



Tropical Cyclone Gita, Tonga

Activation: Tropical Cyclone Gita

Situation Report 1 - period covered: 12-13 Feb, 2018

Prepared by: Humanity Road / Animals in Disaster

Situation Overview

Highlights:

The following is Situation Report #1 for Tonga based on early indications in social media. Humanity Road activated its disaster desk in response to Cyclone Gita which heavily impacted Tongatapu in Tonga. Gita made landfall as the equivalent of a category 4 storm. Fiji's MetService said the category four storm was very close to being upgraded to the highest category, five. [source](#)

Tonga, officially the Kingdom of Tonga, is a Polynesian sovereign state and archipelago comprising 169 islands, of which 36 are inhabited. The total surface area is about 750 square kilometres (290 sq mi) scattered over 700,000 square kilometres (270,000 sq mi) of the southern Pacific Ocean. It has a population of 107,122 people, of whom 70% reside on the main island of Tongatapu. [source](#)

Twitter handles

[@Humanityroad](#)

[@Disasteranimals](#)

[@jAidDog](#)

[@DAFNReady](#)

Facebook pages

[Humanity Road](#)

[Animals in Disaster](#)

About Humanity Road: Founded in 2010 as a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, [Humanity Road](#) is a leader in the field of online disaster response. Through skilled and self-directed work teams, Humanity Road and its network of global volunteers aim to provide the public and disaster responders worldwide with timely and accurate aid information. Providing such information helps individuals survive, sustain, and reunite with loved ones. For more information, please visit <https://humanityroad.org>.

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Situation Overview

Background

On 12 February, 2018, the Tonga National Emergency Management Office was activated at 7:00am in preparation for Tropical Cyclone Gita which was a Category 3 storm. It was located near 20.9 South 168.6 West or 670km East-Northeast of Nuku'alofa or 600km East-Northeast of Lifuka. People were advised to have their emergency kits packed and to evacuate if living in flood-prone areas.

[source](#) At 10:00am on 12 February, the Prime Minister declared a state of emergency for the whole of Tonga. [source](#)

On Tongatapu, the category four cyclone brought winds of over 233km/h which ripped roofs off houses, brought down trees, destroyed a Catholic church, and took the Tongan Met Office and the national radio station offline. [source](#)

Significant Updates (most recent first)

13 Feb:

- Tonga's Parliament House has been destroyed #TCGita Source: FB post by Salote Sisifa. PC: Palu Ertugrul & Kyoshi Karsten Motuapuaka [source](#)
- The office of the Tonga MetService has been structurally damaged by Gita, so forecasting duties have been passed over to Fijian authorities. [source](#)
- Graham Kenna of Tonga's National Emergency Office told Radio New Zealand a church has been completely destroyed - "There's a lot of damage in the city ... we know that one of the Catholic churches is completely gone and others are damaged," he said. [source](#)
- "...a Nuku'alofa local of five years, says there is "a fair bit of destruction" on her street. "There's water absolutely everywhere. One end of the street is blocked by two fallen trees. There's definitely flooding. I'd put it at 50 centimetres on the street, and at least 30 centimetres in my house. I'm upstairs now with my landlord but my whole house downstairs is now flooded." [source](#)
- Travel Advisory for New Zealanders heading to Tonga [source](#)
- The New Zealand government has pledged an initial \$50,000 to help rescue and relief operations in cyclone-battered Tonga. [source](#) A New Zealand Defence Force plane is also ready to fly to Tonga once it is known what is needed in the country. [source](#)
- "A lot of fruits trees are down. One of the Tongan staple food this summer season are Breadfruits. All down." [source](#)

12 Feb:

- Following the State of Emergency Declaration this morning by the Acting Prime Minister, Hon. Semisi Sika, the Commissioner of Tonga Police, Stephen Caldwell, as a further precaution has ordered a curfew in the Central Business District area of Nuku'alofa starting from 9:00pm tonight until 7:00am tomorrow morning Tuesday 13 February 2018 (Public Order Act, Section

8). The following roads delimits the CBD area, Tupoulahi Road to the east, Mateialona Road to the south, Vaha'akolo Road to the west and Vuna Road to the North. [source](#)

National Links

- Tonga National Government: [website](#), [government portal](#), [facebook](#), [@tongaportal](#), [press releases](#)
- Ports Authority of Tonga: [website](#), [facebook](#)
- Tonga Broadcasting Commission: [website](#), [@TBCa3z](#)
- Ministry of Health: [website](#)
- Tonga Fire and Emergency Services: [website](#), [facebook](#), Tel: +676 28738
- Tonga Red Cross Society: [website](#), [facebook](#), [@TongaRedCross](#) Call +676 21-360
- Kingdom of Tonga Police [@TongaPolice](#)

