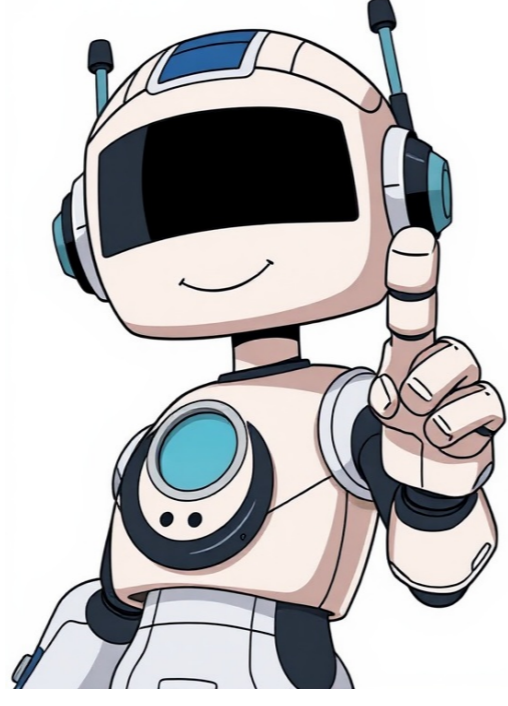


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Skip to main content Working closely with the government and partners, WHO is supporting to respond to the urgent health needs of the affected population A 6.4 magnitude earthquake hit Nepal's Western Province of Karnali, shortly before midnight on 3 November 2023, killing over 150, leaving many more injured, and thousands displaced. Jajarkot, which was the epicenter, and Rukum West are the two districts most affected by the quake. Friday's earthquake and subsequent aftershocks have also caused damages to several health facilities in the province, affecting delivery of essential health services. WHO personnel on the ground are working closely with the Ministry of Health and Population to support urgent health needs. Staff stationed in the province have been mobilized to assist the provincial health authorities to assess damage to health infrastructure, support restoration of basic health services, conduct surveillance for disease outbreaks, and plan for immunization campaigns. On Tuesday, WHO dispatched two basic modules of Interagency Emergency Health Kits to Jajarkot. These have now been handed over to the local authorities in the district. Additional health kits, surgical and trauma kits, medical camp kits, are ready to be dispatched based on the needs. As part of efforts to strengthen the country's emergency preparedness and response, WHO had helped to set up provincial health emergency operation centers in all seven provinces of Nepal. The PHEOC's function as information and coordination hub has been crucial to ensuring effective response to the current crisis. Skip to main content On 28 March 2025, two powerful earthquakes struck central Myanmar's Sagaing Region near Mandalay. The first, with a magnitude of 7.7, occurred at 12:50 p.m. local time, followed by a second of magnitude 6.4 at 1:02 p.m. Multiple aftershocks have since been reported, disrupting ongoing rescue operations. As of 30 March 2025, the State Administration in Myanmar have reported 1644 deaths and 3408 injuries. Critical infrastructure including health facilities, roads, bridges and communication networks infrastructure has been severely damaged, with three hospitals in Nay Pyi Taw and Bago fully damaged. Preliminary assessments indicate high numbers of casualties and trauma-related injuries, with an urgent need for emergency care. WHO South-East Asia has activated an Incident Management Support Team (IMST) and is working in close coordination with the WHO Country Office in Myanmar, WHO headquarters, and health partners. Aligned with WHO's Emergency Response Framework, an organization-wide response has been launched, with incident management teams mobilized across all three levels of WHO. US\$ 5 million has been released from WHO's Contingency Fund for Emergencies to rapidly scale-up operations and support lifesaving health interventions. Within 24 hours of the disaster, WHO dispatched nearly three tons of trauma kits, medical supplies, and multipurpose tents from its emergency stockpile in Yangon to hospitals in Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw. Additional critical medical supplies are prepositioned and ready for dispatch from WHO's Dubai Logistics Hub. A flash-appeal has been released for US\$ 8 million to deliver critical trauma care, prevent disease outbreaks, and restore essential health services over the next 30 days. WHO is issuing Situation Reports and disseminating key public health advice in the aftermath of the earthquake through various communication channels. On 17 December 2024, a powerful 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck near Port Vila, the capital of Vanuatu, impacting more than a quarter of the country's population. The disaster caused significant damage to homes, health facilities, and other infrastructure, leaving communities in this South Pacific Island nation without adequate food, water, and sanitation. Fourteen lives were lost in the earthquake, and hundreds were injured. Nearly 1500 people remain displaced, seeking shelter in evacuation centers or with host families. Amidst the devastation, Vanuatu has shown remarkable resilience. Health facilities in and around Port Vila were operational soon after the earthquake, ensuring continued access to care. Decentralized outpatient services have eased the pressure on the main hospital, Vila Central Hospital, allowing it to focus on more complex and urgent cases. Vanuatu's health leaders, doctors, nurses and allied health professionals provided lifesaving services in the minutes, hours and days after the earthquake, continuing work to care for those in need. The response is also supported by a network of partners like WHO, who have supported assessments of damaged health facilities, coordinated deployment of international emergency medical teams (EMTs), and shared life-saving information in local languages. Swift response paves the way for Vanuatu's recovery Vanuatu is no stranger to disasters, with a history of earthquakes and tropical cyclones including the major storms causing vast destruction such as Tropical Cyclone Pam in 2015 and Tropical Cyclone Harold in 2020, as well as back-to-back Tropical Cyclones Judy and Kevin in 2023. Over the years, the country has developed strong disaster response capacities and systems, enabling swift response and rapid transition to recovery from such events. The recent earthquake posed immense challenges, with damaged facilities and disrupted communication initially hindering needs assessments and response