

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: FOCUS ON ALBAY, CATANDUANES, AND CAMARINES SUR

Appeal No. MDRPH002
TC-2006-000175-PHL

11 December 2006

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 185 countries.

In Brief

- **Operations Update no. 01:** Period covered: 4 - 11 December 2006;
- **Appeal target:** CHF 8,833,789 (USD 7.3 million or EUR 5.5 million) in cash, kind, or services to support the Philippines National Red Cross with assisting 200,000 Beneficiaries for nine months;
- **Appeal coverage & contributions:** ([click here](#))

Operational Summary: Some 100,000 people are currently housed in evacuation centres after 30 November's Typhoon Durian, which devastated the Bicol region in the Philippines. The Philippines National Red Cross (PNRC) as an auxiliary to the government has played an instrumental role in disaster response, rapidly deploying its large network of experienced well trained volunteers and staff to affected areas. PNRC relief, health and social welfare teams have blanketed affected areas providing a range of services from large scale distributions of food and other relief to evacuation centres. PNRC has also ensured emergency health needs have been met, including the care of a fragile two-day-old baby in Albay. On Tuesday 5 December, the PNRC was joined by the International Federation's 14-member joint field assessment coordination team (FACT)/South East Asia regional disaster response team (RDRT) to look at longer term community needs, in particular in: shelter (provision of home repair items); water and sanitation; relief; and health.

The joint FACT/RDRT, in consultation with the PNRC and the Federation's country delegation, will meet this week to specify operations.

This operations update provides an overview of current living conditions observed in Albay, Camarines Sur and Catanduanes. Weather permitting, the team will join PNRC assessment teams and branches responding to the typhoon in Marinduque, Mindoro, and Quezon during later this week.

Background

On 9 December, ten days after Typhoon Durian (Reming) smacked into the Philippines leaving thousands of people homeless and over 1,200 people dead or missing, the country once again raced to prepare for the arrival of Typhoon Utor (Seniang) packing winds of up to 120 kilometers per hour (kph). Over 59,000 people in the ravaged Bicol region were evacuated on Saturday. This latest evacuation comes at a time when the country's national disaster coordinating council (NDCC) is reporting over 100,000 people already housed in evacuation centres throughout the Bicol region following Typhoon Durian, on 30 November. At the same time, residents still recovering from September's super-typhoon Xingxane (Mileyno) took serious precautions in regard to the approach of yet another typhoon.

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National radio stations were overwhelmed with questions from all over the Philippines, already rattled by the succession of destructive typhoons since September. In devastated Albay province alone, some 15,000 people were evacuated on Saturday from about a dozen villages to temporary shelters in government buildings, schools and churches. Concerns were high over the potential impact of heavy rains and wind on the already fragile communities and infrastructure. With typhoons striking at a rate almost as fast as assistance is being delivered, national flights were cancelled, and local PNRC response in the province in health, social welfare and relief were disrupted to avoid risks posed by further floods and landslides triggered by the latest typhoon.



Communities hardened to typhoons have been rocked by this year's ongoing battering.

The Manila-based PNRC operations centre has been monitoring the situation and as of early Sunday 10 December had been notified of temporary shelters being established in affected areas in Aklan and Leyte provinces.

Most of the nearly 200,000 families in the country's Bicol region, who over the past week have either completely lost their homes and/or personal items or had their homes damaged, are used to the challenges posed by frequent typhoons. Communities on precarious mountain-sides, the coast as well as the local authorities have developed sturdy coping mechanisms to contend with the 20-25 typhoons that strike the country annually. For families, living in traditional Nipa houses - constructed in five days out of coconut wood and tin - there is an expectation that they will either have to rebuild or repair their homes

annually. But Typhoon Durian, which reached the rarely-seen level 4 out of the country's 1 to 4 rating system, was a first for even those with great experience of dealing with disasters.

