

## INSIGHTS

### LAO PDR'S DISASTER OVERVIEW

## THE OTHER SIDE

Ms. Daw Lai Lai

*Deputy Director-General of Relief and Resettlement Department for Myanmar*



ONE ASEAN ONE RESPONSE

# THE COLUMN

THE AHA CENTRE  
NEWS BULLETIN  
VOLUME 32

## NEWS HIGHLIGHT



BALI  
16 October 2017

## IDP STATUS OF MOUNT AGUNG

### NEWS STORY

SIGNING OF MEMORANDUM OF INTENT BETWEEN THE AHA CENTRE AND THE AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE (DFAT)

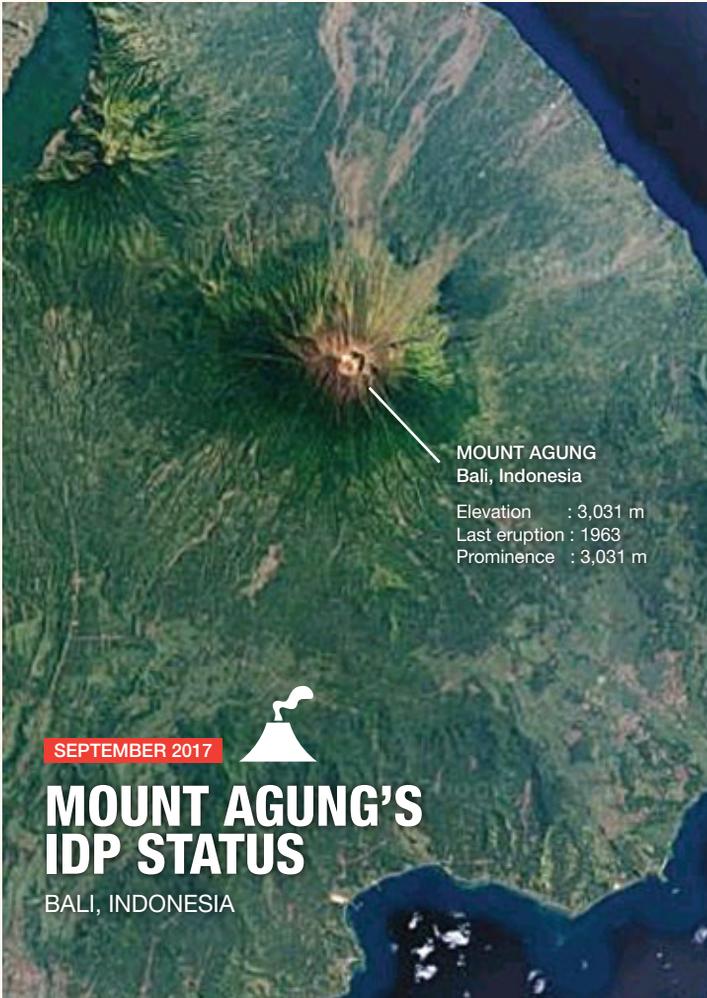
INSARAG ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE EXERCISE 2017 & INSARAG ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL MEETING 2017

### ACE CORNER



ACE PROGRAMME VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND

THE ACE PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS FROM CAMBODIA & LAO PDR



MOUNT AGUNG  
Bali, Indonesia

Elevation : 3,031 m  
Last eruption : 1963  
Prominence : 3,031 m

SEPTEMBER 2017



## MOUNT AGUNG'S IDP STATUS

BALI, INDONESIA

**EDITOR'S NOTE****Greetings fellow ASEANers!**

Since the beginning of September 2017, officials have warned that an eruption of Mount Agung on the tourist island of Bali is imminent with the volcano in a "critical" phase. In this edition's News Highlight, we present a status update on locals who were evacuated as of 16 October 2017.

In this month's News Story, we cover the signing of a Memorandum of Intent between the AHA Centre and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) Asia-Pacific Regional Earthquake Response Exercise 2017 and the INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting 2017 in Putrajaya, Malaysia.

For ACE Corner, we are pleased to share coverage of the ACE Programme Visit to New Zealand and interviews with the participants of the fourth batch of the ACE Programme from Cambodia and Lao PDR.

In this month's The Other Side section, we are thrilled to speak with Mrs. Daw Lai Lai, Deputy Director-General of the Relief and Resettlement Department of Myanmar.

To add, this edition will elaborate on Lao PDR's disaster overview, and we hope these insights will be beneficial for all readers.

