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Information bulletin

Philippines: Typhoon Saola

 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 and details available at this time. The Philippine Red Cross (PRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) have determined that external assistance is not presently required. Therefore, funding or other assistance from donors is not being sought at this time.



Southwest monsoon, triggered by Typhoon Saola which lashed the island of Luzon last week, has been bringing heavy downpours swamping the National Capital Region (NCR) as well as neighbouring provinces in the Central and Southern Luzon where floodwaters reached up to 2 meters deep.

Photo: Mollie Godinez / Philippine Red Cross

Summary:

Although no longer within the Philippines' area of responsibility, the effects of Typhoon Saola, continue to be felt in the island of Luzon. The typhoon triggered the southwest monsoon, which has been bringing heavy downpours swamping the National Capital Region (NCR) as well as neighbouring provinces in the Central and Southern Luzon. Since 28 July when Saola's fury was first felt, the Philippines has been pounded by continuous rain for almost two weeks.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) reports on 7 August state that the total number of affected persons has now increased to some 950,000 while 53 others have been killed and 35 injured. Currently there are 91 evacuation centres which serve as temporary shelter for 20,000 families. The Philippine Red Cross (PRC) is now in full swing as monsoon rains continue to bring floods to Metro Manila and

other parts of the country. Emergency response teams, as well as water search and rescue (WASAR) teams are currently on the ground conducting assessments and addressing immediate needs of flood-stricken families through the provision of ready-to-eat meals and assorted food items, and transport of flood-stricken families to higher ground.

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The situation

Although it did not make landfall, Typhoon Saola struck the Philippines on 28 July, its presence enhancing the southwest monsoon, bringing heavy rains to the island of Luzon as well as parts of Visayas and Mindanao for almost two weeks now. The effects have been directly felt in Metro Manila, as well as provinces of Pangasinan (Ilocos Region), Bataan, Bulacan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Zambales (Central Luzon), Cavite, Laguna and Rizal (Southern Luzon). According to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) in its report on 7 August, about 90 per cent chance of moderate to heavy rainfall (7.5-15 millimeters per hour) is expected to continue until 8 August. Classes have been suspended at all levels in many of these most affected areas for two days now.

In addition, NDRRMC reports that the effects of southwest monsoon have affected nearly 950,000 families across 28 cities and 35 provinces, killing 53 persons and injuring 35 others. Currently there are about 20,000 families seeking temporary shelter in 91 evacuation centres.

Table 1: Casualties and damage caused by Typhoon Saola and the southwest monsoon (Source: NDRRMC)

Details	Number (as of 7 August 2012)
Deaths	53
Injured	35
Missing	5
Number of evacuation centres	91
Number of persons in evacuation centres	4,323 families (19,972 persons)
Number of houses damaged (partially)	6,609
Number of houses destroyed (totally)	1,246
Region	Number of affected families
National Capital Region (NCR)	5,193 families (21,882 persons)
Ilocos Region (Region 1)	8,827 (40,445 persons)
Cagayan Valley (Region 2)	1,081 families (4,837 persons)
Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR)	2,617 families (12,315 persons)
Central Luzon (Region 3)	121,286 families (525,317 persons)
CALABARZON (Region 4-A) ¹	50,645 families (244,992 persons)
MIMAROPA (Region 4-B) ²	8,502 families (42,490 persons)
Bicol Region (Region 5)	565 families (926 persons)
Western Visayas (Region 6)	6,508 families (31,056 persons)
Central Visayas (Region 7)	1,344 families (5,408 persons)
Zamboanga Peninsula (Region 9)	240 families (320 persons)
Northern Mindanao (Region 10)	1,025 families (5,115 persons)
Davao Region (Region 11)	540 families (2,700 persons)
Soccsksargen (Region 12)	2,812 families (11,248 persons)
Total number of affected population	211,185 families (949,051 persons)

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) has warned that the western section of Luzon and Visayas will continue to experience monsoon rains that will trigger flashfloods and landslides over the coming days. Since the evening of 6 August, a high amount of rainfall has been recorded in Metro Manila brought by non-stop rains. Fear of another 'Typhoon Ketsana' which struck in 2009 was felt among affected families in flood-stricken areas in Metro Manila where water levels have reached up to two meters, and where some families have had to climb up to their roofs. Transportation was immediately disrupted creating traffic jams causing travel times to take twice as long.

