

INDONESIA: CIVIL UNREST

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The Disaster

On Thursday 14 May, following an extended period of localised unrest across the Indonesian archipelago, violence erupted on the streets of the capital Jakarta. Early unconfirmed reports suggest that as many as 200 people have been killed and high numbers of injured have been arriving at hospitals and medical centres. As looting continues the Indonesian authorities are making every effort to restore order and the government is holding an emergency session to discuss the situation.

The violence is thought to be a direct result of increasing economic and social hardship in Indonesia — a phenomenon that has affected much of the Southeast Asia region.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Indonesian Red Cross Society (Palang Merah Indonesia or PMI), has been operational from the start of the unrest in Jakarta, with the local Chapter and five Branches mobilising 15 ambulances and 200 staff and volunteers. Ambulances have mainly been used to bring the injured to hospital (173 were assisted on Thursday), but have also helped to transport victims of ethnic tension to places of safety and brought a number of people to the airport. Each ambulance is working around the clock and staffed by four to six volunteers. First aid teams are a crucial component of the operation.

The Movement is working together on this operation. The Federation Representative in Jakarta is currently working with PMI and liaising with ICRC, whilst the Kuala Lumpur based Federation Regional Information Delegate is providing media and information support. ICRC is expected to provide additional medical supplies for the ambulances and first aid teams from its buffer stock, pre-positioned in Jakarta.

The Federation representative and information delegate have given interviews to a number of news organisations, including BBC World Service, and can be made available to journalists contacting National Societies — please refer in the first instance to the Secretariat Media Service in Geneva (++4122 7304480) or the Kuala Lumpur Regional Delegation (++603 4519359). The Media Service mobile phone number (outside office hours) is ++ 4179 4163881.

Regular updates are being posted to the International Federation's "Direct From the Field" page at www.ifrc.org/news/dftf

Needs

Needs are not clear at this time. There will be a number of meetings today (Friday) that will take place in Jakarta when strategies for support to PMI and roles of the Federation and ICRC are expected to be discussed. However, given the degree of unrest and the overall situation of the most vulnerable of Jakarta, it is expected that assistance to meet both emergency and rehabilitation needs will be required.

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