If you wish to share suggestions, comments or anything at all, please do not hesitate to contact us at [comm@ahacentre.org](mailto:comm@ahacentre.org)

Sincerely,

*The Column Editor*





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## INSIGHTS

# LAO PDR'S DISASTER OVERVIEW

According to the Centre for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DMHA) 2014 publication, *Lao PDR: Disaster Management Reference Handbook*, Lao PDR has faced an increase in disaster hazards over the last decade as a result of environmental and climate changes along with various man-made factors. These conditions have resulted in an increase in vulnerability and crop losses.

## NATURAL HAZARDS

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### FLOODS



Floods occurred from August to September in the central and southern provinces of the country, following the southwest monsoon season. Roughly 75% of the country's annual rainfall occurs between May and October. Flooding occurs regularly and often affects not only the main stream of the Mekong River, but also many of its smaller tributaries. Floods have the greatest overall economic impact on the country and affect a greater number of people, as the areas flooded are primary locations of economic activity and contain 63% of the country's population.

The major effects are felt along the downstream areas of the Mekong River and its primary waterways, south and east from Vientiane province. The waterways are often engorged by heavy rains in their reservoir basins and then further backed up by floodwaters from the Mekong. Bolikhamxay, Savannakhet, Khammuane, Champasak and Attapeu are the worst affected provinces. Flash floods have occurred in the upper reaches of the Mekong waterways; generally, the effects are destructive but brief and localised.

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## DROUGHT



The areas in Lao PDR most prone to drought are the western provinces and some of the higher elevations of the southern provinces. Drought affects about 20% of the country's population, adversely affecting agricultural production. There is some extent of drought every year that affects agriculture as well as human and animal health.

Drought occurs in two different seasons – early and late. Early season drought occurs during mid-June to mid-July with late season drought occurring between mid-July and the arrival of the monsoon rains in September. Late season drought can reduce grain production by up to 30%. Droughts affecting the lowland rice growing areas along the Mekong River Valley are aggravated by the porous nature of the soil in the area. In the highlands, droughts impact the time of seeding in April and May. Late season drought is not a concern for the highlands, where most crops are harvested by mid-October.

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## RODENTS



The highland areas of Lao PDR have a high endemic rodent population. The rodents damage at least 15% of the annual harvest, mostly rice. There are occasional periods during which losses reach up to 100% due to environmental conditions. Outbreaks of rodent infestation in some provinces are associated with the wet season's flowering and fruiting of a particular species of bamboo. Highland farmers consider the rodent problem as the production limitation over which they have least control.

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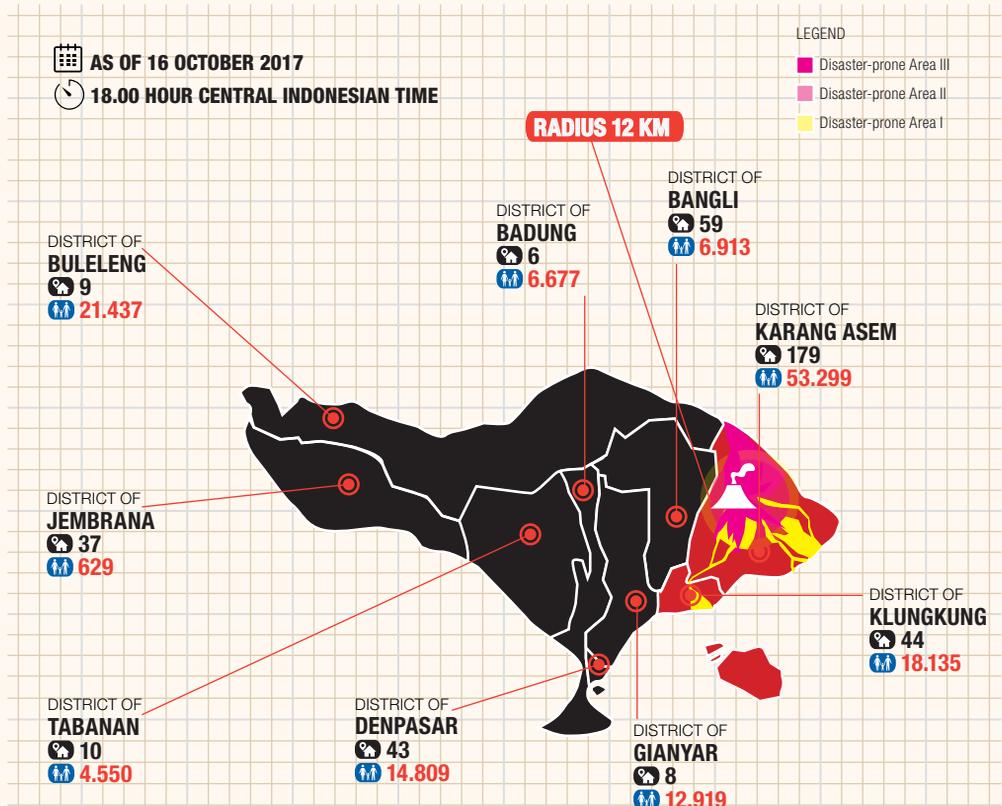
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NEWS HIGHLIGHT

