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CFE-DM NEWS

Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance Monthly Newsletter

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New Publications

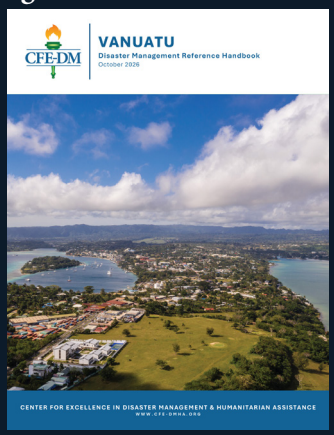
2026 Tonga Disaster Management Reference Handbook



Tonga frequently contends with severe hazards, including tropical cyclones, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, flooding, and tsunamis. Tonga is one of the few Pacific Island countries with a military, and His Majesty's Armed Forces play a vital role in disaster preparedness and response.

https://www.cfe-dmha.org/tonga-dmrh

2026 Vanuatu Disaster Management Reference Handbook



Vanuatu faces substantial exposure to natural hazards and consistently ranks among the countries with the highest disaster risk globally. In response, the nation has instituted comprehensive, whole-of-government and whole-of-society frameworks to strengthen resilience, risk reduction, and disaster management.

https://www.cfe-dmha.org/vanuatu-dmrh

South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting Emphasizes Resilience



CFE-DM Director Joe Martin (second from left) delivers remarks addressing the need for collaboration ahead of a disaster response at SPDMM in Nadi, Fiji.

In a historic first for CFE-DM, Director Joe Martin served as the Head of Delegation at this year's South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting (SPDMM), where he represented both U.S. Pacific Command (US PACOM) and the Office of the Secretary of War (OSW) in support of vital security efforts across the Pacific.

Defense ministers and representatives from Australia, Chile, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and Tonga gathered in Fiji for the 11th SPDMM, 22-24 Sept. They were joined by observers from Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as a special guest from the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).

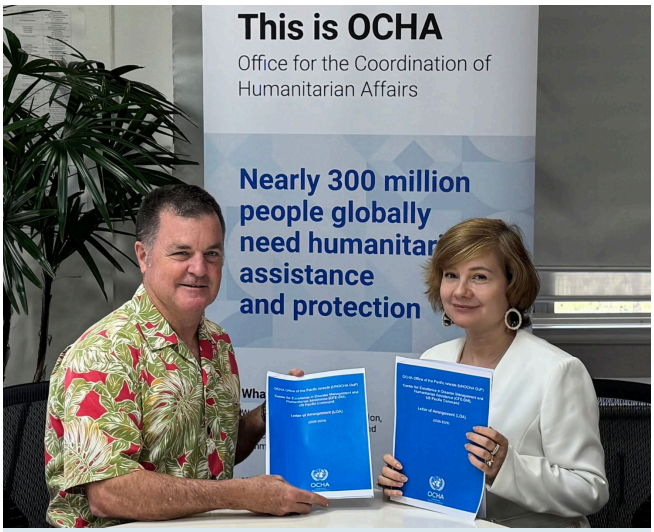
Discussions focused on *Securing the Blue Pacific: Collective Responsibility, Resilient Futures*. Ministers recommitted to working together to safeguard the region from traditional, non-traditional, and hybrid security threats.

Ministers agreed to take a phased approach to expanding the mandate of the Pacific Response Group (PRG), prioritizing consolidation and enhancement of the PRG's humanitarian assistance and disaster response capabilities.

UN OCHA and CFE-DM Sign LoA to Strengthen Coordination

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) Office of the Pacific Islands and CFE-DM signed a Letter of Agreement (LoA) to strengthen civil-military coordination and disaster preparedness across the Pacific.

The agreement establishes a cooperative framework to clarify respective roles and responsibilities, enhance operational information-sharing, and deliver joint training in humanitarian civil-military coordination.



CFE-DM Director Joe Martin (left) and Head of OCHA Office of the Pacific Islands Olga Prorovskaya (right) sign a collaborative LoA.

