

Indonesian quake and tsunami devastates coast, many victims

September 29 2018



A man surveys the damage caused by earthquake and tsunami in Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, Saturday, Sept. 29, 2018. The powerful earthquake rocked the Indonesian island of Sulawesi on Friday, triggering a 3-meter-tall (10-foot-tall) tsunami that an official said swept away houses in at least two cities. (AP Photo/Rifki)

The powerful earthquake and tsunami that hit Indonesia's central Sulawesi has claimed dozens of victims, a disaster official said Saturday,

as rescuers raced to reach the region and an AP reporter saw numerous bodies in a hard-hit city.

Disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho told a news conference that four hospitals in the central Sulawesi [city](#) of Palu have reported 48 dead and hundreds of injured. He said "many victims" are still to be accounted for.

Dawn revealed a devastated coastline in central Sulawesi where the 3-meter high (10 foot) [tsunami](#) triggered by a magnitude 7.5 earthquake Friday smashed into two cities and several settlements.

Palu, the capital of Central Sulawesi province, was strewn with debris from collapsed buildings. Seawater still pooled inland and a mosque heavily damaged by the quake was half submerged. A shopping mall in the paralyzed city of more than 380,000 people had been reduced to a crumpled hulk.

The city is built around a narrow bay that apparently magnified the force of the tsunami waters as they raced into the tight inlet.

An AP reporter saw bodies partially covered by tarpaulins and a man carrying a dead child through the wreckage.

In the nearby city of Donggala a large bridge with yellow arches that spanned a coastal river had collapsed.



Residents carry the body of a tsunami victim in Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, Saturday, Sept. 29, 2018. A powerful earthquake rocked the Indonesian island of Sulawesi on Friday, triggering a 3-meter-tall (10-foot-tall) tsunami that an official said swept away houses in at least two cities. (AP Photo/Rifki)

Indonesian TV showed a smartphone video of a powerful wave hitting Palu at dusk, with people screaming and running in fear. The water smashed into buildings and a large mosque already damaged by the earthquake.

Communications with the area are difficult because power and telecommunications are cut, hampering search and rescue efforts.

Nugroho has said that essential aircraft can land at Palu airport's though AirNav, which oversees aircraft navigation, said the runway is cracked

and the control tower damaged.

AirNav said one of its [air traffic controllers](#) died in the quake after staying in the tower to ensure a flight he'd just cleared for departure got airborne safely. It did.



The ruin of a mosque badly damaged by earthquake and tsunami is seen in Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, Saturday, Sept. 29, 2018. The powerful earthquake rocked the Indonesian island of Sulawesi on Friday, triggering a 3-meter-tall (10-foot-tall) tsunami that an official said swept away houses in at least two cities. (AP Photo/Rifki)

Indonesia's president on Friday night said he had instructed the security minister to coordinate the government's response to a quake and tsunami that hit central Sulawesi.

Joko "Jokowi" Widodo also told reporters in his hometown of Solo that he had called on the country's military chief help with search and rescue efforts.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said U.N. officials were in contact with Indonesian authorities and "stand ready to provide support as required."

Indonesia is prone to earthquakes because of its location on the "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin.

In December 2004, a massive magnitude 9.1 earthquake off Sumatra in western Indonesia triggered a tsunami that killed 230,000 people in a dozen countries.



A mosque is seen heavily damaged by earthquake and tsunami in Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, Saturday, Sept. 29, 2018. The powerful earthquake rocked

the Indonesian island of Sulawesi on Friday, triggering a 3-meter-tall (10-foot-tall) tsunami that an official said swept away houses in at least two cities. (AP Photo/Rifki)



A department store building is seen heavily damaged by earthquake in Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, Saturday, Sept. 29, 2018. The powerful earthquake rocked the Indonesian island of Sulawesi on Friday, triggering a 3-meter-tall (10-foot-tall) tsunami that an official said swept away houses in at least two cities. (AP Photo/Rifki)



A man carries the body of a child who was killed in the tsunami in Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, Saturday, Sept. 29, 2018. A powerful earthquake rocked the Indonesian island of Sulawesi on Friday, triggering a 3-meter-tall (10-foot-tall) tsunami that an official said swept away houses in at least two cities. (AP Photo/Rifki)



A man stands amid the damage caused by a tsunami in Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, Saturday, Sept. 29, 2018. A powerful earthquake rocked the Indonesian island of Sulawesi on Friday, triggering a 3-meter-tall (10-foot-tall) tsunami that an official said swept away houses in at least two cities. (AP Photo)



Residents carry a body bag containing the body of a tsunami victim in Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, Saturday, Sept. 29, 2018. A powerful earthquake rocked the Indonesian island of Sulawesi on Friday, triggering a 3-meter-tall (10-foot-tall) tsunami that an official said swept away houses in at least two cities. (AP Photo)



A car swept away by tsunami is seen stuck under a damaged building in Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, Saturday, Sept. 29, 2018. A powerful earthquake rocked the Indonesian island of Sulawesi on Friday, triggering a 3-meter-tall (10-foot-tall) tsunami that an official said swept away houses in at least two cities. (Dede Budiarto via AP)



People survey a building partially damaged by earthquake in Poso, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, Saturday, Sept. 29, 2018. A powerful earthquake rocked the Indonesian island of Sulawesi on Friday, triggering a 3-meter-tall (10-foot-tall) tsunami that an official said swept away houses in at least two cities. (AP Photo/Yoanes Litha)



Earthquake-affected patients are treated at a makeshift hospital in Poso, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, Saturday, Sept. 29, 2018. A powerful earthquake rocked the Indonesian island of Sulawesi on Friday, triggering a 3-meter-tall (10-foot-tall) tsunami that an official said swept away houses in at least two cities. (AP Photo/Yoanes Litha)



Patients are treated on the hallway of a hospital affected by earthquake in Poso, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, Saturday, Sept. 29, 2018. A powerful earthquake rocked the Indonesian island of Sulawesi on Friday, triggering a 3-meter-tall (10-foot-tall) tsunami that an official said swept away houses in at least two cities. (AP Photo/Yoanes Litha)

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