

DANANTARA INDONESIA  
**DIARIES**

From the Danantara Indonesia Investor Relations Team

COMPANIES OF DANANTARA INDONESIA

# The Architecture of Recovery: Building Huntara in Flood-Hit Sumatra

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Photo credit: Danantara Indonesia

Written by **Indira Ichsan** with contributions from **Putra Muskita**

"Disaster shocks us out of slumber,  
but **only skillful efforts keeps us awake.**"

**REBECCA SOLNIT**, American writer, historian, and essayist

From "A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster"

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The rain did not arrive as a single storm. It settled in and refused to leave. So said Muhammad Ilham, a resident of Tanjung Dalam in North Aceh Regency, on the northern tip of Sumatra. For days, water climbed the walls of homes, turning familiar rooms into submerged memories.

“We were at home, trapped by the flood. It rained heavily for a week,” Ilham said. “In the morning, we heard the water was getting higher. By 6 PM, it was almost two meters high.”

Scenes like these repeated across multiple districts in the Aceh province and parts of Sumatra late last year. An unusual convergence of extreme weather systems brought days of relentless rain across northern and central Sumatra, triggering widespread flooding and landslides that swept through Aceh, North Sumatra, and West Sumatra.



*Construction of Huntara underway in Linggai, Agam, Sumatera Barat /  
Photo credit: Danantara Indonesia*

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The floods affected multiple provinces simultaneously, placing significant pressure on communities and local infrastructure. By early February 2026, official figures showed more than 1,200 confirmed deaths, with 140 people still missing islandwide and over 100,000 evacuated from their homes. Overall, above 3 million residents were affected.

As the waters gradually receded, the nature of the crisis began to change. Months later, many affected communities are facing the slower consequences of disaster: families living in temporary arrangements, homes awaiting repair or reconstruction, and local economies still adjusting to disruption.

Transitions like these rarely resolve themselves. Recovery becomes a question of institutions: who restores systems, who rebuilds continuity, and who provides the structures within which daily life can resume.

## When the Waters Rose

Indonesia's geography is both generous and unforgiving. The Pacific Ring of Fire has endowed the country with fertile land and natural resources. But the archipelago's climatic and geological conditions also mean earthquakes, floods, and landslides.

The role of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) during disasters is less a matter of policy than of physics. Many Danantara Indonesia companies, as SOEs are now called, operate the most basic systems people depend on: electricity, fuel, connectivity, transport, financial access.

They also possess something few other institutions do: presence. Their operational networks stretch across provinces, islands, and districts, often reaching places where private or multinational actors have limited or no footprint. In some remote areas, they are among the few institutions with nationwide operational reach across remote and urban areas alike.



*In progress: Huntara units under construction / Photo credit: Danantara Indonesia*

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When disasters strike, operational challenges arise quickly. Roads fail, supply chains fracture, communications falter. The organizations already embedded within those environments inevitably become central to stabilization and recovery.

The flood disaster in Sumatra unfolded in much the same way. Flooding damaged roads, interrupted utilities, and disrupted communications temporarily across multiple districts. Families were still living in tents. Cooking and sleeping were improvised.

Timely coordination became essential. In circumstances like these, institutional response is not a matter of initiative, but obligation.

What unfolded on the ground was not a single institutional response, but a coordinated movement across the broader Danantara Indonesia ecosystem. Under the humanitarian umbrella of BUMN Peduli, Danantara Indonesia companies mobilized according to their respective capabilities.

By 18 January 2026, PLN reported that 98.9% of villages across Aceh had regained access to electricity, restoring power for more than 1.7 million people, including those in four of the hardest-hit districts: Aceh Tengah, Bener Meriah, Gayo Lues, and Aceh Tamiang.

In the same period, telecom restoration moved in lockstep with electricity. The Ministry of Communication and Digital reported that on 5 December 2025, only 1,789 of Aceh's 3,414 base transceiver towers (BTS), or cellular towers (52.4%) were back online. It explicitly noted that BTS recovery depended heavily on electricity supply and fuel for generators.

As power and access routes stabilized, network coverage returned in stages. By 30 December 2025, Telkomsel reported 99.57% of its sites in Aceh, 10,570 of 10,605 BTS, had been restored, even as some local stability issues persisted.

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*Rows of Huntara captured from the front / Photo credit: Danantara Indonesia*

For Danantara Indonesia more specifically, the role is focused on Rumah Hunian Danantara (Huntara): temporary residential housing designed to provide displaced families with stable living conditions during recovery, contributing to the government-led disaster recovery program.

