

A CONTINUING CRISIS

HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS AROUND INDONESIA'S PIECEMEAL FLOOD RESPONSE IN ACEH

RESEARCH
BRIEFING

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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The front cover photo shows residents climbing debris to cross the river on a newly built bridge connecting Aceh and North Sumatra provinces after being destroyed by flash floods at Peusangan river in Bireuen district, Aceh on 9 December 2025.
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People in Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra have suffered immensely because of devastation caused by the floods and landslides in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Senyar in November 2025. Their suffering is compounded by the continuing displacement and destroyed livelihoods. A year later, the lack of an adequate and swift disaster response has left many of the affected people facing human rights risks, living in a precarious present and facing an anxiety ridden future.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 26 November 2025, *Aisyah* (not her real name) was at home, worried after six days of non-stop rain. She was used to heavy rainfall, but this seemed exceptional. Earlier that day, she had pushed a stick into the river beside her house to check the water level, as she usually did during heavy rain. The level looked normal, and no one told her otherwise.

A few hours later, water rushed in from four directions, engulfing the home she was living in with her daughter. She would later learn that the upstream irrigation dam had burst under the force of the floodwater and the hundreds of logs it carried. Within minutes, the water had reached up to the windows of her house threatening to bury it under water and heavy mud. She and her daughter fled to the highest building in the village, the mosque. Hundreds of people had already gathered there, fearing for their lives. No one had warned them of what was coming.

The days that followed were lived in panic. By the second day, the food had run out and with key infrastructure destroyed, they had nowhere to go. The mosque was too crowded and so *Aisyah* and her daughter moved into a tent, exposed to scorpions, snakes and wild boars. The first help arrived on the fifth day, from volunteers. Seeing that there was no assistance coming from the government authorities, *Aisyah* began volunteering herself to help her neighbours. Only on the tenth day did the rain stop and family members were able to arrive to help her start what would become a very long recovery effort.

Amnesty International met *Aisyah* 10 months after that terrible day. Even though in April 2026, the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) had classified her house as severely damaged, by October she had not received any cash assistance or housing allowance and had not been offered temporary housing. She had been promised more help, including a new home, but did not know when, or even if, it would arrive. She said she lived in severe anxiety, her mental and physical health severely affected, and that she feared the heavy rainy season to come. In November 2026, the floods returned.

Aisyah is not alone. In late November 2025, exceptionally heavy rainfall associated with Tropical Cyclone Senyar triggered devastating floods and landslides across Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra. The disaster affected 53 districts and cities and reportedly killed 1,204 people. At its peak in early December 2025, more than 2 million people were displaced including about 1.46 million in Aceh. Aceh also recorded the greatest housing damage: as of 31 January 2026, an estimated 217,888 homes had been damaged, including 40,582 severely. Roads, bridges, schools, health facilities and other infrastructure were also damaged or destroyed, while losses to farms, plantations, aquaculture and small businesses undermined communities' ability to recover.

Although extreme rainfall was the immediate cause, environmental degradation and long-term land-use changes may have increased the disaster's severity. Approximately 1.2 million hectares of forest were lost across the three provinces between 1990 and 2024, much of it converted into oil-palm and industrial timber plantations. Civil society organizations have called for reviews of forestry and land-use permits, stronger enforcement against illegal activity and accountability for failures in environmental management. There are two pending lawsuits brought by survivors and environmental activists seek government accountability for alleged failures in environmental management, disaster preparedness and response.

METHODOLOGY

Between July and October 2026, Amnesty International spoke with 35 people, including affected residents, community activists and civil society representatives, and saw the devastation caused by the floods and landslides in 40 villages in Pidie Jaya, Aceh Tengah and Aceh Utara. Researchers observed destroyed homes, damaged roads and bridges, families living in temporary or makeshift accommodation, damaged farmland and communities still dependent on temporary water supplies. While the 35 interviews are not representative of all affected communities, they corroborated

information from civil society, official and media reports and provided first-hand evidence of the disaster's continuing consequences.

FAILURES IN PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Amnesty International's findings indicate that authorities' response fell short at every stage, from preparedness and emergency assistance to recovery and mitigation of future risks. Like *Aisyah*, many residents received no effective warning. Advisories issued shortly before the disaster by the Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG) did not translate into timely evacuation. The loss of electricity, internet access and transport links further impeded communication. These failures raise concerns that the authorities did not adequately address reasonably foreseeable threats to life.

Rescue and relief efforts were similarly uneven and, in some places, effectively absent. Affected people described relying on *warga-bantu-warga*, or "people helping people", as community members used makeshift rafts and their own resources to reach stranded people and distribute food. Some communities waited several days for assistance while facing shortages of food, clean water, sanitation, electricity and fuel.

AN INADEQUATE AND UNEVEN RECOVERY

Almost a year later, recovery remained deficient and uneven. The central government announced a three-year rehabilitation and reconstruction plan and several forms of financial assistance, including living allowances, housing waiting funds and payments to replace household goods, restore livelihoods and repair or rebuild homes. However, researchers found a significant gap between the assistance announced and what people received. Some households received only part of the support, others received none, and many remained on waiting lists without clear information. Payments reportedly ended after three months even where families remained displaced and without permanent housing, compounding the hardship for those whose livelihoods were destroyed.

THOUSANDS STILL WITHOUT ADEQUATE HOUSING

Progress towards permanent housing was extremely limited. Almost a year after the disaster, families remained in temporary housing, makeshift shelters, damaged homes or accommodation shared with relatives, often without a clear pathway to permanent housing. As of November 2026, government reporting stated that 57,027 permanent housing units were still needed across the three provinces. Some survivors were told to identify alternative land themselves or wait for relocation to a government-designated site.

Temporary accommodation observed by Amnesty International largely failed to meet international human rights standards on adequate housing. Common concerns included overcrowding, extreme heat, inadequate water and sanitation, exposure to rain, and locations close to rivers or on unstable slopes. In some cases, location of temporary housing far from former homes and livelihoods led people to rent accommodation or stay with relatives. Living in inadequate temporary housing, with no clarity on when permanent homes will be provided, compounds what people have already suffered, impedes their efforts to rebuild their lives and leaves them more vulnerable to future disasters.

LACK OF INFORMATION LEAVES COMMUNITIES IN UNCERTAINTY

Like *Aisyah*, affected people frequently did not know what assistance they were entitled to, whether payments were recurring, when delayed support would arrive, or when and where housing would be provided. This uncertainty prevented families from planning their recovery and made it harder to hold authorities accountable. Volunteers, journalists and social media users in Aceh reported that flood-related posts suffered reduced reach or were taken down, some accusing authorities of suppressing coverage, raising concerns about the rights to information, participation and freedom of expression.

COMMUNITIES REMAIN EXPOSED TO FURTHER DISASTERS

The fear *Aisyah* described is widely shared. The authorities failed to act swiftly enough to reduce the risk of renewed flooding. At the beginning of the 2026 rainy season, affected people raised concerns about rivers that had not been adequately dredged, damaged embankments and blocked waterways and researchers saw little substantial mitigation work. The Home Affairs Minister and leader of the recovery task force conceded that sediment still clogging riverbeds meant even light rain now caused flooding and logged 41 follow-on floods between April and October 2026.

In November 2026, a year later, floods returned to many of the same districts. Aceh's governor placed the entire province under a hydrometeorological emergency alert from 11 November 2026 to 31 January 2027. Heavy rain was again the immediate cause, but officials themselves tied the worsening floods to incomplete recovery work: just 55 of the 137 rivers damaged in 2025 had been restored. Only in November did the President call for accelerated river restoration.

REFUSAL TO DECLARE A NATIONAL DISASTER

Despite the scale of the devastation and appeals from local authorities, legislators and civil society, President Prabowo Subianto declined to classify the floods as a national disaster and refused international assistance, stating that Indonesia could manage the situation. Civil society representatives argued that a national designation could have elevated attention and opened exceptional administrative pathways to accelerate recovery.

BUDGET CUTS AND ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION

The response took place amid extensive cuts to disaster-management and regional budgets. In 2025, the National Disaster Management Agency lost one third of its budget, while meteorological and search-and-rescue agencies also sustained substantial cuts. While these cuts did not necessarily cause all of the shortcomings identified, officials and civil society representatives raised concerns that restricted resources impeded preparedness, relief and recovery.

Allegations of corruption raise further concerns. Interviewees described unofficial payments or deductions related to housing-damage classifications and living allowances, although Amnesty International could not independently verify these accounts. Nationally, the Corruption Eradication Commission detained 14 people and named five suspects in an investigation into alleged bribery and conflicts of interest involving emergency funds. While these allegations remain to be determined by the courts, any diversion of resources risks further delaying recovery and denying affected people essential assistance.

INDONESIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

Regardless of a disaster or post-disaster scenario, Indonesia must guarantee the rights to life, adequate housing and an adequate standard of living, information and participation and effective remedies. It must take reasonable measures against foreseeable threats, guarantee minimum essential levels of economic and social rights, use the maximum of its available resources and meaningfully involve affected people in recovery and resettlement decisions. The evidence gathered raises serious concerns that these obligations have not been fully met.

CONCLUSION

A year after the floods, the experience of affected communities in Aceh demonstrates that a disaster does not end when the waters recede. Failures in preparedness and emergency response have been compounded by a slow and uneven recovery, leaving many people without adequate housing, restored livelihoods or clear information about the assistance available to them, while communities remain exposed to further flooding. Although the scale of the disaster presented significant challenges, the evidence gathered by Amnesty International raises serious concerns that the authorities have not taken all reasonable steps, or mobilized sufficient available resources, to protect affected people and enable them to rebuild their lives.

The floods of November 2026 show the cost of that failure. The communities hit hardest in 2025 are being hit again in large part because the recovery they were promised did not arrive in time. Scientists have concluded that extreme rainfall spells in the region are growing more intense. Each season will test the same rivers, slopes and settlements. Without urgent action to address these shortcomings, ensure accountability and strengthen preparedness for future disasters, the human rights consequences of the 2025 floods will continue long after the immediate humanitarian emergency has passed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the above findings and Indonesia's human rights below are some key recommendations:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of policies, processes and implementation practices of relevant government agencies and authorities in the central and provincial governments,

including BNPB and BMKG, to understand and address the inadequacies in the post-disaster response as highlighted in this briefing and raised by CSOs and disaster affected people.

- Take all necessary steps to ensure that temporary housing is safe, sufficient in number and is brought up to standards that meet the criteria of adequate housing as per international human rights standards;
- Ensure that affected people are provided with full information on applicable relief and recovery measures and timelines for their provision in a form and language that is accessible to all without discrimination.
- Put in place systems to facilitate meaningful participation of impacted individuals and households on any resettlement and recovery plans as well as flood mitigation and control measures.
- Guarantee that no one will face retribution for raising questions about or criticizing disaster management efforts. Everyone's right to freedom of expression must be respected and protected.
- Ensure that all allocation of permanent housing is carried out in a manner that is non-discriminatory and is cognizant of the particular challenges faced by people belonging to groups that are at risk of marginalization and discrimination.
- Promptly, thoroughly, independently, impartially, transparently and effectively investigate all allegations of corruption including bribery in the management and disbursement of emergency relief funds and bring to justice in fair trial anyone suspected to be responsible. Any proceeds of corruption must be recovered and spent for their intended purposes.

2. METHODOLOGY

This briefing documents some of the experiences of people who were impacted by the floods and landslides that occurred in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Senyar in late November 2025. The briefing is based on research conducted by Amnesty International between July and October 2026 on disaster response by state authorities. During this period, Amnesty International spoke with 35 individuals: 11 representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs) and 24 affected people, including 15 community activists and volunteers. Researchers also visited more than 40 villages in three of the most affected regencies in Aceh. Almost a year after the floods, the scale of the damage remained clearly visible.

First, Amnesty International met with 11 CSOs working directly with communities affected by the floods and landslides across Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra. Six of the 11 CSOs comprise the Civil Society Coalition for Disaster Concern (Koalisi Masyarakat Sipil Peduli Bencana), a coalition established in the immediate aftermath of the disaster comprising LBH Banda Aceh, KontraS Aceh, AJI Banda Aceh, MaTA, YKPI and ICAIOS. Since December 2025, the coalition and its members have monitored and publicly reported on the emergency response and recovery, drawing on their respective work in humanitarian assistance, field monitoring, legal aid and litigation, gender and social inclusion, public spending and accountability, journalism and research. Four members of the coalition, LBH Banda Aceh, KontraS Aceh, MaTA and YKPI, are also part of the Advocacy Team for Justice for Sumatra, which represents survivors from Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra in litigation filed before the Jakarta State Administrative Court in May 2026. The information and perspectives provided by these and other CSOs helped Amnesty International understand developments on the ground throughout the emergency and recovery periods.

In addition, in early October, Amnesty International visited more than 40 villages in three of the most affected regencies in Aceh – Pidie Jaya, Aceh Tengah and Aceh Utara – travelling by road. Researchers observed and have photographic evidence on file of:

- villages where houses had been entirely destroyed or swept away,
- families living in makeshift shelters built from salvaged materials,
- houses still partially buried or filled with mud and sediment,
- large quantities of logs and other debris left by the floods, in rivers and riverbeds, on agricultural land and next to homes,
- destroyed bridges, some but not all replaced by temporary structures,
- damaged and partially repaired roads,
- landslide scars on hillsides,
- rivers whose banks had collapsed or whose course had shifted,
- rice fields still covered in sediment and not yet returned to cultivation,
- damaged or in some cases totally destroyed coffee plantations in Aceh Tengah,
- damaged schools, mosques or other public buildings and
- many people relying on water tankers or temporary boreholes.

