

Letters to the Editor, March 19, 2015

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Waves batter the coast of Port Vila, Vanuatu. Photo: AP

Storm has no link to global warming

Super Cyclone Pam has caused widespread devastation in Vanuatu.

The best explanation for the formation of this cyclone is not global warming but regional warming of a portion of the southern Pacific Ocean triggered by the eruption of a submarine volcano off Tonga since December.

Similarly, the submarine eruption of the El Hierro volcano between October 2011 and March 2012 in the Canary Islands archipelago switched on hot seawater in the North Atlantic Ocean.

This was responsible for extreme weather events including Hurricane Sandy, which devastated New York, in addition to a long succession of frontal activity storms causing severe flooding in Britain during 2012.

Policymakers serious about disaster risk reduction, including UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, should take it as a wake-up call that all severe weather events I have mentioned were naturally driven climatic disasters.

The UN Climate Change Conference in December, in Paris, will attempt yet again to reach agreement on reducing carbon dioxide emission, but this cannot be the solution.

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