



OFFICE OF THE
PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION UNIT

MEDIA RELEASE

14-04-14-GH

LILO AND SIKUA DROVE THROUGH FLOOD STRICKEN GUADALCANAL

Prime Minister Gordon Darcy Lilo and Opposition Leader Dr Derek Sikua have visited the Guadalcanal Plains and the Gold Ridge mine on Sunday in a mission to witness the scale and impact of the recent rain and floods on Guadalcanal.

The Guadalcanal Plains and the interior Gold Ridge area are important regions that host two of the country's major companies, the Guadalcanal Plains Palm Oil Limited (GPPOL) and Gold Ridge.

Immediately after the recent floods, Prime Minister Lilo had made an aerial visit to the flood hit areas to view the impact from the air while Sunday's joint visit with the Opposition Leader was aimed at getting first-hand information and to witness the ground situation in those areas.

At Tetere in GPPOL, Prime Minister Lilo made a brief stopover at a road-side market where he met people including women and children who have informed him of the post disaster difficulties they have faced.

Many have expressed disappointment over the slow response from relevant authorities, especially, the Guadalcanal Provincial authorities for failing to provide immediate humanitarian assistance to affected communities.

Most victims are currently being sheltered at the Tetere Correctional Center.

Moving further east, Prime Minister Lilo and Dr Sikua stopped over at the Balasuna Bridge which was able to withstand the floods. The situation at Balasuna has given the two leaders a picture of how important infrastructure such as bridges should be designed to resist severe flooding in the future.

In North East Guadalcanal, the two leaders viewed damages to the unsealed road east of Barande River in the Tasiboko area.

The road connects North East Guadalcanal and East Guadalcanal constituencies with Honiara as well important institutions such as Rauvatu Secondary school and Aola substation in the east.

The damages have indicated a need for major repairs and proper drainage systems to prevent water from road erosion during severe weather conditions.

Dr Sikua whose North East Guadalcanal constituency has been affected appreciated the Prime Minister's mission to visit the area.

"I thank you for your courage to visit this area and I hope that what you have seen on the ground will make you appreciate the situation here to help the government respond to people's immediate needs while planning for the long-term reconstruction process," Dr Sikua said.

The scale of the disaster has affected mostly, farming communities in the plains including GPPOL's newly planted oil palm trees which were flattened by the floods at some estates near the Ngalibiu River.

At Gold ridge, the two leaders have visited the tailings dam which has attracted concerns over the risk that the dam poses to downstream populations in events of severe rainy seasons.

The Australian Company, Saint Barbra which operated the mine has temporarily suspended operations early last week as a result of poor weather conditions.

Prime Minister Lilo has openly expressed concerns over the rising water level in wake of the cyclone season which puts the dam at risk of overflowing into downstream communities.

He assured the nation that the government will sought expert assistance to find ways of preventing the dam from any possible overflow.

An estimated 8000 people are likely to be affected if the dam bursts downstream.

Prime Minister Lilo was satisfied with the visit and assured the nation that he will make every effort to ensure that short-term humanitarian response will be boosted to help people restart their lives while government authorities work to restore infrastructure in the long term.

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See picture below



PM Lilo and Dr Sikua on the Balasuna Bridge on Sunday. The bridge has been cleared off debris and is now accessible for vehicles.



PM Lilo meets people at Tetera, GPPOL



PM Lilo pays attention while Dr Sikua stresses a point



PM Lilo and Dr Sikua briefed by PS Environment and PS MID at the Gold Ridge tailings Dam on Sunday



PM Lilo briefed by a chemical expert at the Gold Ridge tailings Dam



The Gold Ridge Tailings Dam which is at risk of overflowing if heavy rain persists in coming weeks



Damage to newly planted oil palm trees at GPPOL



PS MID Moses Virivolomo briefs PM Lilo and Dr Sikua at the Gold Ridge tailings dam



Heavy Machinery at Gold Ridge Mine



The Processing plant at Gold Ridge Mine. Saint Barbra which operates the mine has halted operations following the recent severe weather conditions.