Urgent needs in these evacuation facilities – according to the joint UN Rapid Site Assessment (7 April) (see Annex) are: WASH facilities, food and drinking water, non-food items, and medicine.

Humanitarian partners are concerned that there may be unmet humanitarian needs in the municipalities outside of Dili, which are yet to be assessed.

While the strict lockdown in Dili municipality, which had been in place since 9 March, was temporary suspended on 9 April in view of the ongoing flood response, the risk of further spread of COVID-19 remains high. The national vaccination programme was launched on 7 April, and the essential workers at the frontline of the COVID-19 response - many of whom are also at the frontline of the flood response – are starting to receive their first dose of COVID-19 vaccination.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

On 8 April, the Government declared a state of calamity in Dili for a period of 30 days and requested for international assistance.

According to the Secretariat of State for Civil Protection, the Government has so far allocated USD 1.451 million from the 2021 State Budget for the flood response: USD 203,524 for food items; USD 243,541 for non-food items; and, USD 1 million for construction materials. The allocation is expected to cover the Government response for a period of three month (April to June 2021).

The Government informed that the international assistance to the flood response will jointly be coordinated by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. The Government will be calling an emergency development partners' meeting early next week, to update all development partners on the situation and priority needs, outline the Government's flood response, and seek support for additional international assistance.

FUNDING

A number of humanitarian donors (including Australia, China, EU, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, USA) have been providing support to the immediate, life-saving flood response, including through repurposing existing resources. Many humanitarian donors are on standby to provide additional humanitarian assistance, awaiting official requests from the Government. There have also been private donations from both within and outside Timor-Leste in solidarity with the affected people of Timor-Leste.

On 9 April:

- United States through USAID provided USD 100,000 to meet the immediate needs of the flood affected population, with IOM as the implementing agency working with the Secretariat of State for Civil Protection. This support includes: provision of cleaning and shelter repair kits, non-food items (NFI) kits, and masks and hand sanitizers; support to strengthen CCCM/Emergency Shelter interventions; and monitoring of needs and returns trends through the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM).
- The Embassy of the People's Republic of China provided USD 100,000 donation to the Secretariat of State for Civil Protection for the flood response.

UN humanitarian agencies have repurposed existing resources to respond to the flood emergency, as well as mobilized additional resources through corporate emergency response funds. To date, over USD 1.1 million have been either repurposed or newly mobilized for the flood response.

As additional needs assessment data becomes available, all humanitarian partners – including the UN - will be seeking to mobilize additional resources.

As humanitarian appeals are made by various humanitarian partners and additional resources mobilized, financial tracking of flood response funding flows becomes important for coordinated humanitarian response.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

In support of the Government efforts, the humanitarian partners continued to provide humanitarian assistance to meet the lifesaving needs of the affected people in Dili municipality. While the focus of the humanitarian assistance to date have centered around addressing the priority lifesaving needs of the temporary displaced in the evacuation facilities, the humanitarian partners are cognizant of the fact that the temporary displaced outside of the evacuation facilities are equally at-risk.

In addition to providing lifesaving support to the temporary displaced people in the evacuation facilities, the humanitarian partners are shifting their response strategy to support those temporary displaced to be able to return safely to their homes.

UN agencies (IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO) provided support to a rapid needs assessment exercise led by the Secretariat of State for Civil Protection and the Ministry of State Administration, with Suco Chiefs of 32 sucos (villages), which would also collect data on damages and losses in affected communities. The assessment is still ongoing.

CCCM & Emergency Shelter

- CCCM & Emergency Shelter Sector continued to deliver emergency shelter materials and NFI kits to affected people.
- IOM delivered 50 NFI kits to affected households at one evacuation facility. A further 300 NFI kits will be distributed to other evacuation facilities in the coming days, in coordination with the Secretariat of State for Civil Protection.
- To date, UNICEF delivered cumulatively 1,870 plastic mats, 54 tarpaulins, 1,751 blankets, 5,338 cleaning tools and products, 110 plastic jerry cans, 1,284 bottles of water, 600 face masks, 7 bottles of hand sanitizer, 200 children bags, as well as children clothes and toys to 6 evacuation sites, 5 social solidarity institutions and the Government (Secretariat of State for Civil Protection and Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion).

