

# 11 bodies recovered after volcanic eruption in Indonesia, and 12 climbers are still missing

December 4 2023, by Rahma Nurjana

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Motorists ride past by as Mount Marapi spews volcanic materials during its eruption in Agam, West Sumatra, Indonesia, Monday, Dec. 4, 2023. The volcano spewed thick columns of ash as high as 3,000 meters (9,800 feet) into the sky in a sudden eruption Sunday and hot ash clouds spread several miles (kilometers). Credit: AP Photo/Ardhy Fernando

The bodies of 11 climbers were recovered Monday a day after a furious eruption of the Mount Marapi volcano as Indonesian rescuers searched for 12 apparently still missing.

Marapi has stayed at the third highest of four alert levels since 2011, a level indicating above normal volcanic activity and prohibiting [climbers](#) or villagers within 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) of the peak, said Hendra Gunawan, the head of the Center for Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation.

"This means that there should be no climbing to the peak," Gunawan said, adding that climbers were only allowed below the [danger zone](#), "but sometimes many of them broke the rules to fulfill their satisfaction to climb further."

About 75 climbers had started their way up the nearly 2,900-meter (9,480-foot) mountain on Saturday and became stranded. Eight of those rescued Sunday were rushed to hospitals with burns and one also had a broken limb, said Hari Agustian, an official at the local Search and Rescue Agency in Padang, the West Sumatra provincial capital.

All of the climbers had registered at two command posts or online through West Sumatra's conservation agency before they climbed, Agustian said. It was possible others took illegal roads or [local residents](#) were active in the area, but it couldn't be confirmed, he said.



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Marapi spewed thick columns of ash as high as 3,000 meters (9,800 feet) in Sunday's [eruption](#) and hot ash clouds spread several miles (kilometers). Nearby villages and towns were blanketed by tons of volcanic debris. Volcanic dust and rain smeared the faces and hair of evacuated climbers, according to video on social media.

Falling ash blanketed several villages and blocked sunlight, and authorities distributed masks and urged residents to wear eyeglasses to

protect them from [volcanic ash](#). About 1,400 people live on Marapi's slopes in Rubai and Gobah Cumantiang, the nearest villages about 5 to 6 kilometers (3.1 to 3.7 miles) from the peak.

Gunawan said that Sunday's eruption was not preceded by a significant increase in volcanic earthquakes. Deep volcanic earthquakes were only recorded three times between Nov. 16 and on Sunday, while the deformation equipment or tiltmeter on the peak showed a horizontal pattern on the radial axis and a slight inflation on the tangential axis.



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Credit: AP Photo/Ardhy Fernando

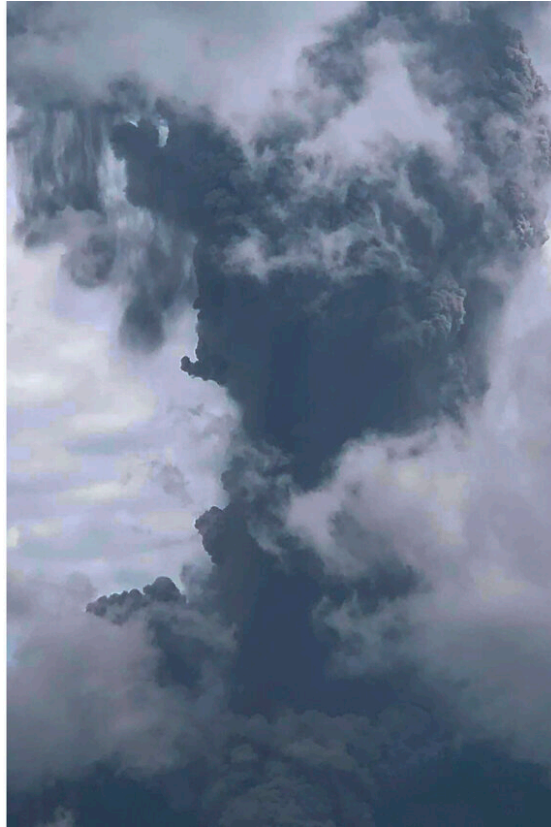




A woman sits outside a house as Mount Marapi spews volcanic materials during its eruption in Agam, West Sumatra, Indonesia, Monday, Dec. 4, 2023. The volcano spewed thick columns of ash as high as 3,000 meters (9,800 feet) into the sky in a sudden eruption Sunday and hot ash clouds spread several miles (kilometers). Credit: AP Photo/Ardhy Fernando



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Mount Marapi spews volcanic materials during its eruption in Agam, West Sumatra, Indonesia, Monday, Dec. 4, 2023. Mount Marapi in Agam district in West Sumatra province spewed thick columns of ash as high as 3,000 meters (9,800 feet) into the sky in a sudden eruption Sunday and hot ash clouds spread several miles (kilometers). Credit: AP Photo/Wica Harefa







Mount Marapi spews volcanic materials during its eruption in Agam, West Sumatra, Indonesia, Monday, Dec. 4, 2023. Mount Marapi in Agam district in West Sumatra province spewed thick columns of ash as high as 3,000 meters (9,800 feet) into the sky in a sudden eruption Sunday and hot ash clouds spread several miles (kilometers). Credit: AP Photo/Wica Harefa



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"This shows that the eruption process is taking place quickly and the center of pressure is very shallow, around the peak," he said.

Marapi has been observed regularly erupting since 2004 with a gap of 2 to 4 years, Gunawan said.

"Marapi eruptions are always sudden and difficult to detect using equipment because the source is near the surface," Gunawan said, "This eruption was not caused by the movement of magma."

West Sumatra's Search and Rescue Agency head Abdul Malik said rescuers found 11 bodies of climbers as they searched for those who still missing and rescued three others Monday morning.

"The evacuation process of the bodies and survivors are still ongoing," he said, adding that rescuers are still searching for 12 climbers reportedly still missing.

Marapi has been active since a January eruption that caused no casualties. It is among more than 120 [active volcanoes](#) in Indonesia, which is prone to seismic upheaval due to its location on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines encircling the Pacific Basin.

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