

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ahead of extreme monsoon weather, Indonesia launches first WhatsApp Humanitarian Chatbot

January 31, 2023 - Yayasan Peta Bencana, supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and endorsed by Indonesian National Board for Disaster Management (BNPB), as part of the USAID Cognicity OSS for Next Generation Community Engagement in DRM Program, through the Investing in Human Capital for Disaster Management initiative, officially launched the first WhatsApp Humanitarian Chatbot, BencanaBot. The first-of-its-kind, AI-assisted chatbot guides Indonesian residents to submit disaster reports. These reports are mapped in real-time on a free and open source platform, PetaBencana.id, where anyone is able to view and share real-time disaster updates in order to make coordinated, evidence-based decisions about safety and response.

Floodwaters up to 3 meters high destroyed dozens of homes in North Sulawesi on Friday, and torrential rains have flooded several areas in Indonesia during the first month of the year. BMKG has issued a warning for peak rainfall across the country this week, with the monsoon season expected to continue into March. In preparation for the upcoming extreme weather and in line with BNPB's vision of Indonesia Tangguh 2045, the launch of BencanaBot on WhatsApp is a pivotal next step in strengthening preparedness and community-led disaster risk reduction.

"If we used to focus on disaster mitigation, now we must focus more on disaster risk reduction. In the past, it was 'what to do,' now it is 'how to do,'" BNPB's deputy for system and strategy, Raditya Jati, explained at a national seminar on strengthening disaster mitigation systems for community resilience as part of the 2022 Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Month.

According to the IPCC report, one of the greatest barriers to adaptation is a lack of timely, locally-specific information. PetaBencana.id addresses this gap by collecting real-time updates directly from street level, soliciting resident reports through automated chatbots on social media and instant messaging apps.

"The scale of the challenges we face today cannot be addressed by one institution alone. It is imperative to enable every single resident to be able to participate in disaster risk reduction and recovery efforts, and that is our mission at Yayasan Peta Bencana," said Nashin Mahtani, director of Yayasan Peta Bencana. "Recognizing that during disasters people will use the applications they are already using with increased frequency, PetaBencana.id was intentionally designed to harness the use of active social media and instant messaging channels. With over 80 million active users of WhatsApp in Indonesia, the launch of BencanaBot on WhatsApp represents a new milestone in enabling residents all across the archipelago to participate in, and benefit from, this free disaster information sharing system."

Any resident in Indonesia can submit disaster reports anonymously by sending a message to +62-8584-BENCANA (+62-8584-2362262 or bit.ly/BencanaBotWA). Residents can also submit reports by tweeting @petabencana, sending a Facebook message to @petabencana, or sending a telegram message to @bencanabot, and check <https://petabencana.id> for real-time disaster updates to navigate safely.

PetaBencana.id Fact Sheet

- + PetaBencana.id is a free and open source platform that maps disasters in real-time using crowd-sourced reports collected via social media, and government agency validations.
- + PetaBencana.id harnesses the heightened use of social media and instant messaging during emergency events to gather confirmed situational updates from street level, in a manner that removes the need for expensive and time consuming data processing. Through the design of a “data-light” platform that operates smoothly with other existing instant messaging, social media, and SMS-based communications that are already familiar to residents, the platform is designed for underfunded communities, agencies with limited technical means, and individuals with modest means for data usage to access; it encourages these groups to both understand and use the system effectively without extensive or costly training.
- + PetaBencana.id is a platform run by Yayasan Peta Bencana. It is supported by USAID BHA as part of the “USAID CogniCity OSS for Next Generation Disaster Risk Reduction program”, with BNPB as a primary implementing partner and Twitter, Mapbox, and PasangMata as data partners.
- + Any resident in Indonesia can share disaster information anonymously to PetaBencana.id via WhatsApp ([+628584-BENCANA](tel:+628584-BENCANA)), Twitter ([@petabencana](https://twitter.com/petabencana)), Facebook Messenger ([@petabencana](https://m.me/petabencana)), Telegram ([@bencanabot](https://t.me/bencanabot)).
- + PetaBencana.id runs on CogniCity Open Source Software, a free and open source software that is run and maintained by Yayasan PetaBencana.
- + PetaBencana.id is designed as a data-sharing tool, not only to collect data but to extend its use; an output API stream gives secondary applications open access to time-critical data, enabling them to optimize their performance with an array of open data.
- + PetaBencana.id was first launched in 2013 (previously PetaJakarta.org), and has been used by millions of residents, first responders, and government emergency managers to make time-critical decisions about safety and navigation during emergency disaster events.
- + In the 2015 World Disaster Report of the International Federation of the Red Cross, PetaBencana.id (formerly PetaJakarta.org) was recommended as a model for community engagement in relation to disaster response.
- + In 2016, the Federal Communication Commission of the United States also recommended PetaBencana.id (formerly PetaJakarta.org) as a best practice regarding disaster information crowdsourcing.

Videos:

[1 minute explainer video](#)

[10 minute video](#)

[20 minute interview](#)

IMAGES



Fig 1. Any resident in Indonesia can share real-time disaster information anonymously to PetaBencana.id via WhatsApp ([+628584-BENCANA](https://wa.me/628584BENCANA)), Twitter ([@petabencana](https://twitter.com/petabencana)), Facebook Messenger ([@petabencana](https://m.me/petabencana)), Telegram ([@bencanabot](https://t.me/bencanabot)).

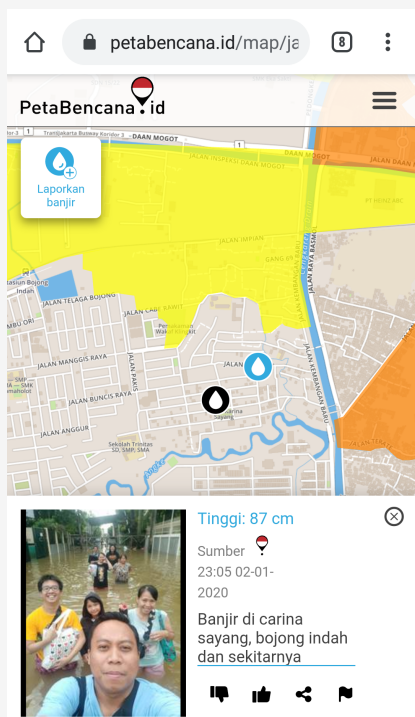


Fig 2. Example of flood report submitted by a resident in Jakarta during the Jabodetabek floods in January 2020. Since 2013, millions of residents, emergency managers, and first responders view and share disaster information via PetaBencana.id, to make time-critical decisions about safety and navigation during disasters.



Fig 3. Crowd-sourced reports submitted to PetaBencana.id are monitored in the BNPB control room to understand resident needs and take response.

LOGOS : [Logo](#)

ASSETS: [Media Social Assets](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Twitter: [@petabencana](#)
Facebook: [PetaBencana.id](#)
Instagram: [@petabencana](#)
Telegram: [@bencanabot](#)
WhatsApp: [+628584-2362262](#) [To submit disaster reports only]
Email: info@petabencana.id

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