

Alert

Philippines – No. 33 / 2010

Typhoon Megi lashes north-eastern Philippines

Geneva, 20 October 2010

1. Brief description of the emergency

On Monday 18 October Super Typhoon Megi (local name “Juan”), with winds of 225km per hour near the centre and gusts of up to 260km, lashed the northern Philippines, devastating mostly farming and fishing areas of northern Luzon.

Weather bureau officials have reported that Typhoon Megi is the world’s strongest typhoon this year and the strongest typhoon to hit the Philippines for decades.

2. Impact

Isabela Province and other areas of Cagayan Valley farming region were worst hit. The heavy rains and furious winds caused power outages in the area as electric pylons were blown down and communication was interrupted in Isabela and Cagayan. The powerful winds uprooted trees and blew roofs away, especially in Santiago City, Isabela. Agence France-Presse reports that the Governor of Isabela said that residents in three coastal towns had suffered massive damage to their homes and were left with limited food supplies.

Landslides were reported in various sections of Apayao and Benguet. The Benguet-Dalupirip Itogon and Nueva Vizcaya-Benguet roads are closed due to landslides. By noon on Monday, Itogon communities reported landslides along 271km of the Baguio-Nueva Vizcaya Road and 271km of the Itogon-Dalupirip Road. The Claver-Calanasan Road (Mabanong section) was also closed to traffic due to landslides.

ACT Alliance member **the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP)** informs ACT that its partners in the affected areas report around 40,000 families (220,000 people) being affected. A total of 465 barangays (districts) in 99 municipalities have been affected along with eight cities in 22 provinces in Regions I, II, III, IV-A, CAR and NCR.

The government has raised the death toll to 19 as more detailed reports are received from around Luzon. The Civil Defence Bureau reports it is still sheltering over 10,000 people in evacuation centres across the northern region while roads are being cleared.

3. National Response

Hours before the typhoon was predicted to hit land, government authorities had begun evacuating about 3,000 people to safer ground. In Manila, prior to the typhoon hitting land, disaster officials prepared food packs, medicines and rescue equipment including rubber boats in areas expected to be hit by the typhoon. The Department of Social Welfare and Development stored food and non-food items in preparation for typhoon affected people in the regions lying in Megi's path.

Philippine National Police were put on full alert nationwide and equipment was pre-positioned in Northern Luzon. Additional search and rescue teams from Manila to northern areas were mobilized. Military personnel are also monitoring the situation and have rescue teams on stand-by to help residents and local government units.

4. Planned Response

The extent of damage cannot be ascertained at this time because most communication lines are still down and many roads and bridges are also closed. NCCP has received some information from its member churches in the affected areas and is waiting for a more comprehensive report. Once roads are cleared, NCCP will send a team to assist the churches and partners in damage and needs assessment. For the immediate response, NCCP has requested member churches in the regions not affected by the disaster to help with emergency relief items including: food (bottled water, rice, canned goods, dried fish, mung beans, vegetables etc), non-food items (mattresses, kitchen/cooking utensils, water containers, candles/matches, flashlights, kerosene lamps, raincoats and boots, school kits), clothing, hygiene kits (toothpaste and brushes, face and hand towels, bath and laundry soap, shampoo, mosquito repellent) and first aid kits, along with the most needed medicines.

NCCP is monitoring the situation and also contacting the partners of other ACT Alliance members (Christian Aid, Lutheran World Relief and United Methodist Committee on Relief) in the affected areas.

Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to Jean-Daniel Birmele, ACT Chief Finance Officer (Jean_Daniel.Birmele@actalliance.org).

Thank you for your attention.

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