

PHILIPPINES: TYPHOONS & FLOODS

*2 November
1998*

appeal no. 32/98

situation report no. 1

period covered: 28 October - 2 November 1998

The Philippine National Red Cross Society's (PNRC) relief supplies are now exhausted. However, only \$ 25,000 (CHF 35,000) in contributions has been received to date. It is most urgent that pledges and donations are made immediately in order to be in a position to continue this emergency operation.

The context

In late October, typhoons Babs and Zeb brought widespread devastation to the island of Luzon. More than 300 people died, thousands were made homeless and crops have been washed away. Whilst there has been a good national response, relief stock carried by PNRC and the government has now been all but depleted. More than 700,000 families face food shortages and a serious lack of adequate shelter. On 29th October, an Appeal was launched for CHF 3,458,000 to assist 40,000 families with food, household kits and housing material for a period of three months.

Latest events

In the wake of typhoon Babs, unrelenting rains over a period of six days have flooded 17 towns in Bulacan and Pampanga. An estimated 18,494 families have been evacuated to schools and chapels while others have set up temporary shelter on road sides and along railways lines; makeshift shelters constructed out of plastic sheets house whole families.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development reported that families affected by the typhoons has now risen to at least 737,016 (57% increase from previous reports) with 317 persons reported dead, 784 injured and 27 missing.

Government action

The Department of Social Welfare and Development reported that 129,141 families are still being supported by local governments and NGOs in 2,238 evacuation centres. An estimated (CHF 585,000) of relief supplies has already been provided to victims (largely in the Bicol region).

The national government released (CHF 7.6 million) for relief and rehabilitation activities in the hardest hit areas; disaster funds are, however, being rapidly depleted.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

The International Federation launched an International Appeal (29 October 1998) on behalf of the Philippine National Red Cross. Meanwhile, whilst international resources are being mobilised, two Federation Regional Delegates (from Kuala Lumpur) accompanied PNRD Disaster Management Services to three affected towns in Bulacan for further assessment.

PNRD, through its 40 Chapters, has assisted 35,261 families who were worst-affected by typhoon Babs. Relief operations remain in full swing as thousands of families are still in evacuation centres (many of which are flooded), makeshift huts or are staying with relatives.

With relief supplies being rapidly exhausted, the PNRD headquarters released additional rice and canned goods. It also mobilised additional manpower and shelter materials specifically for the Catanduanes area.

Outstanding needs

The situation in Luzon remains extremely difficult. Stocks of food and shelter materials are almost exhausted while hundreds of people remain isolated with no road transport or communication. Moreover, with polluted water sources and limited sanitation, there continues to be a considerable health risk.

The situation requires that hard pledges must be received within the coming days. The PNRD are now desperately short of relief supplies and must have the additional resources to continue the operation.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

The International Federation/PNRD are working in close collaboration with the government, the UN and NGOs in the Philippines.

Contributions

Contributions are urgently required to assist the PNRD in this emergency operation. See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

The relief operation which is underway will soon face resource difficulties. Whilst a number of people have already been provided some initial assistance, the heavy rains, lack of shelter and inadequate amounts of food will compound a very difficult situation. If conditions are to improve and further loss of life be limited, the international community *must* respond quickly.

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