During these visits, Amnesty International interviewed 24 affected people, including community activists and volunteers. In the absence of timely official assistance, they had supported relief and recovery efforts, including distributing aid, identifying affected households and isolated communities, helping residents access government assistance and raising concerns with local authorities. Their roles gave them first-hand knowledge of conditions in their communities throughout the emergency and recovery periods. All interviews were conducted with the informed consent of the interviewees, whose names have been withheld to protect their privacy and safety. Together, these interviews

provided Amnesty International with up-to-date information on the situation of affected communities across Aceh.

Amnesty International's interviews cannot constitute a representative sample, and the findings cannot be generalized to all affected communities. Nevertheless, they allowed Amnesty International to corroborate information received from CSOs, community activists, official sources and media reports, by checking it against the first-hand accounts of affected people and the conditions researchers observed directly. They also allowed researchers to see for themselves the conditions in which affected families were living, including with regards to access to housing, water, sanitation and financial assistance. Furthermore, they gave affected people interviewed by Amnesty International the opportunity to describe in their own words the impact of the disaster on their lives and their experience of the government's response.

Amnesty International is grateful to all the organizations and individuals who shared their time, expertise and documentation, and extends particular thanks to KontraS Aceh for its extensive assistance throughout the research, including facilitating Amnesty International's access to affected communities and locations. CELIOS also assisted in the analysis of the 2025 and 2026 budget allocations.

On 11 November, Amnesty International wrote to the Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Cultural Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs in Indonesia to share initial findings and seek their response. As of the date of publication, Amnesty International has not received any response from the government.

3. BACKGROUND

The provinces of Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra in Indonesia are located on the island of Sumatra, a short distance across the Strait of Malacca to Malaysia. Aceh in particular has gone through several crises in the recent past including the conflict from the mid-seventies to 2005[1] and the devastation caused by the tsunami in December 2004 which left 130,000 dead and 37,000 reported missing.[2] As per the latest statistics, around 12.33 per cent of people in Aceh were living in poverty in 2025. The percentage of people living in poverty in rural areas is at 14.44 per cent and in urban areas it is 8.54 per cent.[3]

In late November 2025, several days of exceptionally heavy rainfall associated with Tropical Cyclone Senyar led to floods, flash floods and landslides, causing deaths, displacing communities and damaging homes, livelihoods and public infrastructure. The disaster affected 53 districts and cities in the provinces of Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra.[4]

Indonesia's National Disaster Management Agency (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana, BNPB) reported that 1,204 people had died in the floods and landslides as of February 2025.[5] According to the spokesperson of the Aceh Hydrometeorological Disaster Management Post, a staggering 2.58 million people in Aceh were impacted by the 2025 disaster.[6]

Aceh bore the greatest recorded impact in terms of continuing displacement and damage to housing, with 1.46 million people displaced at its peak in early December 2025.[7] Further, of the 264,105 houses recorded as damaged across the three provinces, 217,888 were in Aceh, including 40,582 that were severely damaged.[8]

The disaster also damaged public facilities and transport links. For example, in Aceh alone, the Aceh Provincial Government reported that 24 bridges and 31 road points were damaged or destroyed by 28 November 2025, seriously disrupting access to several areas, distribution of humanitarian assistance and emergency services.[9] People dependent on farming, aquaculture and small-scale industry were particularly affected by loss of livelihood. A number of farms and coffee plantations were swept away or buried under landslides, undermining the ability of people relying on farming to resume their livelihoods even after the waters receded.[10] Indonesia's Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries identified approximately 30,000 hectares of damaged aquaculture ponds across 16 districts and

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[1] Amnesty International, *Time to Face the Past: Justice for Past Abuses in Indonesia's Aceh Province* (Index: ASA 21/001/2013), 2013.
[2] World Bank, *Lessons from the Reconstruction of Post-Tsunami Aceh: Build Back Better Through Ensuring Women Are at the Center of Reconstruction of Land and Property*, August 2011, https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/772771468326134196
[3] Badan Pusat Statistik, Provinsi Aceh, *Perkembangan Indikator Sosial Ekonomi Provinsi Aceh 2026*, Table 1.12, Volume 14, 30 October 2026, https://aceh.bps.go.id/id/publication/2026/10/30/eb10af5823c70e11ef9aa9a8/perkembangan-indikator-sosial-ekonomi-provinsi-aceh-2026.html (in Indonesian).
[4] Indonesian Humanitarian Coordination Platform (IHCP), *Situation Report #11: Floods, Flash Floods and Landslides in Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra Provinces*, 31 January 2026, https://reliefweb.int/report/indonesia/indonesia-ihcp-situation-report-11-floods-flash-floods-and-landslides-aceh-north-sumatra-and-west-sumatra-provinces-31-january-2026
[5] Indonesia, Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana (BNPB), "Perkembangan Percepatan Penanganan Darurat dan Pemulihan Bencana Hidrometeorologi di Sumatra Pada 6 Februari 2026", 6 February 2026, https://www.bnpb.go.id/berita/perkembangan-percepatan-penanganan-darurat-dan-pemulihan-bencana-hidrometeorologi-di-sumatra-pada-6-februari-2026 (in Indonesian).
[6] Dialeksis, "2,58 juta warga terdampak bencana banjir Aceh 2025" ["2.58 million residents affected by the 2025 Aceh flood disaster"], 2 January 2026, https://www.dialeksis.com/aceh/258-juta-warga-terdampak-bencana-banjir-aceh-2025/ (in Indonesian).
[7] ANTARA News, "Four months on, Sumatra moves from emergency to reconstruction", 26 March 2026, https://en.antaranews.com/news/409938/four-months-on-sumatra-moves-from-emergency-to-reconstruction
[8] Indonesia Humanitarian Country Team (IHCT), *Indonesia IHCP Situation Report #11: Floods, Flash Floods and Landslides in Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra Provinces*, (previously cited).
[9] Indonesian Humanitarian Coordination Platform (IHCP), *Indonesia IHCP Situation Report #1: Floods, Flash Floods and Landslides in Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra Provinces*, 2 December 2025, https://reliefweb.int/report/indonesia/indonesia-humanitarian-coordination-platform-ihcp-situation-report-1-floods-flash-floods-and-landslides-provinces-aceh-north-sumatra-and-west-sumatra-december-2-2025).
[10] Plan International, "Children risk as floods and landslides devastate communities across Sumatra", 8 December 2025, https://plan-international.org/news/2025/12/08/children-risk-as-floods-and-landslides-devastate-communities-across-sumatra

cities, resulting in losses for more than 30,000 fish farmers.[11] The Ministry of Industry reported that, as of April 2026, the floods and landslides affected 3,020 small industrial businesses, with food-processing businesses being the largest affected category.[12]

3.1 LIKELY UNDERLYING CAUSES OF THE DISASTER

Exceptionally heavy rainfall associated with Tropical Cyclone Senyar was the immediate trigger of the late November 2025 floods and landslides. World Weather Attribution estimated the rainfall over the Malacca Strait region to be roughly a 1-in-70-year event in today's climate, intensified by La Niña and a negative Indian Ocean Dipole. The study found that observed rainfall extremes in the region have become more intense as global temperatures have risen.[13] Rainfall alone, however, does not account for the scale of the destruction. Hydrologists and environmental organizations argued that long-term degradation of upstream watersheds, in particular the loss of forest cover, had reduced the landscape's capacity to absorb and slow down runoff, thus amplifying the disaster.[14]

Available data shows that the affected provinces had undergone substantial changes in land use over more than three decades. According to an analysis by the Kompas Data Journalism team, approximately 1.2 million hectares of forest were lost across Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra between 1990 and 2024.[15] Of this area, 690,777 hectares were converted into oil-palm plantations and 69,733 hectares into industrial timber plantations, with smaller areas converted into projects for urban, mining, agricultural and other uses.[16] Some Indonesian public officials have expressed concern about the role of land-use change. Attorney General Sanitiar Burhanuddin, citing government and academic analysis, said that large-scale land-use change in upstream watersheds had combined with heavy rainfall to contribute to the floods.[17] Deputy Minister of Public Works Diana Kusumastuti identified the conversion of forests into agricultural land, settlements and other uses as one of the causes of the floods.[18]

In many interviews conducted by Amnesty International, impacted people said that while the areas they lived in had experienced flooding during previous wet seasons, the November 2025 floods, accompanied by landslides, were of an entirely different magnitude. Unlike previous floods, they said, the November 2025 flash floods carried vast quantities of mud and logs downstream, blocking existing waterways and drainage channels. Forestry Minister Raja Juli Antoni announced an investigation into the origin of logs carried by the floods in North and West Sumatra and whether forestry violations were involved.[19] The logs and thick mud that flowed downstream slowed down evacuations and delivery of aid and damaged key infrastructure[20] thus posing serious human rights risks. Ten months later, when Amnesty International researchers visited the flood impacted areas in Aceh, the traces of the disaster remained plainly visible.

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[11] Antara News, "KKP Identifikasi 30 Ribu Hektare Tambak Budidaya Terdampak Banjir di Aceh", 9 January 2026, https://www.antaranews.com/berita/5341617/kkp-identifikasi-30-ribu-hektare-tambak-budidaya-ikan-di-aceh-rusak (in Indonesian).
[12] Antara News, "Govt speeds up recovery of small, medium-sized industries in Sumatra", 3 July 2026, https://en.antaranews.com/news/421421/govt-speeds-up-recovery-of-small-medium-sized-industries-in-sumatra
[13] Sarah Kew and others, *Increasing Heavy Rainfall and Extreme Flood Heights in a Warming Climate Threaten Densely Populated Regions across Sri Lanka and the Malacca Strait*, WWA Scientific Report 78, World Weather Attribution, 10 December 2025, https://hdl.handle.net/10044/1/126259, "Main findings".
[14] Universitas Gadjah Mada, "UGM expert: Severe Sumatra flash floods driven by upper watershed forest degradation", 2 December 2025, https://ugm.ac.id/en/news/ugm-expert-severe-sumatra-flash-floods-driven-by-upper-watershed-forest-degradation (citing Hatma Suryatmojo, Faculty of Forestry); Antara, "WALHI dorong pemerintah lakukan pemulihan alam pascabencana Aceh", 29 November 2025, https://www.antaranews.com/berita/5275817/walhi-dorong-pemerintah-lakukan-pemulihan-alam-pascabencana-aceh (in Indonesian; citing WALHI Aceh director Ahmad Shalihin).
[15] Kompas.id, "Sumatra's forests disappear", 12 December 2025, https://www.kompas.id/artikel/en-hutan-sumatera-lenyap
[16] Kompas.id, "Sumatra's forests disappear" (previously cited).
[17] Kompas TV, "Blak-blakan! Jaksa Agung Lapor Prabowo Alih Fungsi Lahan Picu Bencana Banjir Sumatera", 24 December 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0sr-zqm0HE (in Indonesian).
[18] Katadata.co.id, "Wamen PU: Alih Fungsi Lahan Jadi Penyebab Banjir di Aceh, Sumut, dan Sumbar", 28 November 2025, https://katadata.co.id/berita/industri/69297f90778af/wamen-pu-alih-fungsi-lahan-jadi-penyebab-banjir-di-aceh-sumut-dan-sumbar (in Indonesian); Kompas.com, "Pertama dalam 40 Tahun, Padang Pariaman Banjir, Apa Penyebabnya?", 28 November 2025, https://www.kompas.com/properti/read/2025/11/28/200000621/pertama-dalam-40-tahun-padang-pariaman-banjir-apa-penyebabnya (in Indonesian).
[19] Indonesia, Ministry of Forestry, "Menhut Raja Antoni Akan Cabut 20 Izin PBPH dan Kejar Pelaku Perusakan Hutan", 8 December 2025, https://bpkh21.planologi.kehutanan.go.id/news/menhut-raja-antoni-akan-cabut-20-izin-pbph-dan-kejar-pelaku-perusakan-hutan (in Indonesian).
[20] Heinrich Böll Foundation Southeast Asia, "No rainbow after the rain: Cyclone Senyar and the aftermath in Sumatra and Aceh, Indonesia", 9 March 2026, https://th.boell.org/en/2026/03/09/deforestation-and-disasters-flash-floods-indonesia

Many houses and other buildings were still filled with mud, uninhabitable and abandoned. On many others, a line across the paintwork still marked the height the mud and water had reached during the floods and in their immediate aftermath. In many cases residents said that they had been left to clear and clean their homes themselves, and in most cases, the mud and water had caused extensive and lasting damage to the houses.

