

LA SOUFRIÈRE VOLCANO: INFORMATION NOTE #5 – MONDAY 12TH APRIL 2021 AS AT 1:00 p.m. AST



Image: Eruption at La Soufrière Volcano, St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Source: Ottawa CTV News (<https://www.ottawa.ctvnews.ca/>)

MESSAGE:

La Soufriere has continued to erupt explosively and has now began to generate pyroclastic currents. In addition, small volcano-tectonic earthquakes have been recorded from April 11th at 6:00 p.m. Also noted is that the explosive eruptions have destroyed the pre-existing domes from 1979 and 2020-2021. The University of the West Indies Seismic Research Centre (UWI SRC) has advised that explosions and accompanying ashfall of similar or larger magnitude, are likely to continue to occur over the next few days.

ALERT LEVEL:

Red

IMMEDIATE EVACUATION ORDERS HAVE BEEN ISSUED FOR RESIDENTS LOCATED IN THE RED ZONE

SITUATION:

Since our previous information note on Friday 9th April 2021, a second explosion occurred at La Soufriere Volcano at 2:45 p.m. on April 9th. This eruption caused the vertical ash column to be launched 4km into the atmosphere. A third eruption also occurred at 6:45 p.m. on April 9th, which further propelled the ash plume into the atmosphere. A series of earthquakes were also recorded near the volcano which scientists indicate fueled the third eruption. Today April 12th, the volcano began to generate pyroclastic currents, alongside volcano-tectonic earthquakes.



AREAS EVACUATED:

The first phase of the evacuation began with communities in the Red Zone and those in the Orange Zone closest to the volcano on the Leeward side of the island. These are communities from Georgetown northwards to Fancy, Chateaubelair, Fitz-Hughes and Richmond. Some persons who opted not to evacuate from Chateaubelair and Owia, later requested evacuation and efforts are ongoing to have them evacuated. In-country transportation is being hindered by heavy ash fall in some areas.

RED ALERT LEVEL:

A Red Level Alert indicates that eruption is in progress or may occur without further warning.

MORE INFORMATION:

Visit the [UWI Seismic Research Centre](#) webpage for more information on the La Soufrière volcanic activity.

The following update presents information from the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) participating states or member countries:

UPDATES FROM IMPACTED CDEMA PARTICIPATING STATE:

St. Vincent and The Grenadines:

1. La Soufriere's volcano alert level was upgraded to RED. NEMO's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was fully activated.
2. Scientists at the Belmont Observatory confirmed that there was an explosive eruption at the La Soufriere Volcano at 8:40 AM, 9 April 2021.
3. Ash plumes of up to 8 km were observed. Ash fall has been recorded at the Argyle International Airport.
4. The dome has now reached the height of the crater on the western (Leeward side) of the island.
5. Seismic activity at La Soufrière changed significantly when the seismic station closest to the summit began recording low-level seismic tremors on April 8.
6. Six separate episodes, or bands of tremors starting at 3 am were recorded with intervals of about two and a half hours between them. The tremor episodes slowly increased in magnitude.
7. The seismic network also recorded five long-period earthquakes during the second and fourth bands of tremor. Long-period earthquakes are also usually associated with the movement of magma.
8. There were also two brief swarms of small volcano-tectonic (VT) earthquakes, both taking place between bands of tremor. These were located at depths up to 5 kilometers below the summit of La Soufrière, which was consistent with the depths of the two VT swarms on 23-26 March and on 5 April.
9. Elevated and continuous periods of gas venting from the summit of the volcano, coinciding with the bands of tremor were observed. At times there was a well-defined plume.

10. A total of 70 shelters were activated with 62 being occupied to date. The total number of evacuees in government issued shelters are 2,318 to date and time.
11. Evacuees have also sought shelter with friends and family. These numbers were not yet quantified.
12. The first phase of the evacuation began with communities in the Red Zone and those communities in the Orange Zone closest to the volcano on the Leeward side of the island. These are communities from Georgetown northwards to Fancy, and the communities of Chateaubelair, Fitz-Hughes and Richmond.
13. Residents of Fitz-Hughes, Chateaubelair and Petit Bordel who require transportation to get to the safe areas were asked to get to the Chateaubelair Jetty immediately to be evacuated.
14. Cruise ships from Carnival and Royal Caribbean arrived in St. Vincent between April 8th and 9th 2021. The cruise ships would be used to shuttle persons to 5 neighboring islands through bilateral arrangements: i.e., Barbados, Saint Lucia, British Virgin Islands, Grenada and Antigua and Barbuda. Conditions to board the ships are a negative COVID-19 test or vaccination.
15. The number of persons to be moved would be informed by shelter capacity and the numbers which can be accommodated by receiving countries. The initial targeted number of persons to be evacuated was 1,600 – 5,000.
16. All persons in the red volcano hazard zone are asked to evacuate immediately.
17. The Hon. Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves held a press briefing on 11 April 2021 to update the nation on the situation.
18. Distribution of relief supplies to all shelters:
 - Feeding and food and water
 - Cots, bedding, and toiletries
 - PPEs, cleaning supplies and hand sanitisers.
19. Evacuees not in a NEMO/Government evacuation center are asked to register with the SVG Red Cross Society at 784-570-6958 or NEMO at 784-456-2975 or 784-458 6366.
20. Bulletins, CAP Alerts and social media blasts were distributed to all Media Houses and shared to NEMO's social media platforms: <https://www.facebook.com/nemosvg/>; Instagram: nemosvg20
21. RESTRICTED AREAS: Northward of the Walliabou Bridge on the Leeward side and North of Mount Young on the Windward Side