Regional and Local Links

Tonga Online Now online facebook group for Tongans [Facebook](#)

Emergency Numbers

Emergency Phone Numbers

- Contact NEMO on 26 340 or 08006366 for any emergency. [source](#)
- Call 3316204 for maritime emergencies. [source](#)
- Tamate Afi / Fire: 928
- Falemahaki / Hospital: 933
- Polisi / Police: 922
- Uhila / Electricity: 944

Information Helplines

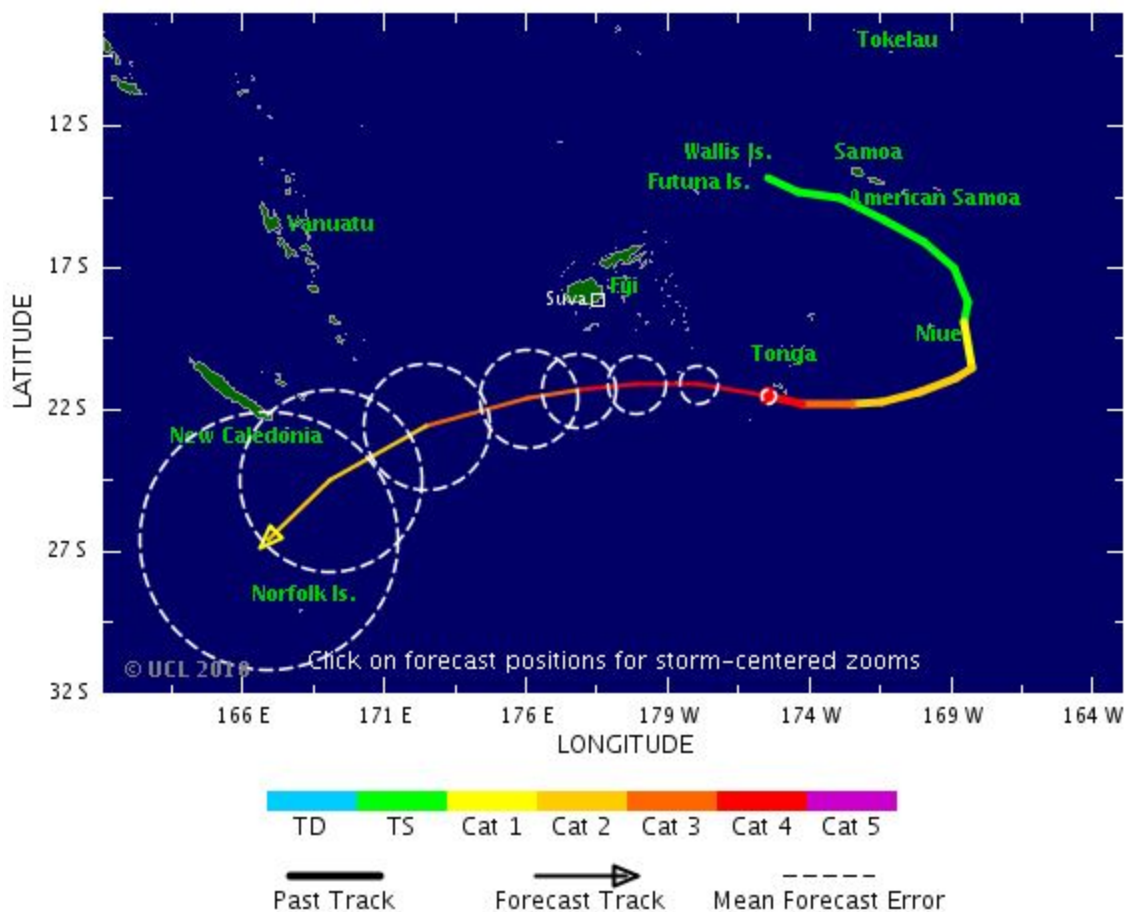
- Ofisi e Fakatu'utamaki Fakanatula | NEMO (Disaster Management): +676 26 340 / +676 28 242 / +676 28 215. [source](#)

Reunification Hotlines and Websites

To be determined.

