

# ***INDONESIA: FLOODS***

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### ***The Disaster***

The city of Samarinda in the Indonesian province of East Kalimantan on the island of Borneo was inundated when a 20 metre high dam broke on Sunday, 2 August, after weeks of heavy rain. Flooding spread across 7,000 hectares, including residential areas of the city. In many places the water was about two metres deep. At least four people died and 100,000 had to evacuate their homes. Air traffic was disrupted when the airport was covered by one metre of water. Some 500 hectares of crops have been lost.

In the immediate aftermath, residents were seen perched on rooftops and patients at hospitals had to be moved elsewhere. Public facilities have been damaged, including the local Red Cross office. The waters are now receding.

The disaster was unusual, since July onwards is normally a dry season in Indonesia. Meteorologists linked the heavy rains to the start of La Niña, a phenomenon that sometimes follows the El Niño weather pattern. They predict La Niña will cause extreme weather conditions in Indonesia, with the threat of floods, hurricanes and tidal waves, over the next eight to 12 months.

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

Youth Red Cross volunteers are working in the ten evacuation centres set up for the homeless. They have distributed some 10 tonnes of rice. The Indonesian Red Cross is planning to fly in clothes, kitchen utensils, baby sets and hygiene kits to the city from its headquarters in Jakarta. A blood transfusion unit in the Red Cross office in Samarinda, which was put out of action by the floodwaters, is operational again.

### ***Needs***

So far the Indonesian Red Cross has managed with its own resources and it is not foreseen for the time being that outside assistance will be sought. The new Federation's Liaison Delegate, who is currently being briefed in Geneva, will take up his position in Jakarta shortly. In the meantime the Federation Regional Delegation in Kuala Lumpur is closely following up the situation.

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