

Floods Displace Over 120,000 People in Indonesia's Aceh



Manila, December 25 (RHC)-- Floods have forced more than 120,000 people to leave their homes in parts of Indonesia's Aceh Province, an official says. The displaced people are from seven districts in Aceh which have been hit by flooding after Sunday's heavy rain, Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, spokesman of Indonesia's National Disaster Mitigation Agency, said on Wednesday.

Nugroho added that the waters reached as high as four meters in the worst hit districts of North Aceh and East Aceh. Rescue operations for those stranded in the floods are ongoing, involving soldiers, police, and local disaster agency officials, said the spokesman. No reports of fatalities have been released yet.

The flooding comes as the province is due to mark the 10th anniversary of the Indian Ocean tsunami on December 26th with prayers and a ceremony attended by 35 foreign envoys and 33 aid organizations from around the world. Over 130,000 people in Indonesia were confirmed dead following the tsunami in 2004.

Indonesia is frequently struck by floods and landslides as a result of heavy downpours. And during Indonesia's annual rainy season, which peaks between December and February, the country is prone to flooding, which is exacerbated by clogged rivers and sewers. Officials say an average of 541 people have died every year from floods and landslides in Indonesia over the past decade.

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