



## **ASIA/INDONESIA - Tsunami in Sumatra, Bishop says "Catholic villages are the hardest hit"**

Padang (Agenzia Fides) – The most seriously affected population in the tsunami that hit the islands of Metawai (opposite the island of Sumatra) are the Catholic towns, Fides learns from Bishop Martinus Situmorang, Bishop of Padang, the diocese of this area. "Southern Metawai, on the western side of the islands ravaged by the tidal wave, is the site of Catholic villages. The approximately 8,000 faithful present have suffered heavy losses," the bishop tells Fides.

"We have taken action without hesitation, in this disaster that affects us personally. We have sent down first aid. As a diocese, we rented a boat that will depart for the islands tomorrow carrying humanitarian aid. A team of Caritas is already in the tsunami zone and is working alongside the four priests and four nuns who live in the area. The religious are working on the frontline in helping and bringing comfort to the population," said the bishop who, through the Fides launches an urgent appeal. "To the faithful of the Mentawai Islands, I say: this is a disaster that has devastated your lives, but do not be discouraged! Now is not the time to ask ourselves how and why, but we extend our heart and hands to God, with faith and prayer. Do not be afraid, but be ready to hope that the Lord and our brothers are close to you in your suffering."

Of all the faithful of the Diocese of Padang, Sumatra, Bishop Situmorang "expects a great deal of solidarity. It is not time to argue or waste time, but to urgently bring help and show real love to those who are victims of the disaster." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 28/10/2010)