Indonesian CSOs raised concerns about the state's regulation and oversight of forestry, mining and plantation activities. Transparency International Indonesia argued that corruption, illegal permits and weakened environmental safeguards had facilitated deforestation.[21] Friends of the Earth Indonesia (WALHI) called for a transparent review of forestry and land-use permits and questioned why illegal activities in forests and river basins had continued for several years without firm enforcement.[22]



Tree trunks, mud and debris left by the November 2025 floods in Meureudu, Pidie Jaya, still uncleared in October 2026.
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On 21 January 2026, the government established the Forest Regulation Task Force to audit practices of extractive and forestry industries for violations of environmental protection laws and regulations.[23] As a

[21] Transparency International, "Corruption-driven deforestation turbo-charges flood crisis in Sumatra", 19 December 2025, https://www.transparency.org/en/press/corruption-driven-deforestation-turbo-charges-flood-crisis-in-sumatra
[22] Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI), "WALHI Desak Kementerian Kehutanan Tindak Aktivitas Ilegal dan Cabut Perizinan Berusaha Perusahaan Penyebab Banjir Sumatera", 9 December 2025, https://www.walhi.or.id/walhi-desak-kementerian-kehutanan-tindak-aktivitas-ilegal-dan-cabut-perizinan-berusaha-perusahaan-penyebab-banjir-sumatera (in Indonesian).
[23] Indonesia, Presidential Regulation 5 of 2025 on the Control of Forest Areas (Peraturan Presiden Nomor 5 Tahun 2025 tentang Penertiban Kawasan Hutan), signed and promulgated on 21 January 2025, State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia 2025 No. 8, available at https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/338527/perpres-no-5-tahun-2025

result of the audit, the government decided to revoke permits given to 28 companies for violations of applicable laws and regulations.[24] However, following the revocations[25], Auriga Nusantara, an Indonesian NGO, raised further questions about the transparency and consistency of the process, reporting that some permits had already expired or been previously revoked and that some concessions were outside the affected watersheds.[26]

In June 2026, the Advocacy Team for Justice for Sumatra comprising flood survivors and environmental activists filed a lawsuit in the Jakarta State Administrative Court against the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Forestry and the Minister for Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning for acting negligently in the discharge of their legal obligations to protect the environment. The petition highlights that the failure of the Ministries to adequately protect and manage the environment "contributed to creating a socio-natural hazard, while simultaneously increasing the vulnerability of communities and enlarging their exposure to disaster risk".[27] Among other calls, the lawsuit seeks a moratorium on approvals of environmental and operational environmental-management licenses within forest areas and watersheds affected by the flooding and landslides in Aceh, North Sumatra, and West Sumatra Provinces, for a at least three years; an environmental compliance audit of operations in the forestry, plantation and mining sectors located within the watershed of the affected areas; and sanctions on operations found to have committed violations causing environmental damage in the affected areas.[28] As of the date of publication, the lawsuit remained pending.



Debris in a flood affected area in Meureudu, Pidie Jaya in Aceh, photographed on 30 November 2025. © Chaideer Mahyuddin / AFP via Getty Images

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See also Jakarta Post, "Prabowo forms task force to curb illegal forest use", 23 January 2025, https://www.thejakartapost.com/indonesia/2025/01/23/prabowo-forms-task-force-to-curb-illegal-forest-use
On the task force's mandate and the 2026 permit revocations, see Indonesia, Cabinet Secretariat, "President Prabowo revokes 28 companies' business permits to enforce compliance in national forest areas", 20 January 2026, https://setkab.go.id/en/president-prabowo-revokes-28-companies-business-permits-to-enforce-compliance-in-national-forest-areas; Mongabay, "Indonesia revokes forest and mine permits over role in deadly Sumatra landslides", 22 January 2026, https://news.mongabay.com/2026/01/indonesia-revokes-forest-and-mine-permits-over-role-in-deadly-sumatra-landslides

[24] Mongabay, "Indonesia revokes forest and mine permits over role in deadly Sumatra landslides" (previously cited).

[25] Indonesia, Cabinet Secretariat, "President Prabowo revokes 28 companies' business permits to enforce compliance in national forest areas", 20 January 2026, (previously cited).

[26] Mongabay, "Indonesia faces scrutiny over permit revocations following deadly floods and landslides", 20 February 2026, https://news.mongabay.com/2026/02/indonesia-faces-scrutiny-over-permit-revocations-following-deadly-floods-and-landslides

[27] Petition, Case 217/G/LH/2026/PTUN.JKT, registered on 19 June 2026.

[28] Petition, Case 217/G/LH/2026/PTUN.JKT (previously cited).

4. KEY FINDINGS

Amnesty International's visit and reports from CSOs that have been monitoring the situation for several months indicated that post-disaster response was largely patchy. The uneven and slackened implementation of relief and rehabilitation measures has threatened the rights to adequate housing, water and sanitation among other human rights. As the region faces another wet season and flooding, many continue to live in makeshift housing, uncertain about how they will earn a livelihood and rebuild their lives, and fearful of what the future holds.

4.1 INEFFECTIVE EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

The establishment of effective early warning systems is a critical aspect of disaster risk reduction and can go a long way in saving lives and property. An effective early warning system includes "an integrated system of hazard monitoring, forecasting and prediction, disaster risk assessment, communication and preparedness activities systems and processes that enable individuals, communities, governments, businesses and others to take timely action to reduce disaster risks in advance of hazardous events".[29] However, interviews with affected people, community activists and CSOs indicated that many residents received no warning of the floods and landslides and were therefore caught unprepared.

In a case filed by a civil society coalition against the President of Indonesia and the Head of BNPB, the petitioners highlight the failures of the agency to undertake sufficient preparedness, early warning and mitigation measures articulated in Law No. 24 of 2007 on Disaster Management.[30] Indonesian law explicitly requires the national and provincial governments to put in place measures that will reduce risks and impacts of the disaster, protect the rights of impacted individuals and communities and engage in reconstruction and recovery after the disaster.

Most of the people that Amnesty International researchers interviewed recalled that information about the floods dripped in even as the disaster unfolded, made worse by loss of access to electricity and the internet. A woman whose home was flooded in Langkahan district recalled that, after several days of continuous rain, she began regularly checking the level of the nearby river with a stick, as flooding was common in the area. "The water level was not rising despite the rain, so I thought it was going to be OK. But then, all of a sudden, we had the flood. Water was flowing in from four sides and very quickly there was water up to the window of my house", she said.[31] A woman in Aceh Tengah described how they were caught unawares by a landslide that destroyed their home in the early hours of the morning. She told Amnesty International researchers about the difficulty she faced as she moved her son who has a mobility-related disability out of their home and to a safe area. "I had to put him on a motorcycle and push the vehicle through flood waters until we reached the safety of the mosque", she said.[32]

One community activist described the morning of 26 November 2025 when the area he lived in was flooded. "My experience of 26th morning was that it was very dark. At eight in the morning, a friend called to say that the road [that connected his area to other areas] had been washed away. Then I heard that there was a flood and the bridge was also destroyed. There was a landslide over the lake…I bought rice for people who had lost everything. It was later that I realized that there was no more food coming because the access roads were cut off".[33]

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[29] UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), Sendai Framework Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction, "Early Warning System", https://www.undrr.org/terminology/early-warning-system;
[30] Petition, Case 167/G/LH/2026/PTUN.JKT, registered on 7 May 2026; Katadata, "Warga Gugat Menteri hingga Presiden Buntut Bencana Sumatra", 8 May 2026, https://katadata.co.id/finansial/makro/69fde5094389f/warga-gugat-menteri-hingga-presiden-buntut-bencana-sumatra (in Indonesian).
[31] Interview in person, 4 October 2026.
[32] Interview in person, 3 October 2026.
[33] Interview in person, 3 October 2026.

According to a policy brief prepared by the Resilience Development Initiative (RDI) on the response to the floods and landslides, the Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG) began issuing advisories on the weather system that became Cyclone Senyar on 21 November 2025. On 26 November, as rainfall peaked in Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra, BMKG officially declared the system a tropical cyclone and repeated region-specific alerts. By then, however, many areas were already flooded, and transport and communication networks had been damaged or destroyed. RDI's policy brief notes that "[t]he short gap between warning and impact highlighted enduring weaknesses in translating meteorological alerts into rapid evacuation, infrastructure protection, and ground-level response".[34] World Weather Attribution similarly found that, although early warnings were issued, failures in communications infrastructure may have prevented them from reaching those at risk, and many who did receive them were unable to anticipate the scale of the floods.[35] These gaps which resulted in the failure to initiate actions at the community level likely contributed to the scale of loss of life and displacement.

4.2 INADEQUATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Under Indonesian law, the emergency response phase is part of the overall disaster-response and includes rapid assessment, rescue and evacuation of affected people, meeting basic needs such as providing shelter, food, water, safe sanitation, healthcare, and protection of groups and individuals vulnerable to discrimination and marginalization, and the immediate restoration of vital infrastructure and facilities.[36] The declaration of the emergency response phase, allows the government in charge to have access to specific resources that are urgently required for carrying out the above mentioned tasks.[37] Depending on the scale of the need for emergency response, the government in charge can extend the period of the emergency response status. In Aceh, the provincial emergency response status was first declared for 14 days, from 28 November to 11 December 2025, and was subsequently extended four times until end of January 2026.[38]

Despite the extended emergency phase, media and CSO reports confirmed by interviews conducted by Amnesty International suggest that emergency operations were at best uneven with people in many areas left to fend for themselves. Flood affected people told Amnesty International researchers that in the absence of any visible government led emergency response efforts, individuals did whatever they could to help each other. For them, "emergency response" during these floods was essentially 'warga-bantu-warga' or 'people helping people'. Several interviewees told Amnesty International that they used their own initiative and resources, including using makeshift rafts and forming volunteer groups to reach out to people who were stranded by the floods and landslides, particularly those in the 3T areas (areas classified as remote and underdeveloped) which were the hardest to reach and therefore often neglected.[39] However, as pointed out by a volunteer activist in Banda Aceh, there were limits to what individual and community level efforts could achieve. "Whether we like it or not, only the government can help in such situations. They are the ones with heavy machinery and access to fuel" he said.[40]

In a statement published on 8 December 2025, Plan International raised concerns over the delayed humanitarian response and slow rescue efforts and life-saving assistance.[41] Families had sought

[34] Resilience Development Initiative, *Cyclone Senyar and the Escalating Hydrometeorological Risks in Sumatra: Shaping Recommendations in Indonesia's Disaster Preparedness and Response*, policy brief, https://www.preventionweb.net/quick/99076, p. 3.
[35] Sarah Kew and others, *Increasing Heavy Rainfall and Extreme Flood Heights in a Warming Climate Threaten Densely Populated Regions across Sri Lanka and the Malacca Strait* (previously cited), "Main findings".
[36] Indonesia, Law 24 of 2007 on Disaster Management (Disaster Management Law), Article 48.
[37] Indonesia, Disaster Management Law, Article 50; Indonesia, Government Regulation 21 of 2008, Article 41.
[38] Petition, Case 167/G/LH/2026/PTUN.JKT (previously cited), para. 16. Kompas.id, "Aceh Akhiri Status Tanggap Darurat Bencana Saat Penanganannya Belum Tuntas", 1 February 2026, https://www.kompas.id/artikel/en-aceh-akhiri-status-tanggap-darurat-bencana-saat-penanganan-darurat-belum-tuntas?open_from=Section_Terpopuler (in Indonesian)
[39] Interview in person, 1 October 2026, Banda Aceh.
[40] Interview in person, 1 October 2026, Banda Aceh.
[41] Plan International, "Children risk as floods and landslides devastate communities across Sumatra" (previously cited).

refuge in makeshift shelters and crowded spaces, with many of their basic needs unmet.[42] With bridges destroyed, people were taking significant risks, crossing fast-flowing rivers in small wooden boats or on improvised pulley-operated carts to transport basic goods, seek medical help or reach evacuation points. This posed heightened risks for older people, people with disabilities, pregnant women and children.[43]

RDI's policy brief also highlighted communication failures on the part of the authorities, as official communication could not keep up with information circulated on social media.[44] This, according to RDI, contributed to a perception among the affected people that the authorities were "out of step with on-the-ground realities and unable to provide timely situational awareness".[45] An organization working on humanitarian response in all three flood-affected regions also had a similar experience. They told Amnesty International that their outreach to some of the worst affected areas in the early days of the disaster was dependent on what people posted on various social media platforms.[46]

A woman living in Langkahan district told Amnesty International researchers that she managed to leave her flooded home and escape to the nearby mosque with her family and a few belongings. However, they could not live on the mosque's premises for long as the area was very crowded and there were serious concerns around water and sanitation. She described how food was in short supply as most stocks had been washed away and those that had not, were wet and therefore unusable. She said that she and her daughter survived the first four days by eating what they found – raw papaya on one day, a piece of pumpkin and some fish on another. It was only on the fifth day of displacement that volunteers reached their village and brought some relief materials with them. She said that she had to live with her daughter in a tent provided by BNPB as the water remained in her house for 17 days.[47]

Similarly, a woman in Aceh Tengah told Amnesty International researchers about the desperate situation of many of the affected people in her area. She said that people were shocked, anxious and afraid. They were cut off from their regular supply of food as access roads had been destroyed. Many people needed basic items like food, blankets and sarongs. There was shortage of fuel, and they remained without electricity for over a month.[48]

[42] Plan International, "Children risk as floods and landslides devastate communities across Sumatra" (previously cited).
[43] Plan International, "Children risk as floods and landslides devastate communities across Sumatra" (previously cited).
[44] Resilience Development Initiative, *Cyclone Senyar and the Escalating Hydrometeorological Risks in Sumatra* (previously cited), p. 5.
[45] Resilience Development Initiative, *Cyclone Senyar and the Escalating Hydrometeorological Risks in Sumatra* (previously cited), p. 5.
[46] Interview by video call, 15 October 2026.
[47] Interview in person, 4 October 2026.
[48] Interview in person, 3 October 2026.



