

EXPLOSIVE ERUPTION AT LA SOUFRIÈRE VOLCANO, ST. VINCENT

SITUATION REPORT No. 8

AS OF 9:30 PM ON 9 APRIL, 2021

Volcanic Activity Continues at La Soufrière, St. Vincent Alert Level Upgraded to Red

LOCATION:

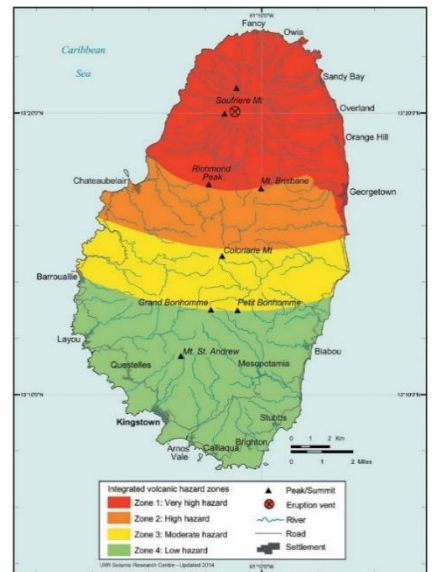
La Soufrière Volcano, Saint Vincent and The Grenadines

PRESENT ACTIVITY:

Ongoing Explosive Eruption

ALERT LEVEL: **RED**

Red	Eruption is in progress or may occur without further warning	Measurements as permitted by safety condition. Civil authorities advised continuously.	Coordinate continued evaluation as necessary. Organize regular radio and television announcements.
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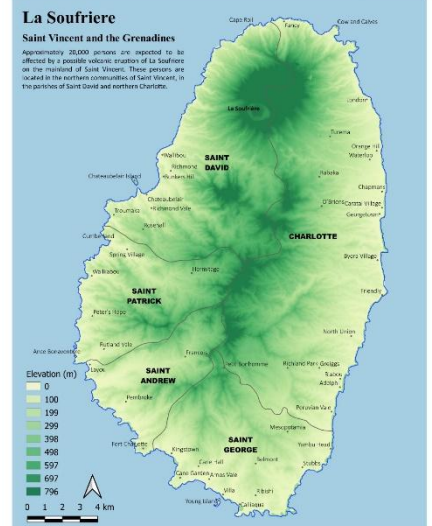


SITUATION OVERVIEW

Between the 29th December 2020 and 7th April 2021, the alert level for the La Soufrière volcano in St. Vincent and the Grenadines had been elevated to **Orange** as a result of increased activity and an ongoing effusive eruption. An Orange Level alert means that there is highly elevated seismicity or fumarolic activity, or both, or other highly unusual symptoms. Eruptions may occur with less than 24 hours notice.

On the 8th April, following significant seismic activity, there was an explosive event at the volcano site. Following an emergency meeting of Cabinet and the National Emergency Council, the alert level was raised to **Red** and an **Evacuation Order Issued**. On April 9th at approximately 8:41 AM the La Soufrière volcano entered an explosive eruptive phase with the first column of ash as high as 10km.

A second explosive eruption was observed at 2:45 PM AST, 9 April 2021, and the vertical ash column, which was estimated to have risen approximately 4km into the atmosphere, could be seen from the capital. This last eruption, which is still ongoing, is being fed by successive pulses and its plume is now estimated to have reached above 15000m into the atmosphere.



**Evacuation Orders
have been issued. Access to the
volcano is strictly prohibited.**

Updates from Impacted CDEMA Participating State

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) has been in regular contact with NEMO St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the following was reported:



