

1.1 Cook Islands Humanitarian Background

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Disasters, Conflicts and Migration

Natural Disasters		
Type	Occurs	Comments / Details
Drought	Yes	Rarotonga relies on rainwater for its source of drinking water so is subject to shortages during prolonged dry periods, however this has never resulted in an emergency situation. The Outer Islands are not affected in this way as they use bores for sourcing water.
Earthquakes	No	According to the earthquake hazard predictions, Cook Islands are situated in a relatively quiet seismic area and have low chance of experiencing a strong earthquake in the next 50 years. Nonetheless, the larger tectonic area of Pacific "Ring of Fire" can in the future generate tsunamis that may affect Cook Islands' shores (PCRAFI, 2011).
Epidemics	Yes	Outbreaks of Dengue fever occur from time to time but are quickly contained and there have been no deaths recorded from it in the past 10 years
Extreme Temperatures	No	
Flooding	Yes	Flooding can occur to low-lying areas as a result of king tides and wave surges. This is generally not life-threatening.
Insect Infestation	No	
Mudslides	No	
Volcanic Eruptions	No	
High Waves / Surges	Yes	Disasters like tsunamis may pose threats to human lives and the infrastructure of the Cook Islands in the future. In 1909, a tsunami with waves of up to three metres high caused damage to roads, bridges and crops in Rarotonga.
Wildfires	No	
High Winds	Yes	Tropical cyclones are the single most likely natural hazard to affect the Cook Islands, with cyclone season falling between November and April. In the 41-year period between 1969 and 2010, a total of 47 tropical cyclones passed within 400 km of Rarotonga, an average of just over one cyclone per season. The number of cyclones varies widely from year to year, with none in some seasons, but up to six in others. Over the period 1969 to 2010, cyclones occurred more frequent in El Niño years.
Other Comments		
Man-Made Issues		
Civil Strife	No	
International Conflict	No	
Internally Displaced Persons	No	
Refugees Present	No	
Landmines / UXO Present	No	

Other Comments	
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For a more detailed database on disasters by country, please see the [Centre for Research on Epidemiology of Disasters](#).

Seasonal Effects on Logistics Capacities

Seasonal Effects on Transport		
Transport Type	Time Frame	Comments / Details
Primary Road Transport	From July - Sept	Some flooding may occur to low lying areas. Effects are short term (3-4 days)
Secondary Road Transport	From July - Sept	Some flooding may occur to low lying areas. Effects are short term (3-4 days)
Rail Transport	No	
Air Transport	No	
Waterway Transport	Oct- April	Cyclones may occur at this time of year causing rough seas and disruption to interisland shipping

There are no seasonal periods that cause disruption to transport or storage other than those occasional and relatively rare weather events mentioned in the tables above.

Seasonal Effects on Storage and Handling		
Activity Type	Time Frame	Comments / Details
Storage	July - April	Wet season and running into Cyclone season may cause some problems with low lying storage facilities but generally this is anticipated and goods are moved to storage at higher ground levels
Handling	July - April	As above, avoiding handling some stores in wet conditions can cause minor delays.
Other		

There are generally no seasonal bottlenecks.

Capacity and Contacts for In-Country Emergency Response

Government

The Government is well placed to respond to emergencies and has an on-going program to strengthen the country's capability.

The Emergency Management Cook Islands (EMCI) is the designated governmental division charged with ensuring the maintenance of the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) plan and all necessary sub-plans for the Cook Islands. It is the coordinating body between other humanitarian actors in the region including the UN agencies (regionally based in Fiji and Samoa), Cook Islands Red Cross Society, the Adventist Disaster Relief Association (ADRA) and the civil agencies of Police and Infrastructure Cook Islands. EMCI will also coordinate with the NZ and French military and NZ Aid organisation in events that require their assistance. A cluster system is being finalised whereby specific organisations will take a lead role in key areas such as health, emergency communications, education, protection etc.

It is planned to establish a Cook Islands Civil Defence Organisation by 2023

The declaration of a disaster is the responsibility of the Prime Minister acting upon input from the EMCI, the Police and Meteorological Service. At the declaration, the Police Commissioner – as the National Disaster Controller- activates the operation of the National Operations Centre based at Blue Sky, the national telecommunications provider. At this point, all stakeholders and first responders (EMCI, Police, Ministry Of Health, Blue Sky, Red Cross) and other relevant stakeholders and specialists commence response.

For more information on government contact details, please see the following link: [4.1 Government Contact List](#).

Humanitarian Community

The Cook Islands Red Cross Society (CIRCS) and the Adventist Disaster Relief Association (ADRA) are present and active in the Cook Islands. Both organisations have contingency stocks of disaster relief items stored in country. The UN agencies whilst not permanently represented in country work with the EMCI through their regional offices in Fiji and Samoa on disaster preparedness and relief programs

Red Cross has offices on 9 of the 12 inhabited islands implementing programs working with communities to adapt to climate change and tackling communicable and non-communicable diseases in addition to cyclone relief efforts. They maintain contingency stocks of disaster relief supplies on all of the inhabited islands. ADRA provides disaster relief food and shelter funding through its partners, Red Cross and the UN agencies.

For more information on humanitarian agency contact details, please see the following link: [4.2 Humanitarian Agency Contact List](#).

Further information on Cook Islands Disaster Management and Disaster Preparedness can be accessed at: <http://www.emci.gov.ck/> and in [Appendix 5.8 UNDP Cook Islands Country Preparedness Package](#)