Tonga battered by Cyclone Gita

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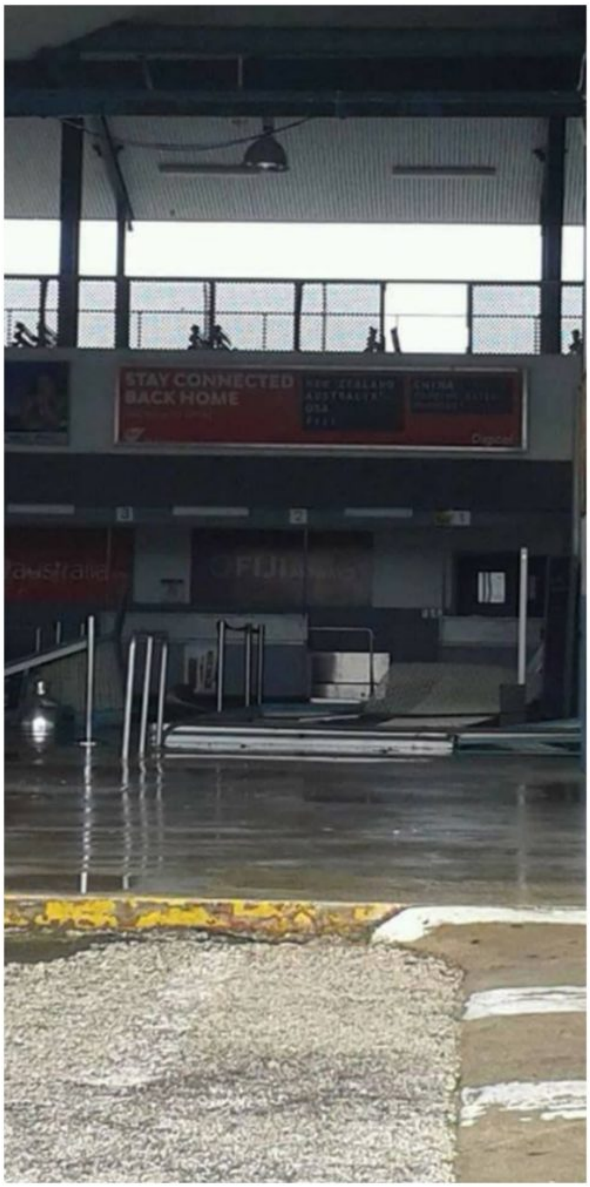
15 February, 2018

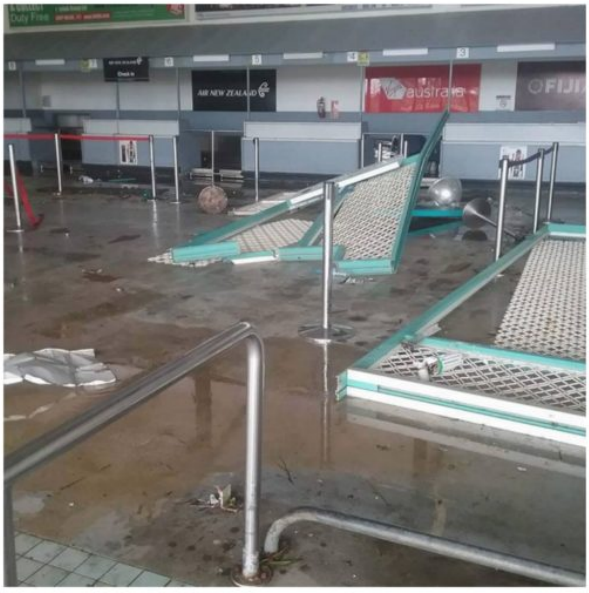
On Feb 14, operations resumed at Tonga's main international airport, NFTF/Fua'amotu, after it was closed for 2 days for the passage of Tropical Cyclone Gita.

The cyclone caused extensive damage across Tonga, and the government has declared a state of emergency. According to the British Met office, Gita was the most powerful Cyclone to hit Tonga in over 60 years, battering the island nation with winds of over 120kts at its peak.