WASH

- WASH sectoral assessment was conducted in several evacuation facilities to assess the WASH situation and propose action points.
- The first WASH Sector meeting took place on 9 April with a view to improve sectoral coordination where many partners are supporting.
- In preparation for the temporary displaced persons to return to their homes, ensuring availability and access to safe water is critical. To this end, provision of water tanks would need to continue, as well as identification of areas in communities to set up water distribution points.
- UNICEF improved the hygiene conditions in 6 major evacuation facilities by installing a total of 10 mobile toilets.
- UNDP installed 11 handwashing stations in evacuation facilities.
- Working with BEE Timor-Leste, E.P. and a private company, UNICEF improved the affected population's access to safe water by filling the existing water tanks.
- UNICEF provided WASH kits to 50 families at Sao Carlos Nuns site in Bebora. Each kit contained 1 bucket (10 liters), 1 water scoop, 2 collapsible jerry-cans (5 liters each) and 1 bottle of liquid soap.

Food Security

- Food Security Sector has noted with concern the private donations of non-nutritious food items such as instant noodles. Food assistance should consider the nutrition requirement of flood-affected people, with consideration to the nutritional needs of vulnerable groups. Discussions are ongoing between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture to explore the possibility of providing local food items for families to prepare diversified complementary food for children 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women.
- There is currently no in-country stock of super-cereal or high-energy biscuits.
- Between 4 and 9 April, UNDP distributed over 10,000 hot meals, drinking water and beverages to the temporary displaced people both in the evacuation facilities and out in the communities.
- In coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Food Security Sector is conducting a food damage assessment to assess the impact of the floods on harvest, particularly in the municipalities outside of Dili. The impact on the next harvest of maize is of concern.
- Due to the COVID-19 restriction measures ("sanitary fence"), there is lack of information on the floods' impact and damaged on agricultural land.

Nutrition

- The Ministry of Health and the Dili Municipality Health Service – with support from UNICEF and WHO – conducted nutrition screening of under-5 children in the evacuation facilities. A total of 270 children were screened. The assessment results will inform nutrition surveillance and treatment. The nutrition surveillance will also be conducted in the affected communities.
- The Nutrition Sector is working with the Ministry of Health to promote continued breastfeeding amongst breastfeeding mothers in the evacuation facilities, including through onsite counseling. The Nutrition Sector partners have noted with concern that some of the private donations to the evacuation facilities include breastmilk substitutes.

Health

- The Ministry of Health, with WHO support, has set up a Health Emergency Operations Center.

- Rapid Health Facility Assessments were conducted. With loss of medicine and medical supplies due to the floods, there is a need to replace emergency medical supplies.
- WHO and UNICEF are supporting the Dili Municipality Health Services and the Ministry of Health to assess, plan and provide health interventions through mobile medical teams.
- Prevention of water-borne diseases, vector-borne diseases (in particular dengue) and skin diseases is a key priority. Cases of diarrhea are starting to be reported in the evacuation facilities.
- The Health Sector distributed masks and hand sanitizers to evacuation facilities to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other disease outbreaks.
- A psychosocial support package is being developed and will start to be implemented shortly through a mental health hotline and group of counselors.

