

# 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

## THE PHILIPPINES: TROPICAL STORM

23 September 2005

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

**This Bulletin (no. 01/2005) is being issued for information only, and reflects the status of the situation and information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.**

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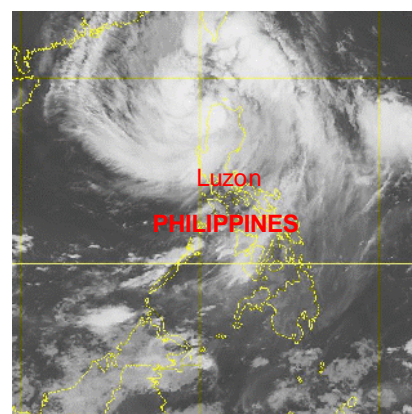
All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#)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

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

### The Situation

After more than a week of heavy rains and strong winds in the northeastern regions, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) issued warnings on Tropical Storm Labuyo (internationally code-named Damrey) on Wednesday, 21 September 2005. The storm lashed northeast Luzon overnight, flooding provinces including Ilocos Norte, Cagayan and Isabela, and triggering landslides which destroyed structures and cut off access between towns and cities.

Tropical Storm Damrey intensified slightly on 22 September as it headed towards the South China Sea. Based on radar, satellite and surface data, the centre of the storm was estimated to be at 190 km North Northwest of Laoag City, Ilocos Norte (19.8N, 120.0E) bearing maximum sustained winds of 95 kph near the centre, moving slowly West Northwest at 11 kph.



A satellite image of the storm over Luzon, the Philippines.

Today, 23 September, the storm continues to move farther away from the country, allowing the government to lower storm signals. According to the Office of Civil Defence (OCD), at least 16 people have been confirmed dead due to drowning and landslides, while some 20,000 are living in temporary shelters in the northern provinces. The

OCD estimates that crop losses could amount to USD 1.1 million, although the damage is considered to be minimal. Local rescue teams are actively evacuating affected people, while the government's engineering and public work department is clearing debris from inaccessible roads. The social welfare office is assisting in relief operations. Members of the national and local disaster coordinating council are still in 24-hour monitoring to provide continuous updates of the situation.

Meanwhile, the authorities of Hong Kong and Taiwan are preparing for impending bad weather, having issued warnings over the past two days as Tropical Storm Damrey approaches from the Philippines. Although unlikely to hit them directly, severe rain and winds are still expected to affect their populations, with Hong Kong raising the standby level to prepare for a Level 1 typhoon.

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

All Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) chapters have lowered their disaster response teams (DRT) alert level to normal except in Ilocos Norte (10 to 11 hours of land travel from Manila) where 28 *barangays* (villages) from the municipalities of Soisona, Pidding, Paoay and Laoag City are still experiencing 3 to 10 ft of flood waters, affecting 2,857 families composed of 12,621 persons.

Ilocos Norte Red Cross staff and its DRTs initially served 350 families with clothing and food. The DRTs also conducted a detailed assessment in the municipalities affected for food distribution, in addition to ongoing rescue, emergency medical and social services for affected families. The national headquarters, through the operation centre of its disaster management services (collectively called NHQ-DMS) facilitated the release of rice from the Ilocos Norte National Food Authority for the chapter. Cash advances for operational expenses were released to the chapter administrator while a truckload of food supplies from NHQ-DMS has been scheduled for delivery. The chapter reports that 1,833 families are affected in 21 *barangays* in the Ilocos Norte province.

As rain continues to fall in many areas, and the Cagayan and Pinacanoan rivers rise, the Red Cross chapter of Cagayan, where there are approximately 444 families affected, as well as the chapters of Ilocos Sur and Isabela are on alert and standby for further disaster response. The Camarines Sur chapter is requesting assistance in water testing as it readies for the possibility of contamination by flood waters. The NHQ-DMS is preparing a water testing kit for the chapter. There are approximately 444 families affected in Cagayan province.

PNRC's Aurora chapter has assisted 30 families at the Cabitukulan Elementary School and contributed 2 sacks of rice and 2 boxes of sardines at the Baler Sports Complex for stranded citizens. Aurora province is still experiencing heavy rains, rendering roads bound to Nueva Ecija via Boangabon Road impassable. The Baler Casiguran Road is also inaccessible due to a landslide today.

The Baguio City chapter conducted an assessment to identify a safer area for evacuating the affected population, and is providing food and clothing to 6 families in 2 *barangays* affected by landslides.

Monitoring and coordination with all PNRC chapters is maintained at the NHQ-DMS, despite complications owing to unfavourable weather conditions. This operations centre also conducts 24-hour monitoring of the situation, to update and conduct necessary follow-up actions. PNRC will maintain close coordination with the national and local disaster coordinating council.

Typhoons and tropical storms regularly hit the Philippines, an archipelago of some 7,000 islands. Most recently, in 2003, Southern Leyte - the most remote and inaccessible region of the country - was hit by monsoon rains, causing widespread destruction and loss of life. And in 2004, a series of four typhoons battered Luzon, causing massive damage to infrastructure and the environment. The PNRC, supported by the Federation and mandated by the Philippine government, played a vital role in both disasters, assisting those affected by the typhoons and landslides and hastening the way to recovery.

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