



15 April 2014 – Flash floods in the Solomon Islands devastated Honiara, the nation’s capital, and the island of Guadalcanal. Two earthquakes struck the same area less than ten days later exacerbating the humanitarian situation.

On April 4 heavy rains from a tropical depression caused what the Solomon Island’s government has [labeled](#) “the worst floods ever seen in the country”. The floods have affected over 50,000 people. The brunt of the damage affected Honiara and more than 9,000 people have been displaced as their homes were swept away. Thus far the death toll stands at 21, with more people still missing. The situation on the ground was aggravated when two large earthquakes struck in the same area on April 13.

Humanitarian aid agencies are deployed in Honiara including Red Cross, UN agencies and other NGO’s. Water and food access are at a critical level as is access to sanitation. Though aid has been effectively deployed in the capital, it has been delayed from reaching affected communities in the surrounding area. Serious damages to infrastructure including bridges being swept away, inundated roads and a scarcity of vehicles hinder humanitarian efforts. The government and aid agencies are concerned the security situation may deteriorate in outlying areas as access to sanitation, food and water are increasingly limited.

The displaced persons are living in about 30 shelters spread throughout Honiara which include formal shelters as well as host families and informal shelters. The government is seeking to

reduce the number of people living in these shelters so that relief medical attention, food and water can be spread to areas beyond the capital. Over 40 per cent of displaced people in the capital are estimated to want to return to their homes immediately and the government seeks to motivate more people by offering return packages.

A three-month humanitarian action is planned in the country. Aerial surveillance by the Australian government has shown that the earthquakes have caused further local flooding, but that the coastal areas did not suffer serious damage. Eight countries have donated resources to the humanitarian action with Australia and New Zealand acting as epicenters for relief distribution to the Solomon Islands. Sune Gudnitz, the head of OCHA's office in the Pacific, is in Honiara calling on the international community for support. He explained that funds are urgently needed "to assist the affected population, who are from some of the poorest urban and remote communities of the country."

The Solomon Islands are victim of climate change, as severe weather events are on the rise globally. [Sri Lanka](#) is suffering from severe drought and weak monsoons, while the Solomon Islands are swept with unprecedented levels of rain and ice sheets in [Greece](#) [land](#) are melting causing ocean levels to rise further threatening island nations. Changes in [human behavior](#) to thwart further climate change and development of severe weather events [need to happen](#), and quickly. A [new report](#) by the IPCC emphasizes the need for urgent change this century "We cannot play a waiting game where we bet on future technological miracles to emerge and save the day," said Ms. Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)).

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