

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, NORTH SULAWESI: MT.AWU: VOLCANIC ERUPTION

9 June 2004

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

In Brief

This Bulletin no. 01/2004 is being issued for information only, reflecting information available at this time. Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, or should the situation deteriorate, the Federation may consider international support through an Appeal.

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The Situation

The 1,320 metre Mount Awu on Sangihe Island in North Sulawesi Province (some 2,250 km northeast of Jakarta) became increasingly active last week (1-6 June), and began spewing ash. A magmatic eruption recorded on 7 June by the office of Vulcanology in Sangihe District and the Directorate of Vulcanology, caused the alert status to be raised to the maximum level (level 4- Red) on 6 June; with a prediction of a potentially large eruption at any time. Following instructions of the local government in Sangihe, the evacuation process commenced on the same day. Between 6 to 8 June, more than 17,000 people were evacuated (out of some 27,000 total vulnerable people -- 12,065 from Tahuna, 5,690 from Kendahe, and 9,248 from Tabukan Utara); and provided refuge in government buildings, schools, and house of prayers.

Mt. Awu is one of the most active volcanoes in Indonesia. The last eruption took place in 1992 with no casualties. A major eruption however killed 39 people in 1966; and displaced thousands of people from surrounding slopes. Constant monitoring by the vulcanologists continues. The Provincial and District Government have provided food relief and pharmaceutical supplies. The Provincial Coordinating Unit for the Management of Disaster and IDPs/Refugees of North Sulawesi (SATKORLAK PBP) has sent staff to assist in responding to the current situation; and the National Coordinating Board for the Management of Disaster and IDPs/Refugees (BAKORNAS PBP) is closely monitoring the situation and is ready to provide additional staff as the situation requires. Needs

assessments are being carried out by Church World Service (CWS) through its local partner, and UNOCHA Indonesia, in collaboration with authorities, is monitoring the situation closely and is preparing an assessment team if needed. Local authorities have indicated that food, pharmaceutical supplies, tents, blankets, plastic sheeting, and masks are currently the most needed items.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the first day of the operation, local SATGANA volunteers (PMI Sangihe branch) have been engaged in monitoring the situation, coordinating with local authorities on evacuation activities. Following an assessment, Red Cross field kitchen units were mobilized with the support of the PMI North Sulawesi chapter office. Regular communications have been set up between the Sangihe branch, the North Sulawesi chapter, and the disaster management division at PMI national headquarters. With the support of the International Federation and AusAID, two Red Cross staff persons (members of the national rapid response KHUSUS team) from PMI national headquarters will depart today (9 June) to the affected area to support the local chapter and Sangihe branch to address further immediate needs; and explore possible coordination with other agencies or organizations involved.

The PMI's national disaster management team will continue close monitoring of the situation; coordinating information sharing with the national disaster management authorities; and the International Federation.

The Federation's delegation in Jakarta has alerted its partners and potential donors to the situation.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

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