

## **Pacific – Cyclone Yasa**

### **ETC Situation Report #2**

**Reporting period 22–28 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 response community – including the ETC – is operating from two Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) set up in Nabouwalu and Labasa in Vanua Levu, the island worst-hit by Cyclone Yasa.
- The ETC Coordinator for the Pacific has been on the ground in Vanua Levu since 19 December. The coordinator deployed from 26-27 December on assessment missions to eight sites across Vanua Levu to assess the impact of Cyclone Yasa on the coverage of mobile and data connectivity services.
- Alongside Fiji's National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), the ETC is working with Fiji's Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to establish connectivity needs and is ready to support with their recovery, if required.



ETC Coordinator for the Pacific – Shantal Boodhun – prepares satellite terminals for use by Fiji's NDMO to support connectivity while on assessment missions.

*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.

Multiple assessment teams continue to collect data in the cyclone-affected areas of Vanua Levu to establish damage and humanitarian needs. Critical infrastructure and essential services continue to be restored and humanitarian assistance has begun to arrive in cyclone-affected communities, although some hard-to-reach areas are still facing problems with access to water, power outages and connectivity.

More than 3,000 people remain in evacuation centres, mainly in the Northern Division of Fiji.

## Response

- The ETC in the Pacific continues to work with regional partners and authorities in Fiji to support the response to Cyclone Yasa as part of the country's emergency telecommunications response plan.
- The response community – including the ETC – is operating from two Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) set up in Nabouwalu and Labasa in Vanua Levu, the island worst-hit by Cyclone Yasa. Fiji's National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and UN OCHA are leading regular coordination and planning meetings – attended by the ETC – with government authorities, the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF), humanitarian responders and service providers.
- The ETC Coordinator for the Pacific has been on the ground in Vanua Levu since 19 December. The coordinator deployed from 26-27 December on assessment missions to eight sites across Vanua Levu to assess the impact of Cyclone Yasa on the coverage of mobile and data connectivity services. The sites included warehouse distribution sites, government offices and schools.
- Mobile and data connectivity networks provided by the two national Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) – Digicel Fiji and Vodafone Fiji – were found to have good coverage in approximately half of the eight assessed sites. The ETC is seeking clarification on the status of the connectivity networks in all assessed areas prior to Cyclone Yasa.
- Alongside the NDMO, the ETC will continue to work with Fiji's MNOs to establish connectivity needs and is ready to support with their recovery, if required.
- The ETC is planning to deploy to Galoa Island on 29 December on an assessment mission following reports of network connectivity issues in the port where humanitarian assistance items are being received. An assessment mission to Yadua – delayed by travel restrictions and bad weather – is also taking place on 29 December.
- Multiple areas across Vanua Levu remain without power, which is reportedly impacting on data connectivity and telecommunications services. National energy provider Energy Fiji Limited (EFL) is working to fully recover its power services across the island.

## Funding

- The Government of Fiji is coordinating emergency funding received from donors in response to Cyclone Yasa. Funding to install and repair emergency communications equipment and services will be presented once the ETC has completed its assessments.

## 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.



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## 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>
- On 17 December, the Crisis Connectivity Charter (CCC) was activated to support ETC response efforts for Cyclone Yasa. It is the second time the CCC has been activated in the Pacific in 2020, following the response to Cyclone Harold in April.

## Contacts

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