CARIBBEAN DISASTER AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (CDEMA) ACTIONS:

The CDEMA Coordinating Unit (CU) continues to operate in accordance with the standard operating procedures (SOPs) of the Regional Coordination Plan (RCP) which includes maintaining contact with the threatened states and Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) partners.

1. The CDEMA Coordinating Unit continues to undertake technical consultations with the UWI Seismic Research Centre (SRC) on the status of La Soufriere volcano.
2. The Regional Coordination Plan (RCP) was activated at 6:00 pm on December 29, 2020.
3. The Volcano Response Plan, the Regional Coordinating Centre (RCC), the Regional Logistics Plan (RLP) and the Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) continue to be activated.

4. The CDEMA Coordinating Unit (CU) undertook consultations with the National Disaster Coordinator of the Sub-Regional Focal Point in Barbados and is presently providing support.
5. In accordance with the Volcanic Annex of the RCP, the following Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) Teams have been placed on ALERT:
 - a. CARICOM Disaster Assessment and Coordination (CDAC)
 - b. Rapid Needs Assessment Team (RNAT)
 - c. Caribbean Disaster Relief Unit (CDRU)
 - d. Regional Urban Search and Rescue Teams (RSART)
6. The CARICOM Operational Support Team (COST) was activated, and Superintendent Sylvan McIntyre (of Grenada) was deployed to support NEMO SVG effective March 1st, 2021.
7. The CDEMA CU convened a Brief and a Table-Top Exercise, as well as a Functional Exercise on the revised SVG Volcano Emergency Plan & SOP document on Friday, January 29, and Thursday March 25, 2021, respectively.
8. The CDEMA CU continues to provide technical assistance to the SVG National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO) in the following areas:
 - a. Evacuation Planning
 - b. Logistics Planning
9. The Core-Coordination Group on Volcanic Hazards (CCG-VH), established as a thematic coordinating cell of the Regional Coordination Centre, was convened four times since January 2021. The CCG-VH, which comprises key representatives of political, scientific, and technical institutions in the region, agreed to undertake the following:
 - a. To work in support of the National Disaster Office of the threatened or impacted State, under the scientific guidance of the UWI Seismic Research Centre or other designated scientific entity, and
 - b. To provide guidance for the provision of regional and international assistance to affected populations, with a focus on preparedness actions to address possible effects/impacts of the volcanic hazard.
10. A meeting of the CCG-VH was convened today, Friday 9 April 2021.
11. A meeting of the Caribbean Development Partners Group (CDPG) was convened today, Friday 9 April 2021.
12. The CU continued to engage regional and international partners on matters related to resource mobilization.
13. The CU would continue to monitor the situation in collaboration with the UWI Seismic Research Centre, the St. Vincent and the Grenadines NEMO and the National Disaster Management Offices of Participating States near the volcano and provide updates to the RRM partners, as necessary.
14. CDEMA convened a briefing meeting on April 8 with NEMO SVG, where the three (3) priority areas for immediate support were identified as: sleeping cots for shelters, security, and the Field Medical Hospital of the Barbados Defense Force.
15. CARICOM Operation Support Team - additional personnel deployed to SVG on 11th April 2021.
16. DDSA Team is being mobilized to support damage assessment in Water, Health, Electrical and Agriculture
17. Other Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) Technical Support Teams are being mobilised.



18. Caribbean Development Partner Group- Disaster Management met on the 10th and 11th of April 2021.
19. CDEMA CU Emergency Telecommunications Team - 24-hour monitoring of the volcanic activity, coordinating with NEMO SVG and national and regional amateur radio operators.

SOURCES:

Explosive Eruption at La Soufrière Volcano, St. Vincent, CDEMA Situation Report #8, as of 9:30 p.m. (AST) on April 9, 2021.

Explosive Eruption at La Soufrière Volcano, St. Vincent, CDEMA Situation Report #9, as of 8:00 p.m. (AST) on April 10, 2021.

Explosive Eruption at La Soufrière Volcano, St. Vincent, CDEMA Situation Report #10, as of 9:00 p.m. (AST) on April 11, 2021.

UWI Seismic Research Centre, Facebook Page, (<https://www.facebook.com/uwiseismic/>).