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# Information bulletin

## Philippines: Measles Outbreak

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

<b>Glide n°</b>	<b>Date of issue:</b> 8 February 2019
<b>Date of disaster:</b> On going since 2017	<b>Point of contact (name and title):</b> Leonardo Ebajo, Manager for Disaster Management Services
<b>Host National Society:</b> Philippine Red Cross	
<b>Number of people affected:</b> 2,000	
<b>N° of National Societies currently involved in the operation (if available and relevant):</b> -	
<b>N° of other partner organizations involved in the operation (if available and relevant):</b> Department of Health	

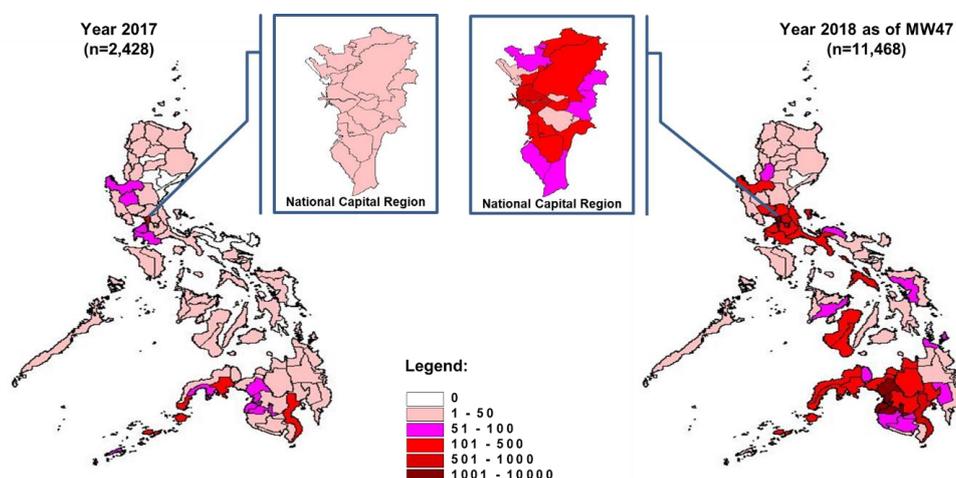
*This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Philippine Red Cross, with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has determined that external assistance is not required, and is therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time.*

## The situation

Cases of measles have been on the increase in the Philippines over the past several years, there have been outbreaks, but they have been mainly individual and isolated. From 2017 to 2018 measles cases rose nationwide by about 550 per cent above the normal average. During 2018, 21,812 measles cases were reported, with 202 deaths, most of them children. Poor immunization coverage is broadly agreed by health specialists to be the root cause of the outbreak. The WHO has reported that immunisation rates were well below the target of 95 per cent and decreasing. In 2016 the rate was about 75 per cent but fell to close to 60 per cent in 2018. Its estimated over 2.4 million children under five are currently at risk of measles.

On 6 February 2019, the Department of Health (DOH) declared a “measles outbreak” in the National Capital Region (NCR) and Region 3 (Central Luzon). On the 7 February 2019, DOH announced that the measles outbreak had spread to more areas in Luzon and Visayas in CALABARZON, Region 6 (Western Visayas) and Region 7 (Central Visayas). Unconfirmed reports from DOH report around 72 deaths among more than 2,000 cases of measles nationwide. While according to San Lazaro Hospital Epidemiology Department (Special National Hospital Medical Center for Infectious Diseases with a 500-bed capacity), there are 1,187 reported suspected measles cases in Metro Manila since January 2019, with 55 deaths. On 5 February 2019, at least 248 children and 21 adults were being treated for measles in the hospital. Most of the confirmed deaths are children aged three months to four years old. Cities in NCR with most cases are: Manila, Calocan, Marikina, Pasig, Navotas, Parañaque, Taguig, Pasay, and Malabon.

Below is a graphic reported by WHO showing the spread of measles cases throughout the Philippines 2017-2018.



# Red Cross and Red Crescent action

PRC Health Services have been scaling up monitoring and responses to affected communities over the past several years, up to the current declaration of outbreaks by DOH on the 6 February 2019. PRC's Operations Centre, which functions 24/7, is now on heightened alert to monitor the situation. PRC has escalated preparations at the chapter and National HQ levels and is engaging partners for possible support.

PRC is coordinating with the DOH Epidemiology Bureau to continue on updating and monitoring of cases. For relevant information sharing and support, PRC continues to engage and coordinate with the NCR Infectious Diseases Cluster. PRC has also published key messages on measles through its different social media account to inform, educate and warn the public on the danger brought by this disease outbreak.

PRC provided updates to its in-country partners, including the IFRC Philippine country office which is supporting PRC in disseminating updates to the IFRC regional office, Movement partners, and is coordinating with the Humanitarian Country Team.

IFRC continues to closely coordinate with PRC and is currently processing the request for support. The country office has also checked preparedness stocks and alerted its National Society staff and delegates. The IFRC Asia Pacific regional office is coordinating the plans of PRC and the IFRC Philippine country office with other partners and throughout the secretariat.

## Proposed PRC Actions:

- To support vaccination campaigns against measles through intensified information dissemination on measles prevention.
- Issue the necessary alert to NCR and other chapters in affected regions and convene concerned chapters.
- Chapters to coordinate to their local health units to support catch up vaccination campaigns with volunteer nurses, student nurses, community health volunteers.
- NHQ to send IEC on Measles and Volunteer *dossard*<sup>1</sup> to support community mobilization.
- Deploy welfare desks.



PRC Chairman Richard Gordon and Deputy Secretary General Dr Susan Mercado visit San Lazaro Hospital in Manila to check the situation of patients following the declaration of measles outbreak. The visit aims to assess the status of patients, as well as explore possible areas of augmentation. (Photo: PRC)

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## Contact information

**For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:**

### Philippine Red Cross:

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- **Alka Kapoor Sharma**, acting deputy regional director; email: [alka.kapoorsharma@ifrc.org](mailto:alka.kapoorsharma@ifrc.org)

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<sup>1</sup> Dossard - A visibility vest worn by PRC volunteer.

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#### For Resource Mobilization and Pledges:

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- **In IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office: Fadzli Saari**, acting PMER manager; email: [fadzli.saari@ifrc.org](mailto:fadzli.saari@ifrc.org)

## 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 Humanitarian 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:



**Save lives.**  
protect livelihoods,  
and strengthen recovery  
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**  
and **safe** living.



Promote **social inclusion**  
and a culture of  
**non-violence** and **peace**.

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