Maps and Situational Awareness

- <http://www.met.gov.to/> Tonga Weather service is unavailable due to power and damage to facilities Fiji Met service is taking over Tonga weather bulletins as the Tonga met facilities have been damaged hits [source](#)
- Tropical Storm Risk website also has up to date monitoring of the weather system. [Source](#)



- OCHA Humanitarian Team Flash Update 1: Tropical Cyclone Gita 12 February 2018 [source](#)

Shelters and Evacuation Centers

- 13 Feb: About 1000 families heeded the warnings and took shelter in evacuation centres early yesterday afternoon. [source](#)

Hospitals

Status of Hospitals

- 12 Feb: Video from Nukualofa Hospital [source](#)
- 12 Feb: Vaiola Hospital may be under evacuation [source](#)

Hospital Lists

- Five hospitals total in Tonga: Vaiola Hospital, Vaini District Medical Center, Dr. 'Ana 'Akau'ola's Clinic, The German Clinic, Family Planning Clinic [source](#)

Special Needs Populations

To be determined

Schools

Status of Schools

To be determined

Airports

Status

- 13 Feb: Fiji Airways advises that due to the adverse weather conditions associated with Tropical Cyclone Gita, a number of flights are cancelled. Fiji Airways flights to/from Nuku'alofa, Tonga scheduled for Tuesday 13 February are cancelled. Affected guests will be rebooked on subsequent flights and contacted by our Reservations Team once weather conditions permit and flight operations resume at Fua'amotu International Airport, (TBU). Fiji Link flights to/from Kadavu, Cicia, and Vanuabalavu over the next two days (Tuesday 13 February and Wednesday 14 February) are cancelled. Affected guests will be rebooked on subsequent flights and contacted by our Reservations Team once weather improves and airport/runway conditions permit. Guests are requested to ensure their contact details in their bookings are correct/ up-to-date. [source](#)

Lists of Airports / Links

- Tonga Airports: [website](#)
- Import Regulations and Tonga Customs [Website](#)

Roads / Bridges

Status

- 13 Feb:
 - Roads all over Tongatapu are blocked by debris and downed power lines hampering relief efforts. [source](#)

- Feb 12 Mr Kenna said it was very difficult to get around Nuku'alofa and although he only lives about 1.5km from his office, it took him 25 minutes to drive home due to downed power lines and debris on the roads. [source](#)

Useful Links

- Tonga road network. [source](#)

Maritime / Shipping / Ports

Status

All enquiries can be directed to +(676) 23 168 during official hours and to +(676) 7716667 during afterhours and only on emergency cases. [source](#)

Useful Links

- Ports Authority of Tonga: [website](#), [facebook](#)

Communications

Communications Sector

- International dial code: +676 Tonga Communications Corporation (TCC) is the only fixed line operator in Tonga with a 100% market share on fixed telephone lines. [source](#)
- There are two mobile network operators – TCC and Digicel Tonga – both offering GSM and 3G services.
- Internet: Country code: .to TCC states that it has a 70% market share on dial up and broadband internet. TCC's internet service is called "Kalianet" and is available in Tongatapu, Ha'apai, Vava'u, and 'Eua through WiMax broadband. Kalianet also offers ADSL2+ and leased line services. [source](#)


Digicel and TCC offer mobile broadband services over their mobile networks.

- The Tonga National Emergency Management Office (NEMO), located in the capital Nuku'alofa, uses both VHF and HF land based radio communication systems. In addition, the Tonga Meteorological Service uses land based VHF and HF radio. The NEMO/Met Office VHF network operates on three simplex channels. Given the very flat topography of Tonga, line of sight (LOS) connectivity is sufficient between the sites on the NEMO/Met VHF network in Nuku'alofa and Ha'apai. The VHF network used by the NEMO and Met Office has six active base station sites in Nuku'alofa. The VHF network on the island of Ha'apai (established in 2016) has four active VHF base station sites.
- The Tonga Met Service also operates the country's maritime coastal VHF and HF radio network. All international standard VHF marine channels (CH0-CH88) are programmed into the coastal VHF radio station. However, the VHF coastal radio channels actively used in Tonga are CH12, CH 16, and CH26. Multiple HF channels are programmed on the coastal HF network between the 2 - 9 MHz range.

- Tonga Police and Defence also have their own radio communication networks. Fire are looking to establish a UHF radio network.