Today, 7 August, at the PRC national headquarters in Metro Manila, more than 60 per cent of staff could not report

¹ Provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon

² Provinces of Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan

for duty because their houses are flooded or they have been stranded due to floods. Although there is no typhoon, PAGASA relates this phenomenon to *siyam-siyam* (nine-nine) rains which literally means nine days and nine nights of persistent rains caused by the southwest monsoon. This event occurred some 21 years ago in 1991 during the Mount Pinatubo eruption where heavy rains triggered the pouring of volcanic debris into towns of Central Luzon. In this recent case, the southwest monsoon was triggered by Typhoon Saola which lashed the island of Luzon in the previous week.

Damage to shelter has also dramatically increased, where there are 1,246 destroyed while 6,609 others damaged. Significant damage to infrastructure is recorded as well where 88 roads in Ilocos Region, Central Luzon, CALABARZON, MIMAROPA, CAR and NCR are impassable. The status of dams has been monitored by NDRRMC as the water level of the La Mesa dam, a reservoir which supplies most of the water in Metro Manila, is 0.39m above the normal high level of 80.15m. Residents living near and around the area of other dams such as Ambuklao, Binga, Ipo and San Roque have been advised to be on alert for possible increase in water levels.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since Typhoon Saola was sighted, PRC has been monitoring the situation and mobilizing volunteers, rescue teams and medical teams. The PRC operations centre which operates 24/7, continues to coordinate with affected chapters especially those located in flood-prone areas gathering information from its chapters and sending out advisories at least every eight hours.

The national headquarters has activated emergency response teams and water search and rescue teams equipped with amphibian, rubber boats and trucks.



Some 100 staff and volunteers of Philippine Red Cross are currently on the ground providing first aid and relief assistance to flood-stricken families.
Photo: Mollie Godinez/PRC

Currently, there are some 100 staff and volunteers on the ground conducting assessment and providing first aid and relief. As of the morning of 7 August, PRC has brought 250 people to safety by transporting them to higher ground. In addition, PRC chapters have also provided hot meals to 5,960 persons and emergency food packages (containing five kg of rice, five cans of sardines and five packets of noodles each) and food items to 2,025 others.

The situation as of yesterday, 6 August, is still within coping mechanisms of the affected chapters. No relief items have been dispatched from the national headquarters as yet. However, with the new information having been received today, an analysis and compilation will be made to ascertain the amount and type of support that might be needed by the most affected chapters.

Contact information

For further information, please contact:

- **Philippine Red Cross** (phone +63 2 525 5654; fax +63 2 527 0857):
 - Gwendolyn Pang, secretary-general; email: gwendolyn.pang@redcross.org.ph
- **IFRC Philippines country office** (phone +63 2 309 8622):
 - Selvaratnam Sinnadurai, country representative; email: selvaratnam.sinnadurai@ifrc.org

- Necephor Mghendi, operations manager; email: necephor.mghendi@ifrc.org
 - **IFRC regional office for Southeast Asia, Bangkok** (phone +66 2 661 8201):
 - Anne Leclerc, head of regional office; email: anne.leclerc@ifrc.org
 - **IFRC Asia Pacific zone office, Kuala Lumpur** (phone: +60 3 9207 5700, fax +60 3 2161 0670):
 - Jerry Talbot, a.i. head of operations; email: jerry.talbot@ifrc.org
 - Heikki Väättämoinen, operations coordinator, email: heikki.vaatamainen@ifrc.org
 - Alan Bradbury, head of resource mobilization and PMER; email: alan.bradbury@ifrc.org
- Please send all pledges of funding to zonerm.asiapacific@ifrc.org



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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.