

By Richard Freer

The Government of **Bali** has issued an extraordinary plea to the peoples of the world. Despite its **volcano** rumbling since August, the government's tourist office claims that the island **paradise** is "still safe for tourism". On Sunday night more than 300 tremors were recorded with smoke rising from the crater to a height of 200 meters. This is official information from the government, which has evacuated more than 80,000 residents from the immediate area.

Beautiful Bali is the destination for millions of tourists each year. As recently as last June, **President Obama**, along with **Michelle Obama** and their daughters, spent 5 days enjoying the island. According to the government, all flights are still running normally with no disruption to tourism. However, it admits that alternative airports are on standby, should volcanic ash be detected. It also claims that 300 buses would be made available to channel tourists to the safety of ferry ports and bus terminals.

The volcano, **Mount Agung**, last erupted in 1963, but with its increasing activity, the government is taking no chances. Indonesia, itself, has prepared **Jakarta**, Banyuwangi, Makassar, Kupang, Balikpapan, Ambon, Surabaya, Manado, Praya, and Solo airports for emergency use, should the situation deteriorate. Of course, **Indonesia**, with more than 100 active volcanoes, is no stranger to preparing for increased **seismic activity**. However, with school holidays approaching in Australia, Bali will be expecting an influx of Australian families.

places.

Scott Bryan, an associate professor from the Queensland University of Technology, says there have been "very good indications" that an eruption is imminent.

"The fact that the seismic tremors beneath the volcano are increasing in number, intensity, and the reduction in their depth in the last week or so, is a very good indication that magma is moving up to the surface," he said.