Thirteen Years After Haiyan's Devastation, Tacloban Continues to Enhance Disaster Readiness and Build Upon Lessons Learned

Nearly 13 years after Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) devastated Tacloban in the Philippines, 57 disaster responders convened for two days of intensive training in an academic workshop led by CFE-DM as part of the U.S. Pacific Fleet's Pacific Partnership mission.

Day one addressed the core mechanics of large-scale disaster response, followed by a second session examining planning requirements for more complex emergencies. On day two, participants applied these concepts during a tabletop exercise simulating a major earthquake and tsunami; they had to work collaboratively to prioritize needs, assess impacts, and coordinate response flows.

Participants spanned the Office of Civil Defense–Region 8, the Tacloban City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, local government representatives, the City Health Office, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Bureau of Fire Protection, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and the Philippine Coast Guard — joined by the World Food Programme, World Vision International, the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific's Marine Rotational Force–Southeast Asia, Task Force Philippines, and the Department of State's Bureau of Disaster and Humanitarian Response.



CFE-DM's Mike Wylie (right) leads a class during a disaster response workshop in Tacloban, Philippines.

Exercise Trident Resolve Brings Together 19 Nations, Bolstering Partnerships



CFE-DM's Lloyd Puckett delivers an operational briefing to the MNCC Commander on the status and employment of U.S. response and recovery assets.

CFE-DM participated in Exercise Trident Resolve in Banten, Indonesia, 21-25 Sept., in support of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus Experts' Working Group on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).

As a combined Field Training Exercise (FTX) integrating three Experts' Working Groups—HADR, Military Medicine, and Cyber Defense—the exercise brought together 19 nations to simulate realistic, multi-domain response operations during a compound disaster scenario involving an earthquake, tsunami, and hazardous chemical release.

CFE-DM supported operations by deploying Liaison Officers to the Multinational Coordination Center (MNCC). They collaborated directly with regional counterparts—assisting the Philippines with chemical release response protocols, Indonesia with MNCC operations, and Singapore with coordination oversight.

Samoa and U.S. Launch National Disaster Preparedness Baseline Assessment

The Government of Samoa and the United States officially launched Samoa's National Disaster Preparedness Baseline Assessment (NDPBA), a year-long initiative led by the University of Hawaii's Pacific Disaster Center (PDC) in close partnership with Samoa's Disaster Management Office (DMO). Supported by the U.S. Embassy in Apia, the opening workshop brought together more than 60 stakeholders across emergency services, health, meteorology, agriculture, and infrastructure.

The assessment will deliver subnational risk profiles down to the village level and integrate data directly into PDC's DisasterAWARE early warning platform to support live hazard monitoring as the region prepares for cyclone season and El Niño impacts.

CFE-DM supported the launch by sending two representatives to serve as observers and to provide civil-military disaster management subject matter expertise.



Samoa DMO Director of Operations and Logistics, Ms. Malia Pisi (standing) and her DMO colleagues work together to map out risk and resilience factors across the main Island of Samoa.

Fifth Regional Exercise LONGREACH Highlights Pacific Response Group in New Zealand



Royal New Zealand Navy CDR Mark Tapsell, PRG Commander, provides an overview of the PRG's capabilities in Wellington, New Zealand.

The fifth annual Regional Exercise LONGREACH (REL26) convened in Wellington, New Zealand, 12-14 Oct. It fostered a shared understanding of South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting (SPDMM) capabilities during crisis operations. Representatives from Australia, Chile, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, and the United States (via CFE-DM) took part in high-level dialogue and a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HADR) Tabletop Training Exercise.

Exercise LONGREACH is a SPDMM initiative which aims to continually improve the way that military and civilian agencies collectively plan for and respond to regional disasters. This year's focus centered on the New Zealand-led Pacific Response Group (PRG), a SPDMM mechanism that enables Pacific Island countries without armed forces to benefit from specialized HADR support following a natural disaster or extreme weather event.

Pacific Disaster Management Experts Convene in New Zealand

CFE-DM Director Joe Martin traveled to Auckland, New Zealand, to support the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) and the U.S. Consulate in Auckland during the Global Cooperation and Training Framework (GCTF) Disaster Management in the Pacific workshop, 29–30 Sept.

