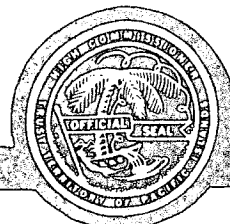


PRESS RELEASE



TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Office of the High Commissioner

Saipan, Mariana Islands

96950

RELEASE: 223-66

Marianas

37 INDONESIANS STRANDED IN PALAU

Truk

Ponape

Marshalls

Yap

Palau

Saipan, Mariana Islands, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Dec. 22 . . . Thirty-seven Indonesians are stranded in Palau. Twenty-five of them arrived December 18 after being granted emergency entry into the Territory at the request of the master of a Japanese vessel, Myoju Maru 35, who rescued them from their sinking ship, Mudasitia, 280 miles south of Palau on December 16. The 39-ton Indonesian trading boat had originally set out from Morotai, an island approximately 300 miles southwest of Palau. As distance to either Indonesia or Japan was too great for the overloaded Japanese fishing vessel to sail, Territory authorities granted entry and agreed to care for the Indonesians until they could be repatriated. The Trust Territory Government is proceeding with arrangements for repatriation.

The other 12 Indonesians arrived in Palau in early October aboard a sailing boat. According to the master, the boat sailed on October 10 from Morotai bound for the Celebes to sell copra. The boat met with strong winds after 8 days of sailing, causing it to lose control and drift. It was found drifting outside of Malakal Pass in Palau and towed into Malakal Harbor. The vessel is currently waiting for good weather to sail.

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In a note delivered December 21 to the American Embassy in Tokyo, the Indonesian Embassy expressed appreciation for American assistance to the shipwrecked Indonesian seamen landed at Palau and stated that all necessary steps for return of the seamen have been taken. The Indonesian consulate at Davu will arrange repatriation.

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UDUI/PIO/2148