

Alert

Philippines

Tropical storm Washi

Geneva, 21 December 2011

1. Brief description of the emergency

On 15-16 December, a severe tropical storm struck the southern Philippines, causing landslides and massive flooding on the island of Mindanao. Two major cities in northern Mindanao, Cagayan de Oro and Iligan City, were extensively damaged, as were many smaller coastal villages along the northern parts of the island. According to the most recent reports by the Philippine disaster management authorities, the number of people affected by the flash floods has doubled over the past three days. More than 63,000 families, or 338,000 people, have lost their homes and belongings due to the storm waters. More than 280,000 residents have taken shelter in evacuation centers in the disaster area, and more than 1,500 people are injured. The death toll now nears 1,000¹. Over 800 people are still missing.

2. Impact

Typhoon Sendong (international code name: Washi) washed away entire villages as it lashed the southern part of the Philippines in the early hours of Saturday, 17 December 2011. In its aftermath, the typhoon left a trail of flattened homes, broken bridges and upended vehicles in the northern Mindanao region. The cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan on the island of Mindanao were worst hit when the typhoon hit the shore sending torrents of water and mud through villages and stripping mountainsides bare.

Massive flooding that rose as high as 3 meters affected many barangays (smallest administrative divisions) in the provinces of Capiz and Negros Oriental in the Visayas and the provinces of Zamboanga del Norte, Lanao del Norte and Misamis Oriental in Mindanao. The serious flooding forced thousands of families to flee to safer grounds in public elementary schools that served as evacuation centres. As of 20 December 9,742 families or 42,733 persons are staying in 62 evacuation centres.

According to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), typhoon Washi affected a total number of 63,079 families or 338,415 persons in 259 barangays, in 30 municipalities and 8 cities in the 13 provinces of Region VI, Region VII, Region IX, Region X, Region XI, CARAGA and the ARMM.

According to the NDRRMC 3,127 houses have been destroyed and 7,218 houses have been damaged. There has been extensive damage to standing crops, fisheries and livestock. Communities continue to experience large scale power outage, which is not expected to be restored until 24 December. Contaminated water is a major problem especially in the urban areas of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan City. The affected area rarely experiences heavy storms

¹ <http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/tropical-storm-in-the-philippines-number-of-people-affected-doubled-since-monday>

to the extent of other regions in the country, and therefore was caught unprepared by the deadly flash flooding and landslides.

3. National and international response

Government agencies and NGOs, both national and international, are responding throughout Mindanao. The Humanitarian Country Team conducted an assessment of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan areas on 19 December. ACT member **Lutheran World Relief (LWR)** has conducted an independent assessment in Surigao del Sur; another area severely affected. All assessment reports are being shared and responses coordinated. Coordination bodies include the Mindanao INGO network (MINGOs), the Philippines INGO network (PINGOs), and OCHA cluster teams. LWR is currently the Chair of MINGOs, as well as the Sphere Focal Point for the Philippines.

As of now, the national government has set aside approximately USD 30 million in calamity fund to help ease the plight of the typhoon victims while other local government unit officials allocated financial assistance to the affected areas. Meanwhile, the governments of US, China and other international donors have pledged support to the Philippine government.

4. ACT Alliance Response

ACT members in the Philippines, the **National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP)**, **Christian Aid (CA)**, **Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (DKH)** and **LWR** have been carrying out assessments and communicating and coordinating on a daily basis.

DKH has started responding through their bilateral partners while Christian Aid is still carrying out damage and needs assessment.

LWR maintains a material resources warehouse in Mindanao, although stocks are very low due to the flooding in southern Mindanao last July. Procurement of NFIs is possible, as the local markets are intact, especially in the southern part of the island.

NCCP has released initial funding from its reserve fund to the Diocese of MOBUCA of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente for initial emergency assistance. IFI-MOBUCA has opened its churches, chapels and facilities to families affected by the typhoon. There is urgent need for food, medicine, potable water, clothing, sleeping paraphernalia and temporary shelter. Psycho-social assistance is also badly needed for traumatized individuals especially women and children.

5. Planned activities

For immediate response, NCCP has issued appeals for donations to its member churches, friends and benefactors and has opened its main building and members' offices for relief goods. NCCP plans to issue an ACT appeal proposal that would request support for humanitarian assistance including food, non-food items, hygiene kits and medicines. Assistance for rebuilding and rehabilitation will also be needed and will later be identified when the situation has normalized. LWR and partners are responding in Surigao del Sur, an area severely impacted by floods that is not being served by other organizations. LWR is planning to engage on a longer term rehabilitation of livelihood, possibly through an ACT appeal.

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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