

Fact Sheet: U.S. Response to Natural Disasters in Indonesia

The United States is partnering with the Government of Indonesia and local communities to respond to, prepare for, and mitigate the effects of natural disasters.

Mentawai Island Tsunami and Mt. Merapi Eruption

After consulting with the Government of Indonesia (GOI), the United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) pledged \$2 million in humanitarian assistance to respond to the earthquake and tsunami that affected the Mentawai Islands on October 25 and to the ongoing eruption of Mt. Merapi. USAID staff members are on the ground to assess humanitarian conditions and to determine needs in partnership with the GOI. United States Geological Survey (USGS) personnel are consulting with Indonesian authorities and are assisting with remote sensing of the volcano's activity. In the immediate aftermath of the disasters, the United States provided funds for the purchase and distribution of emergency relief supplies – such as blankets, hygiene kits, water containers, and tarpaulins – and set up logistics hubs to improve the delivery of relief items to tsunami-affected individuals.

Volcano Disaster Assistance Project

Through the USAID-funded Volcano Disaster Assistance Project, implemented by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) since 2004, the United States has partnered with the Government of Indonesia on hazard assessment training, development of early warning plans, and the installation and updating of volcano monitoring equipment. A U.S. technical assistance team has worked with the Government of Indonesia's Center of Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation to complete the construction of a seismic monitoring network in North Sulawesi, begin new monitoring network installations in Java, and conduct training in seismic interpretation to inform eruption forecasting. In August 2010, following the eruption of long-dormant Mt. Sinabung and the resulting evacuation of approximately 30,000 people, the United States donated seismic equipment to the Center of Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation, provided analysis of remotely-sensed data, and provided eruption forecasts. The United States has also donated monitoring equipment to help monitor a mud extrusion near Surabaya, Indonesia. Earlier this year and prior to the most recent eruption at Mt. Merapi, USGS provided equipment to upgrade the existing seismic monitoring network which minimized loss of life near the volcano..

U.S. Disaster Preparedness Assistance

USAID also assists with disaster preparedness, including through the Climate Adaptation and Disaster Resilience program, a community-based initiative implemented by non-governmental organizations in vulnerable regions to increase community resilience to disasters, support joint efforts with local government, and increase awareness of disaster risks. The U.S. Department of Defense has also assisted with disaster preparedness efforts in Indonesia.

Support for Disaster Risk Reduction

USAID is supporting disaster risk reduction activities in Indonesia to help communities and the GOI to better prepare for and respond to volcanoes, tsunamis, earthquakes, and other hazards. In the past two years alone USAID has funded approximately \$5 million for disaster risk reduction, with additional funding anticipated this year and in the future. USAID is partnering with the GOI and other donors to mitigate the effects of disasters by strengthening infrastructure, improving zoning to avoid construction in disaster prone areas, increasing public awareness, and improving construction practices. USAID is also encouraging local governments to institutionalize disaster risk reduction in local law and practice. In addition, USAID plans to significantly increase funding and staffing for the Volcano Disaster Assistance Project.

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