

# Samaritan's Purse responds to devastating cyclone

*Thousands homeless on islands of Vanuatu in the wake of Cyclone Pam*

**CALGARY, AB – March 17, 2015** – Samaritan's Purse is sending staff and resources to help victims of Cyclone Pam on the South Pacific island nation of Vanuatu, which was devastated by the powerful storm.

Most of the country's homes, schools, and hospitals were destroyed or badly damaged in the Category 5 cyclone—with torrential rain and 300 km/hr winds—between Friday, March 13 and Saturday, March 14.

Samaritan's Purse has deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) that includes experts on clean water and nutrition in disaster situations. Working alongside local Christian partners, the DART is determining how Samaritan's Purse can best assist storm victims.

"This is the most powerful storm to reach landfall since Typhoon Haiyan devastated the Philippines in 2013," said Fred Weiss, executive director for Samaritan's Purse Canada.

"Now, as we did then, Samaritan's Purse is inviting Canadians to come alongside us and donate to support our work providing immediate and long-term support for the people of Vanuatu."

As many as 90 per cent of homes are destroyed in Port Vila, the capital city of Vanuatu, although the full scope of damage and casualties is unknown as electricity is out and communication is down. There are early reports of entire villages being wiped out in the island nation, which has a population of 267,000 spread over 65 islands.

Some members of our DART were able to visit Tanna Island, one of Vanuatu's hardest-hit islands. The team's initial assessment identified medical, shelter, and water as the highest priority needs. Residents on the island rely on collected rain water for their source of clean water, but most of their collection systems were destroyed by the cyclone. Tanna Island has up to two weeks' supply of food, but replanting crops will take months to replenish their supply.

### **Donations Needed**

Canadians wishing to support Samaritan's Purse's emergency relief work in Vanuatu can donate by visiting [SamaritansPurse.ca](http://SamaritansPurse.ca) or calling **1-866-663-6500**. The Christian organization also welcomes Canadians' prayers.

### **About Samaritan's Purse Canada**

Samaritan's Purse is a Christian relief and development organization that takes its name from Jesus Christ's

biblical story of the Good Samaritan. Like that Good Samaritan, who found a beaten man and helped restore him, we aid victims of war, disease, disaster, poverty, famine, and persecution. Our initiatives include Operation Christmas Child, and providing safe water, vocational skills, and agricultural supplies and training to families in the developing world. Learn more at [SamaritansPurse.ca](http://SamaritansPurse.ca).

SOURCE Samaritan's Purse Canada

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