An activist shows the level at which the flood waters rose during the November 2025 floods, which remain visible in a house in Langkahan, Aceh Utara, photographed on 4 October 2026. © Amnesty International

4.3 DEFICIENT RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION

On 8 January 2026, President Prabowo Subianto established the Task Force for the Acceleration of Post-Disaster Rehabilitation and Reconstruction in Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra, chaired by Home Affairs Minister Tito Karnavian.[49] In May 2026, Minister Tito Karnavian estimated that rehabilitation and reconstruction would require IDR 130 trillion (USD 7.69 billion) over three years.[50] The government also announced a masterplan prepared by the National Development Planning Ministry (Bappennas) to be implemented from 2026 through 2028. The masterplan covers several key impacted sectors including agriculture, fisheries, roads, health and education. As per the plan, in the first year, restoration of basic infrastructure and the construction of permanent housing would be prioritized.[51]

In addition to the planned recovery efforts in specific sectors of the economy, the central government also announced support and assistance to individuals and families who were displaced by the disaster. According to government and media reports, the following is to be made available for affected people in the three provinces:

- Living allowance (jaminan hidup): IDR15,000 (USD 0.82) per person per day for three months. On 4 April 2026, according to a media report, in Sekumur Village, Sekerak, Aceh Tamiang, Minister Tito Karnavian stated that the payment would keep going if the permanent housing was not finished within the three months.[52]
- Housing Waiting Funds (Dana Tunggu Hunian, DTH): IDR 600,000 (USD 33) per family per month for three months, renewable until permanent housing is ready. It is for families whose homes are no longer habitable and who have not received, or opted to stay in, temporary housing (*Huntara*). Families who were renting their homes/were tenants before the disaster are not eligible for DTH.[53]
- Household goods: a one-time payment of IDR 3 million (USD 164) per family to replace furniture and household items lost in the floods.[54]

[49] Indonesia, Presidential Decree 1 of 2026 on the Task Force for the Acceleration of Post-Disaster Rehabilitation and Reconstruction in Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra (English translation), 8 January 2026, https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/343433/keppres-no-1-tahun-2026-satuan-tugas-percepatan-rehabilitasi-dan-rekonstruksi-pa; Cabinet Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia, "Accelerating Post-Disaster Recovery, President Prabowo Forms Rehabilitation, Reconstruction Task Force", (English translation)7 January 2026 https://setkab.go.id/en/accelerating-post-disaster-recovery-president-prabowo-forms-rehabilitation-reconstruction-task-force/

[50] Jakarta Globe/Antara, "Indonesia estimates $7.7 billion needed for Sumatra recovery", 26 March 2026, https://jakartaglobe.id/news/indonesia-estimates-77-billion-needed-for-sumatra-recovery

[51] Interview by video call with an adviser to the Governor of Aceh, 13 October 2026. See also VietnamPlus, "Indonesia steps up reconstruction in Sumatra after deadly disasters", 25 May 2026, https://en.vietnamplus.vn/indonesia-steps-up-reconstruction-in-sumatra-after-deadly-disasters-post343401.vnp; Jakarta Globe, "Indonesia Earmarks $6.2 Billion for Sumatra Disaster Recovery", 24 September 2026, https://jakartaglobe.id/news/indonesia-earmarks-62-billion-for-sumatra-disaster-recovery

[52] Akurat, "Satgas PRR Percepat Penyaluran Jaminan Hidup, 60 Ribu Penyintas Pascabencana Sumatera Terbantu", April 2026, https://akurat.co/nasional/847101/satgas-prr-percepat-penyaluran-jaminan-hidup-60-ribu-penyintas-pascabencana-sumatera-terbantu (in Indonesian). Metro TV, "Daftar bantuan korban bencana Sumatra, ada santunan hingga jaminan hidup", 31 December 2025, https://www.metrotvnews.com/play/kELCng23-daftar-bantuan-korban-bencana-sumatra-ada-santunan-hingga-jaminan-hidup (in Indonesian);

[53] Indonesia, BNPB, Implementation Guidelines 15 of 2025 on the Housing Waiting Fund for Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra, Chapter II C (2), https://jdih.bnpb.go.id/download-lampiran/juklak-nomor-15-tahun-2025; Medcom, "Penyaluran DTH Tembus 19 Ribu Penerima", April 2026, https://www.medcom.id/nasional/peristiwa/wkBdWglN-penyaluran-dth-tembus-19-ribu-penerima-hunian-layak-untuk-penyintas-terus-diperkuat (in Indonesian).

[54] Bisnis.com, "Bantuan Bencana Banjir dan Longsor Sumatra, dari BLT Hingga Relaksasi KUR", 27 December 2025, https://ekonomi.bisnis.com/read/20251227/9/1939848/bantuan-bencana-banjir-dan-longsor-sumatra-dari-blt-hingga-relaksasi-kur (in Indonesian); Metro TV, "Korban Bencana Sumatra Dapat Bantuan Isi Rumah Rp3 Juta Per Keluarga", 30 December 2025, https://www.metrotvnews.com/read/b3JC5Zd4-korban-bencana-sumatra-dapat-bantuan-isi-rumah-rp3-juta-per-keluarga (in Indonesian).

- Economic recovery: a one-time payment of IDR 5 million (USD 274) per family.[55]
- Housing repair or replacement, based on the level of damage:
    - IDR 15 million (USD 821) for houses with minor damage (0–30 per cent damage),
    - IDR 30 million (USD 1643) for houses with moderate damage (30–70 per cent damage) and
    - IDR 60 (USD 3,287) million for houses with severe damage (more than 70 per cent damage) for.[56]

When Amnesty International visited Aceh in early October, civil society activists, volunteers and survivors described the disbursement of cash assistance as haphazard. They said that some households had received some payments while others had received none or remained on "waiting lists", without clear information about when any payment would be made. Some of the flood survivors Amnesty International researchers met said that they had been told that they would receive it in October 2026 – more than 10 months after the floods.[57] According to some women living in temporary housing constructed by village authorities, the only form of assistance they had received since the disaster struck were sporadic donations of rice, oil and sugar, the latest being on Eid. They did not know when they would receive the cash assistance or any of the other support announced by the government. Having lost their farms and coffee plantations to the floods, the women said that they tried to earn some money doing odd jobs including weeding and tilling other people's land.[58]

Amnesty International also found a significant gap between the stated purpose and duration of some forms of assistance and the situation of families they met who remained without permanent housing. No survivor, community activist or civil society organization interviewed by Amnesty International was aware of any affected household in the communities with which they worked having received Housing Waiting Funds (Dana Tunggu Hunian, DTH) beyond three months. This is despite the fact that BNPB's implementation guidelines describe DTH as assistance intended to provide ongoing support to disaster-affected people for their temporary housing needs before permanent housing can be occupied.[59] Similarly, at the time of the interview, some had not received the one-time payment for household goods.

Government reporting in July 2026 appears to confirm the three-month cut off by stating that 13,706 identified recipients in Aceh had received DTH, describing distribution as 100 per cent complete, whilst also describing the assistance as IDR600,000 per household per month for only three months, or IDR1.8 million in total. The affected people that Amnesty International encountered, however, remained without permanent housing well beyond that three-month period.[60]

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[55] Antara News, "Ministry disburses Rp100.9 billion for East Aceh disaster recovery", 16 March 2026, https://en.antaranews.com/news/408698/ministry-disburses-rp1009-billion-for-east-aceh-disaster-recovery; Central Aceh District Government, "3,428 families affected by the disaster in Central Aceh received Rp. 27.4 billion in first-phase housing assistance.", 26 February 2026, https://acehtengahkab.go.id/berita/kategori/bantuan-sosial/3428-kk-terdampak-bencana-di-aceh-tengah-terima-bantuan-isi-hunian-tahap-i-rp-27-4-miliar (in Indonesian)

[56] International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), *Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra Provinces, Indonesia: Flood 2025 - DREF Operational Update (MDRID028)*, 31 July 2026, available at https://reliefweb.int/report/indonesia/aceh-north-sumatra-and-west-sumatra-provinces-indonesia-flood-2025-dref-operational-update-mdrid028-31072026; Detik, "Rincian Bantuan buat Korban Bencana Sumatera yang Rumahnya Rusak", 29 December 2025, https://finance.detik.com/infrastruktur/d-8282017/rincian-bantuan-buat-korban-bencana-sumatera-yang-rumahnya-rusak (in Indonesian); Metro TV, "Pemerintah Salurkan Bantuan Perbaikan Rumah untuk Korban Banjir Aceh", https://www.metrotvnews.com/play/N4ECox6v-pemerintah-salurkan-bantuan-perbaikan-rumah-untuk-korban-banjir-aceh (in Indonesian);

[57] Interview in person, 4 October 2026

[58] Interview in person, 3 October 2026.

[59] Indonesia, BNPB, Implementation Guidelines 15 of 2025 on the Housing Waiting Fund for Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra, Guideline, Chapter II, D(1) (previously cited)

[60] Munzir Budiana, "Aceh Terima DTH 100 Persen, Pembangunan 34.777 Huntap Terus Dikebut", Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI), 1 September 2026, https://rri.co.id/banda-aceh/regional/2699592/aceh-terima-dth-100-persen-pembangunan-34777-huntap-terus-dikebut (in Indonesian).

A similar gap emerged in relation to the living allowance (jaminan hidup). As noted above, in April 2026, Minister Tito Karnavian stated that payments would continue beyond the initial three months if permanent housing had not yet been completed. Yet none of the affected people interviewed by Amnesty International who had received the living allowance reported receiving it for more than three months, including people who still did not have permanent housing at the time of Amnesty International's visit in October 2026.

Furthermore, the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) reported as of 15 June 2026 that disbursement of cash assistance that was provided in the first two to four months after the disaster had ceased. This was particularly hard for families whose farms and other places of work were under thick layers of mud which had hardened by this time. Many had also lost their work tools and equipment and were now seeking work as daily wage earners.[61]

More broadly, Amnesty International found that the transition to permanent housing had barely begun in the communities that researchers visited. The affected families who were interviewed did not have a clear indication of when a permanent home would be built or allocated to them. Instead, almost a year after the disaster, families continued to live in temporary housing, makeshift shelters and damaged homes, or with relatives and friends. Official government figures point the same way: by early September 2026, nine months after the floods, only 649 of the 34,777 permanent homes needed in Aceh – under 2 per cent – had been completed.[62]

This was particularly striking given that the government's reconstruction masterplan identified permanent housing as a priority for the first year of recovery. For the affected people Amnesty International met, however, there was often no discernible pathway or timeline from temporary accommodation to a permanent home. Some had been told that they would need to identify alternative land themselves or wait to be relocated to a government-designated site but did not know when that relocation would take place.

On 10 November, Minister of Home Affairs Tito Karnavian, announced that according to data received from the three provinces, construction of temporary housing has reached 99.84 per cent of the need for 20,803 units, the government also provided housing waiting funds to 26,761 and now there was a need for 57,027 permanent housing units.[63]

The lack of permanent housing and clarity on when this would be provided was a cause of anxiety for the people that Amnesty International interviewed. Safe and adequate housing often provides the foundation on which people can begin to rebuild their lives and livelihoods. Without adequate housing that is disaster resilient, people remain vulnerable to repeated disasters with their coping capacities diminished with every experience.

4.4 INADEQUATE TEMPORARY HOUSING

During Amnesty International's visit to Aceh in October 2026, the team witnessed first-hand the conditions in which people continued to live while waiting for permanent housing. Researchers found that some families were living in temporary housing (Huntara) constructed by different government agencies or NGOs; others remained in makeshift shelters they had built themselves, whilst others had returned to badly damaged homes, were renting or were staying with friends and relatives.

With regards to temporary accommodation, the IASC Guidelines clarify that transitional shelter or housing should fulfil the requirements of adequacy in international human rights law particularly as

[61] IFRC, *DREF Operational Update MDRID028* (previously cited).
[62] Satuan Tugas Percepatan Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi (Satgas PRR) Aceh, data as of 5 September 2026, compiled from figures supplied by BNPB and the Ministry of Housing and Settlement Areas (PKP); reported in Antara, "Satgas PRR catat 649 unit hunian tetap di Aceh telah rampung", 7 September 2026, https://www.antaranews.com/berita/5730356/satgas-prr-catat-649-unit-hunian-tetap-di-aceh-telah-rampung (in Indonesian).
[63] VOI.id, "Victims of the Sumatra disaster need 57,027 permanent houses, Tito requests accelerated development", VOI, 10 November 2026, https://voi.id/en/news/601894

articulated in General Comment 4 on the right to adequate housing.[64] In addition, the guidelines include respect for safety standards aimed at reducing damage in cases of future disasters.

The quality and safety of temporary accommodation varied considerably but was largely overcrowded and inadequate for the basic needs of inhabitants. In several locations, researchers observed inadequate access to clean water, toilets that were damaged or unusable, housing units that were very hot during the day and limited lighting at night. The visit took place at the beginning of the rainy season, and researchers saw first-hand and collected photographic evidence of the flood risks that these units faced. Researchers saw villages that had already flooded again, observed new landslides and encountered houses and temporary shelters located close to rivers or on unstable slopes and therefore exposed to further flooding or landslides.



People walk through a flooded area in Meureudu, Pidie Jaya, photographed on 30 November 2025. © Chaideer Mahyuddin / AFP via Getty Images

Temporary housing was not available to everyone who needed it. While media reports highlighted that various governmental agencies including BNPB and Danantara had constructed temporary homes and indeed Amnesty International researchers saw examples of these in Pidie Jaya and Aceh Utara, Amnesty International researchers met people who were eligible for temporary housing but had not been allocated a unit and were therefore living in their own damaged housing. They had also not received the DTH amount of 1.8 million IDR which was supposed to be given to those who were renting rather than living in temporary housing or for those still awaiting temporary housing. In fact, according to a representative of a civil society organization working with the local administration on post disaster response in all three of the impacted provinces, some people were still living in tents due to lack of temporary housing, and many more were living with friends and relatives.[65]

[64] Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), *Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters*, Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement and Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 2011, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/IDPersons/OperationalGuidelines_IDP.pdf, Guideline 21.
[65] Interview by video call, 15 October 2026.