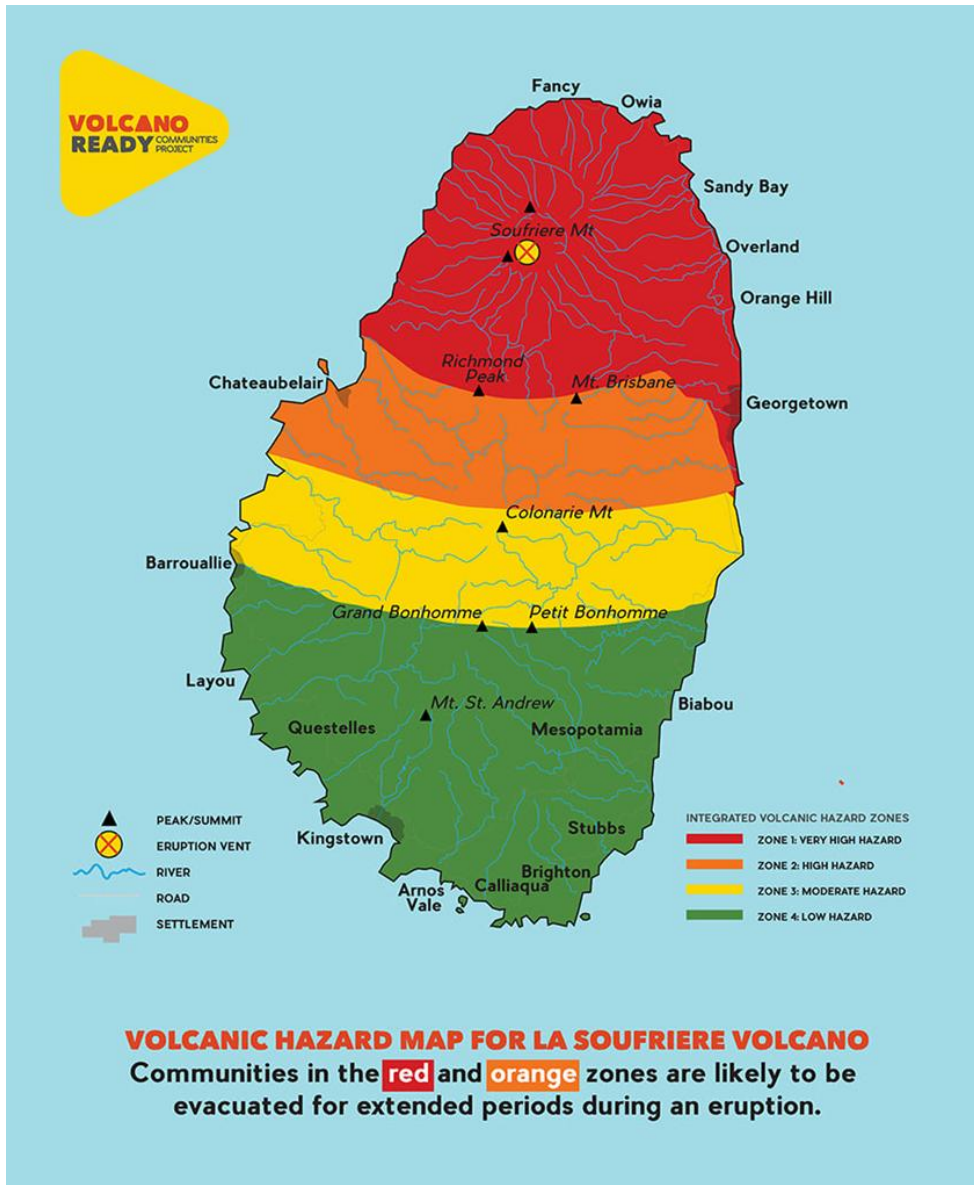
ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

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.**

Updates from Impacted CDEMA Participating State

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) has been in regular contact with NEMO, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the following was reported:

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/nemosvg/photos/3756619274382001>

Updates from Impacted CDEMA Participating State

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) has been in regular contact with NEMO, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the following was reported:



ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES



RED ALERT LEVEL ISSUED



Dr. Hon Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister, SVG held Emergency Press Conference on 8 April 2021



Long exposure photo taken by volcano seismologist Roderick Stewart at the Belmont Observatory on 9 April 2021

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/uwiseismic/photos/a.112065204326/10158019592044327/>



Ongoing explosive eruption began at the La Soufrière volcano on 9 April 2021

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/uwiseismic/photos/a.112065204326/10158020097989327/>

Caribbean Disaster 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 its Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) partners.

CDEMA's actions to date:

- I. The CDEMA Coordinating Unit continues to undertake technical consultations with the UWI Seismic Research Centre (SRC) on the status of La Soufriere volcano.
- II. The Regional Coordination Plan (RCP) was activated at 6:00 pm on December 29, 2020.
- III. The Volcano Response Plan, the Regional Coordinating Centre (RCC), the Regional Logistics Plan (RLP) and the Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) continue to be activated.
- IV. 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.
- V. 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)
- VI. The CARICOM Operational Support Team (COST) was activated and Superintendent Sylvan McIntyre (of Grenada) was deployed to support NEMO SVG effective March 1st 2021.
- VII. 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.
- VIII. The CDEMA CU continues to provide technical assistance to the SVG National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) in the following areas:
 - a) Evacuation Planning
 - b) Logistics Planning

Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) Actions

- IX. 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.
- X. A meeting of the CCG-VH was convened today, Friday 9 April 2021.
- XI. A meeting of the Caribbean Development Partners Group (CDPG) was convened today, Friday 9 April 2021.
- XII. The CU continued to engage regional and international partners on matters related to resource mobilization.
- XIII. 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 in close proximity to the volcano, and provide updates to the RRM partners as necessary.
- XIV. 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.

The CDEMA CU urges all Participating States and members of the RRM to continue to monitor the progress of this volcanic event. The public should continue to monitor the media releases from their local National Disaster Management Office.

List of preparatory actions being undertaken by the RRM Partners



LOGISTICS SUPPORT

- RSS deployed 250 cots into SVG on April 8th 2021.
- RSS conducted discussions today 9 April 2021, around security support to St Vincent.
- Other deployments are expected to follow by the Barbados Coast Guard and RSS.
- Confirmation from Trinidad and Tobago Sub-Regional warehouse of 300 available cots.
- Antigua and Barbuda Sub-Regional warehouse confirmed 300 available cots.
- Further discussions are ongoing in Antigua and Barbuda, and Jamaica on support via their national stores.
- Arrangements are being made to transport PPE via the CDEMA RRM Mechanism. These PPE are specifically face masks which are based on the guidance from the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) guidance on situations with volcanic ash and COVID-19.



RELIEF SUPPORT

- Barbados Defense Force Field Medical Team (FMT) is poised for deployment to SVG. Discussions are ongoing with SVG Ministry of Health to confirm details of the requirements.
- UNICEF has donated over 2,000 WASH supplies to SVG; inclusive of WASH and Dignity Kits, Water Test Kits, and Collapsible Water Tanks.