



Highlights

IOM, local authorities and members of Paipeli community launching peacebuilding initiatives in Hela province. © Philip Nere/ IOM

■ IOM Completes Delivery of Aid to Mount Ulawun Volcano Affected Communities in West New Britain and East New Britain Provinces.

■ “This Partnership Has Saved Lives”: IOM, USAID and Disaster Centres Deliver Aid in Papua New Guinea’s Highlands.

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IOM Expands its Direct Engagement in Creating Regular Pathways Through Establishing Administrative Service Centres (One Stop Shops) in Papua New Guinea

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) started 2024 with the signing of a programme partnership with the Government of Papua New Guinea (PNG), establishing the operation of Administrative Service Centers (ASC’s) in the country and in foreign countries.

On 30 December 2023, the Cooperation Agreement between the PNG Immigration and Citizenship Service Authority (ICSA) and IOM was signed to start this initiative.

ASC’s are one-stop-shops through which services

offered by public agencies will be made accessible to PNG citizens and foreign nationals residing in PNG, as well as potential travelers and immigrants to the country.

The initiative will enhance PNG’s e-governance capacity, streamlining processes, and ensuring data security.

This initiative is offered under IOM’s regular pathways programming. It relies on the technical solutions made available by Immigration and Border Governance built around legal identity as a core enabler of sustainable development, and safe and regular migration.

The programme will begin by providing expedited citizenship and migration-related services, including visa services, stay permit application and renewal, passport application and renewal. It will allow both for better service and enhanced trust in existing pathways.

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Additionally, the programme will be made available at a reduced cost to beneficiaries.

ASC's will start operating in Port Moresby (National Capital District), Mount Hagen (Western Highlands province), and Lae (Morobe province); expanding to other locations in and outside of PNG in a phased approach.

The first three ASC's will be regional hubs accessible to a wide community of applicants. Here, Centres will provide applicants with accurate information, identity checks, document completeness checks, and biographic/biometric data collection in a secure, reliable, flexible and cost-effective manner.

IOM Supports the Government of Papua New Guinea to Improve Alignment with International Standards for Counter Trafficking and Protecting Victims of Trafficking

On 9-10 October 2023, IOM conducted meetings with key stakeholders including PNG ICSA, Customs Services, Magisterial Services, National Judicial Staff Service and Royal PNG Constabulary's Family and Sexual Violence, community service organizations, donors and the UN to review the National Legislative Framework Pertinent to Trafficking in Persons.

Within the meeting, existing gaps in the framework were assessed, conducted within the framework of the "Strengthening Counter-Trafficking Response in Papua New Guinea Project," funded by the IOM Development Fund.

The overall objective of this project is to support the Government of PNG to counter trafficking in persons and protect victims of trafficking through improved alignment with international standards. The outcomes from these meetings contributed to the review of the national legal framework. Outcomes of the meetings will include a set of recommendations, and a National Consultation Workshop to review the findings and recommendations of these meetings.

IOM Completes Delivery of Aid to Mt. Ulawun Volcano Affected Communities in West New Britain and East New Britain Provinces

In the aftermath of the November 2023 Mt. Ulawun volcano eruption in Papua New Guinea, IOM has been unwavering in its commitment to provide relief to affected communities in West New Britain (WNB) and East New Britain (ENB) provinces.

In collaboration with the National Disaster Centre and Provincial Disaster Centres of WNB and ENB, and funded by the United States Agency for International Development/Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA), IOM has diligently worked towards addressing the life-saving needs of the disaster-affected communities.

IOM has successfully reached 850 displaced households across nine care centers in WNB and ENB with essential non-food items (NFIs). The items distributed include kitchen utensils, sleep mats, cleaning materials, jerry cans, and gardening spades. These items have helped in addressing the needs identified through assessments.



IOM, funded by USAID has reached 850 displaced households with essential NFIs. © Sharlene Kendo/ IOM

Throughout these efforts, IOM deployed a gender-inclusive team including a protection expert to work alongside the WNB Emergency Operation Center (EOC) and Forward Operation Base (FOB) team.

This collaboration helped to streamlining coordination, enhanced relief efforts and improved the well-functioning Camp Coordination and Camp Management in the care centers.

IOM's technical support has also been crucial in building capacity in the disaster team and site management committees. The protection expert has helped in mainstreaming protection and gender in IOM's response. This has promoted upholding the rights and dignity of affected communities particularly women, children, and persons living with disabilities, fostering an environment prioritizing safety, empowerment, and equity for disaster-affected communities.

The risk of the volcano has now been downgraded since the time of the eruption. As such, 2,000 (385 households) of the 6,864 displaced people (1,353 households) have now safely returned to their villages of origin. The remaining 4,864 individuals (968 households) many of whom originate from the high-risk zone have remained in Sovula, Kabaya, and Bakada care centres until further advice from the EOC.