coordination. However, rapid deployment of satellite technology quickly resolved many of these issues. Vanuatu's Ministry of Health (MOH), with support from WHO and other partners, swiftly activated incident management systems and coordinated operations from the National, Provincial and Vila Central Hospital Health Emergency Operations Centres. Such centres lead and coordinate the health response guided by objectives in the response and recovery plan. The earthquake also left psychological scars, with many struggling to cope with loss, uncertainty and fear. Mental health and psychosocial support capacities and clear communication became crucial in addressing urgent needs of the communities. Vanuatu's MOH, with support from WHO, crafted public health messages focusing on for example safe water access, injury prevention during aftershocks, and hygiene in evacuation centers, ensuring that the communities received timely and relevant information. Emergency medical teams at the heart of response efforts In the first 24 hours, EMTs - highly trained teams composed of doctors, nurses, paramedics, and logisticians - were quickly mobilized to provide immediate care including treating injuries, performing surgeries, and assisting with deliveries of babies. Services were offered at Vila Central Hospital and in outpatient health facilities, ensuring the continued provision of critical medical care across the region. Meeting of the Vanuatu national emergency medical team, the Vanuatu Medical Assistance Team (VanMAT), which deployed after the earthquake to the Vila Central Hospital, WHO / P. Beauchemin The aftermath of this earthquake is a stark reminder of how people's health and well-being are deeply impacted by disasters. From treating injuries to restoring vital health services, early response makes all the difference, said Ms Sharin Vile, MOH Senior Disaster Officer co-leading the Vanuatu EMT Coordination Cell (EMTCC) and the Vanuatu Medical Assistance Team (VanMAT). Vanuatu's own EMT, which follows international standards set by WHO to ensure their services meet global best practices. Since 2017, Vanuatu's MoH and WHO, with financial support from the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, worked together to ensure that VanMAT is deployment-ready, with trained team members, and essential equipment and supplies on hand, and detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). This enables the team to respond self-sufficiently to emergencies such as this earthquake, and to integrate international EMT support when required. On the day of the earthquake, Vanuatu's Ministry of Health activated the EMTCC within the National Health Emergency Operations Centre (NHEOC), positioning the national and international EMTs where they are needed most enabling the government to efficiently meet the needs of the population. Specialized international EMTs have been filling critical gaps, with over 60 professionals from Australia, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, and teams like the Pasifika Medical Association Medical Assistance Team (PACMAT). They bring expertise in areas such as surgery, rehabilitation, data management, needs assessments, and maternal and mental health services and, ensuring critical care and coordination across affected areas. By strengthening local capacities, supporting vulnerable groups, and fostering regional partnerships, Vanuatu is turning this crisis into an opportunity to rebuild a more resilient health system. We are standing by our communities, working and healing together to rebuild Port Vila so that we are even more resilient for future disasters, said Sharin Vile, highlighting the nation's commitment to long-term recovery and preparedness. Image Scientists are using satellite images to locate landslides following the powerful earthquakes that struck in early February. Published Feb 23, 2023 Image of the Day Land Human Presence Earthquakes Skip to main content A strong earthquake of 6.4 magnitude hit Nepal's Western Province of Karnali, shortly before midnight, on 3 November 2023. As of 24 November 2023, 154 people (Female: 83, Male: 71) had died and more than 900 had been injured as a result of the earthquake. Jajarkot, which was the epicenter, and Rukum West are the two districts most affected by last month's disaster. The earthquake and subsequent aftershocks have also caused damages to several health facilities in the province. 77 health facilities have been affected, 13 of which are structurally are non-functional and where services are rendered through nearby temporary set-ups. Since the first day, WHO has been working closely with the Ministry of Health and Population to support urgent health needs of the affected population. WHO personnel have been deployed to assist the provincial health authorities in various response activities. WHO personnel have been continuously coordinating with representatives of the health section of affected municipalities and hospitals along with the Health Service Directorate of Karnali Province for needs identification, situation updates and information management. At the national level, WHO has been supporting to co-chair health cluster meetings. Regular support has been provided for surveillance and Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) activities. Through government established syndromic surveillance conducted from 5 November 2023 to 7 December 2023, 6498 cases of AGE, cough, fever with cough, fever with rash, fever and jaundice were reported. Among reported cases nearly 19% were from below five years of age. The surveillance team has also been working to verify public health signals and monitor the trend of reported cases to prevent any possible disease outbreak and initiate timely response. WHO has provided 2 basic modules of Interagency Emergency Health Kit, 1 full set of Interagency Emergency Health Kit, 35 Major Trauma Backpacks, 60 Rapid Response Team Backpacks, and 4 sets (24 sqm) of Multipurpose Tents. 