Gender & Protection

- Gender & Protection Sector partners are conducting a mapping exercise of ongoing activities to ensure coordinated response in support of the specific needs of women, children, people with disability and other vulnerable groups.
- UNICEF – together with 7 other organizations - is preparing for child-friendly spaces with psychosocial support activities and recreational materials to be established in 10 evacuation facilities, which will benefit around 1,600 children. These spaces will be operated by 35 trained volunteers, who will conduct structured activities for children, receive complaints and reports, and refer children and other vulnerable people to MSSSI and other services. UNICEF will lead the training of volunteers, as well as planning, preparation and delivery of the psychosocial support activities in the evacuation facilities.
- In coordination with MSSSI, UNICEF delivered 166 blankets, 25 gallons of drinking water and 300 bottles of water to 193 children of 5 Institutional Care Facilities.
- In coordination with MSSSI, UNICEF delivered blankets, buckets, hand buckets, mats, baskets, boxes of detergent, soaps, drinking water, baby carriers and assorted toys for recreational activities to 6 evacuation facilities (Hera, Balide Church, Ministry of Finance, Dom Bosco, Joao Paulo II and Madre SPSS).
- With the support of Telemor, UNICEF delivered goods for young children and psychosocial support goods to the evacuation facility in Hera.
- UNICEF provided the MSSSI with 52 blankets and mats, 20 boxes of drinking water and 19 buckets with cleaning kits to deliver to 77 children and people with disabilities in 3 institutional care facilities.
- UNICEF, together with the Commission on the Rights of the Child and the RCO, delivered blankets, mats, drinking water, cleaning kits and supplies for women and children to cater for the needs of approximately 630 people in the evacuation facility in Hera, including more than 300 children, newborn babies, pregnant mothers and persons with disabilities.
- UNFPA distributed 261 dignity kits to support 1,305 women and girls of reproductive age in the evacuation facilities. Dignity kits contain menstrual pads and other hygiene and sanitary items that are tailored to support the safety of women and girls during displacement.

Education

- The Education Sector met on 8 April, chaired by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and co-chaired by UNICEF.
- According to the initial assessment of schools, 35 schools across the country were affected by the heavy rains, of which 16 were severely damaged. Four schools are being used as evacuation facilities in Dili. Schools exams that had been scheduled to start next week have now been postponed.
- Education Sector partners are supporting the Ministry of Education at all levels to not only rehabilitate schools but not rebuild schools that are safer in the spirit of “build back better.”
- Education Sector partners are also supporting continued learning through provision of learning materials, including those online (*Eskola ba Uma*).

Logistics

- Despite some reports of damaged road and other infrastructure, access to evacuation facilities in Dili is good, and there are no major disruptions to points of entry. There is gap in information related to access outside of Dili municipality. Once more information becomes available, the Logistics Sector will work to develop an access constraints map.

- The Logistics Sector is currently assessing the storage needs, with emergency storage in the municipalities identified as a key challenge.
- The Logistics Sector is preparing for movement of people from the evacuation facilities to return home.
- To date, the Logistics Sector has delivered 10-15 MT of NFIs; provided emergency storage to the Government; and, provided emergency transport to support the Government and humanitarian partners' emergency relief efforts.

Early Recovery / Livelihoods

- UNDP, together with the Ministry of Finance and ADB, is developing a proposal for an emergency cash-for-work and food-for-work project. This recovery project is expected to engage 5,000 laborers for debris removal and clean-up in 50 aldeas that are most in-need.
- UNDP has also secured funding and expertise to conduct a Household and Building Damage Assessment. Discussions are also ongoing with the Government, WB and EU for a possible lighter version of a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) focusing on livelihoods and housing.
- To support adolescents and youth who have organized themselves to clean the streets and their houses, UNICEF handed over to 150 cleaning kits, 200 masks and 5 liters of hand sanitizer to the Secretariat of Youth and Sports (SSYS) and the Alumni Association of the Youth Parliament (APFTL).

GENERAL COORDINATION

The operational coordination of the flood response is led by the Secretariat of State for Civil Protection, who holds daily operational coordination meetings. The UN – with two staff from IOM and RCO as a part of the secretariat coordinating the national response – is working closely with the Secretariat of State for Civil Protection, as well as with other line ministries across sectors.

In lieu of the humanitarian cluster approach, humanitarian coordination is undertaken through the following sectors, with UN sector focal points as follows:

