

Indonesia volcano eruption death toll rises to 34

December 7 2021, by Haeril Halim



The eruption of Indonesia's Mount Semeru has left dozens dead and many more injured.

The death toll from the eruption of Indonesia's Mount Semeru volcano rose to 34 on Tuesday, the national disaster agency said, as aid was

rushed to the affected region.

The mountain on the island of Java thundered to life on Saturday, ejecting volcanic ash high into the sky and raining hot mud on villages as thousands of panicked people fled their homes.

The disaster swallowed entire homes and vehicles, blanketing villages like Curah Kobokan in grey ash and leaving residents terrified of returning home.

"I'm traumatised, I asked my relatives if they were brave enough to go back to Curah Kobokan and they all said no, they'd rather sleep under a tree," said Marzuki Suganda, a 30-year-old who works at a sand mine in the area.

"When the eruption happened, I really thought I was going to die here."

Rescuers have been battling dangerous conditions since the deadly weekend eruption, searching for survivors and bodies in the volcanic debris, wrecked buildings and destroyed vehicles.

Search crews deployed dogs on Tuesday to aid the operation.

"The latest update from the ground... (is) 34 people died," the disaster agency spokesman Abdul Muhari told AFP.

At a later press briefing, the military commander of Lumajang district Irwan Subekti said that "22 people have been declared missing".

"The number of evacuees is 4,250," he said, adding that 26 were seriously injured.

Indonesia deadly volcano



- ▶ Volcano erupted **Dec 4** at 3:00pm local time (0800 GMT)
- ▶ Dozens of people killed by ash and hot mud
- ▶ Almost 3,700 people have been evacuated from the affected area

Mt Semeru has remained active since Dec 4 with ongoing small eruptions



Map of Indonesia locating Mount Seberu, which erupted on Saturday, killing more than a dozen of people.

Dangerous rescue operation

Semeru has remained active since Saturday, keeping emergency workers

and area residents on edge.

There were three small eruptions on Tuesday, each spewing ash around a kilometre (3,300 ft) into the sky, authorities said.

The task for rescuers was made more difficult by the instability of the volcanic debris.

"What we are afraid of is the ground being cold outside but still hot inside," said police officer Imam Mukson Rido. "If it's hot inside, we must get away."

Officials have advised locals not to travel within five kilometres (3.1 miles) of Semeru's crater, as the nearby air is highly polluted and could affect vulnerable groups.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo said during a trip to the area Tuesday that the government will look into moving homes away because of the threat posed by the volcano.



Mount Semeru is the tallest mountain on Indonesia's Java island.

"I hope after things calm down we can start both fixing infrastructures and think about the possibility of relocation from areas we believe to be dangerous," he told Indonesia's Metro TV.

"Earlier I got a report (that) there are around 2,000 houses that must be relocated."

Indonesia sits on the Pacific Ring of Fire, where the meeting of continental plates causes high volcanic and seismic activity, and the country has nearly 130 active volcanoes.

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