

INITIAL RAPID ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
SULAWESI EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI



INTERNATIONAL



FEDERATION



Palang
Merah
Indonesia

10 October, 2018

EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI IN CENTRAL SULAWESI

On Friday 28 September 2018, a major earthquake of 7.4 magnitude rocked Central Sulawesi Province in Indonesia. The quake generated a tsunami whose waves lashed coastal areas of Donggala and Palu with significant humanitarian impact.

More than 2,000 people have been confirmed dead, mostly in Palu, Sigi and Donggala (data from National Disaster Management Agency). Thousands of homes and structures in commercial centres and public buildings were damaged and, in some areas, flattened. Infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and communication lines were also damaged, which has hampered access to information and communication among affected people, and relief efforts.

Location of assessment:



Disclaimer

This is an initial brief report of community engagement and accountability assessment. It is important to note that this report aims to present an initial idea of information and communication with the affected people and not of generalisation of all affected areas.

Background

The Indonesian Red Cross (known as Palang Merah Indonesia – PMI) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) conducted a rapid assessment of Communicating with Communities in three hardest-hit areas; Palu, Sigi and Donggala from 3 – 8 October 2018.

Methodology

This assessment was conducted through informal discussion with the affected people in four groups consisting men, women, adolescents and elders. While people were dealing with the impacts of disasters and a series of aftershocks at the initial days, the PMI and IFRC held this assessment through building on from their stories of surviving the disasters. Questions asked included:

- **access to information about aid**
- **information needs**
- **communication channels of the affected population**

Additionally, some radio actors, including Radio Republic of Indonesia (RRI) and First Response Radio (FRR), were interviewed to understand the current communication challenges in the affected areas across the island of Sulawesi. A discussion with Internews was held over phone to understand rumour-tracking strategies.



“Mobile phone is very crucial for us to look for information now. I charge my mobile phone at night as that is the only time we have power, so that I can follow updates about this disaster” – a man in Palu city.

Indonesia’s mobile network provider, Telkomsel, provides free call and SMS services in the affected areas which are accessed widely by the communities.

Radio Republic of Indonesia, a state-run radio station, provides mobile phone charging stations in their building in for access by the affected people in Palu.

Lack of information about aid

- **People have little or no access to information about aid relief.**
- **Some people access information via information hub (command post or POSKO) locally but not sufficient.**
- **Some follow updates about this disaster on TV but access is limited to night time only for a few hours when they have electricity.**

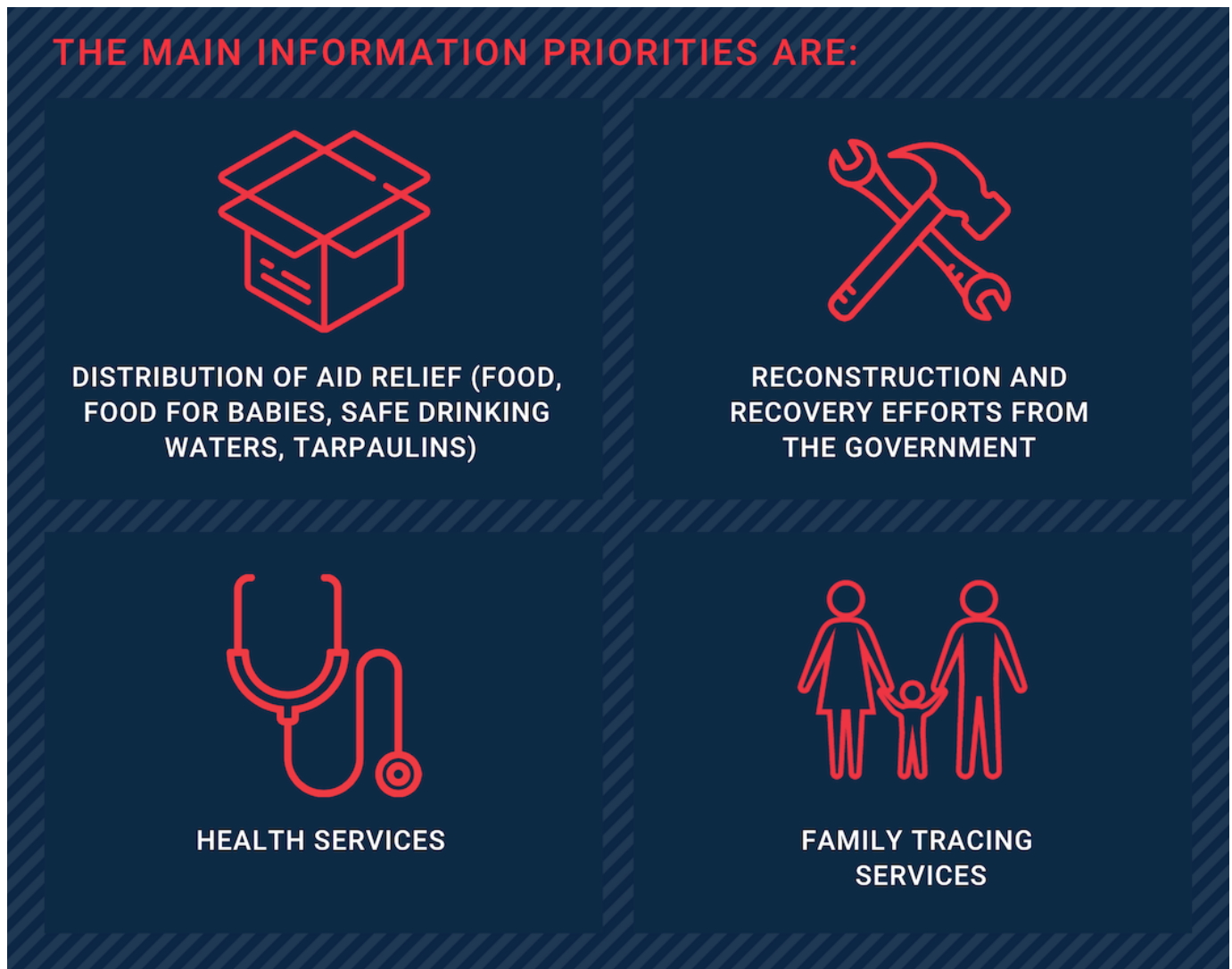
“We travel for around 30 minutes on motorbike to search information about aid relief in nearest POSKO (information hub) but we still don’t find information we want”

