

## **Pacific – Cyclone Yasa**

### **ETC Situation Report #1**

**Reporting period 17–21 December 2020**

ETC Pacific SitReps on Cyclone Yasa will be distributed in line with the evolving situation on the ground. The ETC in the Pacific has been activated since 2016 under the structure of the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) to support the region's telecommunications preparedness activities across the Pacific Island Countries (PICs).

### **Highlights**

- The ETC in the Pacific is working with regional partners in Fiji to support the response to Cyclone Yasa, including the provision of basic data connectivity services to Fiji's National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) to support their response efforts.
- On 17 December, the Crisis Connectivity Charter (CCC) was activated to support ETC response activities for Cyclone Yasa.
- The ETC Coordinator for the Pacific deployed on 19 December on an assessment mission to Vanua Levu with Fiji's NDMO to provide connectivity to them and to assist with the assessment of the immediate damage and impact on local infrastructure.



ETC Coordinator for the Pacific – Shantal Boodhun – demonstrates use of a satellite terminal at the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) set up in Nabouwalu in Bua province, Fiji, in response to Cyclone Yasa.

*Photo: RFMF/ETC*

### **Situation Overview**

On 17 December, Category 5 super Cyclone Yasa barrelled into Fiji causing catastrophic damage and destruction. Most damage was caused on Fiji's second-largest island of Vanua Levu. Assessment of damages in affected areas has begun through aerial surveillance as well as teams on the ground. Many parts of the island remain without communications and are cut off by flood waters. Preliminarily, restoration of critical infrastructure and essential services are the main operational focus.

Four people are confirmed dead due to the cyclone while one person remains missing. Approximately 8,012 people are in evacuation centres, although the majority have started to return to their homes. Humanitarian assistance has begun to arrive in cyclone-affected communities.

As of 21 December, Cyclone Yasa has downgraded to a Category 1 storm and has left Fiji territory.

## Response

- The ETC in the Pacific is working with regional partners and authorities in Fiji to support the response to Cyclone Yasa as part of the country's emergency telecommunications response plan.
- To support immediate emergency response and coordination efforts, the ETC is providing basic data connectivity services to Fiji's National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) with the support of Crisis Connectivity Charter (CCC) partners.
- On 17 December, the CCC was activated to support ETC response efforts for Cyclone Yasa. The CCC is providing free-of-charge data and voice capacity, with initial support from Inmarsat. It is the second time the CCC has been activated in the Pacific in 2020, following the devastation caused by Cyclone Harold in Fiji and Vanuatu in April.
- The ETC Coordinator for the Pacific deployed on 19 December on an assessment mission to Vanua Levu with Fiji's NDMO to provide connectivity to them and to assist with the assessment of the immediate damage and impact on local infrastructure.
- The Disaster Connectivity Maps initiative – led by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and piloted in Fiji – was used by the ETC Coordinator to gather initial information on the impact of Cyclone Yasa on connectivity services in the region. The maps have been instrumental to the ETC's decision-making, including identifying the need to join the assessment mission to Vanua Levu to further assess onsite while deploying essential connectivity equipment.

## Funding

- The Government of Fiji has issued a list of priority humanitarian assistance items – including communications items – and projected quantities. This list will evolve in line with detailed data on humanitarian needs as they become available. A donor coordination meeting was held on 21 December to discuss funding needs.

## Challenges

- The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact on various aspects of emergency response in the Pacific, including the restricted movement of equipment and personnel.



## Meetings

- A Global ETC teleconference on the response to Cyclone Yasa in Fiji is expected to be scheduled on **Wednesday 23 December 2020**, time TBC.

## Information

- A dedicated information-sharing space on the ETC's response to Cyclone Yasa in the Pacific can be found on the ETC website: <https://www.etcluster.org/emergency/fiji-cyclone-yasa>

## Contacts

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