

# Mt Meru said to be potentially dangerous volcano

## Scientists advise for monitor stations

By Staff Reporter

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## What happens if Mount Meru erupts?

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Recent studies, as well as chronological volcanic measurements conducted by the Monduli-based, Eco-Science centre, indicate that mountain Meru remains active volcano and unless tremor and eruption sensors get installed around them, disasters related to volcanic actions are likely to take people by surprise.

"Mt Meru volcano, which had three eruptions between 120 and 90 years ago, is a potentially dangerous volcano, with more than 1 million people living around it," said Mr Ben

Beeckmans the Director of Eco-Science.

Mr Beeckman a renowned scientist has a long track record of studying volcanoes on the African continent and before settling in Arusha, he had done volcanic studies in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

According to Mr Beeckmans, as the weak spot of the volcano is on its eastern side, as far as a future eruption is concerned, that side would suffer logically more damage, but the ascending magma, which would make the volcano

swell, could trigger off partial collapses on any side, which would be a disaster for a city like Arusha.

To save the Arusha population, Mr Beeckmans advised that it is imperative for a seismic net to be organized around both Mount Meru and Kilimanjaro where the town of Moshi is built so that alarm can be triggered should any of the two features start boiling beyond ordinary heats.

"The University of Dar-Es-Salaam has a small seismology section, which, according to the scientist, could perfectly

monitor the seismicity of both volcanoes.

Ben Beeckmans wants the central government, local authorities as well as the private sector to join hands in taking the necessary steps for monitoring these volcanoes through installing at least the first seismic station (apparently three are needed on each volcano).

Disaster may also strike by surprise; "Nature is quiet, the volcanos seems not to exist anymore but in reality these are the more catastrophic areas.

Making a presentation in Arusha, the scientist pointed out that, such calamity happened in 1982 in Mexico, when El-Chichon volcano woke up and killed many people, which will also be a problem for Meru and Kili," warned the scientist.

But how serious is Mount Meru potential eruption? According to Beeckmans the force of St Helens (Washington state) when it erupted in 1980, was about 150 times the atomic bomb of Hiroshima.

"Mt Meru had a similar eruption, which was ten-times bigger, when its eastern side blew out. While the avalanche debris on St Helens produced a volume of 2.8 cubic kilometres of materials, Mount Meru blew out a whopping 28 cubic kilometres; which was 1500 bigger than Hiroshima Bomb, creating the Momella lakes," he said.

It was one of the largest sub-aerial debris avalanches ever recorded and its repeat will not only annihilate human and animal population in Arusha City, but also parts of Moshi, Namanga and Kajiado in Kenya.



Mount Meru. How serious is Mount Meru potential eruption?