

OFDA
Disaster
Case Reports

Indonesia Earthquake
January 20, 1981

Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
Agency for International Development
Washington, D. C. 20523

INDONESIA - Earthquake

Data

Date: January 20, 1981 (FY 81)

Location: Jayawijaya Mountains and Solo Valley area in Kurima District of Irian Jaya province

No. Dead: 306

No. Affected: 2,682 (population of affected villages)

Damage: Fourteen villages partially or totally destroyed. Debris flows destroyed 80% of the root crop, 50% of the coconut crop (3,784 of 7,341 hectares), 50% of other vegetable crops (138 of 247 hectares) and 30% of the 5,738 hogs were lost. In addition, 127 of the 263 houses were destroyed.

The Disaster

On January 20, 1981 an earthquake registering 5.8 on the Richter scale struck the Indonesian Province of Irian Jaya on the island of New Guinea. The quake devastated a 30 by 40 mile area in the Jayawijaya Mountains and the Solo Valley, close to the border of Papua New Guinea. A total of fourteen villages were completely or partially destroyed by debris flows which measured up to 200 meters in some villages. Landslides swept away or covered 127 of the 263 houses in the area. Debris flows and landslides isolated remote villages, destroyed 80% of the root crop, buried villages, and claimed over 300 human lives. Nearly 2,000 hogs were lost and 5,735 hectares of small coconut plantations were destroyed. Debris blocked three streams of the Nagari Solo River and formed a 200 meter lake which threatened to overflow and flood the remaining crop areas.

Action Taken by the Government of Indonesia (GOI)

First reports of the earthquake in Irian Jaya reached the GOI in Jakarta on January 23. By then the GOI provincial government had organized disaster relief teams which operated from Jayapura and Wamena providing first-aid and food supplies to the earthquake victims stranded by debris flows and landslides. Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF), an international voluntary agency operating in Irian Jaya, provided air support in the form of helicopters which ferried food and relief supplies. MAF helicopters evacuated survivors from the isolated villages and relocated them to resettlement centers in Dingalla and Holuan. The provincial government and the Jayawijaya regency distributed 27,550 kgs. of rice, 185 grams of salt, 837 kgs. of vegetables, and 1,889 kgs. of sweet potatoes, as well as 2,000 blankets, 1,000 sarongs, tents, and kerosene lamps provided by the GOI.

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World Relief Commission made a cash contribution of \$17,500 to MAF to support earthquake relief efforts and expenditures.

World Vision made a cash contribution of \$5,000 to MAF to support earthquake relief efforts and expenditures.

Regions Beyond Missionary Union provided the services of an agriculturalist who was working in the Jayawijaya and Dinggila areas. This individual worked with the resettled population to reestablish crop planting.

TOTAL \$22,500

Assistance Provided by the International Community *

UN Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO) - made a cash contribution of \$11,500 to purchase and transport hand tools for agricultural use and shelter construction.

TOTAL \$11,500

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

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On February 4, the GOI Department of Social Affairs in Jakarta convened a meeting of representatives from the World Food Program, the U.N. Development Program, the U.N. Disaster Relief Office, UNICEF, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI), and other voluntary agencies to coordinate relief to the Jayawijaya disaster area.

The following week, the Minister of Public Welfare, the Chairman of Indonesia's National Disaster Relief Coordination Board, and the Ministers of several other departments visited the disaster site and resettlement areas to personally assess the damages and identify the needs of the victims. The GOI allocated \$1,349,206 for relief and rehabilitation and development of the resettlement areas. The GOI continued to provide food to the disaster victims until the newly planted crops could be harvested, and planned to construct 200 new houses for the needy. Plans also called for construction of a 10 km. road between the resettlement centers at Honuan and Dinggila. PMI contributed one metric ton of milk powder and medicines all valued at \$793. Freeport Indonesia Irian Jaya Copper Mine contributed \$10,000 to support relief efforts, and contributions totalling \$1,023 in cash, and thirteen boxes of food and clothing, were received from individuals.

Assistance provided by the United States Government

At the urgent request of the GOI, the U.S. Ambassador made a disaster determination on February 12, 1981. This activated his Disaster Assistance Authority of \$25,000 which was used to supply jet aviation fuel to operate 2 MAF Hughes 500 helicopters during the period from March through mid-June. The helicopters were used to evacuate earthquake victims and deliver relief supplies.

TOTAL \$25,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies*

Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) played a critical role during all phases of the disaster in Irian Jaya. MAF provided pilots and crews for their three helicopters and 16 Cessna aircraft which worked during the initial rescue phase evacuating earthquake survivors stranded in Sinambukbuk, Honbon, and other villages. MAF evacuated some 1,224 victims to resettlement centers at Honuan and Dinggila; they delivered food, blankets, and other relief supplies to the centers, as well as seeds and agricultural tools during the later rehabilitation phase. The value of the assistance was not reported.

This publication does not require CRB approval.