– a woman in Sigi district.

Recommendations:

- **Establish clear Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to be used by aid workers when engaging with affected people.**
- **Communicate logistics challenges faced by government authorities and humanitarian agencies in this response regularly through information hubs (POSKO), social media and radio.**

Information needs



Recommendations:

- Continuous dialogue between aid workers and affected people.
- Develop and broadcast regular information and life-saving messages on radio.
- Use hotline and SMS services to enable communities to inquire about the operation and recovery process.
- Build transparent approaches to communicate about coming risks.

Rumours

People hear various rumours in their villages and are worried of the rumours they receive through words of mouth, social media and online media. Some common rumours are bigger and more powerful earthquakes and tsunami would strike on a particular day. Another rumour is that the city of Palu would sink if another strong earthquake would hit. As a result, communities become more panic and restless as they are scared of these rumours.

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Internews is working with Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) in Indonesia to counter rumours circulating around the communities.

[OB1]In the image above

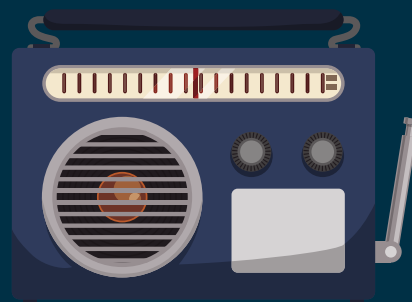
Recommendations:

- **Explain about the complexity of earthquake prediction.**
- **Use the National Disaster Management Agency social media sites to refer to information about rumours.**
- **Work with local journalists and radio stations to counter rumours.**
- **Promote and advertise feedback loops widely to give rooms to people to ask about the rumours.**

Radio

Radio Republic of Indonesia in Palu is operational since the first day of disaster. Other local radio stations experienced heavy and moderate damages and ceased their operation. A week after the earthquake and tsunami, First Response Radio (FRR) entered Palu and started to broadcast through local radio facility Nebula (101 FM).

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Both radio stations, which currently broadcast and focus on information about the earthquakes and tsunamis, explained that they have received numerous calls from people across Palu, Sigi and Donggala. Their main feedback and complaints are about aid distribution, family tracing services and disaster reconstruction and recovery.

FRR has started the distribution of radios in some affected areas and acknowledged that communities are desperate for information and happy after receiving radios.

Recommendations:

- **Include distribution of radio receivers in humanitarian response plans.**
- **Address immediate information needs of the affected people.**
- **Develop more two-way dialogue programmes to amplify community voices in this response.**
- **Support local radio stations in developing stories about community needs (health, WASH, livelihoods, protection, etc.).**
- **Use radio to support community advocacy efforts by linking local authorities (decision makers) with affected populations.**

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