Co-hosted by the United States and Taiwan alongside Japan and the United Kingdom, the event was implemented by the East-West Center. It convened disaster response leaders, policy experts, and private-sector representatives from Pacific Islands Forum members, associate members, and observers.

Discussions featured a keynote address outlining New Zealand's hazard landscape, as well as presentations on Taiwan's whole-of-society preparedness and early warning models. Pacific island leaders also shared local mitigation frameworks and response challenges to ensure participants returned home equipped with practical insights and actionable tools to bolster community resilience across the region.



Director Joe Martin provides an overview of CFE-DM's resources during the GCTF workshop in Auckland.

Australian Command and Staff Course Makes Inaugural Visit to CFE-DM



CFE-DM's Nelson Chang (standing) provides information on various security cooperation engagements to ACSC students and staff.

Staff and students of the 2026 Australian Command and Staff Course (ACSC) visited CFE-DM on Ford Island on 6 Oct. to examine how the U.S. Department of War plans and executes Foreign Disaster Response operations.

During the inaugural visit, eleven mid-career military officers and two faculty advisors received briefings on CFE-DM's history, core missions, and ongoing security cooperation engagements. Discussions highlighted shared areas of interest across Oceania and Southeast Asia, as well as CFE-DM's close partnership with the Australian Civil-Military Centre.

The visit was conducted as part of the ACSC annual overseas field study in Hawaii, with the delegation joined by Ms. Edwina Sinclair, Political-Military Affairs Officer from the Australian Consulate-General in Honolulu. The ACSC is a 47-week residential program for mid-career officers and defense civilians conducted by the Australian Defence College.

CFE-DM Welcomes Tim Horsman

Tim Horsman joins CFE-DM as a Knowledge Manager.



Tim previously supported MARFORPAC G-35 as a contractor within the Global Force Management division and was a Partner Engagement Manager with a tech startup supporting US PACOM. Prior to those roles, he served as the Information Manager in the U.S. Pacific Command Joint Operations Center. Tim has also spent time providing help desk support to the Army Enterprise Service Desk at Ft Shafter, within USARPAC.

Tim holds a Master of Arts in Counseling and a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Indiana Wesleyan University. He spent 17 years as a School Counselor in both Indiana and Hawaii, working with all grade levels from Kindergarten through High School.

CFE-DM

HART

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE RESPONSE TRAINING

DISASTERS

CONFLICT

ALLIES & PARTNERS

HART-A&P - Fiji



Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) service members and disaster managers at Blackrock Camp, in Nadi, Fiji, respond to crisis scenarios in a Fiji-led Tabletop Exercise (TTX) on 28 Oct. Prior to the three-day TTX, participants completed three days of the Humanitarian Assistance Response Training – Allies and Partners (HART-A&P) course, led by CFE-DM and regional partners. Throughout the course, RFMF officers and disaster managers examined critical frameworks that govern civil-military coordination during crises including lessons learned from real-world responses; it also brought a multinational instructor cadre representing the Fiji National Disaster Risk Management Office, the Australian Civil-Military Centre, the Pacific Response Group, United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the Changi Regional HADR Coordination Centre.

HART-C - II Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF)



Kristien Dermine, Armed Forces Delegate from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), briefs participants on the ICRC's role during large-scale combat operations as part of a HART-Conflict course at Camp Lejeune, NC, 22-24 Sept. CFE-DM regularly invites guest instructors from key humanitarian organizations to share first-hand insights on the civilian and humanitarian dimensions of armed conflict to help foster more effective civil-military coordination.

HART-C - U.S. Pacific Command (US PACOM)



Military and civilian planners develop a plan to evacuate civilians during large-scale urban combat operations in a small group exercise during the HART-Conflict course for U.S. Pacific Command and component commands on Ford Island, HI, 20-22 Oct. The exercise was part of a broader case study that examined the 2016-2017 Battle for Mosul, including the operational challenges and lessons learned from military-assisted evacuation and coordination during military and humanitarian planning.