

Tzu Chi Provided Over 45,000 Hot meals to Flood Victims in Jakarta

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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Tzu Chi volunteers in the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, rescued many people from the floods that covered the city, including a pregnant woman who had just given birth to a baby daughter. They are continuing to work at full stretch to deal with this emergency.

From January 13, heavy rain started to fall on the city and continued non-stop until the 16th. More than 50 areas of the capital were flooded; more than 20,000 people were evacuated and 55,000 were affected. To help, volunteers from the Tzu Chi Indonesia Chapter organized a series of relief missions. They co-operated with the Indonesian army to rescue people and bring them to a safe place. It also provided trucks to carry hot food and relief materials to those in need. The excellent co-operation between the two was recognized by the local media; the government acknowledged the good work and its willingness to help people without asking for anything in return.

On January 16-20, the serious flooding brought over one thousand of Tzu Chi volunteers joined the relief work. They have already provided more than 45,000 hot meals and 826 daily necessities to the flood victims from 21 districts in Jakarta area. In order to help the terrified survivors back on their feet, volunteers distributed 918 boxes of bottled water, 6 boxes of cooking oil, 15 bags of milk powder, 560 summer blankets, 450kgs of rice and 130 boxes of instant noodles. To date, there were more than 1,166 residents re-located to the Tzu Chi grounds and 47,796 survivors were benefited from the relief mission in Jakarta.

Saving a mother and baby

The most dramatic story was the rescue of a young woman who had just given birth to a baby. It was January 20, the first Sunday of the floods; the volunteers working in a rescue center in Muara Karang in north Jakarta received the news that a lady in Pluit, Jakarta Utara had given birth to a girl. Her name was Ratni, who works as a housemaid. She and her daughter urgently needed to be taken to a hospital but the water in front of the house was one-meter high; she was unable to leave. So all she could do was wait, hoping desperately for help. Fortunately, a friend with her contacted the foundation and asked for assistance.



After receiving the information, the army immediately sent a rescue boat to the house and notified Tzu Chi about the situation. The volunteers at once notified the Rumah Sakit Pantai Indah Kapuk hospital and asked for an ambulance. The army boat carried Ratni and her baby to a place that was not covered by water; the soldiers wrapped the mother in foam rubber and placed the new-born baby in a plastic box. When the ambulance arrived, it took the two to the emergency unit of the hospital for an examination. After the check-up, Ratni was placed in an

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aseptic ward where she could feed her baby.

Her employer, Kevin, came to the hospital and learnt of the situation; he had been away from home and was astonished to learn of the outcome. He was full of gratitude to Tzu Chi and said that he would pay for the costs of the hospital treatment and medicines. When they heard this, the volunteers were very happy on her behalf; it meant that she would not have to carry this heavy financial burden. A few minutes later, her husband, Ahmad, arrived. He thanked the volunteers very much for rescuing his wife and daughter and bringing them to safety. Ratni was very relieved that she did not have to bear the medical costs; she hopes that her baby can always be like the day she was born – turn bad luck into good and enjoy blessings and happiness.

Son worries for stranded mother



The rescue work of the volunteers was not limited to this single case. Two days before, on the afternoon of January 18, they went to Perumahan Pluit in Jakarta Utara to help residents escape from an area covered by water. They assisted 51 people to leave successfully in a short time. One of them, named Willy, asked the volunteers to rescue his mother and three young sisters who were living in the Coral New Village district, where the water level was very high. He told them that, that morning, his mother had telephoned him to say that the level of the water around them was rising rapidly and asked him to go and rescue them. He set out at once but, when he approached the village, he found the relentless water had reached 80 centimeters and that his vehicle could not enter the flooded area. With nowhere to turn, he called the city's Search and Rescue Team; but it could not get there in time. He had the good fortune to meet Tzu Chi volunteers. When he explained the situation, they immediately accompanied him to the scene.

High-tech helps victims

Before the volunteers had completed this task, they had to rescue the Wiryanto family trapped by floodwaters that had reached 170 centimeters. The family of four were marooned in their house, with nowhere to go. Fortunately, a volunteer used a blackberry messenger to tell them that a rescue team was on its way and giving them hope; she told them to remain calm and wait to be rescued. After helping the Wiryanto family to safety, the volunteers went to the home of Willy's family. En route, Willy was speechless with anxiety over his mother; Wiryanto and his wife constantly talked to him to comfort him and ease his anxiety.

Those who are helped want to help others

After one hour, they reached their destination but found no trace of Willy's mother and three sisters. At this point, Willy became even more tense and started to look around. Then they believed that, in view of the rising water levels, his mother and sisters had probably left their

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home. So they went to look for them in the security centre in the village and found them there. Finally, after their terrible ordeal in the middle of the floods, the family was reunited; they were overjoyed to see each other.

As they took Willy and his family to the shelter, the volunteers explained to them the rescue work they had carried out during the previous three days; the family were very moved and said that they wished to help in the rescue work. The volunteers naturally accepted this offer: another person means another pair of hands, so that they can bring more hope to the flood victims.

To help more victims, they continue to use every kind of high-technology product, to send the news of Tzu Chi's relief work and bring timely help to more of those in need.

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