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Information bulletin

Philippines: Typhoon Bopha

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation, preparedness measures put in place and details available at this time. The Philippine Red Cross (PRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) are presently not seeking external assistance from donors.

Summary: As Typhoon Bopha heads towards the north-eastern coast of Mindanao Island in the Philippines, the Red Cross is preparing to respond to the humanitarian impact the storm could potentially cause.

In addition to monitoring the situation around the clock, volunteers and rescue teams are on standby for immediate action while support vehicles and equipment such as rubber boats and ambulances have been readied for deployment. Personnel in the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) operations centre are relaying real-time information, advisories and response plans to teams on the ground in areas projected to be in the typhoon's path. Contingency stocks of bedding, water storage containers and hygiene kits have been prepared to ensure a rapid response.



Philippine Red Cross national headquarters has a dedicated operations centre that operates 24/7. Since Typhoon Bopha was sighted, it has been relaying real-time information and advisories to chapters particularly those located along the typhoon path.
Photo: Mollie Godinez/PRC

At the same time, PRC is supporting pre-emptive evacuations that have been ordered by disaster authorities in areas expected to be hit by the typhoon, and is encouraging communities to take responsibility for their safety by providing them with information to ensure that they are well-prepared. PRC and IFRC are also participating in preparedness for response meetings that are being held within the context of inter-agency coordination.

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The situation

Typhoon Bopha is heading towards the north-eastern coast of Mindanao Island in the Philippines, and is expected to make landfall in the province of Surigao del Sur tomorrow, Tuesday 4 December 2012. The massive storm has maintained its strength as it moves closer to landmass, and consists of maximum sustained winds of 175 kilometres per hour (kph) and gusts of up to 210 kph. Projections by the national meteorological agency – Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) – as well as by other major international meteorological agencies indicate that the typhoon will transverse provinces in northern Mindanao before hovering over provinces in Southern Visayas prior to making its exit in the northern tip of Palawan. As it crosses land, Typhoon Bopha will bring heavy rains and strong winds in areas near its centre.

Preparations for any eventualities began on Friday, 30 November, with PAGASA and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) issuing regular updates. Besides Surigao del Sur, the provinces of Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Davao Oriental and Surigao del Norte have been placed under [Public Warning Signal \(PWS\) No.3¹](#). This level of PWS implies, among others, cancellation of travel and outdoor activities, and evacuation of people in harm's way to safer shelter. The provinces of Bohol, Bukidnon, Davao del Norte and Compostela Valley, Misamis Oriental and Southern Leyte are currently under [PWS No.2²](#), which implies, among others, postponement of all outdoor activities involving children.

In view of the public warning signals in place, authorities have ordered pre-emptive evacuation of families in areas placed under PWS No. 3, which are expected to be hardest-hit by the typhoon. NDRRMC has advised residents who are living in low-lying areas in these locations to take precautionary measures in the event of landslides and flash floods.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Philippine Red Cross (PRC) has been monitoring the situation around the clock since the typhoon was sighted and meteorological projections indicated that it would enter Philippine territory. Through its operations centre at the national headquarters, the national society has maintained constant communication with chapters concerned in the islands of Visayas and Mindanao, with real-time information, advisories and response plans being relayed to teams on the ground. Chapters located along the projected typhoon path are also monitoring and reporting the situation on the ground to the operations centre to enable quick decision-making and to facilitate faster mobilization of resources and a coordinated response.

PRC chapters in areas placed under PWS No. 3 are supporting pre-emptive evacuations that have been ordered by disaster authorities, and are encouraging communities to take responsibility for their safety by providing them with information to ensure that they are well-prepared. The chapters are on full alert and have put their volunteers, rescue teams and medical teams on stand-by for immediate action in case of any eventuality. The personnel are equipped with personal protective equipment such as helmets and life vests for their safety and are backed up by support vehicles, ambulances and other equipment such as rubber boats.

In addition to the teams from respective chapters, PRC national headquarters, IFRC, German Red Cross and Spanish Red Cross have some personnel stationed in the provinces of Bukidnon, Lanao del Norte and Misamis Oriental supporting ongoing recovery activities relating to [Tropical Storm Washi](#), which also made landfall in Surigao del Sur during December 2011. These personnel have been alerted and are available to provide immediate support to the respective chapters in case of any untoward incident.

Meanwhile, IFRC and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are ready to support PRC and have specialized personnel, additional emergency supplies and resources available in-country and in the region. ICRC has water and habitation teams that can be deployed to support PRC efforts while PRC has several water



IFRC-supplied stocks of pre-positioned relief items and hygiene kits available in country are sufficient to meet the needs of at least 15,000 families. Photo: Joe Cropp/IFRC

¹ A meteorological condition where a tropical cyclone will affect a community with winds greater than 100kph up to 185kph which may be expected within at least 18 hours

² A meteorological condition where a tropical cyclone will affect a community with winds greater than 60kph up to 100kph which may be expected within at least 24 hours

purification units, bladder tanks and tankers. IFRC-supplied stocks of pre-positioned relief items such as blankets, jerry cans and sleeping mats available in-country are sufficient to meet the needs of at least 15,000 families. These are in addition to PRC's own stocks, which can meet the needs of more than 10,000 families. ICRC also has stocks of relief items in Mindanao. Additional supplies can be airlifted into the country within 24 hours from IFRC's zone logistics unit (ZLU) in Kuala Lumpur.

Finally, coordination meetings are underway between PRC and IFRC and partner national societies with in-country presence to plan out the response of PRC should the typhoon bring severe damage. PRC and IFRC are also participating in preparedness for response meetings that are being held within the context of inter-agency coordination. A humanitarian country team (HCT) meeting was held earlier today during which it was indicated that inter-agency standing committee (IASC) clusters may be activated. In view of this, IFRC has mobilized its shelter cluster coordinator from the Asia Pacific zone office for potential activation of the emergency shelter cluster. The coordinator is expected to be in-country for immediate action, starting tomorrow, 4 December 2012.

Contact information

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Please send all pledges of funding to zonerm.asiapacific@ifrc.org



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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#) and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#), which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.