

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

INDONESIA ALOR EARTHQUAKE

16 November 2004

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilising the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organisation and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

In Brief

This Information Bulletin (no. 01/2004) is being issued

- **based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 100,000 has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, or should the situation deteriorate, the Federation may consider international support through an Emergency Appeal.**

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Situation

Indonesian Red Cross (Palang Merah Indonesia or PMI) volunteers and staff are working around the clock trying to get assistance to thousands of people on the island of Alor in eastern Indonesia, approximately 1,100 km east of Bali (putting the island off the north coast of Timor-Leste), which was hit on Friday morning by an earthquake measuring 7.5 on the Richter scale (US Geological Survey reading). The total population of Alor is approximately 170,000. The epicentre of the quake was approximately 35 km east of Kalabahi, the main town on the island. Aftershocks continue to rock Alor, the latest on Tuesday morning measuring 4.6 on the Richter scale.

Following the earthquake 25 people are confirmed dead, 108 severely injured and another 115 suffered lesser injuries. The two latest deaths were attributed to aftershocks on Monday. There are fears that more bodies could be found as rescue workers are able to access outlying areas.

At least 733 houses collapsed and nearly 7,500 have been damaged. Hundreds of aftershocks have been recorded, dozens of them felt by the population. Thousands of people are sleeping outdoors. Villagers along the coastline were initially urged to move at least 200 m inland to avoid possible; tidal waves are reported to have hit a few smaller islands and islets without causing serious damage.

Local media reported this morning that there is urgent need for more tents to provide shelter for the families whose homes have been destroyed. Large tents already available have been set up outside the main hospital in Kalabahi to treat the injured.

The Indonesian government's disaster relief agency is distributing rice, noodles, water and shelter materials while the provincial Social Department is also distributing rice (5 tonnes presently), dried noodles, canned fish, kitchen utensils, used clothing, two generators and four large tents. Several local and international NGOs are beginning to provide support, including MSF-Belgium (emergency team with medicines), Catholic Relief Services (family kits) and WorldVision (food, medicine and shelter). The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is assessing the situation; USAID and AusAID are providing support to PMI's operation through the International Federation. The relief efforts are being coordinated by the Indonesian government.

In addition to the homes destroyed, 12 religious buildings have collapsed, another 114 are badly damaged and 38 have sustained lighter damage. Three schools collapsed, 48 sustained serious damage and another 40 show lighter damage. Fourteen office buildings collapsed, 86 suffered heavy damage and another 38 lighter damage.



Map courtesy of BBC World

A number of remote communities on the rugged island are still cut off with little or no information coming out. Efforts are being made to ascertain damage and injuries in these areas. Travel around the island is very difficult. Many roads, which are relatively old, are inaccessible to cars. Most initiatives are being carried out by volunteers on motorcycles; on Tuesday morning a relief team left on foot to assess the situation in several villages. A representative from the government's relief centre in Kalabahi told news agencies over the weekend that the entire population of Northeast Alor, about 8,000 people, had been left homeless by the quake which destroyed every building in the district.

Limited government relief support is being brought into the four hardest hit subdistricts by boat. The airport runway sustained damages during the quake but is now open to emergency traffic. PMI's volunteers and staff in Alor report that large transport planes are able to land there.

Electricity is down in most parts of the island. Water is being trucked around the main town of Kalabahi, people in the affected subdistricts are making use of traditional wells. Communication from Kalabahi to outlying areas is only possible by radio.

Red Cross Action

PMI currently has a dozen volunteers and staff in Alor, including the Federation's disaster management programme officer, seeking to assess the situation and provide first aid services to the injured. A mobile technical unit from PMI's chapter in Kupang, West Timor (East Nusa Tenggara province) was despatched by ferry to Alor on Friday carrying basic relief equipment.

The first airplane to land on the island after the earthquake was chartered by PMI and the Federation, with support from AusAID and USAID, carrying disaster managers from PMI's national office and the Bali chapter, along with body bags, medicines, mosquito nets, a generator and tarpaulins for 250 families.

Further supplies and trained PMI volunteers sent by boat on Sunday has so far only managed to reach one of the nine affected districts. Supplies to cater for the immediate needs of up to 1,000 families are on the way from PMI's regional logistics centre in Surabaya in eastern Java.

On Tuesday morning PMI's chairman, the society's relief coordinator and the Federation's disaster management delegate flew from Jakarta to Kupang and are surveying the affected area today by helicopter. PMI's national office and the Federation's delegation await their preliminary findings to decide on the extent of the Red Cross and Red Crescent support to the stricken island. The situation is being closely monitored by PMI's national office and the Federation's delegation in Jakarta.

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