



# HEALTH ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL CYCLONE SEROJA RESPONSE

## Who is Health Alliance International?

Health Alliance International is a Seattle-based nonprofit organization and Center of the University of Washington's Department of Global Health. For 30+ years, HAI has partnered with ministries of health in the countries where we work to strengthen public sector health systems. Our multi-tiered systems-based approach to improving health service delivery is bolstered by the expertise of our UW faculty-implementers and our 150+ local staff.

In Timor-Leste, Health Alliance International currently operates multiple projects in coordination with the Timor-Leste Ministry of Health, focusing in particular on work in maternal and child health, clinical skill development, and community health promotion activities.

HAI is a registered 501(c)(3) making all donations 100% tax-deductible.

- Nonprofit & UW Center
- 30+ years
- Model – work with MOH to strengthen health system
- Diverse portfolio in Timor– MCH, mHealth, family planning nutrition, training the health workforce, evaluation & research, data quality

## What do we know about Cyclone Seroja and its aftermath?

Cyclone Seroja hit Timor-Leste on 4 April 2021. There has been widespread power and communications outages and severe flooding in the capital city of Dili and other lowland areas. At least 11,000 Timorese have been displaced.

While damage is still being assessed, initial reports suggest widespread infrastructural damage, including health infrastructure. The central pharmacy warehouse was flooded causing damage to medical supplies and equipment. Several main roads have been destroyed—literally falling into the river or the sea—and many people who live along river beds lost their homes, with the water simply pulling houses into the river.

In addition to fatalities from the storm (42 as of April 9), the immediate public health impact includes countless injuries, food and clean water shortages, and the threat of increased transmission of waterborne and vector transmitted (e.g. dengue) diseases. In addition, with **COVID-19 spiking in the country since early March**, Dili residents had already been under a hard lockdown since March 8th. Many people had suffered economically due to the ban on non-food related business activities including public transport. The current post-flood situation will have severely exacerbated this hardship for many, adding displacement in crowded temporary shelters along with damage to health system infrastructure and supplies/equipment as factors that could exacerbate the spread of COVID-19 and pose additional public health threats to anyone in need of medical attention or critical medicines.

- 11,000+ displaced
- Damage to homes, roads, bridges, schools and health facilities
- COVID-19 is spiking adding additional urgency
- Physical & mental health impact
- Long-term health risk when system down

## Why is HAI participating in the response?

HAI has called Timor-Leste home for more than 20 years, making us one of the longest standing international NGOs with an uninterrupted presence in the country. In that time, we have built enduring and deep relationships with the Ministry of Health at national and municipal levels throughout the country.

Our staff on the ground, though many were personally hit hard by the cyclone, are committed to being part of the response as is our Seattle-based leadership, many of whom have worked on HAI Timor-Leste programs for years.

With 30+ staff on the ground, 20+ years of building relationships in the affected region, and recent experience in this work, HAI is well positioned to help with coordination of the health sector response between government agencies, international NGOs, and donors looking to support locally-identified priorities.

- Dili is home
- Deep knowledge of region
- Relationships and Partnerships
- Recognized by MOH for response model
- 30+ staff on the ground



## How is HAI supporting the Cyclone Seroja response?

HAI is not an emergency response agency and we recognize the incredible work and resource-pooling power of those that have decades of experience responding to humanitarian crises like Cyclone Seroja. Nevertheless, we believe that HAI's existing presence in Timor-Leste and local relationships means we have something to contribute to the overall relief efforts.

HAI's organizational model is to listen to and respond to the priorities of the national health systems where we work. In a crisis situation, this need is particularly strong given that multiple actors are often engaged in a complex relief effort. Following Cyclone Seroja, the Timor-Leste Ministry of Health requested that HAI provide support in conducting assessments of health facilities and evacuation camps, as well as assist with distribution of maternity kits to pregnant women and women with newborns and young babies in evacuation camps.

HAI has worked in and around the affected area for more than 20 years and we will remain. We will be there to help rebuild and continue to strengthen the health system.

- HAI responds to the priorities of the MoH
- Health facility and evacuation camp assessments w/MoH
- Maternity kits for displaced pregnant women and families
- Long-term health system rebuild and re-strengthening planning & implementation

## What can people do to get involved

The little news coverage that Seroja has received internationally downplayed the impact of the Cyclone. The disaster is compounded by a sharp spike in COVID-19 infections over the past two months. Individual contributions to HAI, and especially recurring donations via HAI's Viva! Circle, make a significant difference in our capacity to maintain ongoing support to the health system response.

You can donate to HAI on our website or by check or wire transfer to HAI's HQ office in Seattle.

More than anything we recommend that people talk about Cyclone Seroja with friends and family, share stories, and help direct others to information about recovery efforts and the ongoing needs of cyclone-affected communities in Timor-Leste.

You can also follow HAI on social media where we will continue to share updates, images, and more as it becomes available:

Website: [www.HealthAllianceInternational.org](http://www.HealthAllianceInternational.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/HealthAllianceInternational](https://www.facebook.com/HealthAllianceInternational)

[www.facebook.com/HealthAllianceInternationalTimorLeste](https://www.facebook.com/HealthAllianceInternationalTimorLeste)

Twitter: [@hai\\_1987](https://twitter.com/hai_1987)

Instagram: [@HealthAllianceInternational](https://www.instagram.com/HealthAllianceInternational)

- Visit HAI's Website
- Donate to HAI
- Join HAI's Viva! Circle
- Stay updated
- Share stories
- Ask friends to join you in your support

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**JOIN HAI's VIVA! CIRCLE**

**OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT**

