Highlights

- 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck 62 kilometres west southwest of the Makira provincial capital of Kirakira at 4:39 a.m. on 9 December
- Tsunami warning and watch were cancelled on 9 December Solomon Islands National Disaster Management Office issued an “all clear” message at 10:25 a.m.
- Provinces of Makira and Malaita were most severely affected
- To date, UNICEF has provided a 1500-litre collapsible water tank with distribution kit and 3,000 pieces of soap following a request from the Ministry of Health and Medical Services

Initial Solomon Government assessments suggest 6,897 people affected in three provinces

The map, left, shows the villages affected by earthquake based on Makira PEOC situation reports. (Source: Solomon Island Disaster Management Council Situation Report 03.)
A 7.8-magnitude undersea earthquake that occurred at 4:39 a.m. on 9 December 2016, 62 kilometres west southwest of the Makira provincial capital of Kirakira in Solomon Islands claimed at least one life and affected 6,897 people, the Solomon Islands National Disaster Council has reported. The earthquake damaged or destroyed 305 homes and damaged 11 schools and one health clinic.

Strong tremors were felt in the Provinces of Makira, where the earthquake triggered a tsunami, as well as Malaita, Guadalcanal and Rennel and Bellona. A Pacific-wide tsunami alert, initially issued for Vanuatu, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, Kosrae and New Caledonia, also was cancelled at approximately 5:55 a.m. A tsunami warning and watch advice issued immediately after the earthquake for Makira, Temotu, Malaita, Rennel and Bellona, Central Islands, South Guadalcanal Provinces was cancelled at 9.30 a.m. Solomon Islands National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) issued an “all clear” message at 10:25 a.m.

The National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) of the Solomon Islands, in collaboration with Provincial Emergency Operation Centres (PEOC), has determined that the earthquake significantly impacted the Provinces of Makira and southern Malaita. Based on initial damage reports, disaster management authorities anticipate humanitarian needs related to non-food items, emergency shelter, protection and water, sanitation and hygiene. Needs are expected to become clearer once assessment team data is collected and reported.

**Humanitarian leadership & coordination**

The Government of Solomon Islands is leading and coordinating the humanitarian response to the earthquake through the NDMO. The NEOC and National Disaster Operation Committees (NDOC) are supporting the Provinces of Makira, Malaita and Guadalcanal. PEOCs in Makira and Malaita have been activated and have deployed assessment teams.

The NDOC has convened at least three inter-sectoral coordination meetings since the earthquake with participation from health, education, protection, infrastructure and camp management committees.

UNICEF is active on the health, education, protection and WASH committees. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is supporting the NDMO in coordination. Additional support specific to assessment analysis is to be embedded into the NEOC assessment information management function team. The World Health Organization is providing technical support to the Health committee. The World Food Programme is providing in-country support to the NEOC logistics function team. The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) is supporting civil military coordination through NEOC/PEOC operations function teams.

**Disaster assessment & initial response**

An aerial assessment of earthquake-affected areas was completed with the support of the RSIPF and Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The NDMO has begun initial damage
assessments with support from local humanitarian actors. Findings are to be verified by ground-based assessments.

The Solomon Islands Government as well as its stakeholders and partners have begun deploying humanitarian assistance to communities impacted in the two provinces.

**UNICEF’s response**

UNICEF will participate more detailed sectoral assessments of the earthquake’s impact, which are scheduled to begin later this week. UNICEF stands ready to provide more technical and material support upon request from the Government of Solomon Islands.

**Education**

UNICEF has prepositioned stocks available such as recreation and school-in-a-box kits, tarpaulins, tents, back packs to support educational-related needs, if required.

**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)**

UNICEF provided a 1500-litre collapsible water tank with distribution kit and 3,000 pieces of soap for handwashing following a request from the Ministry of Health and Medical Services. The tank will be used by Solomon Island Red Cross to provide safe drinking water in the Tawaraha area of Makira Province and surrounding communities. Other prepositioned stocks are available to support WASH needs, if required.

**Child Protection**

UNICEF is coordinating the development of a checklist to mainstream child protection into the humanitarian response.

**Funding**

The Government of Solomon Islands had made no official request for international assistance as of the end of the reporting period.
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