

PHILIPPINE TYPHOONS 2006

Rapid Appraisal Report
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Summary of Finding

A total of 5,012 families or 29,778 persons have been affected by the typhoon. Albay is the most affected province in Region 5 as death toll increases each day. About 50% of the affected families have their houses totally damaged hence they are currently housed in different evacuation centers. There is no access to potable water since water piping systems of local water companies in most communities have been heavily damaged. Relief operation is on-going. The national, regional and provincial disaster coordinating council had a joint meeting and discussed extensively the agenda geared towards providing immediate and effective humanitarian assistance to the victims of disaster. Government calamity funds has reached the level of near exhaustion since most of it has been used in 3 successive super typhoons which had visited the region earlier. Oxfam GB together with partner local and international agencies (Plan International, UNICEF, World Vision) should launch relief operations to support government initiatives in mitigating the impact of typhoon Durian in Bicol Region. The assessment team also recommends a more detailed assessment, preferably focused sectorally (health, shelter, water sanitation and nutrition/food security) should be undertaken in a week's time.

Most Affected Province and Municipality in Region 5

One the regions that was ravaged and perhaps the most affected by Typhoon Durian is Region 5 since the number of casualties continue to increase. To date, the Regional Disaster Coordinating Council Region 5 reports a total of 389 dead, 278 missing and 444 injured persons from the provinces of Albay, Catanduanes and Camarines Sur.

Because of the occurrence of mudslide in Albay, the province had registered the highest number of death toll, which is 381 or 98%. Most of the deaths were claimed to be children and women mostly from the municipality of Ginobatan (187) followed by Daraga (85), Sto. Domingo (55), Legaspi (53) and Tobacco (1).

Retrieval operation by both the military and local/international civilian rescue groups (e.g. Southern Leyte Emergency Response Team, Spanish Rescue Team) are on-going. Death toll may possibly rise in the next few days since the missing persons may have been buried in the mudslide.

The devastation which happened in Ginobatan was claimed to be the first in the entire history of disaster in the municipality as verbally expressed by a 83 year old native from the said place.

Number of Displaced Persons

The Albay Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council reported that a total of 5,012 families or 29,778 persons have been affected. Legaspi City registered the most number of displaced families (758 families) followed by Canalig (680 families) Sto. Domingo (611) Libon (469), Gunubatan (253), Malinao (150), Bacacay (101) Tiwi (47) and Palangui (10). Data on the number of affected persons who are in the evacuation centers are not available during the conduct of this rapid assessment.

Risk Communication and Information Management

The electric power is down all over Region 5. Except for Smart Telecommunications and VHF radio, communication facilities are non functional. While conducting the assessment, there was a widespread news via text message, allegedly announced in a radio program, about an up coming tsunami which will hit Legaspi City. This information created massive panic as multitude of people from both low lying and high land communities packed their belongings and run from their houses towards the northern part of the region for safety. There were some observed injuries brought about by the movement. Phivolcs, a government warning agency sent advisory regarding this matter to correct misinformation.

Also, as a result of communication systems breakdown, timely submission of information related to the impact of the typhoon from concerned municipal government units to the provincial government disaster coordinating council failed to happen.

Education and Evacuation Facilities

Classes maybe suspended in day care centers and elementary and high schools beginning tomorrow since these education facilities were severely damaged. As observed, school roofs were torn and most were blown by the typhoon in massive proportion. Some schools were buried in the mudslide. Schools with intact structures, however, are currently used as evacuation centers. There are no available information on the extent of damage as well as the names and number of schools needing repairs.

In Ginobatan, affected communities evacuated in government owned facilities such as the Municipal Social Hall, Travesia Barangay Hall and Ginubatan East Central School. There are two private buildings being used as evacuation centers: MORN High School and Seventh Day Adventist Church. Toilet facilities are limited in the said evacuation centers.

Local Water Facilities

All major water companies were forced to discontinue their operations due to broken piping systems. Though some water sources were not heavily affected, in the municipality of Daraga, the main reservoir was reported to be heavily damaged. One water company had committed for a quick repair of damaged water piping system. However, this commitment remains to be realized.