One of the challenges that people highlighted in the case of temporary housing was the availability of sufficient and well-located land. Members of civil society organizations told researchers that due to a shortage of vacant land, in many cases temporary housing was located at a great distance from people's original homes and places of work. Amnesty International researchers also saw that some temporary housing units were constructed on land where landslides had occurred. This meant that where possible, some survivors preferred to rent homes or live with friends or relatives instead of moving to a temporary house. A man whose house in Pidie Jaya was completely washed away during the floods in November told researchers that he decided to rent a place along with a few other flood-affected families rather than live in the government provided temporary housing which was located far away from any work opportunities. Since losing his farm to the floods, the man now earned money doing odd jobs around the village.[66]

Amnesty International researchers visited a temporary housing complex built by the Ministry of Public Works in Aceh Utara, which was described by the resident interviewees, "as one of the best temporary housing complexes".[67] The temporary housing complex consisted of communal kitchens and toilets and a one-room units allocated per household. These units, while comparatively better than others, were very small for an average family of four and heated up during the day in a way that they were very uncomfortable for the residents. While residents that researchers spoke with highlighted that they were grateful for what they had received, they were worried that their temporary housing complex was located on private land whose rental agreement ended in December 2026. With no plans for permanent housing in sight, they were anxious about whether they would be evicted if the owner sought to take back their land. One of the interviewees who was part of the village administration said that he was also worried about the rental costs which so far, the village administration had raised by borrowing, and he was worried about raising this again if permanent housing was not provided soon enough.

[66] Interview in person, 2 October 2026
[67] Interview in person, 4 October 2026.



Tents provided by BNPB still being used by a family for storing household items as they continue to live in their damaged home, in Langkahan, Aceh Utara, photographed on 4 October 2026. © Amnesty International

Conditions were substantially worse at temporary housing constructed by village authorities in the grounds of a mosque in Aceh Tengah. Amnesty International met with members of four families living in single-room units constructed from tin, tarpaulin sheets and wood board. Residents said that the type of construction meant that it had already suffered damage and rainwater often entered the unit. The units comprised of one room where families of five or six people slept, ate and cooked. Lacking sanitation facilities, families living in these units used the toilets and washing areas in the mosque.

The people interviewed by Amnesty International researchers said that they had been told that in order to obtain housing they would need to identify alternative land or then wait to be relocated to one of the government designated sites for permanent housing. They said that they did not have the funds to purchase alternative land and also did not know when they would be allocated permanent housing on the government sites. Some of the women who spoke with Amnesty International researchers said that they struggled to live in the cramped conditions where parents and adult and teenage children of different genders all had to sleep next to one another in the same room. One woman said that among the things she found most difficult was having to live away from her son who had multiple disabilities. The living conditions in the units and particularly the lack of proper sanitation facilities meant that it was very difficult for her son to access the toilets and therefore she had to move him to live with relatives in a nearby village.

4.5 INFORMATION GAP

The impacted people and CSO representatives Amnesty International spoke to had very little information on post-disaster response plans. In cases where they had asked village or sub-district authorities, they had been provided piecemeal answers. Largely, people were unsure about the type and amount of assistance they were entitled to. For example, those who had received cash assistance

payments were not sure whether these were a one-off payment or whether they would receive similar payments in the future. For those who were told that they were entitled to cash assistance but had not received it at the time of the visit, there was lack of clarity of when they would get it.

The same uncertainty extended to housing and resettlement. People waiting for temporary or permanent housing frequently lacked information about when accommodation would become available, where permanent housing would be constructed, who would be prioritized for allocation or what they were expected to do while waiting. This uncertainty compounded the insecurity of families who had already spent several months living in temporary, makeshift or otherwise inadequate accommodation.

According to Guidelines by the UN's Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) mandated to formulate policy, set strategic priorities and mobilize resources in response to humanitarian crises (IASC Guidelines), people affected by disasters should be informed and consulted on measures taken on their behalf. They should be provided with information in a language and form that is accessible to them on the nature and level of disaster they are facing; measures taken to mitigate the disaster; ongoing or planned humanitarian assistance, recovery efforts and their entitlements; and their human rights under international and domestic law. They should also be given the opportunity to participate in the planning and implementation of the various stages of the disaster response.[68]

Linked to the lack of information were the allegations, raised by civil society actors, volunteers and journalists and echoed in media reports at the time[69], that efforts had been made, including through "shadow banning", to suppress independent reporting on the scale of the disaster and the adequacy of the response. They also said that the government's interest in suppressing information on the disaster, its causes and post-disaster response were among the reasons why it had disallowed external support and assistance. One person in Aceh Tengah told Amnesty International researchers, "We don't have the right to criticize the government. We live in poverty, but we pay taxes. But when there is a disaster, we cannot scream".[70] Amnesty International was not able to independently verify these allegations, including whether restrictions on online content were directed by the state or resulted from social media platforms' own moderation practices. Nevertheless, the allegations raise important questions about what role, if any, the authorities played in limiting public information about the disaster.

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[68] Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), *Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters* (previously cited), Guidelines 1.2 and 1.3.

[69] See, for example, "Akun Medsos Aktif Publikasi Banjir Aceh Diduga Kena Shadowban" [Social media accounts actively publishing on the Aceh floods suspected of being shadowbanned], *AJNN*, December 2025, https://www.ajnn.net/news/akun-medsos-aktif-publikasi-banjir-aceh-diduga-kena-shadowban/amp.html, in which volunteers in central Aceh (Aceh Tengah, Bener Meriah and Gayo Lues) reported reduced reach on accounts documenting flood conditions and said that flood-related posts by influencers and national media had been taken down; Muhajir Juli, "Berita TV3 Malaysia tentang Korban Banjir Aceh Diblokir di Indonesia" [TV3 Malaysia report on Aceh flood victims blocked in Indonesia], *Komparatif.ID*, 24 December 2025, https://komparatif.id/berita-tv3-malaysia-tentang-korban-banjir-aceh-diblokir-di-indonesia/, which alleged that the reach of flood-related posts on Facebook had been quietly restricted as criticism of the central government's response grew; "Konten Soal Banjir Sumatra Mendadak Sepi Penonton di Instagram" [Content about the Sumatra floods suddenly gets few viewers on Instagram], *Mistar.id*, December 2025, https://mistar.id/news/sains-teknologi/konten-soal-banjir-sumatra-mendadak-sepi-penonton-di-instagram, reporting widespread user complaints from early December 2025 of sharply reduced reach for flood-related posts; "Komdigi Buka Suara soal Ramai Keluhan Dugaan Shadowban Konten Karhutla di Medsos" [Komdigi responds to complaints of alleged shadowbanning of forest fire content on social media], *Katadata*, 21 October 2026, https://katadata.co.id/digital/teknologi/6ad89992df56a/komdigi-buka-suara-soal-ramai-keluhan-dugaan-shadowban-konten-karhutla-di-medsos, in which SAFEnet's Nenden Sekar Arum stated that similar content restrictions, including account suspensions, occurred during the 2025 Sumatra floods; "Essay: Sumatra's Floods and the Perils of Narrative Control," *Stratsea*, 9 January 2026, https://stratsea.com/2026/01/09/essay-sumatras-floods-and-the-perils-of-narrative-control/, on official pressure on media to focus on "positive news"; and "When Environmental Disaster Is Silenced: How Algorithmic Power Erased Indonesia's Flood Crisis," *Repro Uncensored*, January 2026, https://www.reprouncensored.org/research-overview/algorithmic-silence-indonesia-floods. The Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs (Komdigi) has denied requesting or carrying out the removal of Aceh flood content. All accessed 22 November 2026.

[70] Interview in person, 3 October 2026.

4.6 SLUGGISH CONTROL EFFORTS FOR FUTURE FLOODS

An important aspect of recovery in a post-disaster context is disaster prevention and mitigation which includes taking steps to protect people and property from future disasters. In the case of the floods and landslides of November 2025, this would mean swift and concerted action to repair river embankments that were destroyed by the floods, clearing flow channels and dredging of rivers and other water channels to remove the buildup of silt which would otherwise cause the river to easily overflow its banks.

When Amnesty International researchers visited Aceh in October 2026, it was the start of the wet season. Many of the people they interviewed were still dealing with some of the worst impacts of the 2025 floods including the relatively recent experience of fleeing to safety with their loved ones and the meagre belongings that they could carry with them, displacement, loss of farmlands and other means of livelihood. In addition, with the onset of the rainy season, they also expressed concern about facing another round of floods as the rain intensified. When asked about mitigation and disaster risk reduction efforts, many of them said that they did not know what the government was doing, if anything to mitigate against another flood. They pointed out to researchers that the rivers on the banks of which they lived needed dredging to clear silt build up and thus avoid flooding. Amnesty International researchers saw some construction activity in Pidie Jaya which local people said was being done to bolster a section of the riverbank.

In 2026, as the rainy season progresses, tens of thousands of people in Aceh are once again reeling from floods caused by several days of heavy rainfall. According to the BNPB, heavy rainfall upstream caused three rivers in Pidie Jaya to overflow on 8 November, inundating 8,608 homes and surrounding agricultural land in 43 villages.[71] Flash floods in November 2026 in Gayo Lues Regency once again brought thick mud and logs into villages and damaged over 100 houses.[72]

From 12 November, flooding spread to Aceh Tamiang, Subulussalam, Aceh Singkil, Southeast Aceh and West Aceh. As reported in the media on 14 November 2026, the provincial government of Aceh declared “emergency status” as floods once again devastated different parts of the region. Media reports highlighted that the Governor of the province had declared that the ‘emergency status’ would remain in effect from 11 November 2026 to 31 January 2027 in order to allow the government to prepare for the floods.[73] Most recently, on 19 November, BNPB was said to have begun weather modification operations over Aceh to mitigate flooding as further heavy rain was forecast for six regencies.[74]

Media reports also reported that Home Minister Tito Karnavian attributed the flooding in Aceh partly to sediment buildup in rivers following the November 2025 floods which reduced their carrying capacity. Despite this, it was only on 9 November 2026, deep in the middle of the rainy season, that President Prabowo Subianto called for accelerated river restoration as the top priority in post-disaster recovery efforts in Aceh, North Sumatra, and West Sumatra provinces.[75] Further, Minister of Home Affairs Tito Karnavian, as leader of the Task Force for the Acceleration of Post-Disaster Rehabilitation and Reconstruction in Sumatra, acknowledged that at least 41 subsequent flood events were recorded across the three provinces between April and October 2026. Recent repair and clean-up efforts were

[71] Bernama, “Floods in Indonesia's Aceh affect over 32,000 people, thousands of homes inundated”, The Star, 11 November 2026, https://www.thestar.com.my/aseanplus/aseanplus-news/2026/11/11/floods-in-indonesia039s-aceh-affect-over-32000-people-thousands-of-homes-inundated.
[72] Bernama, “Floods in Indonesia's Aceh affect over 32,000 people, thousands of homes inundated”, The Star, 11 November 2026, https://www.thestar.com.my/aseanplus/aseanplus-news/2026/11/11/floods-in-indonesia039s-aceh-affect-over-32000-people-thousands-of-homes-inundated.
[73] Star, “Aceh declares state of emergency after widespread flooding”, 14 November 2026, https://www.thestar.com.my/aseanplus/aseanplus-news/2026/11/14/aceh-declares-state-of-emergency-after-widespread-flooding
[74] Antara, "BNPB expands weather modification operation to mitigate Aceh floods", 20 November 2026, https://en.antaranews.com/news/444227/bnpb-expands-weather-modification-operation-to-mitigate-aceh-floods
[75] Indonesia, Cabinet Secretariat, “President Prabowo prioritizes river restoration to prevent further flooding in Sumatra Island”, 10 November 2026, https://setkab.go.id/en/president-prabowo-prioritizes-river-restoration-to-prevent-further-flooding-in-sumatra-island

also set back by the floods, with renewed damage to roads, bridges and areas where mud and debris had previously been cleared.[76]

4.7 REFUSAL TO CLASSIFY THE FLOODS AS A NATIONAL DISASTER

Tropical Cyclone Senyar caused widescale destruction and affected the lives and livelihoods of people across Aceh, North Sumatera and West Sumatera.[77] In the weeks after the floods, the heads of three regencies in Aceh (Aceh Tengah, Pidie Jaya, Aceh Selatan) declared their inability to handle the disaster in their regions and called upon the central government to take over disaster response.[78] On 1 December Indonesia's Home Affairs Minister acknowledged the overwhelming need in the affected districts.[79] In early December the House of Representatives also called for the designation of the floods as a 'national disaster'.[80]

However, on 15 December 2025, President Prabowo Subianto announced that since only three of the 38 provinces in the country were impacted by the disaster, it would not be classified as a national disaster.[81] The President also refused international assistance. On 15 December, he said that Indonesia was capable of handling the disaster and that the situation was under control.[82]

[76] Indonesia, Cabinet Secretariat, "President Prabowo prioritizes river restoration to prevent further flooding in Sumatra Island", 10 November 2026, https://setkab.go.id/en/president-prabowo-prioritizes-river-restoration-to-prevent-further-flooding-in-sumatra-island
[77] Sarah Kew and others, *Increasing Heavy Rainfall and Extreme Flood Heights in a Warming Climate Threaten Densely Populated Regions across Sri Lanka and the Malacca Strait* (previously cited), citing ECHO and CNN (at least 1.5 million people affected in Indonesia).
[78] IHCP, *Situation Report #1: Floods, Flash Floods and Landslides - Provinces of Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra*, 2 December 2025, available at https://reliefweb.int/report/indonesia/indonesia-humanitarian-coordination-platform-ihcp-situation-report-1-floods-flash-floods-and-landslides-provinces-aceh-north-sumatra-and-west-sumatra-december-2-2025; see also Metro TV, "Aceh Darurat Banjir, 7 Bupati Menyerah", 4 December 2025, https://www.metrotvnews.com/read/bVDCPLX7-aceh-darurat-banjir-7-bupati-menyerah (in Indonesian).
[79] IHCP, *Situation Report #1* (previously cited).
[80] CNN Indonesia, "Kenapa Banjir-Longsor Sumatra Tak Kunjung Jadi Bencana Nasional?", 9 December 2025, https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20251209125108-20-1304533/kenapa-banjir-longsor-sumatra-tak-kunjung-jadi-bencana-nasional (in Indonesian).
[81] DetikNews, "Prabowo: Ada yang Teriak-teriak soal Bencana Nasional, Ini 3 dari 38 Provinsi", 9 December 2025, https://news.detik.com/berita/d-8260962/prabowo-ada-yang-teriak-teriak-soal-bencana-nasional-ini-3-dari-38-provinsi (in Indonesian).
[82] Tempo, "Prabowo rejects foreign aid in Sumatra, says Indonesia capable", 16 December 2025, https://en.tempo.co/read/2073722/prabowo-rejects-foreign-aid-in-sumatra-says-indonesia-capable;



A house rendered uninhabitable as it remains filled with mud brought by the floods in Pidie Jaya regency, photographed on 2 October 2026. © Amnesty International

In May 2026, seven flood survivors and environmental activists, represented by the Advocacy Team for Justice for Sumatra, used the citizen lawsuit mechanism to file a case in the Jakarta State Administrative Court against the President of Indonesia and the Head of BNPB, among others.[83]

The lawsuit which is pending for judgement sought action against the refusal of the President to recognize the Sumatra floods as a national disaster and against the BNPB for its failure to put in place measures relating to disaster preparedness, disaster mitigation and establishing early warning systems.[84] According to the plaintiffs, the refusal of the President to recognize the floods as a national disaster was responsible for the slow and inadequate management of post-disaster processes. The complaint noted that many disaster-affected areas remained isolated, lacking basic goods and services such as adequate food, medical supplies, and clean water. In many cases the emergency displacement sites were built haphazardly without safe sanitation facilities.[85] Furthermore, the lawsuit critiques the President's decision to not allow foreign assistance for both the emergency and recovery phases of disaster response.

