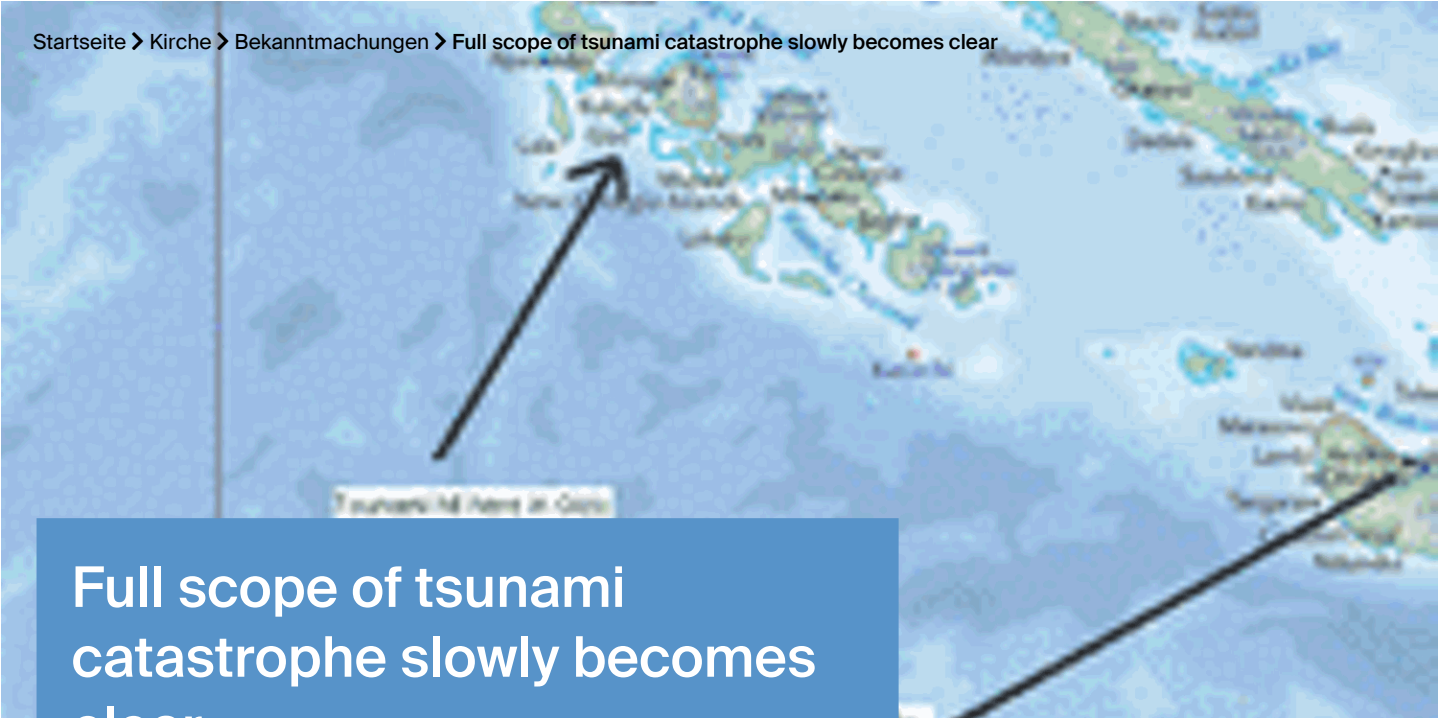




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Full scope of tsunami catastrophe slowly becomes clear

Graphic: NAC Australia

Sydney. At the start of April, a metre-high tsunami swept over parts of the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific. Some 50,000 people have been directly affected, including some New Apostolic families (we reported). In the meantime we have learned the sad news that the family of the Evangelist Luther, who works on the island of Gizo, has been especially hard hit: the rector's mother and two cousins all lost their lives in the disaster.

Otherwise our members on the islands are in good health. Four of our church buildings have been totally flattened however, as the rocks were simply unable to withstand the power of the waters. District Apostle Andrew Andersen from Australia, who is responsible for the archipelago of the Solomon Islands, writes the following in his report: "Our District Elder Bolana Deve was on the island at the time the disaster struck. He was among the very first in a position to provide first aid." He goes on to relate that the local members are also being helped in cooperation with the Red Cross.

District Apostle Andersen: "Further help is not required at the moment. As soon as the people are able to resume their normal lives, we will replace the damage that has resulted from the disaster."

UNICEF reports that over 2,500 houses were destroyed and that some 25,000 people have become homeless as a consequence of the tsunami which struck the Solomon Islands and Papua-New Guinea. Metre-high waves devastated numerous coastal villages on the islands on 2 April. A total of 50,000 people have been directly

affected by the devastation. At present, efforts are underway to supply water to thousands of people living in emergency shelters that are filled beyond capacity.

20. April 2007