Status

13 Feb:

- Communications are difficult, as power remains off to many parts of the island. The national radio station has also been knocked out by Gita. [source](#)
- Due to the known power outages and expected communications outages, the Fiji Maritime Surveillance Rescue Coord Ctr is monitoring and analyzing #Fiji and #Tonga for response and assisting with @VFRfiji for Tele-Med support. [source](#)
- Mariners and ocean-going vessels can listen out on VHF Marine Ch26 and HF radio 4372KHz, 8746KHz at 4-hourly intervals for weather updates. Next update 1603h
- UCall Tonga - If you are abroad, you can top up your loved ones on  www.ding.com. [source](#)
- Main weather updates come from the Nadi weather website: <http://www.met.gov.fj/>. Last update available here: http://www.met.gov.fj/aifs_prods/20021.txt

Useful Links

- Tonga Emergency Telecommunications Cluster [Website](#)
- Internet KaliaNet [Website](#)
- Tonga Communications Corporation / UCall Tonga: [website](#), [facebook](#)
- Tonga Cable Ltd: [website](#)
- www.mic.gov.to under the Ministry of Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC), is the regulatory body for the telecommunications sector in Tonga. The Department is responsible for the overall management of the radio frequency spectrum in Tonga.

Amateur Radio

TONGA Amateur Radio Club of Tonga [ARCOT], Address: c/o Manfred Schuster, P.O. Box 1078, Nuku'alofa Tel: 676 22677 <A35MS> Secretary: Manfred Schuster, A35MS, IARU liaison: Secretary, More info at [website](#)

Power and Fuel

Status

13 Feb:

- Authorities last night switched off the electricity for about 75,000 residents who live on Tongatapu. [source](#)
- Power came back on in Aoloau before midnight last night, street lights too, out for 3 days, no water yet out since Friday morning. [source](#)
- All Tonga Power offices in Tongatapu and the outer islands will be closed today until further notice. The power supply will remain off in order to allow the linesmen to survey the damages and assess what is required before any restoration works can take place. [source](#)

Useful Links

- Tonga Power Limited: [website](#) (site down 13 Feb).

Water Systems

Status

- 13 Feb: Power and water supplies are out in Nuku'alofa and not even tank water was likely to be available because many tanks had been blown over, Mr Kenna said. [source](#)
- 13 Feb: Electricity and water are back in [the town of] Apia [source](#)

Pictures and Videos

13 Feb:

- Damage photos on Tonganow Facebook page. [source](#)
- Video of damage. [source](#)
- Video of storm hitting Nukualofa Hospital. [source](#)
- Photo of vehicle thrown into air and downed trees. [source](#)
- Photos of damaged church and buildings. [source](#)
- Photos of flooded streets in Pahu. [source](#)
- Video of flooded streets and other damage. [source](#)

Twitter Accounts

Hashtags

#TCGita #CycloneGita #Tonga #Gita #Tongatapu

Accounts of Interest

- Humanity Road Tonga [twitter list](#)

FaceBook Accounts

- [Tonganow - Online Community for Tongans](#)
- [Radio Tonga Vake Tali Folau Media USA](#)
- [Matangi Tonga Online](#)
- [Tonga News Hub](#)
- [Coconut Wireless Tonga](#)
- [The Tonga Current](#)
- [My Tongan - Online Community](#)

Traditional Media (TV, Radio, Newspapers)

Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) is the national broadcaster for Tonga. TBC, which is government owned, runs three radio stations and two free-to-air television channels. Radio Tonga 1 (also known as A3Z) is the main AM radio station offered by TBC, and covers all of the country. In an emergency, Radio Tonga broadcasts regular updates on weather events. Radio Tonga 2 (also known as Kool 90 FM) is a commercial station. Under a joint partnership project, a new AM radio transmitter is being installed for TBC, the project kicked off in 2016. TBC also operates FM 103, a 24-hour Radio Australia relay. The TV channels are Television Tonga and Television Tonga 2. TV Tonga works in affiliation with overseas broadcasters whilst Television Tonga 2 offers more domestic content. [source](#)

- Radio Tonga: [website](#)
- Radio Tonga Vake Tali Folau Media USA [Facebook](#)
- Radio Tonga VTF USA: [website](#), [facebook](#)
- Tonga radio stations, listen online. [source](#)
- Radio stations in Nuku'alofa. [source](#)
- TV Tonga: [website](#)

Animals in Disaster

- 13 Feb: South Pacific Animal Welfare of New Zealand will be in touch with Tongan authorities over the coming days to seek advice as to what assistance they can provide. [source](#)

Volunteers Reporting

Alice, Aline, Cat, Chris, Cindy, Crystal, Eugenie, Joshua, Lloyd, Nafisa, Serena, Larry, Judi