According to Law No. 24 of 2007 on Disaster Management, the central government must determine whether a disaster is classified as national or regional. In making that determination, the government must consider the number of victims, property losses, infrastructure damage, the geographic extent of the disaster, and its socio-economic impacts. The law does not prescribe quantitative thresholds that automatically require a disaster to be designated as a national disaster.[86]

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[83] Petition, Case 167/G/LH/2026/PTUN.JKT, registered on 7 May 2026; Katadata, "Warga Gugat Menteri hingga Presiden Buntut Bencana Sumatra", 8 May 2026, https://katadata.co.id/finansial/makro/69fde5094389f/warga-gugat-menteri-hingga-presiden-buntut-bencana-sumatra (in Indonesian); Suara, "Ahli UGM Sebut Ada Indikasi Pembiaran Pemerintah dalam Penanganan Banjir Sumatra", 15 October 2026, https://www.suara.com/news/2026/10/15/191008/ahli-ugm-sebut-ada-indikasi-pembiaran-pemerintah-dalam-penanganan-banjir-sumatra (in Indonesian).
[84] Petition, Case 167/G/LH/2026/PTUN.JKT (previously cited).
[85] Petition, Case 167/G/LH/2026/PTUN.JKT (previously cited).
[86] Indonesia, Disaster Management Law, Article 7.

Some civil society representatives told Amnesty International researchers that although the central government has been involved in the relief and recovery efforts, the responsibility is shared with the provincial and local governments. In their opinion, the designation of a national disaster would have elevated the attention given to it, while also creating exceptional pathways and administrative arrangements to hasten relief and recovery measures.[87] Echoing this, an advisor to the Governor of Aceh told Amnesty International that the local government was struggling to effectively carry out its role in disaster response due to its limited budget and the lack of a "mechanism for post-disaster recovery".[88]

Many civil society group representatives and community activists contrasted the disaster response to these floods with the disaster response to the 2004 Tsunami. They said that although the death toll after the tsunami was much greater, they did not feel isolated and alone at the time as there was help pouring in from all over the world. This time around, however, they felt that they had been left to fend for themselves, which gave rise to a sense of hopelessness. One woman said to Amnesty International researchers, "I have lived through four crises – the Aceh conflict, the tsunami, Covid and these floods. Out of them all, I feel this is the worst. Maybe because I am older now. But in the case of this crisis everyone was working for themselves – people did not help each other. We were on our own."[89]

4.8 DRASTIC BUDGET CHANGES

Many civil society members and experts told researchers that one of the reasons for the haphazard and sluggish disaster response was that the main institutions responsible for disaster management, along with regional governments, had seen their budgets cut over the preceding year – resulting in severely restricted access to resources: financial, technical and human.

In January 2025, Presidential Instruction No. 1/2025 ordered Rp 306.69 trillion in spending cuts across ministries, agencies and transfers to regional governments.[90] The Finance Ministry said the aim was to manage the state budget more wisely, with greater discipline and better targeting, and to safeguard its stability, inclusivity and sustainability.[91] The State Secretary said the savings could be prioritized for the Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) programme.[92]

The agencies at the centre of disaster response were severely hit. BNPB lost a third of its 2025 budget.[93] BMKG, which monitors weather and seismic activity and issues the forecasts and early warnings on which evacuation and preparedness decisions depend, initially lost half its budget; part was later restored, and the government's mid-year outlook put its 2025 spending about 11 per cent

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[87] Interviews in person, 1 and 5 October 2026.
[88] Interview by video call, 13 October 2026.
[89] Interview in person, 4 October 2026.
[90] The cuts comprised Rp 256.1 trillion from ministries and agencies and Rp 50.59 trillion from transfers to regions, out of total planned state spending of Rp 3,621 trillion for 2025. Indonesia Business Post, "Indonesia to redirect state budget savings to boost MBG program", 24 January 2025, https://indonesiabusinesspost.com/3458/policy-and-governance/indonesia-to-redirect-state-budget-savings-to-boost-mbg-program; Indonesia Business Post, "Sri Mulyani ensures budget efficiency not hamper economic growth", 14 February 2025, https://indonesiabusinesspost.com/3620/policy/sri-mulyani-ensures-budget-efficiency-not-hamper-economic-growth; Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, *Nota Keuangan beserta Rancangan Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Negara Tahun Anggaran 2026, Buku II* [Financial Note and Draft State Budget for Fiscal Year 2026, Book II], August 2025, Table 1, p. 7 (in Indonesian).
[91] Investortrust, "Kemenkeu: Efisiensi Anggaran Rp 306,69 Triliun untuk Kesejahteraan Rakyat", January 2025, https://investortrust.id/macro/54252/kemenkeu-efisiensi-anggaran-rp-256-1-triliun-untuk-kesejahteraan-rakyat (in Indonesian)..
[92] Indonesia Business Post, "Indonesia to redirect state budget savings to boost MBG program" (previously cited);
[93] BNPB's 2025 budget was cut by Rp 470.9 billion, from Rp 1.43 trillion to Rp 956.67 billion, a reduction of 33 per cent (authors' calculation). Tempo, "Budget constraints impede regional disaster response, BNPB says", 19 March 2025, available at https://www.asia-pacific-solidarity.net/news/2025-03-19/budget-constraints-impede-regional-disaster-response-bnpb-says.html; Metro TV News, "Lengkap! Ini Daftar Terbaru Kementerian dan Lembaga Terdampak Efisiensi Anggaran", 14 February 2025, https://www.metrotvnews.com/read/k8oCVoLn-lengkap-ini-daftar-terbaru-kementerian-dan-lembaga-terdampak-efisiensi-anggaran (in Indonesian). At the parliamentary hearing on 6 February 2025, an earlier figure was given: a cut of Rp 620.5 billion, about 43 per cent of an initial allocation of Rp 1.4 trillion. Metro TV News, "Efisiensi Anggaran, BNPB Kurangi Alokasi Pengadaan Alat di Daerah", 6 February 2025, https://www.metrotvnews.com/read/bD2CMoqZ-efisiensi-anggaran-bnpb-kurangi-alokasi-pengadaan-alat-di-daerah (in Indonesian). BNPB's funding was later increased during the year: the government's mid-year outlook put its 2025 spending at Rp 2,014.4 billion, above the original allocation. Ministry of Finance, *Nota Keuangan RAPBN 2026* (previously cited), Table 4.3, p. 4-15.

below the original allocation.[94] The National Search and Rescue Agency (Basarnas), which leads operations to locate, rescue and evacuate people during disasters, initially lost about a third of its budget, later partly restored.[95]

Even as disasters mounted, the 2026 budget, passed on 23 September 2025, two months before the floods, proposed further cuts, although these only took effect in January 2026.[96] BNPB's allocation was roughly halved again, to IDR 491 billion (USD 26.8 million), about a third of its original 2025 allocation.[97] Transfers to regions (*Transfer ke Daerah*, TKD) were cut by almost a quarter compared with the original 2025 budget.[98] These are the central government funds on which provincial, district and city governments depend for close to 80 per cent of their revenue on average, and they finance the regional budgets from which local governments fund their own disaster management agencies (BPBD) and the contingency allocations (*belanja tidak terduga*) they draw on for emergency response. Only after the floods did the government reverse the planned transfer cuts for Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra and increase BNPG's budget.[99]

The government's position on funding was not uniform. The Finance Minister maintained that funding was not a constraint: on-call and reserve funds were sufficient, some remained unspent at the end of

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[94] BMKG's 2025 budget was cut from Rp 2.83 trillion to Rp 1.40 trillion, a reduction of 50.35 per cent. On 11 February 2025, BKMG's head said a restructuring of the cut could raise the allocation to IDR 1.78 trillion subject to approval. Jakarta Post, "BMKG seeks to avoid budget cuts, citing disaster risks", 11 February 2025, https://www.thejakartapost.com/indonesia/2025/02/11/bmkg-seeks-to-avoid-budget-cuts-citing-disaster-risks; Tempo, "Expert says BMKG's budget cut may disrupt disaster early warning system", 13 February 2025, available at https://www.itiger.com/news/2511519707. See also Ministry of Finance, *Nota Keuangan RAPBN 2026* (previously cited), Table 4.3, p. 4-14.

[95] Basarnas's 2025 budget was initially cut from Rp 1.50 trillion to Rp 1.01 trillion, a reduction of 32 per cent (authors' calculation). The amount withheld was later reduced to Rp 409.14 billion and eased further through two rounds of budget relaxation. The agency's head said on 6 February 2025 that there would be no procurement of drones or remotely operated vehicles that year. Antara, "Basarnas proposes national emergency fund to speed up SAR operations", 2025, https://en.antaranews.com/news/391241/basarnas-proposes-national-emergency-fund-to-speed-up-sar-operations; Suara Surabaya, "Basarnas Tunda Pengadaan Alutsista SAR Seiring Kebijakan Efisiensi Anggaran", February 2025, https://www.suarasurabaya.net/politik/2025/basarnas-tunda-pengadaan-alutsista-sar-seiring-kebijakan-efisiensi-anggaran (in Indonesian); Ministry of Finance, *Nota Keuangan RAPBN 2026* (previously cited), Table 4.3, p. 4-15.

[96] Investortrust, "Indonesia passes 2026 state budget with deficit set at 2.68% of GDP", September 2025, https://investortrust.id/market/79980/indonesia-passes-2026-state-budget-with-deficit-set-at-268-of-gdp; Jakarta Post, "House passes higher spending 2026 state budget into law", 23 September 2025, https://www.thejakartapost.com/business/2025/09/23/house-passes-higher-spending-2026-state-budget-into-law

[97] BNPB's allocation fell from an estimated IDR 2.01 trillion (USD 118.7 million) in 2025 to IDR 491 billion (USD 29.1 million) in 2026, a reduction of 75.6 per cent. The 2025 figure is the government's mid-year outlook, not the original budget. Ministry of Finance, *Nota Keuangan RAPBN 2026* (previously cited), Table 4.3, p. 4-15. See also Jakarta Post, "Budget cuts cast shadow over disaster readiness", 9 February 2026, https://www.thejakartapost.com/indonesia/2026/02/09/budget-cuts-cast-shadow-over-disaster-readiness; Databoks, "Prabowo cuts BNPB 2026 budget to only Rp491 billion", 21 August 2025, https://databoks.katadata.co.id/en/economics-macro/statistics/68a72334613a1/prabowo-cuts-bnpb-2026-budget-to-only-rp491-billion; .com, "Menilik Kesiapan Anggaran Tanggap Bencana Prabowo, Seberapa Besar?", 28 November 2025, https://ekonomi.bisnis.com/read/20251128/10/1932557/menilik-kesiapan-anggaran-tanggap-bencana-prabowo-seberapa-besar (in Indonesian).

[98] Transfers to regions were cut from IDR 919.9 trillion in the original 2025 budget to IDR 693 trillion in 2026, a reduction of Rp 226.9 trillion or 24.7 per cent (authors' calculation). The draft budget had set the figure at Rp 650 trillion; it was raised by Rp 43 trillion before passage. Measured against the reduced 2025 outlook of Rp 864 trillion, the cut is about a fifth. Ministry of Finance, *Nota Keuangan RAPBN 2026* (previously cited), Table 1, p. 7; Bisnis.com, "Puluhan Kepala Daerah Temui Purbaya, Protes Pemotongan Transfer ke Daerah (TKD)", 7 October 2025, https://ekonomi.bisnis.com/read/20251007/10/1918140/puluhan-kepala-daerah-temui-purbaya-protes-pemotongan-transfer-ke-daerah-tkd (in Indonesian); Reuters, "Indonesian parliament set to approve bigger 2026 budget for Prabowo", published in Kontan, 18 September 2025, https://english.kontan.co.id/news/indonesian-parliament-set-to-approve-bigger-2026-budget-for-prabowo.
On regional dependence on transfers: Investortrust, "Apkasi Minta Pemerintah Pusat Hentikan Pemotongan Anggaran Daerah pada 2027", https://investortrust.id/macro/111167/apkasi-minta-pemerintah-pusat-hentikan-pemotongan-anggaran-daerah-pada-2027 (in Indonesian).
On regional disaster funding: Kompas, "Pengembalian Dana TKD Aceh, Sumut, dan Sumbar Tak Cukup Pulihkan Daerah Pascabencana".