IOM and local authorities distributing relief supplies to displaced persons in West New Britain province © Sharlene Kendo IOM

IOM also worked in partnership with the WNB Provincial Disaster Centre and distributed NFIs donated by the Australian Government, promoting an equitable, coordinated, and effective humanitarian assistance targeting persons displaced to the care centers.

"We thank USAID, the Australian Government and IOM for their continued support in undertaking the needs assessment, beneficiary targeting, and delivery of life-saving assistance to the displaced people," said Clement Bailey, WNB Acting Provincial Disaster Coordinator and EOC Controller.

You have enkindled hope for this community:" Paipeli Community Launch and Implement Gender-Inclusive and Climate Responsive Peace for Development Plan

IOM in partnership with the Papua New Guinea Government formally launched the Community Peace for Development Plan (CPDP) in communities of Paipeli, Tingo and Edauwi in Hela province.

IOM worked closely with local churches in Paipeli community to successfully launch Paipeli's CPDP on 7 November 2023.

The CPDP integrates peacebuilding, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

The plan was developed and launched with financial assistance from the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UN PBF) and is a direct result of IOM-led training, inclusive community-level planning, and community wide discussions. These discussions included inputs from women, youth, faith-based organizations, partners, and local authorities (provincial, district and local level).

Lord Mayor for Tari Urban Local Level Government, Honourable Andaja Jali thanked UN PBF and IOM for the initiative to promote peace, address hazard risks and empower women and youth to tackle man-made and natural hazard risks that threaten peace.

"Paipeli was a thriving community over a decade ago, but the past few years of conflict destroyed several properties and affected many people. You have enkindled hope for this community. This project has empowered women, men and youth of Paipeli for the betterment of their community," he said.

He commended Paipeli community members for developing the plan and enforcing children's rights to education at a community level, through the construction of an elementary school classroom block in Paipeli.

"Violence in pockets of Hela province at times resulted in children missing school owing to security reasons. This is the one of the reasons why the community decided to build this classroom block under the IOM's supported CPDP priority interventions," said a woman leader, Mary Tapo during the launch of the plan and opening of the elementary school block constructed under the project.

"We used to worry about the safety of our children when they walk to school. Mothers would occasionally take the children to school further putting themselves at risk of violence especially during tribal fighting times in the province. Worrying about our children's safety when attending school is now a thing of the past," she added.

Jukari Tawai, Chairperson of the Paipeli Ward Committee highlighted the community's continued collaboration with the Hela Provincial Education Office to strengthen support for children's learning in a safe and peaceful environment. "The CPDP is a huge millstone for the community. It will help to promote community resilience and peace," he highlighted.

The project also supported Paipeli with the building of a rainwater catchment to improve community water security. The water catchment will improve storage and

access to safe drinking water during times of water stress and natural hazards such as drought.

The water supply intervention will also help reduce tensions and risk of conflict that result from water shortage.

The launch of the Paipeli community plan was attended by over 300 people, including Paipeli community members, government, churches, and community service organizations. The Hela Provincial Community Development Officer and Tari Town Manager also attended.

IOM Builds Peace for Conflict-torn Communities

On 21 December 2023, the Southern Highlands province witnessed a historic moment as four previously warring communities in the Kagua-Erave District (Pira 1, Pira 2, Mapata 1 and Mapata 2) signed a peace agreement to end years of fighting between the wards.

Throughout the time of conflicts that began in October 2022, IOM has been collaborating closely with the Kagua-Erave District and Southern Highlands Provincial Administration. Such collective efforts helped facilitate mediation between the warring parties and contributed to the development of the Peace Agreement.



The Southern Highlands Province witnessed a historic moment as four previously warring communities in the Kagua-Erave District signed a peace agreement to end years of fighting between the wards. © Sebastian Hurokoli/IOM



IOM, government staff and members of Pira community at the launch of the community peace for develop plan and health facility supported by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund and IOM. © Sebastian Hurokoli/IOM

Working with the local communities to arrange community sessions on peacebuilding framework, IOM also supported the construction of a health centre and a market facility in the Kagua-Erave district, providing the community members with access to healthcare services, and a facility for women to sell their products and produce.

Meanwhile, IOM conducted peacebuilding trainings for community leaders, ‘warlords’ and ex-combatants, and the covered topics included gender sensitization and youth advocacy. These actions were crucial to paving the way for a peace accord. “Peace has finally arrived after years of suffering and loss,” said Serhan Aktoprak, IOM PNG Chief of Mission. “Now that we have achieved it, we should maintain and direct all our energy to fighting illiteracy, unemployment and social problems to actively eradicate the risks of future conflicts. IOM is ready to support all efforts to help the people of this beautiful land prosper.”

