Earthquake in West Sulawesi, Indonesia
Situation Report #2
19 January 2021

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- A 6.2 magnitude earthquake struck West Sulawesi province in Indonesia on Friday January 15.
- More than 40,000 people are displaced with many now in evacuation sites.
- The Mitra Mankarra District Hospital in Majene city has collapsed in addition to other buildings which have suffered heavy damages.
- Evacuation sites are underequipped for COVID-19 response.
- Yayasan Project HOPE’s Emergency Response Team is on the ground in West Sulawesi conducting a rapid assessment and beginning response operations.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

On January 15 a 6.2 magnitude earthquake struck West Sulawesi province, northeast of the city of Majene. The city reports heavy damage to structures including the Mitra Manakarra Hospital, which collapsed, and several health care centers (puskesmas). As of January 18, 84 people have been reported killed and 932 injured. More than 40,000 people are directly affected and displaced, with many now housed in 10 evacuation sites.¹ The largest evacuation site is Mankarra Stadium in nearby Mamuju where it is estimated more than 10,000 people are currently being sheltered.

Project HOPE’s Emergency Response Team (ERT) reports that since some of the region’s health facilities were built in low lying, coastal areas, the population is concerned about visiting them. Health teams establishing themselves following the earthquake have opted for operations on higher ground due to concerns of additional earthquakes and the potential for tsunamis. Health care teams are also primarily establishing outdoor clinics due to concern over the stability of buildings. In addition to injuries as a direct result of the earthquake, the ERT has received reports of health need including hypertension, dyspepsia, neuropathy, fevers and other cold symptoms.

Indonesia reported its highest single-day number of COVID-19 cases on January 16, confirming more than 14,200 cases.² Prior to the earthquake the West Sulawesi region was already experiencing an increase in COVID-19 cases. The nearby Mamuju District Hospital reportedly went into lockdown a week before the earthquake after more than 75 staff tested positive for COVID-19. The ERT
reports that the evacuation sites are not set up for effective social distancing, lack sufficient COVID-19 screening systems, and remain underequipped with personal protective equipment for both those residing in the camps as well as for administrators and camp medical staff. This dual crisis in West Sulawesi heightens the risk of a rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in the coming weeks.

The ERT has also identified that primary sources of clean water have been damaged by the earthquake, leaving many without access to clean, potable water. Despite damage to local infrastructure electricity is being restored and fuel and gas suppliers have resumed operations.

PROJECT HOPE RESPONSE

Yayasan Project HOPE, a local entity of Project HOPE, deployed an ERT to West Sulawesi to assess the situation on the ground and coordinate response efforts with local and national responders. The ERT is working closely with KUN Humanity System+ and their medical teams to deliver emergency care to populations impacted by the earthquake. Project HOPE is conducting a rapid local procurement of basic medical supplies and medicines, including bandages, pulse oximeters, infrared thermometers, acetaminophen and anti-acids, to support KUN’s medical teams in the region. Medical personnel from the ERT will also soon begin medical surge services to augment and relieve local healthcare staff.

Project HOPE is mobilizing a shipment of PPE to support frontline healthcare workers and responders as they respond to COVID-19 in the region. Once, immediate lifesaving operations have concluded, Project HOPE will work with KUN to identify if there are opportunities to provide COVID-19 and mental health trainings for frontline healthcare workers.

Project HOPE will work with local health authorities to identify WASH interventions that can help provide affected communities with immediate access to potable water and help reduce the risk of spreading disease. Additionally, Project HOPE is examining opportunities to provide and distribute hygiene kits and other non-medical supplies to impacted communities.

1 https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ROAP_Snapshot_210119.pdf
2 https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/region/indonesia