[99] The planned 2026 transfer cuts for the three provinces were cancelled in December 2025 and January 2026, and BNPB's regular 2026 budget was raised to about IDR 1.08 trillion. CNBC Indonesia, "Kena Bencana, Anggaran Aceh, Sumut, Sumbar Tidak Dipotong Purbaya", 16 December 2025, https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20251216055131-4-694471/kena-bencana-anggaran-aceh-sumut-sumbar-tidak-dipotong-purbaya (in Indonesian); Kompas, "BNPB Usul Tambahan Anggaran Rp 5,67 Triliun ke Kemenkeu untuk Penanganan Bencana 2026", 8 September 2026, https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2026/09/08/11115641/bnpb-usul-tambahan-anggaran-rp-567-triliun-ke-kemenkeu-untuk-penanganan (in Indonesian).

December 2025, and there was no need to reallocate MBG funds.[100] Officials also pointed to regional contingency budgets and the Village Fund as available sources for the emergency response.[101] But others in government said that funding was inadequate. In January 2026, the Home Affairs Minister, who chairs the government's recovery task force, said he hoped the cut to Aceh's transfers would be cancelled or reversed so that recovery would not be held back by budget constraints.[102] The following month, BNPB head Lieutenant General Suharyanto told parliament that limited funding was a major challenge to the agency's disaster mitigation work.[103] In September 2026, at a cabinet meeting on other disasters, President Prabowo Subianto said the lesson for his government was that "we must significantly increase the budget allocation for disaster mitigation".[104]

As stated in this briefing, Amnesty International researchers found that early warning was insufficient and that the response following Cyclone Senyar fell well short of what was needed. Almost a year later, many survivors had still not received the cash assistance allocated to them or permanent housing. Whether the budgets in place before the cuts would have been enough to deliver these services is unclear, and this briefing does not claim that the cuts alone explain the gaps in disaster response. However, those closest to the response were unanimous: village officials and activists who had direct knowledge of what support reached survivors all told researchers that what had been done fell far short of what was needed.

4.9 AN OPEN SECRET: REPORTS OF CORRUPTION IN DISASTER RESPONSE

There is no doubt that budgets were limited, at least compared with what they had been before the cuts. However, there remain questions around whether the funds that were allocated were properly and transparently used and disbursed by government authorities at the national, regional and local levels. Amnesty International found reasons for concern at both ends: in villages, where people described having to pay bribes to receive assistance they were entitled to, and at the centre, where the national disaster agency is under investigation for alleged corruption in its emergency funds.

ASSESSING DAMAGE TO HOMES

Much of the assistance to households depends on a single administrative decision: how badly a home is judged to have been damaged. Under the government's scheme, households receive IDR 15 million (USD 821) for a lightly damaged home, IDR 30 million (USD 1643) for a moderately damaged one and IDR 60 million (USD 3287) for one that is severely damaged or destroyed. The Home Affairs Minister described the data as being collected by local governments and formalized by decree of the district head, with validation going no higher than district level.[105] A change of category can therefore

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[100] Bernama-Antara, "Disaster relief budget for food-hit Sumatra sufficient, says finance minister", published in Star, 26 December 2025, https://www.thestar.com.my/aseanplus/aseanplus-news/2025/12/26/disaster-relief-budget-for-food-hit-sumatra-sufficient-says-finance-minister; Antara, "Indonesia says funds ready for housing disaster survivors", 30 December 2025, https://en.antaranews.com/news/398062/homepage-v2.html

[101] On 30 December 2025 the Finance Minister said Rp 1.51 trillion in on-call funds remained available. Antara, "Indonesia says funds ready for housing disaster survivors", 30 December 2025, https://en.antaranews.com/news/398062/homepage-v2.html; Antara, "Indonesia says disaster recovery budget ready, no MBG cuts needed", December 2025, https://en.antaranews.com/news/397654/homepage-v2.html.
On regional contingency budgets and the Village Fund: Kontan, "Korban Banjir Sumatra Terus Bertambah, Pemerintah Belum Tambah Anggaran Bencana", 7 December 2025, https://nasional.kontan.co.id/news/korban-banjir-sumatra-terus-bertambah-pemerintah-belum-tambah-anggaran-bencana (in Indonesian).

[102] Metro TV News, "Usulan Kembalikan TKD Aceh Sudah Disampaikan ke Presiden Prabowo", January 2026, https://www.metrotvnews.com/read/NQAC0V9e-usulan-kembalikan-tkd-aceh-sudah-disampaikan-ke-presiden-prabowo (in Indonesian); RRI, "Government accelerates regional transfers for disaster areas", 22 January 2026, https://rri.co.id/en/national/2123575/government-accelerates-regional-transfers-for-disaster-areas

[103] Jakarta Post, "Budget cuts cast shadow over disaster readiness" (previously cited), also available at https://asianews.network/indonesian-governments-budget-cuts-cast-shadow-over-disaster-readiness

[104] Asia News Network, "Indonesia's mitigation budget under scrutiny as country grapples with disasters", 10 September 2026, https://asianews.network/?p=300093; Antara, "Prabowo orders bigger disaster mitigation budget, more equipment", 7 September 2026, https://en.antaranews.com/news/430237/prabowo-orders-bigger-disaster-mitigation-budget-more-equipment

[105] iNews, "Pemerintah Siapkan Skema Ganti Rumah Korban Bencana Sumatra, Dibagi 3 Klaster", 10 January 2026, https://www.rctiplus.com/news/detail/terkini/5299834/pemerintah-siapkan-skema-ganti-rumah-korban-bencana-sumatra--dibagi-3-klaster (in Indonesian).

double a family's entitlement, and the decision rests with local officials whose assessments are difficult for residents to scrutinize.

One village official in Aceh Utara said that when the damage to homes in their village was being classified, the village chief had to pay what was described as an "advocacy fee" (*uang minyak*) so that the village's households would be prioritized over those in other villages. According to this person, families in villages that did not pay would still be entitled to assistance but would end up waiting longer to receive it.[106]

Some people described households whose homes appeared to have suffered little or no damage receiving full compensation as though they had been severely damaged. They did not know how this had come about but said the most likely explanation was that those families had paid someone and could see no other way they would have qualified.[107]

RECEIVING THE LIVING ALLOWANCE

Survivors are also entitled to a living allowance (*jaminan hidup*, or *jadup*) from the Ministry of Social Affairs, intended to cover daily food needs. The funds are allocated based on data collected by sub-districts.[108]

A civil society activist whose work involved helping affected people understand the assistance process and collect what they were owed told researchers that the allowance did not reach people in full. The activist said that of the Rp 450,000 allocated per person each month, Rp 50,000 (USD 2.73) went to the village head, IDR 50,000 (USD 2.73) to the military representative assigned to the village and IDR 50,000 (USD 2.73) to the police representative, leaving recipients with IDR 300,000 (USD 16.40), two thirds of what they were owed. The activist had accompanied recipients through the process and said they had seen this happen many times. Asked why the money was taken, the activist said recipients were told these were administrative fees needed to make the relief effort work. Recipients, the activist said, understood them to be payments people had no choice but to make in order to receive their allowance.[109]

Amnesty International was not able to independently verify these accounts, and those who gave them asked not to be identified. But interviewees described them as part of a wider pattern: having to pay bribes/unofficial fees to get the administration to do things it should have done without charge, with no real choice in the matter. This, they said, was widely known and rarely spoken about openly.

The authorities' own actions suggest they recognised this risk. In January 2026, the Home Affairs Minister warned regional governments that he would not tolerate misuse of disaster funds.[110] In March 2026, BNPB announced that it was working with law enforcement agencies to anticipate and act against illegal levies in the distribution of aid and the construction of housing for disaster victims.[111] In April 2026, the district head of East Aceh ordered sub-district and village heads to repeat the public verification of recipient lists for housing assistance, to test the credibility of the data.[112] The same month, flood survivors demonstrated at the district head's office in Bireuen demanding transparency in the distribution of aid.[113]

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[106] Interview in person, 4 October 2026.
[107] Interviews in person, 3 October 2026.
[108] RRI, "Al-Farlaky Minta Camat dan Geuchik Uji Publik Ulang Data Penerima Bantuan Rumah", 13 April 2026, https://rri.co.id/lhokseumawe/info-pemda/2329928/al-farlaky-minta-camat-dan-geuchik-uji-publik-ulang-data-penerima-bantuan-rumah (in Indonesian).
[109] Interview in person, 3 October 2026
[110] RRI, "Government accelerates regional transfers for disaster areas", 22 January 2026, https://rri.co.id/en/national/2123575/government-accelerates-regional-transfers-for-disaster-areas
[111] Indonesian National Police News Portal, "BNPB involves law enforcement parties to combat illegal levies on aid", 31 March 2026, https://inp.polri.go.id/artikel/bnpb-involves-law-enforcement-parties-to-combat-illegal-levies-on-aid
[112] RRI, "Al-Farlaky Minta Camat dan Geuchik Uji Publik Ulang Data Penerima Bantuan Rumah", 13 April 2026, https://rri.co.id/lhokseumawe/info-pemda/2329928/al-farlaky-minta-camat-dan-geuchik-uji-publik-ulang-data-penerima-bantuan-rumah (in Indonesian).
[113] NU Online, "Korban Banjir Geruduk Kantor Bupati Bireuen, Tuntut Transparansi Bantuan", 9 April 2026, https://www.nu.or.id/daerah/korban-banjir-geruduk-kantor-bupati-bireuen-tuntut-transparansi-bantuan-l4gQ7 (in Indonesian).

ALLEGED CORRUPTION IN THE NATIONAL DISASTER AGENCY

The concerns are not confined to the local level. On 13 October 2026, Indonesia's Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) detained 14 people, including BNPB officials and private contractors, in an operation targeting alleged corruption in the management and disbursement of the agency's ready-to-use emergency funds.[114] These are the funds intended for urgent procurement of goods and services during disaster response, and the same funds the Finance Minister had pointed to as evidence that money was available. Among those detained was the agency's Principal Secretary, who was released after questioning and is being treated as a witness.[115]

The following day, the KPK named five suspects, including a BNPB official responsible for aid and emergency management and two expert advisers to the head of BNPB.[116] The KPK alleges bribery and conflict of interest in contracts awarded by direct appointment between 2024 and 2026, with procurement worth around IDR 148 billion (USD 8.1 million) going to suppliers.[117] It has said it suspects the practice dates back to 2022.[118] On 15 October, the President replaced the head of BNPB.[119] According to media reports, the KPK is examining procurement connected to the Sumatra floods among other disasters.[120] None of the suspects has been tried, and the allegations remain to be proven in court.

Academics and experts who spoke with Amnesty International were concerned that these allegations of corruption and alleged lack of transparency and accountability would further delay resettlement and reconstruction in the flood-affected areas of Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra, prolonging people's suffering and the risks to their human rights.

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[114] Jakarta Globe, "KPK detains 14, seizes cash and gold in disaster agency corruption probe", 13 October 2026, https://jakartaglobe.id/news/kpk-detains-14-seizes-cash-and-gold-in-disaster-agency-corruption-probe;
[115] Antara, "KPK duga korupsi dana siap pakai BNPB telah terjadi sejak 2022", 15 October 2026, https://sumbar.antaranews.com/berita/783113/kpk-duga-korupsi-dana-siap-pakai-bnpb-telah-terjadi-sejak-2022 (in Indonesian).
[116] Jakarta Globe, "KPK detains 14, seizes cash and gold in disaster agency corruption probe", 13 October 2026, (prevoiusly cited);
[117] Antara, "KPK ungkap identitas dan peran lima tersangka kasus dana BNPB", 16 October 2026, https://www.antaranews.com/berita/5791685/kpk-ungkap-identitas-dan-peran-lima-tersangka-kasus-dana-bnpb (in Indonesian); CNN Indonesia, "KPK Periksa Sestama BNPB Terkait Kasus Korupsi Dana Siap Pakai Bencana", 27 October 2026, https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20261027101624-20-1420042/kpk-periksa-sestama-bnpb-terkait-kasus-korupsi-dana-siap-pakai-bencana (in Indonesian).
[118] Antara, "KPK duga korupsi dana siap pakai BNPB telah terjadi sejak 2022", 15 October 2026, https://sumbar.antaranews.com/berita/783113/kpk-duga-korupsi-dana-siap-pakai-bnpb-telah-terjadi-sejak-2022 (in Indonesian).
[119] Cabinet Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia, "President Prabowo Subianto Inaugurates BNPB Chief and BPGMN Chief" 15 October 2026, https://setkab.go.id/en/president-prabowo-subianto-inaugurates-bnpb-chief-and-bpgmn-chief/ Jakarta Globe, "
[120] Katadata, "KPK Dalami Korupsi Dana Bencana Banjir Sumatra dan Karhutla di BNPB", 17 October 2026, https://katadata.co.id/berita/nasional/6ad2b86453f1a/kpk-dalami-korupsi-dana-bencana-banjir-sumatra-dan-karhutla-di-bnpb (in Indonesian).



