

Remote Indonesia volcano erupts again after thousands evacuated

April 19 2024, by Ronny Adolof Buol with Marchio Gorbiano in Jakarta



Mount Ruang erupted again after nearly half a dozen earlier in the week stirred a spectacular mix of fiery orange lava, a towering ash column and volcanic lightning.

A remote Indonesian volcano sent a tower of ash spewing into the sky Friday, after nearly half a dozen eruptions earlier this week forced

thousands to evacuate when molten rocks rained down on their villages.

Mount Ruang in Indonesia's outermost region of North Sulawesi started erupting late Tuesday, stirring a spectacular mix of fiery orange lava, a towering ash column and [volcanic lightning](#).

Officials on Friday morning said Ruang had calmed, but it started to belch ash again hours later after authorities maintained the highest alert level and told residents to stay out of a six-kilometer (four-mile) exclusion zone.

"I was very surprised, the mountain erupted again. We are scared," said Riko, a 30-year-old resident of neighboring Tagulandang island.

The country's volcanology agency said the eruption sent a plume of smoke 400 meters (1,312 feet) above the peak.

"There was an eruption of Mt Ruang, North Sulawesi" at 1706 local time, 0906 GMT, it said in a statement.

"The ash column was observed to be gray in color... leaning towards the south."

Hundreds of locals on neighboring Tagulandang island were earlier seen cleaning up volcanic material from the harbor and their yards on Friday morning with the help of soldiers and police officers, according to an AFP journalist.



A man looks at holes in the roof, caused by the volcanic material from the recent eruptions of the Mount Ruang volcano.

Some described their panic and rush to safety when the eruptions began days ago.

"I evacuated. There was a house. I stayed there. And then it rained and rocks fell. I prayed 'God have mercy, please help me God'," Ninice Hoata, a 59-year-old teacher, told AFP on Tagulandang.

Other residents pleaded for more assistance and expressed fears of another eruption before it struck.

"We really need tarpaulin assistance as soon as possible, to temporarily

cover the leaking roof," said 64-year-old Herman Saho.

"We are worried there will be a follow-up because there is information about that."

Indonesia's volcanology agency had earlier warned in a statement that the volcanic activity at Ruang was "still high" with potential dangers including flying rocks, hot clouds and lava flows.

Thousands evacuated

Houses elsewhere could be seen lying empty and electricity was out in parts of the island before Friday's eruption, the journalist said.



Police officers helped locals sweep volcanic debris on the ground after eruptions at Mount Ruang.

Officials said Thursday communications had already been knocked out on parts of both Ruang and Tagulandang, which is home to around 20,000 people.

Sahid Samihing, a 53-year-old Tagulandang resident, said he feared his belongings would be ruined after volcanic rocks peppered his roof.

"If it's not covered, it will destroy the house," the father-of-three said.

"It was terrifying. No one would not be scared. Everybody was scared. I experienced this event directly."

More than 6,000 residents of Tagulandang had been evacuated to the other side of the island that faces away from the crater, Joikson Sagunde, an official from the Sitaro islands disaster management agency, told AFP.

There were no reports of deaths or injuries but authorities said a day earlier they hoped to evacuate 11,000 people from the exclusion zone.

The closure of a nearby international airport in Manado city, more than 100 kilometers (62 miles) from the crater, was also extended to Friday evening, national disaster mitigation agency (BNPB) spokesman Abdul Muhari said in a statement.

Indonesia volcano



Map of Indonesia locating Mount Ruang, a stratovolcano in North Sulawesi Province.

The alert level upheld the exclusion zone around the crater, as well as warnings about further eruptions and parts of the volcano collapsing into the sea that could cause a tsunami.

In 2018, the [crater](#) of Mount Anak Krakatoa between Java and Sumatra islands partly collapsed when a major eruption sent huge chunks of the volcano sliding into the ocean, triggering a tsunami that killed more than 400 people and injured thousands.

Mount Ruang's last [major eruption](#) was in 2002, when residents also had to be evacuated.

Indonesia, a vast archipelago nation, experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity due to its position on the Pacific "Ring of Fire".

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Citation: Remote Indonesia volcano erupts again after thousands evacuated (2024, April 19)
retrieved 3 May 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2024-04-remote-indonesia-volcano-erupts-thousands.html>

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