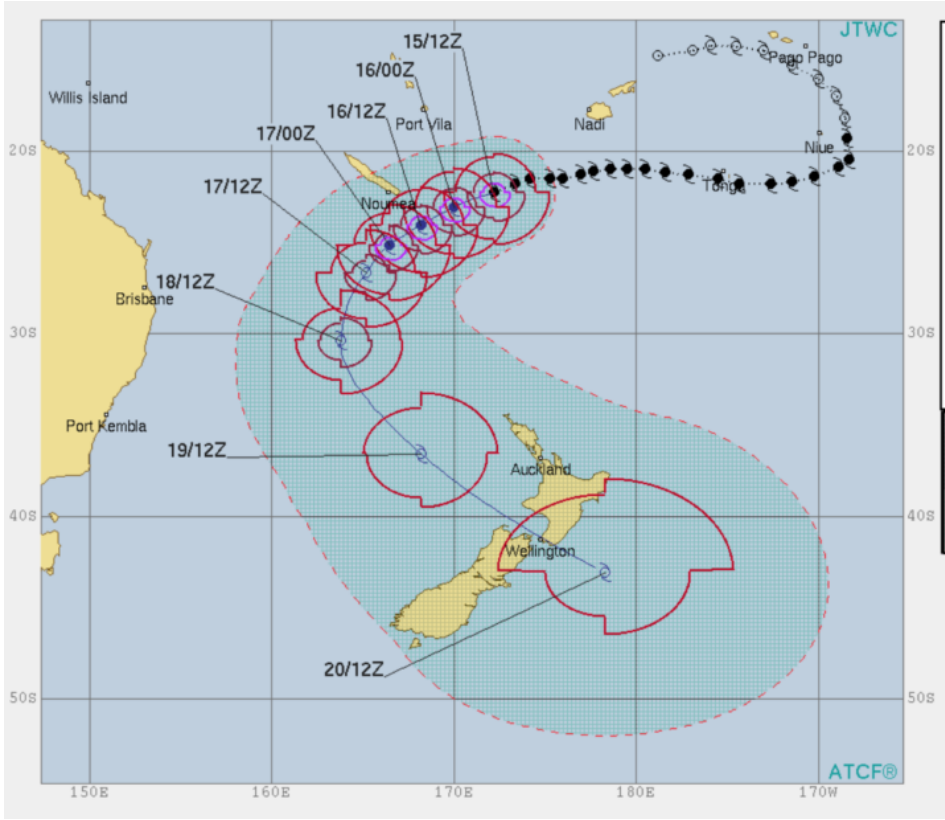
At least 30 people were reportedly injured during the storm, and around half the buildings suffered damage in Nuku'alofa, the capital of Tonga. Roads across the main island of Tongatapu have been obstructed by storm wreckage and downed power lines, and widespread power outages have also been reported.

At the airport itself, the domestic terminal is still closed due to damage sustained in the storm, and now all domestic flights are using the international terminal instead. Here's some photos of the damage at the airport:





Gita has since moved westwards into open waters as the equivalent of a Category 4 hurricane, with winds of over 100kts, but it’s now expected to head south-west across the ocean, narrowly avoiding direct hits on Vanuatu and New Caledonia – although heavy rain, strong winds and storm surge will affect these areas.



TROPICAL CYCLONE 09P (GITA) WARNING #27
WTPS31 PGTW 151500
151200Z POSIT: NEAR 22.3S 172.2E
MOVING 245 DEGREES TRUE AT 12 KNOTS
MAXIMUM SIGNIFICANT WAVE HEIGHT: 30 FEET
15/12Z, WINDS 100 KTS, GUSTS TO 125 KTS
16/00Z, WINDS 090 KTS, GUSTS TO 110 KTS
16/12Z, WINDS 075 KTS, GUSTS TO 090 KTS
17/00Z, WINDS 065 KTS, GUSTS TO 080 KTS
17/12Z, WINDS 060 KTS, GUSTS TO 075 KTS
18/12Z, WINDS 050 KTS, GUSTS TO 065 KTS
19/12Z, WINDS 045 KTS, GUSTS TO 055 KTS
20/12Z, WINDS 040 KTS, GUSTS TO 050 KTS

CPA TO:	NM	DTG
PORT_VILA	336	15/22Z
NOUMEA	163	16/16Z
KINGSTON_IS.	211	18/03Z

BEARING AND DISTANCE	DIR	DIST (NM)	TAU (HRS)
NOUMEA	093	339	0
PORT_VILA	142	353	0

LESS THAN 34 KNOTS
34-63 KNOTS
MORE THAN 63 KNOTS
FORECAST CYCLONE TRACK
PAST CYCLONE TRACK
DENOTES 34 KNOT WIND DANGER AREA/USN SHIP AVOIDANCE AREA
FORECAST 34/50/64 KNOT WIND RADII