Logs and other debris deposited by the November 2025 floods in Meureudu district, Pidie Jaya, photographed on 2 October 2026. © Amnesty International



Temporary housing (huntara), built using flimsy material in Aceh Tengah, photographed on 3 October 2026. © Amnesty International

5. APPLICABLE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW AND STANDARDS

The UN's Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) mandated to formulate policy, set strategic priorities and mobilize resources in response to humanitarian crises in its guidelines on disaster response has highlighted that the primary duty to provide protection and assistance to victims of disasters lies with the national authorities of the affected countries. Those affected by disasters have the right to request and receive protection and assistance from their governments. The main duty bearers are the national and local authorities of the countries concerned.[121]

Indonesia is a state party to several international human rights treaties[122] and the United Nations Convention against Corruption whose obligations are directly relevant to Amnesty International's findings, including as set out below. Indonesia has also committed to implementing[123] the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, a global agreement that aims to reduce disaster risks and losses in lives, livelihoods, health, and economic, physical, social, cultural, and environmental assets over the 15-year period.[124]

RIGHT TO LIFE

Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the country is a state party requires states parties to take positive measures to address reasonably foreseeable threats to life, including through disaster preparedness.[125] The UN Human Rights Committee has made clear that this duty extends to reasonably foreseeable threats and life-threatening situations, including those that do not ultimately result in loss of life.[126] Among the measures states should take, the Committee identifies contingency plans and disaster management plans designed to increase preparedness for, and address, natural and man-made disasters.[127]

Based on the information that Amnesty International was able to collect on the floods and landslides in the aftermath of Cyclone Senyar, there is concern that the government at the central, provincial and local levels may not have done enough to address foreseeable threats to life. The organization is concerned by information suggesting several gaps in disaster preparedness: warnings may not have reached all at-risk communities and been translated into timely evacuation; many people, particularly in remote areas, reported relying largely on each other for rescue; and measures to reduce the risk of further floods and landslides may not yet be adequate.

RIGHT TO AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING AND OTHER ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS

The right to an adequate standard of living includes access to the goods and services necessary for an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, water and sanitation, clothing, housing, electricity, transport and communications.[128] As a state party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Indonesia has an obligation to guarantee to people minimum essential levels of each of the economic, social and cultural rights enshrined in the ICESCR,

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[121] IASC, *Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters* (previously cited), p. 2.
[122] Indonesia acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) on 23 February 2006. It ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 5 September 1990, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on 13 September 1984, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on 30 November 2011.
[123] Official Statement of the Indonesian Delegation, delivered by BNPB head Suharyanto, 2022 Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Brisbane, 19–22 September 2022, paras. 3 and 7, https://apmcdrr.undrr.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Indonesia_Statement_APMCDRR%202022.pdf.
[124] UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework), para. 30(f).
[125] UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), General Comment 36: Article 6 (Right to Life), 3 September 2019, UN Doc. CCPR/C/GC/36, paras 7 and 26.
[126] HRC, General Comment No. 36 (previously cited), paras 6-7.
[127] HRC, General Comment No. 36 (previously cited), para 26.
[128] UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), General Comment No. 27: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development, 6 November 2025, UN Doc. E/C.12/GC/27, para. 58.

including in the context of disasters.[129] Article 2(1) of ICESCR states "[e]ach State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take steps, individually and through international assistance and cooperation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources". A failure to guarantee the minimum essential level of rights can only be justified if the state is able to demonstrate that it has used its maximum available resources to realize these rights.[130] Available resources include funds and other resources that could be obtained from the international community for assistance in implementing the core obligations.[131]

Amnesty International is concerned that many of the disaster impacted areas and communities are living in conditions that fall far short of the minimum essential levels of their economic and social rights, particularly the right to an adequate standard of living. Amnesty International's research points to concerns that these standards may not have been met for all based on the inadequate living conditions in temporary and makeshift housing, the reported complete exclusion of renters from the Housing Waiting Funds, the absence of completed permanent housing almost a year after the disaster and the instances of discontinuation of cash assistance after three months despite people's continuing displacement.

The organization is also concerned that resources available to affected communities may have been limited by several factors: the decision not to declare a national disaster or accept international assistance despite local authorities stating they were unable to cope; reductions to the budgets of BNPB and to regional transfers; and allegations of mismanagement and other forms of corruption in the use of emergency relief funds. The emergency relief fund is the subject of an ongoing corruption investigation.

The CESCR has said that any deliberately retrogressive measure requires the most careful consideration and must be fully justified by reference to the totality of Covenant rights and the full use of maximum available resources. In the context of austerity, the Committee has said such measures must be temporary, necessary, proportionate and non-discriminatory, and must protect the minimum core content of rights.[132] The drastic changes to the budgets of the ministries and authorities directly responsible for post disaster response could have a retrogressive impact on the enjoyment of human rights. The government of Indonesia should assess their impact and demonstrate that these reductions met the criteria as articulated by CESCR.

THE RIGHT TO A CLEAN, HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

The right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (right to a healthy environment) is a precondition for the enjoyment of all other human rights, including the rights to life, health, food, water and sanitation. Most recently, the UN General Assembly in 2022 recognized this right as a stand-alone right.[133] The right to a healthy environment includes substantive elements such as clean air; a safe and stable climate; access to safe water and adequate sanitation; and healthy biodiversity and ecosystems.[134] It also includes access to information, the right to participate in decision-making, and

[129] CESCR, "Statement: Substantive issues arising from the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Poverty and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights", 4 May 2001, E/C.12/2001/10 para 18
[130] CESCR, General Comment 3 (previously cited), para. 17.
[131] CESCR, General Comment 27 (previously cited), para. 29.
[132] CESCR, General Comment 3 (previously cited), para. 9; Chairperson of CESCR, letter to States Parties, 16 May 2012, UN Doc. CESCR/48th/SP/MAB/SW; CESCR, *Public Debt, Austerity Measures and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, 22 July 2016, UN Doc. E/C.12/2016/1.
[133] UN General Assembly (UNGA), Resolution 76/300, adopted on 28 July 2022, UN Doc. A/RES/76/300.
[134] UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Obligations Related to the Enjoyment of a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment (UN Special Rapporteur on a healthy environment), *Right to a Healthy Environment: Good Practices*, 30 December 2019, UN Doc. A/HRC/43/53, para. 2.

access to justice and effective remedies.[135] Realizing the right to a healthy environment requires international cooperation, including for resource mobilization.[136]

In its General Comment 27 on economic, social and cultural rights and the environmental dimension of sustainable development, CESCR highlighted that states have an obligation to ensure that housing is resilient to climate impacts and that adaptation measures do not undermine the right to adequate housing. The General Comment also calls on states to ensure that adequate urban and rural planning at national and local levels addresses climate change risks and disaster preparedness among other key issues.[137]

RIGHT TO INFORMATION AND PARTICIPATION

Article 19 of the ICCPR protects the rights to seek, receive and impart information, including access to information held by public bodies, and Article 25 protects the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs.[138] The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement add that internally displaced people should participate fully in planning and managing their return or resettlement.[139] Amnesty International is concerned by reports that many affected people lacked information about their entitlements and rehousing, and that some journalists and civil society actors experienced intimidation while reporting on the disaster.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND EFFECTIVE REMEDIES

All victims of human rights violations must have access to effective remedy. Certain activities such as unregulated mining, logging and deforestation can lead to conditions that negatively impact human rights. States must adopt legislative, administrative, educational and other appropriate measures to ensure effective protection against business-related violations of human rights, including by establishing regulatory frameworks, monitoring of activities, and establishing mechanisms to ensure accountability.[140] Furthermore, all displaced people have a right to resettlement without undue delay. This includes equal or improved living standards, including the right to adequate housing, sustainable livelihoods, and cultural cohesion.[141] Indonesia must provide to access to justice and effective remedies for people whose rights may have been violated in the context of the disaster.[142]

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[135] UN Special Rapporteur on a healthy environment, *Right to a Healthy Environment: Good Practices* (previously cited), para. 2.
[136] OHCHR and others, *What Is the Right to a Healthy Environment? Information Note*, https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-01/UNDP-UNEP-UNHCHR-What-is-the-Right-to-a-Healthy-Environment.pdf, p. 9.
[137] CESCR, General Comment 27 (previously cited), paras 65-66.
[138] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Articles 19(2) and 25(a); UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment 34 Article 19 Freedoms of Opinion and Expression, UN Doc. CCPR/C/GC/34, paras 18-19.
[139] UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, UN Doc. E/CH.4/1998/53/Add.2, Principle 28(2).
[140] CESCR, General Comment 27 (previously cited), para. 12.
[141] UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, *Guiding Principles on Resettlement*, , UN Doc. A/HRC/61/43, Principle 6.
[142] ICCPR, Article 2(3).

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

People in Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra have suffered immensely because of the deaths and widespread destruction caused by the floods and landslides in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Senyar in November 2025. Nearly a year later, their suffering is compounded by an inadequate post-disaster response that has left hundreds of thousands of people displaced, livelihoods destroyed and many survivors facing an anxiety ridden future. According to some CSOs, the refusal of the central government to declare the floods and landslides of November 2025 a national disaster and accept international assistance is likely to have contributed to these challenges.

While the central government has announced different forms of cash assistance and both central and local authorities have provided temporary housing, Amnesty International's research points to a significant gap between what is promised and what many of the people have received. None of the affected people Amnesty International interviewed had received all the assistance to which they were entitled, while the temporary housing Amnesty International visited did not meet international standards on adequate housing. Further, almost all those interviewed lacked clear information about available assistance, their entitlements or when additional support, including permanent housing, would be provided. This lack of transparency makes it even more difficult for people to hold authorities and those in power accountable for their failure to meet their obligations.

This situation points to several human rights concerns, including risks to the right to an adequate standard of living, housing, food, water and sanitation, health; and a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, as well as rights to information, participation and an effective remedy. Indonesia's international human rights commitments as well as those under the Sendai Framework emphasize the importance of transparent and participatory disaster governance, access to information, investment in recovery and preparedness and international cooperation where national capacity requires it. The authorities must now ensure that it fulfils these commitments, particularly as communities continue to face heavy rains and recurrent flooding, risks that are expected to become increasingly severe and frequent.

In light of the findings presented and Indonesia's human rights obligations and disaster risk reduction commitments, Amnesty International makes the following recommendations:

6.1 TO ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT IN INDONESIA

- Conduct a comprehensive review of policies, processes and implementation practices of relevant government agencies and authorities in the central and provincial governments, including BNPB and BMKG, to understand and address the inadequacies in the post-disaster response as highlighted in this briefing and raised by CSOs and disaster affected people.
- Take all necessary steps to ensure that all those who have lost their homes and are still living in tents are urgently moved into temporary housing that is adequate as per international human rights standards on the right to adequate housing.
- Take all necessary steps to ensure that any temporary housing that is susceptible to flooding and does not provide protection from the elements is urgently repaired. Where this is not possible, ensure that people living in these units are moved to alternative housing that is habitable and meets criteria of adequacy in line with international human rights standards.
- Take all necessary steps to ensure that temporary housing that is constructed in previously flooded areas and in the path of earlier landslides is moved to safe and well-located land.
- Ensure all households whose homes were severely damaged are provided with permanent housing; and that such provision is carried out in a manner that is non-discriminatory and cognizant of the particular challenges faced by people belonging to groups that are at risk of marginalization and discrimination based on gender, age, disability, property ownership and marital status among others.

- Take all necessary steps to ensure that all those entitled to different types of cash assistance and who have not received it are provided with it as a matter of urgency.
- Take steps to ensure that disaster affected people are provided with full information on applicable relief and recovery measures in a form and language that is accessible to all of them including to women, older people, people with disabilities and people who may not be able to read or write. This information must include timelines for the provision of temporary or permanent housing, disbursal of housing construction amounts as applicable as well as the responsible authorities for this at different levels of government. The information must also contain avenues for redress of grievances relating to relief and recovery measures.
- Put in place systems to facilitate meaningful participation of impacted individuals and households on any resettlement and recovery plans.
- Take steps to guarantee that no one will face retribution for raising questions about, or criticizing, disaster management efforts. Everyone's right to freedom of expression must be respected and protected.
- Work with local communities to design and implement disaster mitigation projects with a view to protecting them from floods and landslides as well as other disasters in the future.
- Coordinate and work with local communities to monitor illegal logging, deforestation and other such activities that are known to cause or contribute to floods and landslides among other disasters.
- Promptly, thoroughly, independently, impartially, transparently and effectively investigate all allegations of corruption including bribery in the management and disbursement of emergency relief funds and bring to justice in fair trial anyone suspected to be responsible. Any proceeds of corruption must be recovered and spent for their intended purposes.

6.2 TO THE PRESIDENT OF INDONESIA

- Take urgent steps to ensure that key central government ministries and agencies like the BNPB, as well as the regional governments have the necessary resources and technical expertise to carry out their roles and responsibilities in the context of post-disaster response in Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra in a manner that is compliant with Indonesia's human rights and anticorruption obligations.
- Direct the Task Force for the Acceleration of Post-Disaster Rehabilitation and Reconstruction in Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra to work with regional, provincial and local governments in the disaster affected area to conduct a human rights audit of post-disaster response activities thus far, ensuring that impacted people are able to provide their inputs.
- Based on the outcomes of the audit and where the government is unable to guarantee at least the minimum essential levels of each of the economic, social and cultural rights through its disaster response efforts, seek assistance (both financial and technical) from the international community as per Indonesia's human rights obligations.
- Carry out prompt, independent, impartial, transparent and effective investigations into allegations of corruption in the emergency relief funds at the BNPB. Anyone suspected to be responsible should be brought to justice in fair trials.
- Identify individuals and communities who may have been deprived of essential humanitarian assistance as a result of the alleged misuse of emergency funds, assess the harm suffered and provide appropriate remedies, including restoration of services and compensation where legally justified.
- Ensure that recovered funds and assets are transparently managed and, where legally permissible, used to address the harm suffered by disaster-affected individuals and committees and strengthen the provision of essential disaster-response service.

- Develop a comprehensive national framework for the transparent, accountable and rights-based management of emergency funds, ensuring that expedited procurement procedures do not undermine competition, integrity, independent oversight and accountability.

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