

PAPUA NEW GUINEA and SOLOMON ISLANDS - Severe Sea Swell Floods

Affected Areas Reported as of 23 December 2008, v5



Legend

- ⊙ Affected location
- ★ National capital
- Major town
- ▨ Most-heavily affected
- ▨ Affected
- International boundary
- Province boundary

This map shows regions and specific locations affected by severe sea swells in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands as of 22 December 2008.

Please refer to the latest OCHA SitRep for more detailed information on

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 Projection/Datum: Geographic / WGS84
 Web Resources: <http://ochaonline.un.org/roap>
 Nominal Scale at A4 paper size: 1:9,675,890

0 50 100 150 kms

Map data source(s): GAUL, PNG National Statistical Office (NSO), GEBCO, United Nations Cartographic Unit

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BACKGROUND: On 8 December 2008, severe sea swells hit a number of Pacific island countries, including Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands, Kiribati and the Federated States of Micronesia. The prime cause of the inundation appears to have been long period swells generated from distant winds over the North Pacific, enhanced by shorter period waves generated locally by tropical depressions. The moon's perigee (closest orbital position to earth) coincides with a full moon on 13th December, which creates high spring tides. In some areas it was combined with storm surge and heavy rain, which appears to have caused flooding.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: At the event's peak, some 75,000 people were affected, with most temporarily displaced from their homes. Although most have since been able to return, several thousand people remain displaced though the majority of these are in care centres or with relatives close to their homes. Current estimates from the PNG Red Cross place the number of displaced from damaged homes on New Ireland at 7,000. Also, 118 people have relocated from Tench Island to Emirau island and several hundred to several thousand people are also reported to be temporarily displaced due to damaged homes in East Sepik. A total of some 2,000 houses are reported to be damaged or destroyed.

SOLOMON ISLANDS: The two inhabited islands (Pelau and Luaniua) of Ontong Java atoll that is part of Malaita Province in the Solomon Islands were also affected.

