

OPERATIONS UPDATE



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: TYPHOONS

December 09, 2004

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

In Brief

Appeal No. 26/04; Operations Update no. 01; Period covered: 03 through 09 December 2004; Appeal coverage: 10.4% (with a significant number of pledges awaiting conversion).

Please note that the list of contributions is currently being updated to reflect all support received to date, and will be attached to the revised (full) Emergency Appeal to be launched shortly.

Appeal history:

- Preliminary appeal launched on 02 December 2004 for CHF 2,011,000 (USD 1,749,036 or EUR 1,316,738) for three months, with revised/full appeal targeted for mid/end next week.
- Final report on current planning is therefore due in early June 2005.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 150,000.

Outstanding needs: with the timely and generous support received to date, this appeal is either almost fully or completely covered; the revised Emergency Appeal is now being prepared, and the updated list of contributions will be available on the Federation's website shortly.

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Southeast Asia Regional 01.66/2004

Operational Summary: Responding to four major weather disturbances from mid-November to early December, Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) staff and volunteers are in the forefront of one of the country's most extensive disaster response operations of recent times. The society is distributing relief, providing health services, conducting assessments and, at the same time, preparing for a major rehabilitation programme when the emergency phase concludes. The PNRC is being supported in these far-reaching initiatives by sister Societies - directly and through appeal contributions - and the International Federation, which has deployed a strong team to the Philippines from the Bangkok regional delegation and, with the agreement of the national society is establishing a delegation in Manila for the duration of the operation.

There has been a strong response to the preliminary appeal, which, including funds received (firm and soft/viable) is close to the initial request of CHF 2,011,000. The PNRC has also received a number of direct contributions, including the Spanish Red Cross and USAID. Preparations are moving ahead on the full/revised appeal, scheduled for launch mid/end next week, which, depending on assessments and coordination with all humanitarian partners, could show some marked changes in planned activities and beneficiaries targeted.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- *In the Philippines:* Victor Lioso, PNRC Secretary General, tel: +632.527.0866 email: pnrenhq@redcross.org.ph; Bernd Schell, Regional Programme, tel: +661.899.9605; email: ifrc28@ifrc.org
- *In Bangkok:* Dr Ian Wilderspin, Head of DRM unit; tel: +662.640.8211; email: ifrc22@ifrc.org
- *In Geneva:* Charles Evans, Southeast Asia desk, tel: +41.22.730.4320; email: charles.evans@ifrc.org

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for

further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Operational developments

A succession of tropical storms and typhoons that has affected the island of Luzon since mid November has caused major loss of life and damage to the agricultural economy, severe disruption to daily life and infrastructure in the Philippines. Typhoon Muifa lashed southern Philippines in a retracting movement that affected both the northern and southern portions of Luzon. The worst hit area of the typhoon was the province of Mindoro Oriental where over 2,000 houses were destroyed, leaving the agriculture-based economy in ruins.

Tropical depressions Violeta and Winnie brought torrential rains in eastern Luzon which caused hundreds of landslides in the upland areas and brought cascading mud and debris to the towns of Infanta, Real, and Nakar, province of Quezon. Almost 80 percent of the infrastructure of these three towns was damaged, which were also cut off from Manila by landslides and collapsed bridges. Electricity, potable water supply and communications systems are all seriously affected. In the adjacent Aurora province, remote villages have been isolated by floods and landslides.

Due to the destruction already wreaked by Muifa, Voileta and Winnie, the fourth weather disturbance in the series, typhoon Nanmadol, with 220-240 kilometer per hour winds brought comparatively little further damage and passed swiftly through the Philippines. Nevertheless, the devastation remains huge.

According to latest government estimates, the combined impact of these events has affected more than three million people, leaving more than 1,750 dead or missing with a further 750 injured; over 120,000 houses are completely destroyed or partially damaged. Some 650,000 people are thought to be displaced.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Severe damage to infrastructure and communications systems has seriously hampered the initial assessment exercise, targeted for completion early next week. There are already six PNRC disaster assessment teams deployed in the worst hit areas of Luzon, includes the teams that have undertaken assessments in Mindoro Oriental, northern parts of Aurora province, eastern parts of Quezon province and the Nueva Ecija province.

Emergency Relief

- **Provision of emergency food items consisting rice, beans, instant noodles, biscuits, dried fish, sardines, iodized salt, cooking oil, sugar and tea for 50,000 affected families for three months.**
- **Provision of basic household kits composed of cooking utensils, plastic eating utensils, mosquito nets, blankets, plastic mats, plastic pails and towels for 50,000 families.**

Red Cross relief supplies together with those of the government were the first to reach the isolated towns of Aurora and Quezon. This outcome was made possible by close coordination with the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), which provided Air Force helicopters and Navy vessels to transport relief supplies. In Mindoro Island, ongoing relief distribution is assisting the affected population, with at least two weeks' supply of emergency food items.

Shelter

- **Provision of selective construction materials to rebuild totally damaged houses:** Criteria setting, beneficiary identification and registration will be carried out to provide roofing materials to families whose houses were totally destroyed by typhoon Muifa. Provision of shelter and food are priority needs according to the affected communities.

