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Local Government Policy in Handling Flash Flood Disasters in the Ternate Region

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ABSTRACT: Ternate City is part of an archipelago that has a volcano that is still active until now, so the potential for natural disasters is very vulnerable to the people living in Ternate. This study explains the policy of the Ternate City regional government in handling flash flood disasters in Rua Village, Ternate City. The method used is a qualitative descriptive approach, with data analysis through; data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. The findings of this study are that there are several stages of Ternate City government policy in handling flash floods consisting of; (a) Search, Rescue, Evacuation, and Victim Management; (b) Declaring a State of Emergency; and (c) Refugee Services. Efforts have been made to handle/repair public and community facilities after the flash flood disaster in Rua Subdistrict, namely; (a) fulfilling basic community needs/logistics, (b) repairing/rehabilitating infrastructure, (c) repairing electrical facilities, and (d) cleaning public facilities and yards.

KEYWORDS: Public Policy, Local Government, Handling, Flash Floods

INTRODUCTION

Natural disasters or naturally occurred severe phenomena hinder humans from living peacefully leading to huge damages against life and assets. Moreover, they also degenerate society (Geofrey et al.,2018; Rotjanakusol et al.,2018; Ounrit et al, 2022). Flash floods are known as one of the most common and dangerous natural hazards, causing a large number of deaths (Suarez, et al.,2005; Pregnolato et al.,2017) and extensive damages (Bil et al., 2015; Sultana et al.,2016). Their impacts present a significant diversity (Drobot et al.,2007; Coles et al.,2017), including various tangible and intangible effects and disruptions on various socioeconomic activities (Jonkman et al.,2005), including transportation (Kotlyakov et al.,2015; Diakakis et al.,2020).

Indonesia is an archipelagic country with a relatively high level of disaster vulnerability, and natural disasters such as floods, landslides, and earthquakes occur almost every year (La Suhu et al., 2023). Geographically and geologically, Indonesia is a flood-prone area (Putri, 2018). An event can be classified as a disaster if it meets several criteria: an event occurred, and the event was caused by natural or human factors (Hamid et al., 2021). From before the disaster occurs to after the disaster, including how to handle logistics, manage victims, address the aftermath of the disaster, and so on (La Suhu et al., 2025). So, the principle is that natural disasters actually have a broad impact on the lives of communities, nations, and states. Therefore, early disaster mitigation is necessary to minimize the impact of a larger disaster.

Ternate City, as part of the archipelago in North Maluku Province, is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, one of which is flooding (Usemahu et al., 2025). The geology of the Ternate archipelago is mountainous with well-functioning lava flows located on the island of Ternate (Sarihi et al., 2023). The coastal city of Ternate is located on the middle slope of Gamalama volcano with a distance of less than 6 km from the main crater (Handayani et al., 2022). However, the natural phenomenon that recently occurred in one of the Rua sub-districts of Ternate City in 2024, differed from the flood disasters that have frequently occurred in several places such as Marikurubu Sub-district and Tubo Sub-district, where the Flash Flood Disaster followed the path of rivers or water channels that had been left for a long time.

The context of Rua Village, the chronology of the flash flood incident on Sunday, August 25, 2024 at 03.00 WIT, a flash flood occurred in Rua Village, Ternate Island District, which was caused by the high intensity of rainfall in the area causing the water volume to exceed the river's capacity due to sloping topography and high flow speed causing the river water to cut the cliffs forming a new river channel in the middle of residential areas, water from the foot of Mount Gamalama flows quickly from the upstream area to the valley and lower settlements. The strong current carries mud, rocks, and trees which cause major damage to infrastructure and residents' homes.

The flash flood disaster situation urgently requires policies from local governments in its handling process. Policy is essentially the choice of actions or government decisions (Paryanto et al., 2022; La Suhu, 2023; Lating et al., 2021; Radjak et al., 2025). Policy implementation is a critical stage in the policy process. Without implementation, a policy is merely a written document

without meaning in society (Baihaqi et al., 2023). Actions in handling flash flood disasters are part of public service, government service to communities in need (La Suhu et al., 2025; Ibrahim et al., 2020).

RESEARCH METHODS

The method used was descriptive qualitative. Qualitative descriptive methods describe and explain the results of primary and secondary data obtained through direct interviews. The purpose of descriptive research is to systematically, factually, and accurately describe the research facts (La Suhu et al., 2019). This qualitative method approach greatly facilitates data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation. Furthermore, qualitative methods can be analyzed by providing descriptive analysis based on the research findings.

