

# INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## PHILIPPINES: FLOODS

31 August 2004

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilising the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organisation and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

### In Brief

This Information Bulletin (no. 02/2004) is being issued for information only at the present time. However, based on further updates and assessments, on request from the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC), an allocation from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) may be made.

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### The Situation

Massive floods and landslides brought about by the continuous heavy rains that hit Metro Manila (13 cities and two towns) and nearby provinces in the early morning (around 3:00 a.m.) of Wednesday, 25 August severely affected the areas of Manila, Quezon City, Valenzuela City and Rizal. The floods affected a total of 4,392 families, or 24,108 persons, with eight people confirmed dead and three injured. Two landslides in the town of San Mateo, Rizal Province, forced 76 families to move to various temporary shelters provided by the local authorities.

For two consecutive days, Metro Manila experienced moderate to heavy rains that caused the submergence of low-lying areas. According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), two weather disturbances triggered the incidents that threatened the country, which were Typhoon Aere with maximum sustained winds of 55 kph - 140 kph and Typhoon Chaba, with maximum sustained winds of 180 kph - 190 kph. The two typhoons, located northwest and northeast respectively, both moved outside the Philippine Area of Responsibilities (PAR), dramatically increasing monsoon rains over the Luzon and Visayas regions.

On 27 August, as the effects of the monsoon rains continued, the two weather disturbances moved north, away from the country. Water levels in most of the flooded areas of Metro Manila then subsided, while the Bulacan, Pampanga, Bataan, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan, La Union and Mt. Provinces (all situated in the central and north-western part of Luzon) started to experience the ferocious effects of the continuous heavy rains. Water two

to twelve feet above ground level submerged some 960 barangays in 11 cities and 86 towns, affecting more than 193,500 families, or 930,500 persons.

The local authorities declared the provinces of Tarlac, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan, and the town of San Miguel, Bulacan under a state of emergency. The provincial government of these areas immediately mobilised their land and air rescue units to evacuate thousands of residents isolated and forced to move to the roofs of their houses, particularly in the towns of Moncada and Paniqui in Tarlac Province.

Reports also revealed damage to dikes in Paniqui (Tarlac Province), resulting from large volumes of water released from the dams of San Roque and Angat, the first affecting Pangasinan Province while the latter inundated the provinces of Bulacan and Nueva Ecija. The resulting river swelling and high tides led to the slow subsiding of floods, and, as a result, the low-lying areas of the Pangasinan and Nueva Ecija Provinces became a catch basin for flood waters from the nearby provinces of Bulacan, Tarlac and Pampanga.

***This flooding is the worst so far in the country for the year. Flood-waters have destroyed millions of pesos worth of structural, infrastructural and agricultural property, while thousands of families have been evacuated to various temporary shelters in the affected areas.***

The national disaster coordinating council immediately launched major operations in coordination with the various agencies concerned. Land-based rescue operations used amphibian vehicles, dump trucks and rubber boats from the Philippine navy, coast guard, army reserve corps and provincial/municipal/city rescue groups, while the national air force conducted air operations in severely affected areas, including Tarlac, Pangasinan, Pampanga and Bulacan. Massive relief operations launched by national and local government organisations, non-governmental organisations, Catholic organisations and private groups also provided immediate food and non-food assistance to the affected families.

In Tarlac, an unknown number of affected houses, property and other establishments remain submerged, while the areas of Paniqui, La Paz, Moncada, Anao, Pura and Ramos still experience power failures. Water levels are high and ongoing rescue operations remain underway for families trapped on top of their roofs.

Following is a further summary of severely affected areas:

- In Pangasinan, 31 municipalities/cities are submerged and some road lines are not passable to all types of vehicle. The province is experiencing high tide in the morning and afternoon on a daily basis.
- In Nueva Ecija, three towns are still underwater.
- In Pampanga, seven towns and one city are approximately one to two feet underwater.
- The swelling the Cayapu and Tinukan Rivers in the town of Tanay, Rizal has isolated approximately 400 families and chapter relief operations to the affected families are ongoing.
- The daily high tide in the morning and afternoon keeps large parts of the towns of San Miguel, Calumpit, Obando, and Hagonoy in Bulacan submerged.

## **Red Cross and Red Crescent action**

As the disaster struck, the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) immediately launched a major operation to the affected areas in Metro Manila, Pampanga, Tarlac, Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija and Bulacan. A number of disaster response teams from the local chapters were deployed to the affected areas conducted assessments and provided relief, rescue, psychosocial support, welfare assistance and tracing services to the affected families.

Food assistance for 10,775 families was distributed, comprised rice, sardines, noodles, compact food BP5 and assorted biscuits. Relief operations in the chapters of Pampanga, Rizal, Pangasinan, Bulacan and Nueva Ecija are ongoing. The PNRC national headquarters also despatched two truckloads of relief supplies to Pampanga, Tarlac, Pangasinan, Bataan, Bulacan and Nueva Ecija to augment the existing local stockpiles.

Rescue operations are being undertaken in close coordination with the local authorities, conducted during the height of the critical situation in Quezon City, Metro Manila, San Mateo and Rodriguez in Rizal, Tarlac, Pampanga, and Pangasinan.

The PNRC chairman and chief executive officer visited the severely affected areas of Tarlac and Pangasinan to conduct assessment and oversee the entire emergency in those areas.

With the overall outlook still serious, the PNRC continues to conduct major relief operations across the stricken area. The Society has launched local appeals to generate funds to provide food and non-food items (rice, canned goods, noodles, plastic mats, mosquito nets, blankets, water container and medicines), as well as medicines, for some 58,110 families over the coming days, in the affected areas of Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Rizal, Bulacan and Pampanga.

It is also possible that the PNRC will request an allocation from the Federation Secretariat's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). A member of the Bangkok regional delegation's disaster risk management unit is stationed in the Philippines – and currently working from the PNRC headquarters – and could be joined by a senior colleague on standby and ready to travel to the disaster zone as the situation demands.

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