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CARITAS MOBILIZED ON 3 FRONTS IN INDONESIA

Aiding Flood, Volcano and Tsunami Victims

ROME, OCT. 27, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Caritas workers in Indonesia are working tirelessly to come to the aid of those affected by three different natural disasters: floods, a volcanic eruption and a tsunami.

"The emergencies succeed one another and accumulated," said Father Sigit Pramuji, a director of the Caritas agency in Indonesia, named Karina. "We were still in the midst of operations of reconstruction and rehabilitation in the aftermath of the floods that took place in Papua, when we were surprised by these two other events: the eruption of the Merapi volcano and the tsunami in western Sumatra."

"We mobilized immediately," he added, in comments to the Fides news agency. "We are close to the people who are suffering; it is our mission."

Earlier this month, flash floods in West Papua killed some 145 people, and destroyed dozens of homes and bridges.

On Monday, a 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck the island to the northwest of the capital Jakarta, which then caused a tsunami that killed nearly 300 people, and some 500 are still reported missing.

On Tuesday, Mount Merapi erupted in Java, leaving some 30 people dead and another 40,000 displaced.

"In Java, in the Diocese of Semarang, the situation is under control. The diocesan Caritas is very strong and well organized," said Father Pramuji. "A team of priests is working in close contact with indigenous populations that live on the slopes of the volcano."

"Thanks to them and to the Caritas volunteers -- given the information on an imminent eruption -- a vast work of prevention was carried out and we saved many lives."

In Sumatra where the earthquake and tsunami struck, the priest reported that "priests and nuns are active in the first emergency, consoling the victims and helping to bury corpses."

"The population is being sorely tested," he added.

Father Pramuji said that during the next national assembly of the Indonesian Church -- which will be held in Bogor beginning Nov. 1 -- he hopes to make an appeal to all the Catholic communities of the country.

The meeting, which will bring together representatives of all the dioceses will be, according to the priest, an occasion to reflect on the identity and mission of the Catholic community in the country and "to launch a great appeal for solidarity and mobilize the whole community of the archipelago."

"Over the next few days, according to the unfolding of the emergencies, we will decide if we will also ask for foreign aid. The English Caritas (CAFOD), and Caritas-Germany have already spontaneously promised us support," he added.