

UN warns that impact of Caribbean volcano could affect other islands

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A NASA Earth Observatory satellite image of the volcano eruption of the La Soufriere Volcano on the Caribbean island of St. Vincent

The humanitarian and economic crisis unleashed by the eruption of the La Soufriere volcano on the Caribbean island of Saint Vincent will last months and could extend to nearby islands, a UN official warned Wednesday.

"It is a crisis that will require a humanitarian response but also a response in terms of rehabilitation" which could last for several months, said Didier Trebucq, the United Nations coordinator for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean.

Trebucq, speaking to reporters in New York via videoconference from Barbados, said that the volcano—which had not erupted since 1979—remains active and every day belches up clouds of ash and smoke after erupting on April 9.

The islands of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have around 110,000 inhabitants, 20,000 of whom had to be evacuated from their homes.

About 4,000 people have been moved to shelters but "this number is growing," Trebucq said.

On Wednesday a French navy ship, Le Ventose, reached Saint Vincent with water and 75 tonnes of humanitarian aid.

Trebucq said that it was hard to know how long the crisis will last. "Everything will depend on the duration of the volcanic eruptions," he said. "It is possible that it will last a few weeks, it is also possible that it lasts several months."

Caribbean volcano erupts



Map locating Saint Vincent's La Soufriere volcano

The eruption will have a medium and long term impact on Saint Vincent as well as nearby islands including Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, and others.

The French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe may also be impacted "depending on the direction of the winds and where the [volcanic ash](#) is deposited," he said.

In calling for more robust international aid Trebucq noted that [hurricane](#)

[season](#) in the Caribbean is set to begin in two months, and that tourism, the main source of income for the [islands](#), has been severely curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is currently a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

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