

STY Rai (Odette) Aftermath

Emergency Situation Report

Reporting Period: 11 January – 21 January 2022, Issue No. 5

CURRENT SITUATION

More than a month after Super Typhoon Rai (locally known as Odette) struck, the number of affected populations has reached a total of 383,783 families (approximately 1,511,096 persons) in Caraga Region affecting 1,082 barangays in 67 municipalities and 6 cities. The number continues to increase from the previous reports because of the delayed transmittal of reports from the affected local government units to the government regional office, which is still attributed to the communication outage/ issue affecting the severely affected provinces. Of the total reported affected population, 5% (20,257 families or around 69,328 individuals) were displaced of which 59% (12,032 families or around 43,848 individuals) have sought refuge at the evacuation centers and 41% (8,225 families or around 25,480 individuals) were hosted by their relatives and friends.

Verifications on the displacement figures need to be conducted because there is a huge disparity between the reports of DSWD Caraga and local government units of the affected municipalities. There are a total of 171,631 damaged houses that were reported in the region as of 15 January 2022 of which 43% (74,324 houses) are totally damaged and 57% (97,307 houses) are partially damaged.

The operations of some municipalities affected by the typhoon are back to regular operations except those on the islands of Dinagat and Siargao. In the mainland of Surigao del Norte, particularly in the municipalities of Malimono and Tagana-an and in Surigao City, the operations of its Local Government Units are back since 10 January 2022, and it no longer reports during the weekends.

In light of the growing COVID-19 cases in the country, the authorities have implemented the tighter Alert Level 3 measures in different parts of the country including Butuan City in the Caraga Region. With the reported cases of COVID-19, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) manned by the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (RDRC) was demobilized. Its Regional Task Force on COVID-19 has issued a memorandum circular on 14 January 2022 that pertains to the travel requirements of humanitarian agencies entering the region. The Department of Health (DOH) Caraga has reported cases of influenza-like illnesses and severe acute respiratory infections in areas affected by the typhoon in Siargao. Thus, all responders are required to present the result of their negative RT-PCR test, 72 hours before the travel and that he/she is asymptomatic, has no close contact with COVID-19 patients, and is fully vaccinated.

Most days, Maria Flor Gloria Pacquiao is left to look after her grandchildren while their parents are working. Being an elderly who suffered from mild stroke, mobility is a major challenge. Coupled with the lack of access to information, she often only arrives at the relief distribution site when all supplies have already run out.



PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



THREAT TO LIFE SAFETY AND SECURITY

1. The local executive of Surigao City has ordered to prioritize the distribution of relief assistance to the IDPs who are staying in schools so they could return to their original habitual residences. As there is no assurance that their residences are now cleared and safe, this move may be considered as a disregard to the safe, dignified and voluntary return of the IDPs.



ACCESS TO SHELTERS

1. While food continues to be a need, in terms of prioritization, most of the assessed displaced and affected families expressed shelter as the top priority as of this report.
2. In the assessed areas in Dinagat Island and coastal municipalities of Surigao del Norte, some of the IDPs sheltering in evacuation centers have gradually returned to their place of origin. Only those whose houses were totally damaged and have no means to rebuild their houses remain displaced.
3. The most expressed priority need of the IDPs is shelter repair kits rather than plastic sheeting or tarps especially those whose houses are either partially or totally damaged. In Loreto Municipality, Province of Dinagat Island, its local government unit has procured shelter repair materials consisting of G.I. sheets, nails, plywood, and plain sheets. It prioritizes distributing the shelter repair materials to those whose houses were totally damaged while it also aims to provide the same to those with partially damaged houses in its next wave of distribution.
4. In Surigao City, some displaced families, belonging to an indigenous community, are living in an undignified condition - in shanties made of salvaged light materials. Some of these shanty units are even shared up to four families.



ACCESS TO HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE – FOOD AND NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)

1. Food aid is still one of the most pressing needs expressed by the displaced and affected populations. The provision of food from the government and humanitarian agencies is relatively sufficient in some municipalities but the majority still clamor for a sustained ration of food since their livelihood activities have been hampered and their capacity to purchase food has decreased. Most are still dependent on relief assistance from the government, private entities, and individuals.
2. Due to the challenges of its geographical location, a community of indigenous people (IP), called Mamanoa, are rarely receiving assistance. This community, located in the barangays of Gasipan and Mayag in the Municipality of Sison, is part of the Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA). Aside from being geographically isolated, this community also constantly faces risks of man-made conflicts, as well as natural disasters, such as landslides. A recent report said that the community is now accessible after debris has been cleared off.



ACCESS TO LIFELINES

1. The community lifeline services are still being restored. The electric cooperatives from another region such as Luzon island have deployed its team last 15 January 2022 to help restore electricity in the affected communities in Siargao, Dinagat Island, and Surigao City.
2. Although there are well-off families who are financially capable of procuring generator sets for their use, the majority can only procure low-cost flashlights and solar lamps for their use.



