



ASIA/INDONESIA-Eruption of the volcano in Sulawesi: more than 5,000 refugees in schools and Christian parishes

Manado (Agenzia Fides) - The Christian Churches and the island of Sulawesi Mando (also known as Celebes) have immediately moved to help the many displaced persons, affected in past days by the eruption of the volcano on mount Lokon in Tomohon, in the North of Sulawesi. According to the information Fides received by the local Catholic Church, more than 5,000 refugees are currently welcomed in Christian schools and church halls in Tomohon and Manado. Other IDPs are in institutes and public buildings, such as the University of Manado. The Christian volunteers are fervently working on the distribution of food and continue, as the alert level remains high. Christian schools have also activated a service of education, allowing children to continue school lessons. The Development Commission of the Diocese of Manado has expressed to Fides its concern over the large number of displaced families to help (mostly Muslims) and has been active in providing humanitarian aid, even with the help of Caritas Indonesia (Karina) and the Indonesian Episcopal Conference. The Diocese of Manado has appealed to all Catholic parishes and organizations so "they are open and show solidarity, providing as much assistance as possible" . In addition to Manado and Tomohon, refugees are distributed in the villages of Walewangko, Noongan, Ratahan, Tombatu, Maluku and City Tower. "The local population has shown generosity and hospitality towards these brothers and sisters in need" says the local Church. The volcano began erupting on July 9 and over 10 thousand residents of the villages of Kinilow, Kinilow 1 and Kakaskasen had to be evacuated urgently elsewhere. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 19/07/2011)