# IDP\* STATUS OF THE MOUNT AGUNG

Since the beginning of September 2017, Indonesian authorities have raised the alert level for Bali's Mount Agung to its highest degree after a surge in seismic activity.

Fearing an imminent eruption, authorities have evacuated residents of the surrounding area by 16 October 2017.



\*Internally Displaced People

Mount Agung status raised from standby III (level III) to Alert by Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation Centre (PVBMG) starting Friday, 22 September 2017, 20.30 hour Central

Indonesian Time. People are urged not to engage in activities within a 12 km radius of the crater of the mountain.

## EARTHQUAKE ACTIVITY



Shallow Volcanic Earthquake **38x**



Deep Volcanic Earthquake **98x**



Local Tectonic Earthquake **14x**



16 October 2017



12.00 - 18.00 WITA

## INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE



IDP Camps **395**



People Displaced **139.368**

### NEWS STORY

## SIGNING OF MEMORANDUM OF INTENT BETWEEN THE AHA CENTRE AND THE AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE (DFAT)



(Front, left to right) Australian Ambassador to ASEAN Ms. Jane Duke and Executive Director of the AHA Centre, Ms. Adelina Kamal share a light moment during the signing ceremony.

The AHA Centre and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) agreed to reaffirm their commitment to continue working together in the area of disaster management. To mark this commitment, a Memorandum of Intent was signed on 12 September 2017 at the AHA Centre, formalising the appointment of Mr. Wojciech Dabrowka as the Disaster Response Coordination Specialist under the Australian Civilian Deployment initiative.

The signing ceremony was conducted by Ms. Adelina Kamal, Executive Director of the AHA Centre, and Ms. Jane Duke, Australian

Ambassador to ASEAN. The ceremony was witnessed by Mr. Dody Ruswandi, Secretary-General of Indonesia's National Disaster Management Authority (BNPB), Ms. Bronwyn Robbins, the Australian Deputy Head of Mission to ASEAN, and Ms. Intani Kusuma, Technical Officer of the Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance at the ASEAN Secretariat.

Mr. Ruswandi said the Australian Government's support was vital during the establishment phase of the AHA Centre in 2011. At the same time, the bilateral partnership between Australia and Indonesia has helped to fortify disaster preparedness in the Southeast Asian region.

Meanwhile, Ms. Adelina Kamal said, "The continuous support from the Australian Government will enhance our capacity in implementing a broader mandate to respond to disasters within and outside the ASEAN region, including by utilising the East Asia Summit Rapid Disaster Response Toolkit. Therefore, I am pleased to extend our partnership at this timely and critical juncture, and I am looking forward to further strengthening disaster resilience in our region."



(From left to right) Ms. Intani Kusuma, Ms. Bronwyn Robbins, Ms. Jane Duke, Mr. Dody Ruswandi and Ms. Adelina Kamal pose for a group photo after the signing ceremony.

Throughout September 2017, the AHA Centre welcomed the visits of ambassadors from ASEAN Member States and partners. We would like to thank them for visiting the home of One ASEAN, One Response.

12 September 2017: H.E. Jose Antonio Morato Tavares, the Director-General for ASEAN Cooperation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. <sup>(1)</sup>

19 September 2017: H.E. Morten Høglund, Norwegian Ambassador to ASEAN. <sup>(2)</sup>

27 September 2017: H.E. Tan Hung Seng, Singapore's Permanent Representative to ASEAN. <sup>(3)</sup>

## THE ACE PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS FROM CAMBODIA



**PHLANG PONLEA RATH**



**Can you tell us more about your work within the disaster management field? How long have you been in this field?**

**P** I have been working for the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) of Cambodia for nine years. My responsibilities are data collection, annual planning for my department, and providing training at the national level.

**T** In Cambodia, I am currently the Deputy Director of the Administration Division and I am also a member of the Provincial Committee for Disaster Management (PCDM). My responsibilities focus on preparing contingency plans, disaster responses, as well as communicating with the other departments.