1 Medical Camp Kit (MCK) has been established, and 2 others are in the process of establishment. WHO has been providing continued support on information management, operation and documentation at federal and provincial level. Recently, WHO provided orientation on the Health Resource and Services Availability Monitoring System (HeRAMS) to officials at the Ministry of Health and Population. Support to injury data analysis has been provided for identification of cases that require further follow-up and management including the continuity of care at the community level. PRS is an important area of WHO's response to the Nepal earthquake. WHO has conducted orientations on PRS for members of the health cluster at both the federal and provincial levels to promote awareness of Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) principles, and will be supporting the Ministry of Social Development, Karnali Province, to orient local government officials including gender focal persons on PRS, in the earthquake affected districts. In addition, WHO has supported efforts to disseminate IEC materials on PRS to the affected areas. These include materials about the PRS Code of Conduct, posters about six core principles, as well as the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) referral pathway, developed by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Authority. WHO has been supporting the continuous monitoring of vaccine sub-stores to ensure vaccines are intact and cold chain is maintained, coordinating with the Reporting Units (RUs) of Jajarkot, Rukum West and Salyan districts for strengthening VPD surveillance, and supporting planning of measles-rubella and typhoid conjugate vaccination campaigns in the affected districts. WHO is providing continued technical support to help restore emergency and essential health services. WHO has facilitated the identification of at-risk population groups and coordinated with provincial and local governments to ensure the continuation of health services at the local level. WHO has provided medical kits and drugs, facilitated water quality surveillance in earthquake-affected areas, and facilitated government actions for the deployment of human resources and procurement of required medicines. Skip to main content On 28 March 2025, two powerful earthquakes struck central Myanmar's Sagaing Region near Mandalay. The first, with a magnitude of 7.7, occurred at 12:50 p.m. local time, followed by a second of magnitude 6.4 at 1:02 p.m. Multiple aftershocks have since been reported, disrupting ongoing rescue operations. WHO Health Emergencies Programme Highlights Two months after the devastating earthquakes in Central Myanmar, there continues to be significant... WHO Health Emergencies Programme Highlights A month after the catastrophic earthquakes, earthquake-affected communities in Myanmar continue... WHO Health Emergencies Programme Highlights Just over two weeks since the devastating earthquakes, 3 600 people have reportedly died, 4 800 have been... WHO Health Emergencies Programme Highlights As of 7 April 2025, over 3 500 people died, nearly 5 000 have been injured, and over 200 remain... On 28 March 2025 two powerful earthquakes struck central Myanmar's Sagaing Region near Mandalay. The first, with a magnitude of 7.7, occurred at... Two powerful earthquakes have devastated central Myanmar, disrupting health services and putting thousands at risk of life-threatening injuries and disease outbreaks. WHO is responding at its highest level of emergency activation deploying nearly three tonnes of emergency medical supplies within 24 hours and coordinating global Emergency Medical Teams. WHO urgently needs US\$ 8 million to deliver life-saving trauma care, prevent disease outbreaks, and restore essential health services over the next 30 days. Your support is vital. Together, we can save lives and deliver critical care where its needed most. On 6 February 2023, a series of large earthquakes hit southern Trkiye and northern Syria, followed by hundreds of aftershocks. Thousands of lives were lost in the initial earthquakes and thousands more are at risk given the destruction of infrastructure and freezing temperatures in the affected areas. Efforts in the immediate aftermath of the earthquakes and the following days are focused on search and rescue, finding survivors among the rubble of collapsed buildings. Other urgent needs are providing medical care for people with physical injuries and ensuring food, drinking water and shelter for all those who have lost their homes. Ensuring continuous access to basic health services is also critical. WHO is supporting the response in both Trkiye and the Syrian Arab Republic in a number of ways: dispatch of life-saving medicines and other medical supplies; the activation of its Emergency Medical Teams Network to provide essential health services and supplies to care for those in need; liaison with disease surveillance and rapid response teams to ensure ongoing surveillance and detection of water-borne, infectious and respiratory diseases, as well as preparedness for any outbreak; and support for the mental health and psychosocial response. Staff already working in