

## Operation Palu: Impact Report

### Disaster Strikes

On Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September the Indonesian island of Sulawesi was struck by the combined force of a 7.4 magnitude earthquake and tsunami, with catastrophic repercussions for the city of Palu and the surrounding areas. The disaster decimated the population, killing over 2,101 people, with a further 1,084 missing and many more displaced. The region was subsequently affected by aftershocks, landslides, soil liquefaction and a volcanic eruption.



### Team Rubicon UK's response

Team Rubicon UK (TRUK) mobilised straight away, initially sending a reconnaissance team to assess the situation and establish key working relationships. Further volunteer strike teams closely followed, deploying alongside colleagues from Team Rubicon Australia, to conduct critical aspects of the mission. Crucially, working closely with the contacts gained from TRUK's previous mission in Lombok, our team was able to establish a very close working relationship with the Head of the National Agency for Disaster Management, the Indonesian Board for Disaster Management - BNPB (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana), local NGO Asia Pacific Alliance for Disaster Management Indonesia (APAD), intergovernmental organisation Asia Humanitarian Assistance Centre (AHA) and local NGO Aksi Cepat Tanggap (ACT).



By building strong alliances with these key partners, Team Rubicon became one of the few NGOs formally invited by the Indonesian authorities to assist with the response in Sulawesi and quickly began providing drone support in Palu to assist assessments and search and rescue operations.

Team Rubicon's drone support mapped an area equivalent to 1,400 football pitches with 42 drone missions covering the most devastated areas. We were able to identify 2,223 destroyed homes and quickly share the information gathered with the BNPB to inform their response. This important work enabled officials to map out the true extent of the destruction, and our team's presentation provided invaluable insight to brief the United Nations Secretary General on the extent of the crisis.

Our next priority was to equip and train our local NGO partners on specialist water purification equipment to deliver clean, safe water to displaced survivors in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. Access to water and hygiene in the camps was poor, and many survivors were existing on just half a cup a day - perfect breeding conditions for killer diseases such as cholera and dysentery. Having overcome what many multinational INGO's were describing as impossible 'red tape', within nine days of arriving in Jakarta TRUK had agreed an MOU with our partner APAD and secured official permission to import water purification equipment to Palu.



Team Rubicon UK delivering Water Purification Kits

Tireless and important negotiating by our representative in Jakarta enabled our team to work with Indonesian NGO ACT, providing clean water to several IDP camps in need in the areas surrounding Palu. Thanks to the relentless dedication of our 'Greyshirt' volunteers, supported by our UK Mission Hub, we successfully imported six water purifiers for the region with 12 lifestraw kits courtesy of Team Rubicon Global.

Our expert team delivered water to some of the most remote and worst affected communities, previously unreachable by aid. To date we have delivered over 186,750 litres of clean, safe water for families who were in a life limiting situation. 12,230 survivors now have daily access to clean, safe water thanks to our intervention. We conducted Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) training for ten local ACT volunteers and 30 locals who will ensure the ongoing delivery of clean, safe water.

The Vice President of ACT praised Team Rubicon's contribution to their disaster response: *"Working with Team Rubicon United Kingdom has allowed ACT to expand its relief effort providing clean water to remote communities affected by the earthquake and tsunami that struck Central Sulawesi. Team Rubicon's ability to work collaboratively alongside ACT volunteers and staff in very demanding conditions has ensured that our aid has reached communities that have not received help since the earthquake in September."*

Over the course of Operation Palu, ten representatives of Team Rubicon UK deployed to Indonesia. They conducted 88 meetings to address need and action response and undertook 32 impact assessments to find the most urgent and advisable locations for the water purification units.

Reflecting on the operation, Operations Response Manager Paul Taylor said:

*“This has been a challenging operation but the videos the team sent back from Palu of the locals drinking clean water have made all the long days and nights worthwhile and are a worthy testament to the tenacity and commitment of our volunteers – and to the fact that forging enduring relationships with local humanitarians and the affected population can help to deliver a successful outcome.”*

Testament to the trusted relationships we have established through this operation, key Indonesian Government departments and local humanitarian charities have expressed a keen interest in continuing to work together. We are currently in discussions over providing disaster capacity training, mapping and mitigation, making us the ‘go to’ provider for further support and putting us in an even better position to help the people of Indonesia as and when disaster strikes again.