

Indonesia flood death toll rises to 89, dozens missing

19 March 2019



The disaster was triggered by torrential rain on Saturday

At least 89 people are known to have died after flash floods and landslides tore through Indonesia's Papua region, with the toll expected to rise further as rescuers hunt for dozens still missing, the national disaster agency said Tuesday.

Scores have also been injured in the disaster, triggered by torrential rain on Saturday, with some 6,800 people evacuated to temporary shelters.

The military has taken up the grim task of putting mud-caked corpses into body bags, with the search hampered by mountains of debris including rocks and fallen trees.

Seventy-four people remain unaccounted for, while around 150 suffered broken bones, cuts and other injuries.

"Many people are choosing to stay at shelters because they're still traumatised and scared of more [flash floods](#), so some evacuation centres are packed," said national disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho.

The government has issued a 14-day state of emergency in Papua, which shares a border with independent Papua New Guinea on an island just north of Australia.

Flooding is common in Indonesia, especially during the [rainy season](#) which runs from October to April.

In January, floods and landslides killed at least 70 people on Sulawesi island, while earlier this month hundreds in West Java province were forced to evacuate when torrential rains triggered severe flooding.

Meanwhile, three people were killed—including two Malaysian tourists—and some 182 were injured after an [earthquake](#) Sunday triggered a landslide on the Indonesian tourist island of Lombok, next to Bali.

Lombok was rocked by several earthquakes last summer, killing more than 500 people and leaving over 150,000 homeless.

Last September, the country was hit by an earthquake and tsunami in Palu on Sulawesi island which killed around 2,200 people.

The Southeast Asian archipelago of some 17,000 [islands](#) is one of the most disaster-prone nations on Earth, straddling the Pacific Ring of Fire, where tectonic plates collide. Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are common.

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