Within hours after Durian struck the southern Catanduanes province, the PNRC operation centre was working on three shifts with five assessment teams deployed to five of the eleven provinces affected by the typhoon. However, with many provinces still reeling from typhoon Xangsane on 27 September and super Typhoon Cimaron on 28 October, many of the local response resources (both relief supplies and financial resources) are either severely or entirely depleted. At the same time reports indicate severe damage caused by Typhoon Durian to health centres and schools in Camarines Sur, Catanduanes and Albay-Legaspi as well as Red Cross chapters which have been flooded and damaged.

Table 1: Philippines Typhoons: Sept –Nov. 2006 **

PARTICULARS	TYPHOON XANGSANE	TYPHOON CIMARON	TYPHOON DURIAN
DATE	Sept 25	Oct 27	Nov 28
DURATION	5 days	4 days	4 days
STRENGTH	55-160 kph	55-195 kph	195 kph gusts
PWSS RAISED	1, 2 & 3	1, 2, 3 & 4	1, 2, 3 & 4
PROVINCES AFFECTED	24	12	12
CASUALTIES			
DEAD	188	30	590
INJURED	592	65	1 995
MISSING	48	23	749
AFFECTED POPULATION			
FAMILIES	841 297	79 895	458 632

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PERSONS	4 142 951	364 733	2 198 788
DISPLACED POPULATION			
FAMILIES	49 126	1 920	20 788
PERSONS	244 613	4 251	101 465
DAMAGE TO HOUSES			
TOTALLY	118 081	1 395	118 351
PARTIALLY	385 096	12 412	212 046

**** Source NDCC as of 18h00, 7 Dec. 2006**

Focus on Albay, Camarines Sur, and Catanduanes



Communities have banded together to help each other. Red Cross Red Crescent support seeks to build on this local momentum.

The impact of the typhoon extends far; the area's poor have sustained the greatest economic loss due to the shoddy construction of their homes. At the same time, in an area which derives much of its income from agriculture the destruction of crops and farmland, small businesses and the death of farm animals has left those living on already tight margins with little or no recourse to finance re-starting of their livelihoods. Meanwhile, those people who are able to continue working are having difficulty accessing relief items and medical attention that are distributed during working hours, as this would require missing work and risking the loss of their job. Men have been tasked during the day to try to salvage homes and items. The evacuation centres are mostly filled with women caring for children. In areas such as Albay where entire villages were consumed by volcanic ash and the air is

filled with the lingering scent of the dead, people have nowhere appropriate to go.

Table 2: Number of evacuees by province

Provinces	Total Population	Evacuees	
		Families	Individual
Albay	1,212,010	3,955	18,134
Camarines Sur	1,718,714	41	421
Catanduanes	233,123	8	-
Total	5,196,264	4,004	18,555

- **Albay**

On 30 November 2006 Typhoon Durian hit the Bicol region. Albay province suffered greatly from unexpected ash slides from the slope of Mount Mayon during the typhoon, with the provincial disaster coordination council (PDCC) reporting as of 7 December, 71,670 affected families 1,148 dead or missing, and 1,379 injured.

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The PNRC deployed emergency health teams to Albay to provide medical services and rescue. The Department of Health (DoH) set up a joint command post in Legaspi City, with the DoH and Provincial Health Office (PHO) of Albay consolidating resources to respond to the current health emergency. The city is working on a hazard analysis of the area, both in regards to typhoons and mudflow. The constraint however, is that the province has no money left due to the previous typhoons.



The homes of richer families, while still affected, managed to withstand the onslaught thanks to better construction techniques and materials.

Regarding health and water and sanitation the greatest needs appear to be in assisting evacuees in the shelters. There are 64 evacuation centres in Albay province. One of the biggest challenges is the placement of evacuees in permanent homes. There are health problems in many shelters that have been set up in schools, public halls and churches due to lack of water and toilets. Regional and provincial hospitals are functioning. However, due to communications problems there is no information about the functioning of barangay (*villages/administrative units comprised of 100-1,000 families*) health stations. Most are covered by midwives. At the moment the PHO lacks sufficient supplies of medicine and medical supplies to distribute to health facilities. Most evacuees are elderly and children and there is an increasing rate of infections; respiratory, diarrhoea and of wounds.

