

P R E S S R E L E A S E**Sulawesi quake and tsunami: Urgent need to identify children who are lost shocked and alone, six days after tsunami warns Save the Children**

Children who lost or were separated from their families during Friday's devastating earthquake and tsunami urgently need to be identified and reunited with surviving relatives, warns Save the Children and its local partner in Indonesia.

More than 46,000 children are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, according to Indonesia's disaster authority. More than 1400 people have been confirmed dead including hundreds of children, and more than 65,000 homes destroyed.

Child Protection Adviser, Zubedy Koteng, is in Palu, the epicenter of the crisis. "Moving around the streets the destruction is everywhere. It's hard to recognize where some buildings once stood, such is the scale of damage," Mr Koteng said.

"I'm particularly worried about children who've been separated from their families or are now orphans because their parents have lost their lives in this tragedy. Many of these children are sleeping on the streets because they simply have nowhere to go. It's hard to imagine a more frightening situation for a child. Many children are in shock and traumatized, alone and afraid. Young children searching for surviving relatives will have witnessed and lived through horrific experiences which no child should ever have to see or undergo.

On Wednesday, Dimas* told Save the Children partner staff how his nine-year-old sister Puri* was trapped under rubble for five hours after the earthquake. She was found buried next to a dead body, and was barely conscious at the time. However, Puri* had one hand free and was able to attract attention. People immediately started to remove the rubble and she was freed.

"Our house, where Puri* was found shifted almost 50 meters from its original location. Very few houses remain in tact. I didn't expect anything to be saved at that time. Puri*'s survival was a miracle." Said Dimas*.

Save the Children, working through its local partner Yayasan Sayangi Tunas Cilik (YSTC) has a team of staff on the ground in Palu preparing to begin distributing aid, including shelter kits and hygiene items, as well as setting up child friendly spaces, which provide a safe space for children to play, often instead of being on the streets.

The aid agency is also working to establish family tracing and reunification procedures with other agencies to help reunite children with their families, as well as to establish child protection systems and reporting mechanisms to keep children safe.

"Reunifying separated children with their surviving family members is a major protection priority, and will involve careful coordination between agencies and the government. For children who have been orphaned, we will try to find other relatives who can care for them," Mr Koteng said.

"Reaching communities in Sulawesi is really challenging due to its remoteness coupled with the devastation that the tsunami has wrecked, cutting off transport links, which makes children separated from their families even more vulnerable."

Save the Children has been working in Indonesia since 1976, and has a long history responding to humanitarian disasters in the country, including the recent earthquakes in Lombok and the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami.

ENDS

To set up interviews contact Fajar Jasmin in Jakarta on +62 811 881 9912, Antonia Roupell in Jakarta on +44 7879 885 327, or Evan Schuurman in Melbourne on +61 406 117 937 (up to 12pm Melbourne time on October 4).

Stories of survival bring hope to those hardest-hit

**Story and pictures of 9 year old Puri* who was rescued after being buried in rubble for 5 hours – photos [here](#)*

***Please note we have a spokesperson available in Palu, central Sulawesi. To arrange interviews, see bottom of press release*

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About Save the Children

Save the Children believes every child deserves a future. Around the world, we work every day to give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. When crisis strikes, and children are most vulnerable, we are always among the first to respond and the last to leave. We ensure children's unique needs are met and their voices are heard. We deliver lasting results for millions of children, including those hardest to reach.

We do whatever it takes for children – every day and in times of crisis – transforming their lives and the future we share.