After systematically collecting data according to research needs, the author can organize the data so that it can be sorted and analyzed according to the patterns applied in the qualitative descriptive research method. In analyzing the data, the researcher used three (3) stages:

(1) Data Selection/Data Reduction,
(2) Data Presentation/Data Display, and
(3) Conclusion/Data Verification (Wance et al., 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ternate City Government Policy in Flash Flood Disaster Management

1. Search, Rescue, Evacuation, and Casualty Management Policy

During the flash flood on August 25, 2024, rescue and evacuation efforts were carried out by the Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD), the Ternate National Search and Rescue Agency (BASARNAS), the 152/BBL Military Command (Korem), the 1501 Ternate Military District Command (Kodim), the Banau Company, the Ternate Naval Base (Lanal), the Maluku Regional Police Mobile Brigade (Brimobda), the North Maluku Regional Police Water Police (Polairud), the North Maluku Regional Police K-9 Unit, the Ternate Police, the Ternate City Public Works and Housing Agency (PUPR), the Ternate Public Order Agency (Satpol PP), the Ternate Fire Department (Damkar), the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI), volunteers, and the community. The actions of the Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD), as the Ternate City Government, are part of its role in disaster management in Ternate City.

The emergency response to the flash flood disaster in Rua Village, Pulau Ternate District, is highly anticipated by the Ternate City Government's policies. The priority of the Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) as the Ternate City Government has been carried out, namely the search, rescue, evacuation of the community and casualties. The Ternate City BPBD has taken action in the process of search, rescue, evacuation of the community and casualties. The actions were carried out for 8 (eight) days through field operations from August 25 to September 1, 2025. The stages of the operation were carried out according to the areas affected by the flash flood disaster in Rua Village, Pulau Ternate District, a description of the area is as follows:



Source: Research Results

From the results of the search and rescue operation process for the Flash Flood Natural Disaster in Rua Village, Pulau Ternate District, North Maluku Province for 8 (eight) days, from August 25 to September 1, 2024, the conclusion was that the total number of victims was 27 people, with details of 8 people surviving and 19 people dying.

2. Policy in Determining the Status of a Disaster Emergency

Flash floods occurred in Rua Village, Pulau Ternate District, on August 25, 2024. Rescue and evacuation of affected residents have been carried out since the incident. The affected area and population were in one village in Ternate City. The resulting impacts resulted in casualties, including injuries and deaths, as well as damage to infrastructure, such as power outages, total communication disruptions, and disrupted transportation due to the extensive and massive flooding and the collapse of the national road connecting Pulau Ternate District to West Ternate District.

Based on the above, the Rapid Response Team of the Ternate City Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) proposed a 14-day emergency response period to the Mayor of Ternate. Based on this proposal, the Mayor of Ternate issued Decree Number 205/III.6/KT/2024 concerning the Determination of a State of Emergency for the Flash Flood in Rua Village, Pulau Ternate District, Ternate City. With this flash flood incident, to ensure smooth coordination and handling of emergency response to flash flood disasters in an integrated, effective and efficient manner, the Ternate City Government, TNI/POLRI and other related stakeholders formed an Emergency Response Command Post by issuing Mayoral Decree Number 206/III.6/KT/2024 concerning the Flash Flood Disaster Emergency Response Command Post in Rua Village, Pulau Ternate District, Ternate City in 2024.

With the vast and thick accumulation of floodwaters, including mud, large rocks, and debris, which remain in residential areas, requiring extensive manpower, heavy equipment, and a large fleet to complete the cleanup, new post-flood threats such as disease outbreaks, disrupted transportation access, and mud-filled educational facilities remain. Therefore, a second 14-day extension of the emergency response period has been issued, pursuant to Mayoral Decree No. 218/III.6/KT/2024 concerning the Extension of the Emergency Response Status Following the Flash Flood Disaster in Rua Village, Pulau Ternate District, Ternate City, 2024, from September 8 to September 21, 2024.

The ongoing threat of the disaster continues to disrupt the lives and livelihoods of a group of people/communities and requires immediate and adequate response measures. Cleanup and restoration of public facilities affected by the flash floods are ongoing. Based on this, the Emergency Transition Period Towards Recovery was determined in accordance with the Mayor's Decree Number 222.1/III.6/KT/2024, Concerning the Determination of Emergency Transition Status Towards Recovery from Flash Flood Disaster in Rua Village, Ternate Island District, starting from September 22, 2024 to November 20, 2024 (SK. Emergency Transition attached) and extended by the Mayor's Decree Number 244/III.6/KT/2024 dated November 21, 2024.

3. Refugee Services Policy

The flash floods that occurred on August 25, 2024, displaced 137 families (385 people), who were housed in evacuation centers (SMK N 4 Ternate City, sub-districts, and close relatives). Evacuee services were coordinated by the Ternate City Social Service, the Ternate City Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD), the Ternate Island Sub-district Head, the Rua Village Head, the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI)/Police/Mobile Brigade Unit (Brimob), the Disaster Preparedness Team (Tagana), and the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI). Refugee services included providing a public kitchen, folding mattresses, blankets, mats, fans, ready-to-eat meals, clean water/sanitation, and lighting.

The Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD), acting as the Ternate City Government, provided basic services to the displaced Rua community, which remained vigilant at all times following the flash flood. The services provided to refugees are certainly inseparable from the cooperation between various agencies, especially the Ternate City Social Service, the Ternate City Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD), the Ternate Island Sub-district Head, the Rua Village Head, the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI/POLRI/BRIMOB), the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI). These agencies consistently coordinate in providing various basic needs for the refugees. The Ternate City BPBD has been very effective in providing basic services to the needs of refugees in Rua Village. Cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination between government agencies, the TNI/POLRI, and other organizations have been effective, ensuring that the basic needs of the flash flood refugees in Rua Village can be met according to everyone's expectations.



Figure 2. Refugee Services at the SMKN 4 Ternate City Refugee Post

Source: Research Results

Local Government Policy in Handling Flash Flood Disasters in the Ternate Region

In providing services to flash flood evacuees in Rua Village, several services have been implemented in collaboration with the Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) representing the Ternate City Government, the Ternate City Social Service, the Ternate Island Sub-district Head, the Rua Village Head, the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), the Indonesian National Police (POLRI), the Mobile Brigade Corps (BRIMOB), the National Disaster Management Agency (Tagana), and the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI). These services include:

(1) Public kitchen services, and

(2) Health and environmental services.

Efforts to Handle/Repair Public and Community Facilities

Flooding is a river flow that is relatively greater than normal due to continuous rainfall upstream or in a specific location. This results in the river channel being unable to accommodate the flow, causing the water to overflow and inundate the surrounding area. A disaster is an event that causes significant impacts on humans, such as loss of life, loss of property, and environmental damage, caused by both natural and non-natural factors. According to Law Number 24 of 2007 concerning Disaster Management, a disaster is defined as an event or series of events that threaten and disrupt community life, caused by natural, non-natural, and human factors, resulting in loss of life, environmental damage, loss of property, and psychological impacts.

Although disasters are unavoidable, the risk of their impact can be reduced through proper mitigation and planning. The impact of natural disasters significantly impacts human life and the environment. Therefore, government policies and public awareness are essential to minimize their impact, given the high number of casualties and material losses. The main obstacle to reducing the impact of disasters is the lack of public understanding and awareness of the importance of environmental protection. The flash floods in Rua Village clearly had a far-reaching impact on the community. Therefore, the Ternate City Government, through the relevant agency, the Ternate City Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD), has implemented various measures to manage public facilities and support the community in Rua Village, including:

(1) Fulfillment of basic needs/logistics for the community

Basic needs provided include: packaged rice, ready-to-eat food, mineral water, canned/bottled drinks, rice, mats, sarongs/blankets, and other items. Funding for these basic needs comes from the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) of the Central Government, the Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) of North Maluku Province, the Ternate City Regional Budget (APBD), Ministries/Institutions/State-Owned Enterprises/Regional-Owned Enterprises, Community Organizations, and community groups, among others.

(2) Infrastructure Repair/Rehabilitation

Actions undertaken include clearing roads and removing debris from houses affected by flash floods, establishing temporary housing (Huntara) and permanent housing (Huntap), providing road access, drainage, drinking water, sanitation, and street lighting. The implementation of infrastructure rehabilitation is coordinated by the Ternate City Public Works and Spatial Planning Agency, the Ternate City Housing, Settlement Area and Land Agency, the North Maluku River Basin Center, the North Maluku National Road Implementation Center, the North Maluku Regional Settlement Infrastructure Center, the Provincial Public Works and Spatial Planning Agency, and the North Maluku Housing Provision Work Unit (Satker). In the emergency response, they clean up flood material and repair vital facilities and infrastructure in the form of creating flood material channels.

(3) Electrical Facility Repair

Due to the impact of the flash flood in Rua Village, since the incident on August 25, 2024, electrical facilities in the disaster-affected area of Rua Village experienced disruptions/blackouts for three days. By the third day, 50% of the electricity in the affected area was restored, and the PLN office was still working on repairing the remaining electricity poles and substations. By the end of the emergency response period, all electricity was restored.

(4) Cleaning of Public Facilities and Community Yards

Cleaning of public facilities and community yards, such as roads, schools, and homes, which were covered in mud, garbage, and remains of collapsed buildings, was carried out by the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), the Indonesian National Police (Polri), the Ternate City Public Order Agency (Satpol-PP), the Ternate City Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD), the Ternate City Health Office, the Ternate City Environmental Agency, and local residents.

CONCLUSION

Ternate is an archipelago geographically located near active Mount Merapi, making it prone to disasters. The flash floods that occurred in Rua Village are among the natural disasters that Ternate experiences. The Ternate City Government's policies for managing flash floods in Rua Village, Ternate City, in 2024 were implemented effectively within its authority. The policies implemented by the Ternate City Government include: (a) Search, Rescue, Evacuation, and Victim Management; (b) Declaring a State of Emergency; and (c) Refugee Services.

In addition to these policies, various efforts have been made to address/ repair public and community facilities following the flash flood disaster in Rua Village, including: (a) meeting basic needs/logistics for the community, (b) repairing/rehabilitating infrastructure, (c) repairing electricity facilities, and (d) cleaning public facilities and yards.

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