- **Camarines Sur**

Due to the onset of Typhoon Utor and travel limitations because of dangerous conditions posed by heavy rains, the team decided to focus on the most affected municipalities (“municipios”). The FACT/RDRT team visited the maximum number of barangays possible in a limited period to get a fast overall picture of the situation. All assistance was arranged by the Naga PNRC chapter and all visits were made with a PNRC member included in the FACT/RDRT team.

Local, municipal and provincial authorities have distributed three rounds of food, including: rice (2 kg), noodles and candles. One French NGO is planning to distribute further food. Some livelihood activities have resumed, therefore, food at this point is not the highest priority. Electricity has been cut off and, as in Albay, it is estimated that it could take up to two months to restore. Based on observations and interviews during the assessment there is a significant need for shelter items and perhaps hurricane lamps. Although the population will most likely focus on restoring their houses, restoration of sanitation is important. Shovels and wheelbarrows to support shelter repair can also be used to gather and dispose waste. Based on interviews with health personal and locals in the barangays, communities continue to have access to health facilities. There have been no reports of malaria and measles. There has been an increase in respiratory infections and diarrhea while hygiene is relatively poor.

- **Catanduanes**

The island of Catanduanes is home to some 215,356 people. Following Durian, the island has been without communications systems (ie mobile phones, land lines etc.) and electricity and water supplies. Catanduanes is one of the most disaster prone areas in Bicol. The vulnerability of those living there is increased because of their dependence on agriculture and the fact that cash crops are easily destroyed by disasters. As in the other affected areas, the people are normally relatively resilient to the annual typhoons that strike having in place an efficient disaster alert and response system. The impact of Durian alone affected 47,732 households in particular in Bato, S. Miguel, S. Andres, and Virac where 85 percent of the population sustained wind and flood related losses.

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The typhoon was one of the worst to strike the area since 1970 (Typhoon Sening). It affected long term livelihoods, in particular for people dependent on cash crops such as coconut plantations, abaca, rice harvest and vegetables as well as those dependent on fishing. The area sustained massive damage to homes of all sizes and shapes, including “Nipa” houses. It also damaged schools, hospitals, houses, water refilling stations, municipal water supply, electricity grids. Although the government has been distributing food, loss of crops (40 percent of rice locally produced) could contribute to exacerbating the existing 22 percent malnutrition rate.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The existing operational plan, developed prior to the devastation wrought by Durian focused on the provision of food and other relief, including hygiene kits, health education, psychosocial support and equipment and materials to assist in the cleaning and repair of family homes. A basic upgrade of the PNRC emergency power provision and the urgent replacement of some equipment in the PNRC blood bank are needed to avoid a break-down of the vital supply of blood to hospitals in Metro Manila.

The objectives, as they currently stand are as follows, provision of:

- At least one week of emergency food ration consisting of rice, instant noodles, canned food and iodized salt for approximately 25,000 families (125,000 affected persons), representing one-third of the families who lost homes and belongings.
- Basic household kits composed of cooking and kitchen utensils, mosquito nets, blankets, plastic mats and towels for 12,500 families, representing one-sixth of the families who lost homes and belongings.
- Selective construction materials and tools to repair 5,000 severely damaged houses.
- Better overall hygiene to 25,000 families to prevent an outbreak of waterborne diseases.
- Stress debriefing and immediate psycho-social support to affected people.
- Community-based disaster management (CBDM) training and organization of *barangay* disaster action teams (BDAT).
- Institutional learning and the upgrade of skills for the national society

These specific objectives are being modified to incorporate the additional needs required to support communities devastated by typhoon Durian in the areas of water and sanitation (watsan), shelter and other relief.

