

# ***INDONESIA: VOLCANO ERUPTION***

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### ***The disaster***

Mount Merapi, Indonesia's most active volcano, started spewing burning lava ash on 17 January 1997. The authorities have alerted the public that a major eruption is possible. So far, the volcanic activity has affected four districts of Boyolali, Klaten and Magelang in Central Java province and Sleman Yogyakarta province.

Since the government alert, 3,444 people from Sleman, 5,300 from Klaten and 2,000 from Magelang have already evacuated to safer areas. Emergency tents have been located at Pakembinangun, some 20 kilometres from the tourist area of Kaliurang, the nearest slope of Mount Merapi.

Recent reports say that most of the evacuees have started returning to their homes as the situation has calmed down. There were no reports of casualties, except two persons who broke their legs during the evacuation.

### ***Red Cross/Red Crescent action***

As a member of the SATLAK (government body in charge of relief co-ordination), the Indonesian Red Cross Society joined the government relief effort by dispatching Red Cross volunteers who operated a public kitchen and offered first aid to the evacuees. Over 200 volunteers have been working on shifts of 50 volunteers per shift.

Five tents and one motorcycle were used in the operation in Sleman.

To better cope with future eruptions, the Indonesian Red Cross Society will organise a meeting which will bring together Red Cross staff in the relevant branches to discuss issues such as readiness, identification of existing resources and co-operation with the local SATLAK.

The Federation will issue further information as and when it becomes available.

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