



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for
International
Development

Washington D.C.
20523

INDONESIA - Food Shortage

Date: October 1977 - April 1978 (FY 78)

Location: Paga District in Sikka Regency of Flores Island of Nusa Tenggara Timur Province; villages of Bu Utara, Bu Selatan, Renggasari, Masabewa; sub-villages of Woluara, Detuduli, Detudenu, and Wolopeo

No. Dead: 63

No. Affected: 17,220 out of a population of 18,235

Damage: Typhoons damaged or destroyed: 1,558 houses; 202 buildings; 198 hectares rice fields; 240 hectares corn fields; 96 hectares sorghum fields; 8,276 candlenut trees; 162 coconut palms; 120 orange trees; 5,562 banana trees; 5,120 bamboo trees; lemon trees, cocoa, coffee, and screwnut pine plants; 6,453 farm animals also killed

The Disaster

The difficulties of farming on mountainous Flores Island are compounded by poor farming techniques that have caused deforestation and severe erosion of fertile land. Rain then causes landslides on the denuded hillsides while unsheltered fields are also subject to damage from strong, yearly winds that come in December through February, and which have come recently with greater frequency.

By October 1977, a drought on Flores Island had destroyed 75% of its crops. Although the people expected a corn harvest in March of 1978, strong winds battered the area continuously from January 12-19, 1978, and from January 24-February 2, destroying nearly all crops and food resources.

The affected area is accessible only by foot or on horseback, and communications are poor. This, coupled with an apparent lack of interest on the part of local government officials, resulted in delay of relief to starving victims until April 1978. Only when a former Minister of Communication, himself from Flores, brought the matter to the attention of the newspapers, did any positive action begin. The Governor of Nusa Tenggara Timur Province, who died of a heart attack just after the existence of famine was revealed, admitted that his government's response had been inadequate.

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Action Taken by the Government of Indonesia (GOI) and by Indonesian Groups

Medical and paramedical teams were sent into the area after the Minister of Social Services made a personal inspection tour of the famine-stricken area from April 13-15, 1978. Two helicopters and one DC-3 aircraft plus 15 trucks were used to haul supplies to Maure, a central distribution point and capital of Sikka Regency. From there, food, medicines, and clothing were shuttled by helicopter to the most seriously affected areas. The air shuttle/drop continued from April 22 to mid-May.

Concurrent with the relief effort in Sikka Regency, the GOI provided assistance to food shortage victims in the East Flores Regency, providing 100 MT of rice, 3 MT of milk powder, 1,000 garments, 10 cases of medicines, and 2.5 million Rupiahs (approx. US\$6,031) in cash. In addition, contributions from governmental agencies were as follows: East Nusa Tenggara Dept. of Social Services (DEPSOS) Central and Provincial Offices denoted 56,224 MT of rice, 5.75 million Rupiahs (approx. US\$13,873), and over 2,000 garments; Department of Health donated 441 bags of skim milk powder, 9 crates of medicines, and 47 units of medicine. President Suharto also directed DEPSOS to earmark 212.5 million Rupiahs (approx. US\$512,666) for resettlement, and ordered housing and food to be provided for six months.

When the disaster in Flores was publicized, many Indonesian citizens, businesses, and organizations contributed to the relief effort. A few of these contributions were as follows: Indonesia Red Cross (PMI) distributed over one ton of food, medicine, and clothing; Adhiaksa Organization - 500 kg. of corn, 1 bag of salted fish, 75 garments; Air Communications Youth Association (IMADARA) - \$1,092 in cash; Arthakencana Organization - 60 kg. of rice and 12 garments; Atma Jaya Foundation (Flores Fund Raising Action) - 3,528 tins of food, 6,325 garments, and \$26,398 in cash; Bank Rakyat (Maumere) - 1 crate of Indomilk; Caltex - medicines, vitamins, and milk valued at \$24,125; Chase Manhattan Club - \$277 in cash; Civil Servant Corps of the Department of Information - \$740 in cash; Development Faction - \$2,413 in cash; Dian Ekawati Organization - 50 kg. of corn and 11 garments; Diocese of Flores - \$4,825 in cash; Ekadiata Organization - 100 kg. of rice; Employees of the Department of Information, Sikka - \$15 in cash; Employees of Maumere Airport - 100 kg. of rice; IBM Club & PT Usi Jaya - \$585 in cash; Individuals - \$2,356 worth of food, clothing, and cash; Police of Sikka - 100 garments; Prison Employees - 31 kg. of rice; Ria Pembangunan Women's Organization, Pelita Air Service, PT Kramayudha & OKD Depty - \$15,923 in relief; Unilever - 20 MT of rice.

Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

On April 27, 1978, the U.S. Ambassador determined that a disaster situation existed. In response to a formal request for assistance from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ambassador provided \$25,000 to lease a helicopter for one month to shuttle immediate relief items from a supply point at Maumere to the affected areas. Without air support the area is only accessible on horseback or on foot.....\$25,000

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In addition, P.L. 480 Title II commodities were provided during this emergency: 4.5 MT of bulgur and 2.2 tons of rolled oats through Church World Service.....\$1,435

TOTAL \$26,435

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies *

Catholic Relief Services' (CRS) Indonesian counterpart, YASPEM, set up four nutrition centers, each of which served about 150 severely malnourished children. In addition, the CRS representative expended some \$80,000 for relief, mostly from the Federal Republic of Germany

Church World Service assisted with short-term relief by providing 90 bales of clothing, and 10 bales of blankets and distributing P.L. 480 Title II commodities.

TOTAL \$80,000

Assistance Provided by the International Community *

International Organizations

The World Food Program approved a program to feed 20,000 people in Sikka and East Flores Regencies for a 6-month period using 1,440 MT of rice or bulgur.

Governments

Australia - 500 MT of rice.

TOTAL \$716,549

* Please note: the figures for total U.S. voluntary agency and international assistance are an approximation. In many cases the cash value of in kind aid is unavailable.