The Federation is updating existing plans to support the PNRC with delivering assistance in Albay, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Marinduque, Mindoro and Quezon. One significant change to existing plans, is the Federation’s intention to scale up activities in shelter to support 15,000 households with home repair items such as timber, galvanised iron sheeting, and tools. At the same time, initial feedback from the assessment teams indicates a need to: distribute relief such as bed-mats and blankets; improve sanitation in the affected areas; and provide basic medicines to depleted health centres. During the first week of December, 20,000 mosquito nets – from the Global Health & Care Fund - and 10 new Emergency Health Kits (EHK) with anti-malaria items were donated to the operation. The final objectives will be reflected in the Appeal’s revised plan of action at the conclusion of the current FACT assessment. The Plan of Action is due to be finalised by 15 December. However, continued typhoons and threats of landslides and flooding in the affected areas have hampered communications, diverted available human resources, and grounded and stranded PNRC and joint FACT/RDRT assessment teams.

Philippines National Red Cross (PNRC)

The Philippines National Red Cross (PNRC) is operating a 24/7 operations centre at the national society’s headquarters and has established one in Albay province. The disaster management service collects information on a daily basis from the national society’s chapters in the affected area. As with the previous typhoons, PNRC continues to closely coordinate activities with government counterparts through its presence on the national disaster coordinating council (NDCC) and its good working relations with the local government units (LGU).

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Volunteers from all concerned chapters have overcome the many communication problems despite many land lines and parts of the mobile phone network being down. In Catanduanes, for example, PNRC relies on a partnership with a local amateur radio group to relay important information. The volunteers have provided the operations centre with a good overview of damage and have enabled four specialized multi-sectoral teams to perform more targeted assessment.

PNRC assessment teams comprised of a team leader and experts in relief, logistics, and health covering water and sanitation activities and psycho-social support have been monitoring the impact of the typhoon in the provinces of Sorsogon and Albay (team 1) and Camarines Sur and Quezon (team 2). The tactical rescue team was sent to assist those in flooded areas. The 10-member team, which returned to Manila this week, ran a first aid station and conducted rescue operations with their two rubber boats. Red Cross chapters and volunteers at national headquarters have been packing relief goods for immediate distribution to the most affected families.

Federation Coordination

Three-person teams from the French and Japanese Red Cross Societies are considering supporting the PNRC with watsan and health activities respectively. The existing FACT/RDRT team will be expanded with the arrival of a telecomms emergency response unit (ERU) and members from the South Asia RDRT. Activities in-country are also being supported by the Federation delegation in Manila, the SE Asia regional delegation in Bangkok, the regional desk officer and media services in the Geneva Secretariat and by a task force comprised of sector heads in Geneva, Bangkok and the Asia Pacific Service Centre (APSC) in Kuala Lumpur. Over the past week national society and Federation representatives have attended coordination meetings in Manila, Albay and Legaspi.

The PNRC and the International Federation have embarked on an extensive awareness raising campaign mobilizing in an effort to raise support nationally and internationally for a concerted action involving government and non-government actors. In response, the Canadian government has announced its support to the PNRC/Federation operations (CHF 1,047,183 (CAD 1,000,000)). The Netherlands Red Cross has offered CHF 63,738 (EUR 40,000) and the Irish Red Cross CHF 47,730 (EUR 30,000). Notification was also received from the government of New Zealand of their donation of NZD 500,000 as well as a donation from the Italian government. Meanwhile discussions have been initiated with ECHO to support the Appeal.

Appeal history:

- **Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated in September: CHF 100,000 (USD 80,000 or EUR 63,291). This DREF will be reimbursed through this Appeal.**
- **Launched on 2 October 2006 for CHF 5,704,261 (USD 4,563,408 or EUR 3,610,292) for three months to assist 126,000 beneficiaries.**
- **Revised 19 October 2006 for CHF 5,704,261 (USD 4,563,408 or EUR 3,610,292) for nine months to assist 126,000 beneficiaries.**
- **1 December 2006, Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 100,000 (USD 80,000 or EUR 63,291)**

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The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- **Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.**
- **Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.**
- **Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.**
- **Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.**

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>