ACCESS TO HEALTH

1. A newly-born, almost at decomposition stage, was found on 4 January 2022 at a school in Gikakit Municipality, Surigao del Norte. The said school has served as evacuation center of the IDPs from Barangay Ipil last 16 December 2021 who have returned homes the following day, but there is no report that a person has given birth during their stay in the school.

PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



HOUSING, LAND, AND PROPERTY (HLP) ISSUES

1. There is an emerging issue on HLP in severely-hit communities in the Province of Dinagat Island and Surigao del Norte Province especially those residing along the shorelines. In an interview with the IDPs who have mostly taken refuge in evacuation centers and in home-based settings with relatives and friends, they raised the concern about the lack of information on the government's relocation plan. They heard that they will not be allowed to return as their area will eventually be declared as "no-build zones".
2. The IDPs who have sought temporary shelter at the schools in Surigao City and Placer Municipality were advised by the personnel of the Department of Education (DepEd) to vacate the schools at the soonest time because of the resumption of the modular classes.
3. The IDPs in Tagana-an Municipality, Surigao del Norte who have temporarily occupied the isolation facility near the police station were ordered by the local authorities to vacate the facility on 17 January 2022.
4. There are approximately 66 families in Sitio Carmen in a remote barangay in Loreto Municipality, Province of Dinagat island who has been subjected to relocation as their current location is identified as prone to landslide. The Mines and Geoscience Bureau (MGB) and the local officials have visited the site and recommended the evacuation of the residents based on their risk assessment.
5. Badjaos, an indigenous group, who are now temporarily dwelling across the road from where they originally lived in Surigao City, is now at risk of involuntary relocation. The LGU allegedly prohibits the return of these IDPs to their original location which is risky since it is near the seashore. The IDPs, on the other hand, still prefer to return to their original place to have access to their accustomed way of living.



ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION

1. Access to potable water remains a problem as water sources have not yet been fully restored. Most of the affected residents continue to buy water at water refilling stations but with the price increase, this will not be a sustainable alternative. The Department of Health (DOH) collected water samples for analysis in different affected areas and the results show that most of the tested water sources have the presence of E.coli and coliform.
2. UNHCR has raised the protection issues on the price increase of water being sold. Per DOH, the price increase is linked to the absence of electric power as most are using generator sets. DOH urges for the restoration of the local water system or may request the LGUs to provide generator sets to the established associations (water maintenance) in different communities however, LGU has a limited budget to address this.



ACCESS TO LIVELIHOOD

1. Farmers and fisherfolks are the sectors whose livelihood activities have been negatively affected. Fishing is the main source of income for most of the residents in the island barangays of Dapa Municipality and other adjacent towns but their fishing activities were hampered as their fishing implements like boats were damaged or got lost making it difficult for them to recover.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE



The Tri-Cluster Coordination Platform (Protection, Food and NFI, and CCCM) led by the DSWD that was organized with the support of UNHCR has now been integrated into the Regional Disaster Response Committee (RDRC) that holds its regular meeting every Wednesday and is presided by the Vice-Chair agency which is DSWD and attended by 11 Cluster leads. UNHCR also supports the existing platform that is the RIACAT-VAWC and RCPWG with highlights on IDP Protection cum International Humanitarian Assistance (IHA is supposed to be led by DFA) that holds its meeting every Monday. UNHCR also participates in the different cluster meetings being called by the government lead.



The UNHCR initiated Tri-Cluster Information Management System has been adopted as the official repository of all Odette-related data and Information from all 11 clusters that DSWD leading and monitoring. DSWD on 30 December issued Advisory No. 17 highlighting the utilization of the said Tri-Cluster IM System as the Response Cluster Information Management System. The system can be accessed from this link. UNHCR IM specialists conducted dedicated training about the system with the DSWD-RDRC technical staff. UNHCR will be coordinating with the other IM experts from other clusters to help maintain the IM system with the DSWD.



UNCHR and CHR conducted a joint protection monitoring on the island of Siargao on 7-8 January 2022. The team coordinated with local government units on UNHCR's CRIs provided through the DSWD. Also, UNHCR joined the IDP team of DSWD that was deployed in different affected areas to conduct monitoring and psychosocial support.



As part of UNHCR's advocacy and protection mainstreaming work, it has been able to encourage the government to issue protection advisories to address pressing protection concerns. The DSWD Caraga has issued an advisory on the prohibition of begging to cite the provisions in the Anti-Mendicancy Law.



The first Mindanao Humanitarian Team meeting for Caraga response was conducted the first week of January. Cluster co-leads including UNHCR for Protection reported on the needs, responses, and gaps of their respective Clusters.



The core relief items provided by UNHCR, which include plastic sheets, were among the first life-saving non-food items that have reached the communities in Siargao and Dinagat Islands. The plastic sheets were used as temporary canopy for the health centers and birthing facilities and have served temporary shelters of the returning IDPs in their respective places of origin.

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For more information, please visit the UNHCR Philippines website—www.unhcr.org/ph/typhoon-rai-odette or email us at PHICOPRC@unhcr.org.