



Photo by Josua Marunduh for Project HOPE

# Responding to the Sulawesi Island Earthquake in Indonesia

Situation Report #1  
10/2/2018

A series of powerful earthquakes, the strongest of which registered magnitude 7.4, shook the Indonesian island of Sulawesi on Friday, September 28, 2018 and triggered a tsunami which has caused widespread damage in the cities of Palu, Donggala, Parigi Moutong and Sigi<sup>i</sup>.

At this time, over 1200 fatalities have been reported as well as over 800 injuries and 100 missing persons across 934 affected villages<sup>ii</sup>. There are over 65,000 displaced from this event. As access to the affected areas improve, these numbers are expected to rise. Some hospitals have been destroyed, while those that continue to function are overwhelmed and many are facing power outages. Indonesian authorities are concerned about diseases outbreaks resulting from decomposing corpses and have started digging mass graves for victims who have been identified<sup>iii</sup>. The full extent of damage to WASH infrastructure is not clear; however, initial reports suggest water pipes have been badly damaged and power outages are resulting in waste treatment plant malfunctions<sup>iv</sup>. President Jokowi declared that Indonesia is open to foreign aid for the earthquake, but a formal declaration of national disaster has not yet been issued.

## Situation Snapshot

- 7.4 magnitude earthquake.
- Over 1,200 dead.
- Over 1.5 million people affected.
- Over 800 injuries and 100 missing persons<sup>ii</sup>.
- 64,000 displaced.
- As access to the affected areas improve, these numbers are expected to rise.
- Obstacles to accessing the affected areas paired with power outages and downed telecommunications are inhibiting information flow.

# Project HOPE's Response

Project HOPE deployed an emergency response team on Saturday September 29. For three days, the team was coordinating with local authorities and other response agencies in Makassar to evaluate needs and capacities and overcome logistical hurdles until access to Palu was possible. On October 2, traveling by both air and sea, the team arrived in Palu. Upon arrival, the critical need for medical personnel and supplies was immediately evident. The team noted that movement was challenged due to lack of vehicles and gas. Despite the presence of experienced emergency responders, the team acknowledged that the dual impact of the earthquake and the tsunami left a scale of destruction that they had never witnessed. The smell of dead bodies was powerful as they made their way to the Provincial Health Office, suggesting that the number of casualties is still expected to grow as the search and rescue efforts continue. Based on key stakeholder meetings and observation of medical facilities and conditions, Project HOPE is deploying additional medical personnel to provide urgent care to the affected population. The team attended the Health Cluster meeting in Palu today and is working closely with the BNPB (Provincial Office for Disaster Management) to ensure efficient staffing coverage of medical facilities and to coordinate plans for deployment of mobile medical teams as necessary.

Project HOPE has a roster of medical volunteers, both Indonesian and international, on standby for subsequent deployments. An additional five medical personnel arriving from Mamuju, a city 11 hours drive from Palu, will be joining the team tomorrow.

Project HOPE is committed to providing health care and assistance where the need is greatest. While our current activities are focused in Palu, we will continue to assess health needs across all affected areas on the island and coordinate with local stakeholders to ensure we are reaching those who need the most care.



Two members of Project HOPE's emergency response team arriving at the Palu airport on October 2, 2018. Photo by Ronny Adolof Buol for Project HOPE.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1766672/Network/World/Tsunami-sweeps-away-homes-on-Indonesian-island-of-Sulawesi>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/sulawesi-earthquake-death-toll-crosses-1200>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2018/10/indonesia-plans-mass-burials-quake-tsunami-victims-181001051709381.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2018/sep/30/tsunami-indonesia-sulawesi-rescue-earthquake>