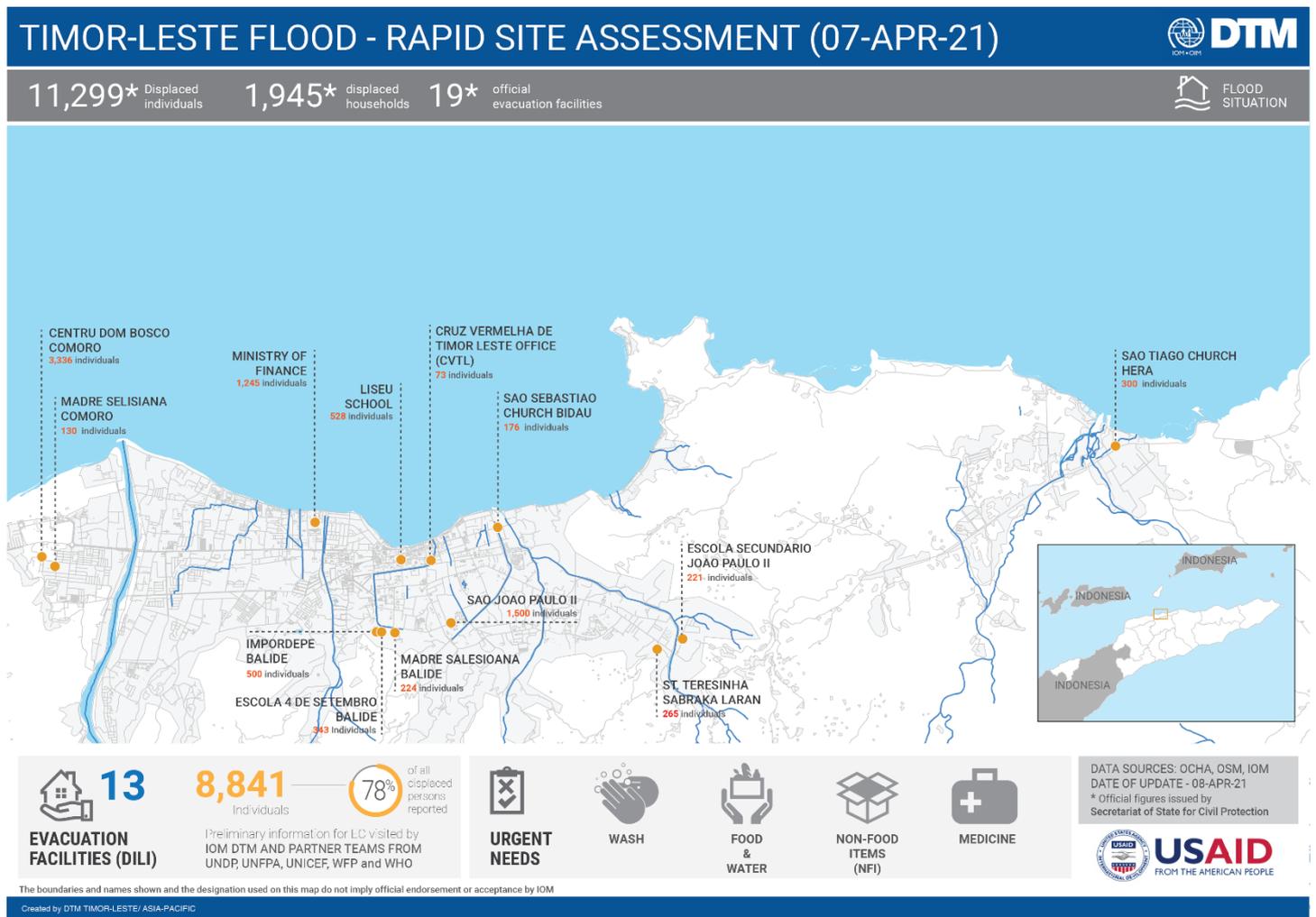
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Sector coordination meetings are starting to be held. Humanitarian partners are encouraged to contact the Sector Lead/Focal Point, should they wish to be engaged in the sector coordination mechanism.

The UN Resident Coordinator is providing strategic coordination of the UN humanitarian response to the floods, as well as high-level engagement with the Government senior leadership, diplomatic community including humanitarian donors, civil society and the media. RCO is providing inter-sector coordination.

The first meeting of the humanitarian partners were held on 9 April, with participation of over 80 humanitarian actors including: Secretariat of State for Civil Protection, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, CVTL (Red Cross Timor-Leste), members of the diplomatic community, international and national NGOs, and UN humanitarian agencies.

ANNEX: TIMOR-LESTE FLOOD – RAPID SITE ASSESSMENT (7 APRIL 2021) & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



EU Copernicus Emergency Mapping: <https://emergency.copernicus.eu/mapping/list-of-components/EMSR507>

UNOSAT Preliminary Analysis (Dili & Liquica): <https://unitar.org/maps/map/3263>

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