The work unfolded in stages: initial construction, structural development, completion of communal facilities, handover, and relocation. Across multiple districts in Aceh, North Sumatra, and West Sumatra, sites gradually took shape.



*Aerial view of Huntara in Padang, Batang Anai / Photo credit: Danantara Indonesia*

The intention was not merely to provide shelter, but to ensure homes that are proper and dignified, even if temporary. Each unit was equipped with basic furnishings and access to free electricity and Wi-Fi connectivity. Communal facilities, including shared sanitation, kitchens, health clinics, and playgrounds for children, were integrated into site planning. Gardens formed part of the layout, creating spaces that were functional, social, and restorative.

Delivering housing at this scale, however, is never the work of a single institution. Waskita Karya, working alongside the Ministry of Public Works, completed Huntara blocks in the Aceh Utara regency designed to accommodate displaced residents.

## Gardens After the Flood

Ina, another Aceh resident, saw the disaster unfold across dark roads and rising currents.

“At the time, I was in Matang. My family was across the broken Hutabelang bridge,” she explained. From seven in the evening, she went back and forth between the towns of Bireuen and Hutabelang three times to check on relatives.

Some needed evacuation. Others required makeshift flotation boards and tires. “At 3 AM, the water was more than two meters. By 3:30 AM, it reached three meters, including my mother-in-law’s house.”

Entire neighborhoods were left uninhabitable. In some places, mud reached rooftops: two and a half to three meters high. Many homes required extensive rehabilitation before families could return.

Months later, Ina finds herself in the Huntara. To date, 1,398 units of Rumah Hunian Danantara have been completed and handed over to disaster-affected communities, distributed across three provinces: 1,075 units in Aceh, 200 in North Sumatra, and 123 in West Sumatra, spanning eight districts.

Ina works among the gardens. She guides children and residents who want to learn decoration and entrepreneurship. The concept is minimalist, neat, and elegant.

“We build gardens so mothers feel brighter at heart. Children can play there. The atmosphere becomes safer and more peaceful,” she says.

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*A moment of play in the Huntara garden / Photo credit: Danantara Indonesia*

Around the Huntara sites, economic life has gradually resumed. Small stalls appeared near construction areas. Displaced residents found temporary employment. Informal commerce like food, drinks, daily necessities began circulating again.

Ilham has started selling once more.

“We started selling when this Huntara project began. We sell fried snacks, packed rice, coffee. The project workers buy from us. We are grateful they buy here.”

Such patterns are common in post-disaster environments. Temporary housing performs a humanitarian function, but also an economic one. By restoring basic stability and concentrating activity, these settlements often become nodes where micro-economies re-emerge and community rhythms begin reorganizing themselves.

Of course, the Huntara structures do not replicate what was taken by the flood. They are not intended to replace permanent homes.

What they provide instead is interim certainty. A space where families can return to daily routines while longer-term rebuilding unfolds.



*Where smiles gather, hope naturally follows / Photo credit: Danantara Indonesia*

“With Huntara, it really helps the community as a place to live, to rest, to cook more comfortably, even if it is not exactly like their own home,” Ina reflected.

Her hope remains simple. “I hope the gardens I create make them happy, calmer, more comfortable. So their hearts feel more at peace.”

Rebuilding starts after the water recedes. And it is never only about walls and roofs. It is about an ecosystem restarting. It is about institutions responding as they are supposed to. It is about communities rebuilding as they must.

And then, perhaps ordinary life can gradually reassert itself.

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# Did You Know?

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*See this roof? Congrats, you've just found South Sulawesi. / Source: localguides.id*

Left-lane traffic and bursts of colorful signage: the kind of telltale markers avid Geoguessr players swear by when spotting Indonesia in Google Street View. More distinctively, seasoned guessers can even pinpoint exact cities by observing house roofs.

Saddle-shaped Tongkonan roofs rise above the Toraja landscape in South Sulawesi. On Nias Island, steep palm-leaf roofs stand out instantly. And across Java and its neighboring regions, tiled roofs rule the streets.

Some players even compile spreadsheets of labeled roof snapshots, perhaps a true celebration of Indonesia's diverse vernacular architecture and surprisingly fun depth of street-level knowledge (pun intended).

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*Danantara Indonesia Diaries is a newsletter produced by Danantara Indonesia's investor relations team.*

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