It was also observed that amount of potable water is becoming scarce particularly in the City of Legaspi. People have to fall in a long line to have access to water in a nearby water filling stations. However, residents fear that the supply of water may have not lasted to cover at least the evacuees from said places.

Deep wells in some houses and communities are functional. Chlorine tablets were distributed by the Department of Health to the affected communities who were then taught by health personnel staff on the procedures on how to use these tablets.

Damaged Houses

Albay Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council reported 2,389 totally damaged and 633 partially damaged houses. Most of the totally damaged houses are concentrated in the municipalities of Ginubatan and Camalig. Typhoon Milenyo, another super typhoon which visited the country very recently had destroyed houses randomly in different community sites. Typhoon Durian, however, damaged several clusters of neighboring houses in a particular geographic location if not the total number of houses in a village. Provision of shelter assistance is particularly challenging to the members of the Philippine Emergency Network since expertise on this field is not readily available.

Relief Operations

The Albay Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council had initially purchased 5,000 cavans of rice and have distributed 900 family packs (containing rice, noodles and sardines) to affected families. The National Disaster Coordinating Council had augmented an additional 300 sacks of rice. Calamity funds of the province is near depletion since they been hit by 3 consecutive strong typhoons very recently not to mention the Mayon volcanic eruption in July of this year.

Health and Health Systems Management

Due to the number of affected communities seeking health assistance brought about by the typhoon and mudslide, augmentation of health personnel from neighboring regions for the province of Albay has been provided by the Department of Health for the province of Albay. Medical staff assigned for each affected municipalities manned the clinics in the evacuation center on a rotation basis. There is a need though for augmentation of medicines and medical supplies.

Livelihood and Economy

Rice field were totally destroyed. Coconut trees, whose products serve as additional source of income among farmers, were mostly observed to be mostly bent down if not up rooted. The traditional local markets facilities and the department stores were closed. The Provincial Governor, though, requested Liberty Commercial Center, one of the biggest shopping malls in the city, to resume operations. Some sari-sari stores have their business open as usual.

Coordination

A multi level disaster management coordination meeting was initially held in the Province of Albay. With the Chief of the Presidential Management Staff as the lead

convenor, a joint meeting was undertaken jointly with the senior managers of the regional and provincial offices. It was announced in the meeting that the President of the Republic of the Philippines is set to arrive in Albay on December 5, 2006 to see for herself the reality on the ground and how the national government can further provide humanitarian assistance.

Recommendation

For Immediate Humanitarian Assistance

1. Depending on the agency mandate and field of expertise, international NGOs can provide immediate relief support to include water, food and non-food distribution and shelter assistance prioritizing the families affected in Ginubatan.
 - Oxfam GB and Plan International can procure and deliver immediately bottled water for the beneficiaries; Oxfam GB can explore, together with the PDCC of Albay the possibility of voucher programming tapping Liberty Commercial Center as probable supplier for hygiene kits
 - World Vision and perhaps Plan International can assist the government in providing the much needed food and non food items
 - Government to mobilize DSWD/ for immediate provision of core shelter assistance
2. Install temporary learning centers and provision of learning kits for day care children, elementary and high school students. This may be undertaken by Plan International, World Vision, UNICEF and agencies with child centered/focused mandates
3. PDCC of Albay and RDCC Region V to mobilize the Department of Health to organize teams who will provide psychosocial first aid to direct victims of typhoons and mudslide

For Intermediate Humanitarian Assistance

1. Plan International may provide assistance in the repair and construction of schools after due assessment of damages.
2. Oxfam GB to possibly install deep wells and construct additional toilet facilities in the evacuation centers; likewise Oxfam GB can share its experience in Bicol regarding its successful health promotion activities which they implemented in Southern Leyte.
3. For concerned government agencies to institutionalize documentation system to include disaggregating data as to age group and gender
4. Conduct of a more specific sectoral assessment on health, water and sanitation, nutrition/food security and shelter after one week of initial relief operations.