Welcoming the vision of peace for his community, Yarks Keria, an ex-combatant, stated “so many things that were earned through sacrifice and hard work were destroyed, and innocent lives were lost to the conflicts. As of today, on behalf of the youth, we say no to this.”

Grateful for the trust and cooperation of the involved local communities, IOM will continue its efforts to deliver peace across Papua New Guinea.

This Partnership Has Saved Lives”: IOM, USAID and Disaster Centres Deliver Aid in Papua New Guinea’s Highlands

IOM, working in partnership with the national, and provincial disaster centres in the Highlands provinces of Papua New Guinea distributed food rations to vulnerable households affected by election related violence in Enga, Southern Highlands, Hela and Jiwaka.



Displacement-affected women shed tears as they welcome assistance from USAID/BHA and IOM in Jiwaka province. © Thomas Mek/IOM

It has been over a year since election-related violence broke out in Papua New Guinea’s Highlands region, displacing several local communities.

Food crop gardens and shelters have been damaged in the wake of the violence, adversely affecting the livelihoods of the local population.

IOM, through the generous financial assistance of USAID/BHA continued to deliver much-needed aid to affected communities.



IOM distributing food rations to communities affected by election related violence in the Highlands. © Thomas Mek/ IOM

Food rations of rice, cooking oil, tinned fish, sugar, and salt have been distributed to 750 households comprising of 3,975 people .

Relief efforts targeted households headed by women, elderly people, and those hosting people living with disability. These groups were identified through IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix information.

Community leaders and women from these areas shed tears as they noted the hardships that affected groups were dealing with, especially in providing meals for their households.

"It will take months for us to replant and harvest our crop fields destroyed during the fighting. Providing enough food for households has been difficult and we

are thankful to USAID and IOM for this assistance," said a women's representative, Mambu Gene.

"We faced several difficulties and many families had to skip meals. We did not have enough money to buy food and this help is appreciated," she added.

"This is first of its kind the displaced persons receive such assistance," said local community member Michael Kuman, as he received two months' worth of food rations on behalf of his household. Kuman noted that the food rations would sustain them until the upcoming harvest time.

Jiwaka Provincial Disaster Coordinator, John Kupul extended his thanks to the people and government of the United States for supporting affected communities. He appreciated the partnership of IOM and Jiwaka Provincial Disaster Centre, made possible through funding from the USAID/BHA.

Kupul noted that this partnership will go a long way to improve the lives of the most vulnerable populations. "This partnership has saved lives," he said.

IOM through USAID/BHA has improved food security for 5,300 people from 1,000 households in Enga, Hela, Southern Highlands and Jiwaka provinces through distribution of two months' supply of food rations.



Photo: IOM and government staff delivering aid to displacement-affected communities in Hela province. © Philip Nere/IOM

IOM and USAID Assist Communities Displaced by Mt. Bagana Volcano Eruption Return Home

Three months after the eruption of Mount Bagana volcano that displaced thousands of people in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (AROB), IOM in line with the Government efforts helped the entire affected population recover and safely return home.

Since the volcanic activities surrounding the area subsided, the Autonomous Bougainville Government facilitated the return of the displaced communities to their homes.

IOM, alongside district disaster management teams comprised of the police, district officials and community representatives, worked tirelessly to assist the affected populations in going back to where they lived before the eruption.

IOM's efforts to address the mobility aspect and well-being of displaced populations included the provision of logistics, delivery of core relief items, and improving access to safe drinking water.

Through IOM and USAID/BHA support, all 3,920 persons displaced by the volcano eruption safely returned to their homes.

To deploy assisting teams to the identified care centres in AROB and deliver the services more effectively, IOM partnered with national and sub-national disaster centres.

The care centres served as temporary communal shelters where people sought accommodation during displacement and received humanitarian assistance such as food, water and healthcare.

"We worked closely with the Autonomous Bougainville Government and IOM colleagues in response planning.

Our effort also extended to coordinating the delivery of services at the care centres," said Robin Yakumb, Western Highlands Provincial Disaster Coordinator.

"It is an opportunity for us to apply the knowledge and skills received from various trainings, including those delivered by IOM. I would also like to thank the Western Highlands Provincial Government and the National Disaster Centre for their coordination, support and continued partnership with IOM to enhance preparedness and response efforts of the local community," added Robin.

Strengthening Disaster Preparedness in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville

On 21 November 2023, Lemanmanu community in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville opened a new evacuation route stairway, to allow emergency response in the case of a tsunami.



IOM worked with the Lemanmanu community to build the stairway. This was achieved with funding support from USAID/BHA, and partnership with the National Disaster Centre and Autonomous Bougainville Government.

This is a priority project under the Lemanmanu's Community-Based Disaster Risk Management Plan.

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