

Indonesia's Mount Merapi unleashes lava as other volcanoes flare up, forcing thousands to evacuate

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Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Indonesia's Mount Merapi erupted Sunday, spreading searing gas clouds and avalanches of lava down its slopes as other active volcanoes flared up across the country, forcing the evacuation of thousands.

On the densely populated island of Java, Merapi unleashed clouds of hot ash and a mixture of rock, and [lava](#) that traveled up to 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) down its slopes, said Agus Budi Santoso, the head of Indonesia's Geological Disaster Technology Research and Development Center. A column of hot clouds blasted 100 meters (about 109 yards) into the air as ash blanketed several villages without casualties, he added.

Merapi is the most active out of more than 120 volcanoes across the country. Sunday's eruption is the latest since authorities raised its alert level to the second-highest in November 2020 after sensors picked up increasing activity. Residents living on the slopes were advised to stay 7 kilometers (4.3 miles) away from the crater's mouth and be aware of possible threats from flowing lava.

In 2010, an eruption killed 347 people and displaced 20,000 villagers.

The 2,968-meter (9,737-foot) mountain is about 30 kilometers (18 miles) from Yogyakarta, an ancient center of Javanese culture and the seat of royal dynasties going back centuries. About a quarter million people live within 10 kilometers (6 miles) of the volcano.

Several other [active volcanoes](#) also blew up this weekend, prompting authorities to evacuate thousands of residents, said Indonesia's Center for Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation in a statement released on social media platform X, formerly Twitter. No casualties were reported, it said.

The agency said Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki in East Nusa Tenggara province spewed hot clouds as high as 700 meters (2,300 feet) into the air on Sunday, as more than 6,500 people fled to shelters.

Also on Sunday, [Mount Marapi in West Sumatra province](#) erupted again, its third biggest flare-up this month, albeit without discharging lava.

About 500 residents living near it were evacuated. Last month, it erupted, killing 23 climbers and injuring several others.

Mount Semeru in East Java province released searing [gas clouds](#) and rivers of lava on Saturday, as did Mount Ibu on Halmahera island in North Maluku province which shot a column of hot ashes as high as 1,300 meters (4,265 feet) into the air.

In December 2021, Mount Semeru, the highest [volcano](#) on Java island, erupted, leaving 48 people dead and 36 missing.

Indonesia, an archipelago of 270 million people, is prone to earthquakes and [volcanic activity](#) because it sits along the "Ring of Fire," a horseshoe-shaped series of seismic fault lines around the Pacific Ocean.

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