

For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE

MERCY Malaysia appeals for funds in aid of earthquake and tsunami-struck Palu, Sulawesi

Kuala Lumpur, 30 September 2018...Following the 7.7 Richter Scale earthquake which triggered a tsunami in Palu and Donggala, Central Sulawesi, on 28 September, MERCY Malaysia is appealing for funds to bring humanitarian relief to affected communities. The Indonesian National Board for Disaster Manager has reported that close to 400 lives have been lost, and hundreds more injured.

The death and injury toll is expected to be higher, as local authorities scramble to rescue people trapped in buildings or swept away by the tsunami waves that reached 3 metres high. Many families are also searching for loved ones who are still unaccounted for, as both the earthquakes and tsunami happened without any early warning signs.

The total number of people affected in Palu, Donggala dan neighbouring Mamuju is estimated to be 1.5 million. Most heart-wrenching is that the high number of deaths and casualties were from the hundreds of people who were celebrating a beach festival at Palu beach on the day the tsunami happened.

Aftershocks continue to rock the beach city since the first earthquake on Thursday, causing thousands of houses, schools, buildings, bridges and roads to collapse. Videos on social media show a collapsed shopping mall, and flood waters inundating the city area, including a mosque and other public buildings.

“Our Indonesian partner, PKPU Human Initiative, is already assessing the needs on the ground, while we make plans to deploy our first team by Monday or Tuesday,” says Datuk Dr Ahmad Faizal, President of MERCY Malaysia. “It will be challenging, as the airport is still closed to commercial flights, and many roads and bridges have been badly or completely destroyed. Accessibility and safety will be some of the main obstacles faced.”

Hospitals, like all other buildings are declared unsafe, so patients are being treated in the open ground, exposed to the elements. Food and temporary shelters are believed to be the most immediate needs, while mental health and psychosocial support will be an important aspect of the community’s recovery in the next 6-10 months.

For MERCY Malaysia, the situation brings back memories of the 2004 tsunami in Aceh, which claimed the lives of over 200,000 people and wiped out entire towns. Photos of Palu and Donggala on social media bore many similarities, such as cars, logs, houses, even a ship, being washed ashore and ending up in the most unlikely places, while hundreds of dead bodies were laid on streets for mass burials.

“We are hoping for the best, but preparing for the worse,” says Dr Faizal, adding that MERCY Malaysia’s vast experience in providing emergency response during the Aceh tsunami, as well as the recent earthquake in Lombok, will be invaluable in dire situations like this.

“We urgently appeal for donations from caring Malaysians which will enable us to provide immediate relief aid, such as safe drinking water, food and temporary shelter,” he urges. Donations can be made to Palu Relief Fund (MBB 5621 7950 4126) on Malaysia’s website www.mercy.org.my. All contributions are tax-exempted.

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About MERCY Malaysia

MERCY Malaysia is a non for profit organisation focused on providing medical relief, sustainable health-related development and risk reduction activities for vulnerable communities in both crisis and non-crisis situations, both locally and internationally. MERCY Malaysia recognises the value of working with partners and volunteers as well as providing opportunities for individuals to serve with professionalism. We uphold the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief and hold ourselves accountable to our donors and beneficiaries. For more information, please proceed to www.mercy.org.my

How is MERCY Malaysia funded?

To ensure independence and impartiality, MERCY Malaysia relies on donations from the general public for financial support. A portion of our income is obtained from institutional donors, individual government grants and other international organizations, which are given on project basis. MERCY Malaysia spends 80% if its income in carrying out its relief operations and support.

Important Note to Media: Usage of Wordmark MERCY Malaysia

In order to avoid confusion with other organisation(s) that uses “Mercy” as the organisation’s name or part of the organisation’s name, please take note that in addressing the name of our organisation, the wordmark for MERCY Malaysia is with capitalised “MERCY”, followed by the word “Malaysia”. When describing the organisation, the term “MERCY Malaysia” must always be used in full, and should not be partially referred to as “MERCY”, or “Mercy”. Thank you for your cooperation.