

VOLCANO CAUSED 'SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE'

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Important Geophysical phenomena - Earthquakes, Tsunamis & Volcanoes

Taking stock: A couple looking at a damaged boat in a marina at Tutukaka, New Zealand, on Sunday. AP

A massive volcanic eruption in Tonga that triggered tsunami waves around the Pacific caused "significant damage" to the island nation's capital and smothered it in dust, but the full extent was not apparent with communications still cut off on Sunday.

The eruption on Saturday was so powerful it was recorded around the world, triggering a tsunami that flooded Pacific coastlines from Japan to the United States.

The capital Nuku'alofa suffered "significant" damage, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said, adding there had been no reports of injury or death but a full assessment was not yet possible with communication lines down.

There has been no word on damage in the outer islands and New Zealand will send an air force reconnaissance aircraft "as soon as atmospheric conditions allow", the country's Defence Force tweeted.

Tonga has also accepted Canberra's offer to send a surveillance flight, Australia's foreign office said, adding it is also immediately prepared to supply "critical humanitarian supplies".

The United States was "deeply concerned for the people of Tonga", Secretary of State Antony Blinken said, pledging support for the island nation. In California, the city of Santa Cruz was hit by flooding due to a tidal surge by the tsunami.

Peru closed 22 ports as a precaution while waves of around 1.2 metres hit along Japan's Pacific coast.

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