**Do you have any particular reasons or personal ambitions that motivated you to work in the humanitarian field?**

**P** Actually, I did not choose to be in the humanitarian field. At first, I worked for the Ministry of Social Affairs of Cambodia, but I was brought to the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM). My friend actually was the one who requested me to help him in the field, as he needed a helping hand.



**TOUNG KIMTOL**



**What are the challenges that you have faced during the ACE Programme?**

**P** One of the challenges I have faced during the ACE Programme is that all of the subjects are new to me. For example, rapid assessments, international humanitarian systems, key management, and so on — these are all new to me. When I was in Cambodia, I had heard of these subjects before, but I was never directly involved with them.

**T** To be honest, when I joined the ACE Programme, I was amazed with the topics provided. These topics were challenging too. I had difficulties in pronouncing several things, such as other countries' names, as most pronunciations in English are different in Cambodia. Now I can learn, communicate and share my ideas with others – and that is very important to me.

**What do you hope to achieve through the ACE Programme?**

**T** Through the ACE Programme I wish to obtain all the knowledge I can get from the interesting topics provided by the programme. I also hope that I will be able to improve my communication skills especially in English, as well as develop better leadership skills.

## THE ACE PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS FROM LAO PDR



**TINGKHAM KHOUNSOUVANH**



**Tell us about your work within the disaster management field. How long have you been in this field?**

**T** Truthfully, I am not from the disaster management field. Instead I have worked within the site protection section of the disaster division in the National Disaster Management Office, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of Lao PDR for the last 14 years.

**P** I have worked with the Disaster Management Division of the NDMO, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare since 2002.

**What motivated you to work in the humanitarian field?**

**P** For me, the fact that I am able to become a small link in helping people who are in deplorable conditions, and I am able to see the joy in their eyes when they receive aid is priceless. Being a humanitarian provides me with the opportunity to exert all my efforts (physical and intellectual) to save lives and give hope to disaster-affected populations. That is why I chose to work in the humanitarian field.



**PHOMESAVANH SAYSOMPENG**



**What challenges have you faced during the ACE Programme?**

**T** As mentioned earlier, my background was not in the disaster management field. Therefore, the most challenging aspects for me are to be able to adjust and absorb all of the new knowledge and information all at once. Challenging, but definitely exciting!

**P** Language barrier is a challenge, as are different expertise, and new cases.

**What do you hope to achieve through the ACE Programme?**

**T** By the time I graduate from the programme, I hope I will have gained as much as new knowledge, expertise, and experience as possible, so that I can share it with my colleagues back in Lao PDR. During the programme, I met so many experts and great people that I have become good friends with, and I hope these connections can last a long time.

## ACE PROGRAMME VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND



ACE Programme participants pose for a group photo as part of the Kaikoura Hazard-scape trip, part of their visit to New Zealand to learn more on the impact of Kaikoura Earthquake.

The fourth batch of the ACE Programme has been running for nearly three months now. As part of the programme's effort to build future ASEAN leaders in disaster management, participants were given an opportunity to visit several cities in New Zealand on 17-30 September 2017.

For two weeks, the University of Canterbury (UC), in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), delivered the Critical Incident Leadership (CIL) course as part of a leadership skills' enrichment programme for participants. Representatives from the AHA Centre and Red Cross from ASEAN also joined the group.

The course was officially opened by a warm welcome by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Canterbury, Dr. Rod Carr. In his speech, Dr. Rod Carr mentioned his great excitement for hosting the event for the fourth time and hoped the participants could use the opportunity to learn from New Zealand's past experiences, especially the two most recent disasters — the 2011 Christchurch earthquake and the 2016 Kaikoura earthquake. It was important to explore the lessons of the past as

we contemplate how best to prepare for the future in an uncertain world, Dr. Rod Carr said.

Along with Dr. Rod Carr, the former Mayor of Christchurch, Sir Bob Parker, also welcomed participants and shared his leadership experience during response to the 2011 Christchurch earthquake. Coincidentally, the participants from Singapore, Captain Muhammad Azhar Said, a Rota Commander for the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF), was in Christchurch as part of an urban search and rescue (USAR) team following the February 2011 earthquake. Upon learning this, Sir Parker took the opportunity to thank Captain Muhammad Azhar for his service during the response.



Sir Bob Parker thanks Captain Muhammad Azhar for his service with the USAR team in response to the 2011 Christchurch earthquake. (Photo credit: University of Canterbury)

## INSARAG ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE EXERCISE 2017 & INSARAG ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL MEETING 2017



All of the participants pose for a group photo during the INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Earthquake Response Exercise 2017 & INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting 2017 in Putrajaya, Malaysia.



