

Solomon Islands Tsunami 2007



Tsunamis are powerful and indiscriminate forces of nature that continue to devastate Islands and coastal nations. In April 2007, Solomon Islands bore the devastation of two such tsunamis, which AusAID (Australian Agency for International Development) sought to help alleviate with International SOS.

Situation

On Monday 2nd April an earthquake off the coast of Solomon Islands caused two tsunamis several minutes apart, inflicting considerable damage to the area. AusAID requested International SOS to provide a medical team to offer health support to affected people in the Western and Choiseul provinces of Solomon Islands. The teams were also asked to assess the medical infrastructure on the islands.

Timely response

Rapid response to the initial request from AUSAID was essential. Within 10 hours of being activated, International SOS coordinated and deployed an advance team consisting of a doctor and a nurse, shortly followed by another 3 doctors, one more nurse and a logistics manager. The team were flown into Honiara, then a chartered aircraft flew the team on site where they broke out into two medical teams to cover the remote geographic spread of affected islands more efficiently.

Logistics and resources

Given the difficulty of accessing many of the more remote islands, the International SOS logistics specialist

employed all necessary modes of transport to reach all required locations in the most timely manner.

Some of these included canoes, small aircraft, helicopters and motorbikes. The team drew from their experience, resourcefulness and networking to engage the help of RAMSI (Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands) for in depth local knowledge, their ground transport and their helicopters; the Ministry of Forestry for the use of their canoes; the Ministry of Health for the use of their boats and US Navy for their aircraft. These provisions meant that the two medical teams were able to visit the dozens of villages required by AusAID, and treat or refer any people requiring medical attention.

The International SOS difference

The International SOS team visited scores of remote islands and villages, treated and assessed in excess of 1,100 people and helped with the provision of medical supplies to existing medical facilities. They also assessed the medical conditions of 16 medical providers and made recommendations. To make this possible, the two medical teams engaged in more than 20 trips by canoe, 9 trips by light plane and

helicopter and innumerable trips over land.

International SOS was chosen to represent AusAID on the basis of our ability to deploy medical personnel quickly, as well as our expertise in the delivery of medical care in remote environments.

With over 1,500 medical officers on staff throughout the world, International SOS has unparalleled resources for rapid response in emergency situations.

International SOS is the world's leading provider of medical assistance, international healthcare, security services and outsourced customer care.

For more information, please contact

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