Trkiye and Syria are providing full support to local authorities of the two countries. Response efforts and deployments from WHO regional offices and headquarters are ongoing. Three months ago, the ground shook beneath Vanuatu's capital of over 50000. A 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck Port Vila on 17 December 2024, claimed 14 lives, destroyed critical infrastructure, and displaced over 2000 people who needed to stay in evacuation centres or with host families for weeks after the earthquake. To this day, aftershocks are felt by the communities. The response began within moments of the earthquake. Vanuatu's Ministry of Health (MOH) supported by its partners including WHO, activated its incident management system and the national, provincial and Vila Central Hospital Health Emergency Operations Centres. Assessments were done to rapidly review damages of health facilities, critical for guiding response actions. While saving lives was an immediate priority, the work to protect prevent further health crises was only just beginning. Preventing outbreaks: surveillance as a backbone of response and recovery As health workers treated the injured, another invisible threat emerged: the risk of disease outbreaks. With damaged water and sanitation systems and crowded evacuation centres, conditions were ideal for outbreaks of diarrheal diseases and respiratory infections. By enhancing disease surveillance and ensuring health workers had the tools and training to spot early warning signs, Vanuatu's health system was able to stay one step ahead of potential outbreaks, said Dr Mark Jacobs, WHO Representative to the South Pacific and the Director of Pacific Technical Support. The established Early Warning and Response Surveillance (EWARS) system was used to monitor outbreak-prone conditions. The team further enhanced their surveillance efforts, transitioning from weekly to daily disease signal reporting, expanding the list of monitored diseases, and increasing the number of reporting health facilities in and beyond Port Vila. Thanks to the efforts of Vanuatu's surveillance team, they detected an outbreak of influenza-like-infections and responded quickly to minimize impacts. With the support of WHO, MOH also trained health workers within weeks to strengthen surveillance so that the team could quickly detect, report, and respond to any signs of disease outbreaks. &nbsp; However, surveillance efforts depend on laboratory testing and the earthquake caused significant damage to the key laboratory at the Vila Central Hospital. When the earthquake happened, some of our staff were injured, explained Dexter Takau, Acting Principal Laboratory Officer. Machines and analyzers were displaced, storerooms were damaged, and supplies were scattered across the floor. Within hours, essential functions of the laboratory supporting hospital services were restored. But the recovery of the laboratory still continues. Through the generosity of the Australian Government, WHO provided rapid diagnostic tests that enabled faster confirmation of suspected cases. Risk communication: empowering communities with knowledge While the health system responded, another vital effort was underway: delivering clear and timely risk communication to ensure people know what to do, where to go for help, and how to stay safe. After this earthquake, we tried to understand which health facilities are operating. And from there we communicated the messages out to the public. explained Melissa Binihi, a Health Promotion Officer of MOH who coordinated risk communication efforts to provide timely information to people. WHO supported communications by arranging satellite internet at key sites in the first days after the earthquake. The messages provided practical advice for example on how to stay safe during aftershocks, how to purify drinking water, and how to protect against respiratory and waterborne diseases, a risk in the wake of the subsequent rains. In partnership with WHO and UNICEF, the Ministry of Health used radio broadcasts, posters, and community outreach teams to get life-saving information into people's hands including those without internet connectivity. &nbsp; Making strides into the future Together, we remain committed to protecting the health of Vanuatu's communities, not just during this recovery phase, but for the future challenges that lie ahead. Dr Jacobs about the continued partnership with Vanuatu. In February 2025, WHO supported Vanuatu's Ministry of Health to conduct an After Action Review (AAR), bringing together various stakeholders to assess what worked and what can be improved for future emergencies. Among key lessons were clearer standard operating procedures for health emergency coordination, securing contingency funding for rapid response, regular stocktaking of essential health supplies, and developing offline communication strategies for when internet and phone networks fail. Beyond this, other investments could include developing a recovery plan or evaluating health security capacities more broadly. The Pacific Ring of Fire is responsible for 90% of the world's earthquakes, and Vanuatu is located along this line. As such, results of the AAR will help Vanuatu further improve resilience essential to protect health and safety. This latest earthquake following major storms like Category 5 Cyclone Pam (2015), Cyclone Harold (2020) and Cyclones Judy and Kevin (2023) highlights the critical importance of strong preparedness for the resilience of health systems. Skip to main content

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