Participants work through a worst-case scenario based on a sudden-onset earthquake in Malaysia.

INSARAG, a global network of more than 80 countries and organisations under the United Nations umbrella, held an INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Earthquake Response Exercise on 11-13 September 2017, followed by the INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting 2017 on 14-15 September 2017 in Putrajaya, Malaysia.

The exercise was endorsed by the INSARAG Steering Group as a means to increase awareness of INSARAG disaster response methodologies amongst national and local authorities in the host country.

Aiming to strengthen earthquake responses among ASEAN and Asia-Pacific countries, the exercise simulated a worst-case scenario, resulting in collapsed structures within Malaysia's urban environments on a scale that overwhelmed local and national response capacities. As a result, the scenario included a request for international assistance.

During the regional meeting, the AHA Centre was represented by Executive Director

Ms. Adelina Kamal, who shared the developments of the INSARAG Asia-Pacific Group with regard to the AHA Centre. She underlined importance for ASEAN and the AHA Centre to be part of the INSARAG process, and shared recommendations on how INSARAG and the United Nations could facilitate regional capacity building.

Overall, 197 people were invited to the event, six of which were ERAT members who rehearsed the operational interoperability between ASEAN and the United Nations.



Participants of the INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Earthquake Response Exercise 2017 pose for a group photo after the exercise.

# THE **Ms. Daw Lai Lai** *Deputy Director-General of Relief and Resettlement Department for Myanmar*

# OTHER SIDE



## **Tell us about your role and responsibilities as the Deputy Director-General of the Relief and Resettlement Department of Myanmar?**

I supervise my department, especially regarding financial administration, so that it operates and meets its goals. My responsibilities include providing immediate and emergency relief support, for all kinds of natural or man-made disasters. Another responsibility of my department is to conduct disaster risk reduction measures, including awareness training. We also coordinate, the rehabilitation and reconstruction measures with civil society organisations, as well as with other government ministries.

## **What is the biggest challenge for you working within the humanitarian field?**

The biggest challenge here is almost the same as for other humanitarian centres, because we try to support those who need humanitarian assistance. However, there are many limitations such as human resources, time, budget, transportation, communications, and security when we are implementing the humanitarian assistance. Therefore, based on what we have, we have to identify what priorities are most important.

## **With your busy schedule, how do you keep a balance between your work and personal life?**

To be honest, this question is not just challenging for me – but for all of us. With limitations that we have to face and with the

number of disasters that happen every day, the needs for humanitarian assistance are also rising. So, we try very hard to balance everything. However, my family has given me a lot of support in what I do. Whenever I have free time, we spend time together by going out and enjoying nature as well as sightseeing.

## **What would you like people to know most about working within the humanitarian field?**

Since natural and man-made disasters are happening more frequently day-by-day, the fulfilment of humanitarian requirements is also rising. Therefore, I suggest that every community enhance and promote disaster management activities. With global warming on the rise, I think it is very important that the community does more capacity building for others.

## **What are some of your aspirations or hopes for Myanmar's Relief and Resettlement Department in the coming years?**

In the coming year, as we have officially launched the Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction (MAPDRR), we aim to improve life economy, heritage, and environment through an inclusive approach. At the same time, we will work to develop the capacity of the department. I believe that the more capacity we have, the less our people will suffer.

# One **ASEAN** One **Response**

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## Talk to Us

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**ONE ASEAN  
ONE RESPONSE**

## ABOUT ASEAN

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967. The Member States of the Association are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The ASEAN Secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia. As set out in the ASEAN Declaration, the aims and purposes of ASEAN among others are to accelerate the economic growth, social progress, cultural development, to promote regional peace and stability as well as to improve active collaboration and cooperation.

## ABOUT THE AHA CENTRE

The AHA Centre is an inter-governmental organisation established on 17 November 2011, through the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre by ASEAN Foreign Ministers, witnessed by the ASEAN Heads of State / Government from 10 ASEAN Member States: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The Centre was set-up to facilitate the cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member States and with the United Nations and international organisations for disaster management and emergency response in the ASEAN region.

## ABOUT AADMER

The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) is a legally-binding regional policy framework for cooperation, coordination, technical assistance and resource mobilisation in all aspects of disaster management in the 10 ASEAN Member States. The objective of AADMER is to provide an effective mechanism to achieve substantial reduction of disaster losses in lives and in social, economic and environmental assets, and to jointly respond to emergencies through concerted national efforts.