
On 28 September 2018, an earthquake of magnitude 7.5 hit the city of Palu on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi, and triggered a large tsunami as well as soil liquefaction that levelled thousands of homes and led to more than 2,000 casualties. In addition to the terrible loss of life, there was also an important impact on the culture sector. In particular, the Museum of Central Sulawesi in Palu estimated that 70% (out of 834) of the inventoried ceramic items in the museum had been damaged as a result of the disaster. The museum’s collection of local ceramics – the existence of which was not widely known amongst international academic circles prior to the disaster – suggests that it may contain 17th century Chinese and Japanese ceramics that had previously been thought to be unavailable in the region, and thus potentially revealing new findings on the role of central Sulawesi in the history of maritime trade. A number of additional activities are foreseen, including a review of the existing disaster risk reduction strategy of the museum; the building of capacities of the museum staff in disaster resilient storage and display methods; and the reinforcement of public sensitization and education programmes on disaster risk reduction for cultural heritage.