

Volcano Erupts in Eastern Indonesia, Releasing Molten Lava



Jakarta, December 19 (RHC)-- A volcano has erupted in eastern Indonesia, releasing molten lava, hot ash, and thick smoke and sending hikers into a panic. Mount Gamalama on the Ternate island in the North Maluku Province spewed smoke up to 2,000 meters into the sky just before midnight Thursday. It released hot ash on Friday, when slow-moving red lava was visible at the peak of the eruption.

Nine panicked hikers fell while fleeing to safety. Four of them were hospitalized and rescuers were searching for the tenth. The provincial capital Ternate had an airport, schools, and offices closed.

The mountain's last major eruption was in 2012. No deaths were reported then. Indonesia has about 129 active volcanoes. The country lies on the major tectonic fault lines known as the Ring of Fire between the Pacific and Indian oceans.

In 2010, more than 350 people lost their lives, following a series of volcanic eruptions in Mount Merapi in central Java.

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