

# 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: POPULATION INFLUX*

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This Information Bulletin is for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this Indonesian Red Cross operation at this time.

### *The Situation*

Tens of thousands of young Indonesian migrant workers, many of them considered illegal by the Malaysian government, have been steadily moving across the Sabah-Kalimantan border into Nunukan district, East Kalimantan since May 2002. The influx of these migrant workers, from East Malaysia to Nunukan island, has been linked to the cut-off date of 31 August 2002 for enforcement of a new Malaysian immigration law.

The health status of migrant workers in Nunukan is poor. The town has no hospital and relies on the services of one health clinic. Limited water sources on the island, where resident populations reportedly experience water shortages in the dry season, has led to scarcity in safe drinking water for migrant workers. Water is often collected from small rivers, which also function as giant latrines. Between May and August, asthma, diarrhoea and malaria were among the leading causes of 68 reported deaths. Emergency food kitchens, run by the Indonesian government and other agencies, provide modest meals for migrant workers who otherwise have limited means to prepare food. Shelter is often non-existent, with almost no protection and items such as blankets, sleeping mats and bednets unavailable. Most migrant workers live where space is can be found - shop verandahs, mosques and government buildings. Some are provided accommodation by host communities.

Of the approximately 162,000 migrant workers who arrived in Nunukan four months ago, 68,000 have since returned to their homes in South Sulawesi, East/West Nusa Tenggara and Java. A further 76,000 have moved back to the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak with renewed work permits. As of early September some 18,000 people still remain on the island according to an Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) field representative. Most workers are aged between 20-40, roughly 30% of them female. The group also includes some 3,000 children under the age of five and there are no signs that the remaining population is unlikely to stay in Nunukan for an extended period of time.

The local government will continue to provide essential shelter, food and health services, made possible with a recent central government aid package of nearly CHF115,000. An Indonesian

naval ship, now en route to Nunukan, will provide a 200-bed referral hospital, desalinification machine and drilling equipment for tube-well installation. Other humanitarian organisations continue to provide returnees with cooked food (rice and dry fish) as well as basic health treatment.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

In anticipation of the influx of migrant workers, seven PMI chapters/branches located at Indonesian/Malaysian transit and arrival points were ready to respond by 6 August 2002. An initial assessment of the situation in Nunukan, conducted by PMI headquarters on 18 August, subsequently led to the establishment of a health post with two full-time doctors and three nurses. On 3 September, a floating hospital with 10 PMI volunteers departed for Nunukan from Jakarta. Future intervention by PMI includes establishment of an ambulance team and deployment of specialist doctors, including one paediatrician, to support the local Public Health Centre.

PMI says no international assistance is being requested at this stage.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)

*For further details please contact :*

- *The Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) in Jakarta ; Phone 6221 799 2325; Fax 6221 799 5188; email [disaster@palangmerah.org](mailto:disaster@palangmerah.org)*
- *Sandra Rosner, Phone 41 22 730 4456; Fax 41 22 733 0395; email <[rosner@ifrc.org](mailto:rosner@ifrc.org)>*

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*For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.*

John Horekens  
Director  
Division of External Relations

Simon Missiri  
Head  
Asia Pacific Department