

# 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

## ***PHILIPPINES: VOLCANIC ERUPTION*** 26 June 2001

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*This Bulletin is for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.*

### ***The Situation***

The Mount Mayon volcano in Legazpi City in the central Philippines violently erupted at 12.15 p.m., local time, on Sunday, 24 June 2001, after steadily erupting for the last two weeks. Huge geysers of rocks, lava and flaming ash columns (up to 5 km high) were seen shooting from the crater.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) raised the alert status in the area of the 2,467m volcano to 'level 5', which is the highest level. This means that a hazardous eruption is in progress and that lava could be ejected up to 20 km from the summit. Scientists now warn that there could be a more powerful eruption in the next few days and that the eruptions could last for as long as two weeks.

The National Disaster Co-ordinating Council (NDCC) said that the previously delineated 7 km radius - or 'Extended Danger Zone' - in the southeast sector of the volcano has been extended to 8 km. A total of 19 villages in 7 towns have been affected by the eruption with more than 20,000 people evacuated since Sunday to 12 evacuation centres in different municipalities. No casualties have been reported.

The situation is presently reported as 'under-control', with the government taking a lead role in co-ordinating evacuation and relief efforts. Specifically the role of the government is to:

- Facilitate the evacuation of displaced people from the area
- Provide evacuation centres, which are mostly schools
- Provide food needs of the evacuees

The Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) has been working with the local authorities and has teams both in the area and others on standby for a larger scale emergency.

### ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

The PNRC had been on alert since May 2001 when Mount Mayon volcano first showed signs of a possible volcanic eruption. At present, four teams of staff and volunteers from the Albay Legazpi City Chapter are on the scene, helping with the evacuation of 3,806 families (22,820 people) from the immediate area. Neighbouring chapters - Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte and Sorsogon - have also been placed on alert for possible deployment. Furthermore, the National Headquarters Disaster Response Team in Manila is on standby to conduct a damage and needs assessment.

Currently the role of the PNRC has primarily been in assisting the evacuees. The evacuees are being brought to 12 evacuation centres, made up largely of school buildings, in different municipalities/cities (Tabaco, Malilipot, Santo Domingo, Camalig, Guinobatan, Daraga, and Legazpi City).

The PNRC has a regional warehouse in the area which will provide food and other relief supplies (such as rice, sardines, canned food, salt, cooking pack) if the need arises. A truckload of additional supplies, primarily foodstuffs such as biscuits and noodles, has been rushed to the area. The local chapter will also be purchasing 100 sacks of rice. The food and relief supplies will be distributed when the PNRC has completed a more comprehensive needs assessment.

Furthermore, seven mobile water tanks have been prepared and brought to the region and the PNRC has placed first aid teams on standby to support local health teams that are currently looking for indications of health problems. A recommendation has been made by the NHQ to release a cash advance to the Albay Legazpi Chapter for operational expenses and local purchase of canned goods.

Given that those evacuated from the area are farmers growing rice and coconuts, there are no immediate food security concerns. However, given a prolonged eruption, there may be a need to address food security and livelihood related issues. Indications based on past experience in the Philippines does, however, suggest that local authorities are well prepared for such an eventuality.

The needs of the current situation remain well within the capacity of the Philippine authorities and PNRC, however, the PNRC, with support from the Federation Regional Delegation in Bangkok, will continue to monitor the situation.

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*All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

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*For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.*

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