Health Services and Hygiene Promotion

- **Provision of mobile health services to provide primary health care.**
- **Provision of a basic health and hygiene kit which will include bath soap, laundry soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, water container for drinking water and oral re-hydration salts.**

Local PNRC chapters in adjacent provinces trekked through extensive landslides blocking the roads to reach the isolated towns in Quezon and Aurora to conduct emergency medical response. Chapter staff and volunteers were also involved in the search, rescue and retrieval operations together with the Philippine Army.

An assessment report from Nakar, one of the worst hit towns in Quezon, received earlier this week, is a relevant indication of the significant damage to health infrastructure and water sources across the disaster zone. In Nakar, limited supplies of medicines are available from the PNRC, government and associated organizations.

Nakar town (in Quezon Province) :

No. of affected families	22,300	Total no. of villages	19
Dead	243	Health centres damaged (flooded)	42
Injured	35	Water sources affected	all
Missing	220		
Families in evacuation centres	945		

The PNRC health department is in the process of consolidating information from assessment reports and additional data. The society is mobilizing mobile health teams to be deployed in General Nakar, Infanta and Real, with the aim of mobilizing community health volunteers to assess the situation at the evacuation centres and to provide hygiene and health education. The health ministry has prepared a 14-step action plan, which the PNRC is using as a reference tool, to ensure coordinated response.

In Manila, the PNRC and Malaysian Red Crescent Society (MRCS) are working together as part of a daily ambulance service at the airbase of the Philippine Air Force by unloading and providing care to injured people being flown in by helicopters from the disaster areas. A two-member team from the MRCS has been on duty with the PNRC safety services at the airbase providing support to medical evacuation.

Water Sanitation

Provision of water containers, purification tablets and water testing kits: in Nakar, the population use wells with hand pumps and open wells, but the water quality is not known. In response, PNRC is distributing bottled water. The government is providing bottled water and chlorination tablets, which are not available at local suppliers.

The major impact of Red Cross operations was seen through the timely provision of emergency food, potable water supplies and medicines to the affected population of the towns of Aurora and Quezon which were totally cut off. It has been raining heavily and supplies are insufficient due to inaccessible roads and collapsed bridges. The arrival of supplies has, however, mitigated the possible outbreak of diseases caused by lack of food and contaminated water. Flu and cold medicines were also made available.

Volunteers and disaster response teams operating in the affected areas also conducted psychosocial support services for those families traumatized by the disaster.

The major constraint during the early part of the emergency has been the lack of reliable information coming from the affected areas, due to difficulties encountered by the assessment teams, which in turn has adversely affected timely reporting.

Federation Coordination

A Federation disaster management specialist – out-posted to the Philippines – has been working with the PNRC since the onset of the current series of severe weather disturbances and he was joined promptly by another colleague from the Bangkok regional delegation's disaster risk management unit (DRMU). In recent days, the regional delegation has also deployed experienced personnel covering water-sanitation, information/visibility and finance as well as the regional programme coordinator to lead the Federation Secretariat team in the Philippines, which has been engaged with the range of PNRC departments, including the disaster management, community health and nursing, social and safety services and the secretary general's office.

With the agreement of the PNRC, a Federation delegation is being established for the duration of the operation, to be headed by a Malaysian national, supported by a logistics coordinator, who is already in Manila. An experienced Federation liaison/reporting delegate (of Macau origin) has also been deployed to join the regional DRMU.

Federation representatives are attending meetings of NDCC and are liaising with the ECHO office in Manila and also the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team. The Spanish Red Cross, which has bilateral projects with PNRC, was involved in the drafting of the preliminary appeal to ensure coordination and complementarity between all Red Cross Red Crescent response and rehabilitation activities in the wake of the disaster.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and Initiatives

The objectives of the preliminary appeal have taken into account the link between relief and development. This will be incorporated in the detailed appeal planning process, which will involve risk mapping, risk reduction, community participation, community level and institutional capacity building. This developmental approach to the relief operation will improve the provision of emergency relief supplies and rehabilitation activities.

National Society Capacity Building

The Federation's deployment of personnel is not only focussed on providing technical assistance but, likewise, will provide national society counterparts with hands-on application of Federation tools and standards.

By employing a working environment of teach-by-showing, learn-by-doing, the Federation deployed personnel will be exchanging skills and ideas with people working at national society level. In an indirect process, national society capacity is built through a practical approach in disaster management, which encompasses all related services involved.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

In the country, there are weekly press statements being written by the PNRC communications department and released to local print and broadcast media. The PNRC chairman was invited to several television talk shows to provide an overview of the situation and the corresponding society response to the disaster.

Through the joint effort of the communications department of PNRC and the Federation's regional information unit, several web stories were written. Photographs were taken from the area of operation and posted on the web to accompany human interest stories.

Disaster response teams in the field, together with volunteers from local chapters, are also conducting dissemination of Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement principles and values.

In Geneva, the Federation has established a special focus for the Philippines typhoons on its disaster management information service (DMIS) site, including reports, photographs and a tracing section.

Tracing

With more than 800 people missing, the PNRC has deployed tracing officers in the affected region in order to assess the tracing and RFL (restoring family links) needs. However, some areas are still isolated and cannot be reached due to landslides and rockslides. The society is collecting lists from evacuation centres and hospitals as and is establishing a master list of dead and missing persons. The society is also accepting tracing request from national societies and individuals overseas. Discussions are underway with the ICRC on setting up a family links web page.

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