

STY Rai (Odette) Aftermath

Emergency Situation Report

Reporting Period: 22 January – 05 February 2022, Issue No. 6

CURRENT SITUATION

Over 50 days after the devastating landfall of STY Rai (Odette) in the country, the affected populations remain steadfast to overcome the enclosed challenges of its aftermath. In Mindanao, the extent of damage manifests in the province of Dinagat Islands and in the Province of Surigao del Norte, including Siargao Island.

Per the government's Disaster Response Operation Monitoring and Information Center (DROMIC) report dated as of 03 February 2022, the number of affected families have reached up to 385,078 families (approximately 1.5 million individuals). Out of these number of affected families, 20,518 families (approximately 72,180 individuals) were displaced and are currently staying either in the evacuation centers or at their relative's home.

Amidst all these, the community exhibits extreme resilience. Most of the affected families have immediately built makeshifts out of salvaged materials from the debris left by the raged storm. Safety and dignity are two other things of concern linked to meeting durable solution.

Despite their resiliency and given the extent of damage the typhoon left in their places of origin, the affected families anticipate that it may take some time to reach full recovery. STY Rai (Odette) particularly impacted their access to shelters, livelihood, lifelines, infrastructural facilities including access road, health facilities, schools, dock in port, among others. After more than a month, the affected population is looking forward to sustainability of food

assistance, support for reconstruction of shelters and recovery of livelihood. Evidently, there is a lot of work that needs to be done and a huge gap to fill to accelerate recovery and ensure safe and dignified living of the affected population. Furthermore, the implementation of the notice for non-rebuilding of structures within the legal easements of Siargao Island or the No-Build Zone (NBZ) policy is making a resounding noise to the affected communities in the said island which is now adding to their anxieties.

Meanwhile, a coordination meeting attended by the mayors of the nine (9) municipalities in Siargao Island and the representatives from different humanitarian agencies was conducted for the first time in the provincial operation center based in the island. Presented in the meeting were the commitments of the UN agencies in implementing Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) project in the region. Also, non-CERF funded agencies were given their time to present their engagements as well.

In this meeting, UNHCR emphasized that its commitments revolve around two main functions, namely: operation and coordination functions. The operational function refers to UNHCR's protection-by-presence through protection monitoring with project partners, protection mainstreaming, advocacy works and provision and distribution of core relief items (CRI). For its coordination function, UNHCR provides technical support in protection coordination and information management.

“Our heartfelt thanks for all the help that we received. Now, we can sleep better. And as long as we can, we will continue to strive to rebuilding our house. It doesn't matter if the pace is slow,” said 52-year-old Alan Escuyos, a resident of Siargao Island.



PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



ACCESS TO SHELTERS

1. Most of the IDPs have returned to their respective places of origin. Only those whose houses were totally damaged and have no means to rebuild them are still displaced. However, IDPs who have returned to their habitual places of residences may remain at risk of getting hurt or ill. Most of the original sites remain uncleared of debris and the materials used in the construction of makeshift dwellings are made of salvaged materials. People are exposed to elements like the changing weather, heat and cold in their shelters. These conditions pose potential adverse impact to their health. While most displaced families returned, meeting durable solution in consideration of their safety and dignity is still far from being reached.
2. Most of the displaced population in Siargao Island, in Libjo municipality of Dinagat Island, and in the island barangays of Surigao City, including those who are now sheltered in self-constructed makeshifts, are seeking support for shelter and/or construction materials to rebuild their homes.
3. Shelter and/or materials for the reconstruction of shelters are among the priority needs of the affected populations in the municipalities of Pilar, Del Carmen, Burgos, Dapa and Sta. Monica of Siargao Island; in Libjo municipality of Dinagat Islands; and some of the island brgys of Surigao City. There are thousands of families whose houses were reportedly damaged by STY Odette. Although, some of these families have returned to their places of origin, they are temporarily sheltered in roofed stilt houses built out of salvaged materials. There is an unaccounted number of families who are staying with their relatives while others remain in evacuation centers which remain open to date.
4. According to the focal person of DSWD in Siargao Island, 90% of the houses were estimated to have been totally damaged, while the 10% were assessed as partially damaged in the municipality of Dapa.
5. According to the interviewed IDPs in the DPWH Regional Center EC, they were given a schedule to leave the evacuation camp on the last day of January 2022, yet accordingly, they are yet to build or fix their damaged shelters.



HOUSING, LAND, AND PROPERTY (HLP) ISSUES

1. The IDPs who have sought temporary shelter at the schools in Surigao City and Placer Municipality were allegedly advised by the Department of Education (DepEd) to vacate the schools the soonest time possible due to the resumption of modular classes. This issue was referred by UNHCR to the concerned agency. The same was also raised by UNHCR during the weekly RDRC Meeting on 26 January 2022. On both occasions, the representative of DepEd denied cascading any official order or memo of this sort.
2. The implementation of the government's No-Build-Zone (NBZ) that commenced by putting up NBZ signages by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in the coastal areas of Siargao Island is adding to the anxieties of the affected population. The municipalities of Dapa and Pilar, the local authorities are allowing the affected families to build temporary shelters in the NBZ by signing a waiver and that the houses to be built are made of light materials only. While there are local government units that are considerate of the situation of IDPs, there are municipalities that are strictly implementing the NBZ policy, such as in Burgos Municipality, which deprived the rights of the house owners to rebuild their houses in their habitual residences as it is identified as NBZ areas. There are also reports of families residing in the NBZ areas who were allegedly being excluded from shelter assistance for them to not be able to rebuild their houses.
3. The resounding issue on NBZ dreads to affect reception of the affected communities to some conditional assistance including the Emergency Shelter Assistance (ESA), as the program requires a house or a space to where the assistance will be spent on. This limitation may exclude families who have no house nor space to show. In Sta. Monica Siargao, Surigao del Norte, there is an issue of not providing shelter materials to families whose houses are within the identified NBZ.
4. The issue on NBZ was raised by the president of the League of Mayors in Surigao del Norte at the coordination meeting at the EOC of Siargao Island on 28 January 2022. The OCD Regional Director acknowledged the concern and assured consideration on the matter.

PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



THREAT TO LIFE SAFETY AND SECURITY

1. People in makeshift dwellings built out of salvaged materials are exposed to elements and are not protected against the heat and rain.
2. The return of IDPs prior to clearing of debris has adverse effects to the physical safety of the affected population. In San Francisco, Surigao del Norte and in the island barangays of Surigao City, there are IDPs who have sustained wounds from the debris left by STY Odette. Clearing is ongoing but the pacing is quite slow.
3. Proper policing support is needed to address conflict or minor trouble in evacuation centers.



ACCESS TO FOOD AND NUTRITION

1. Some IDPs reported that assistance are no longer as frequent compared before. The DSWD is on its second wave of distribution of food assistance in the municipalities in Siargao Island.
2. The LGU of Pilar in the province of Surigao del Norte is now on its 10th wave of food assistance distribution. According to the LGU, while they are still in abundance of food supplies and inventories, they still ensure to regulate and strategize well the distribution in anticipation of the coming months when donations will be fully exhausted.



ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION

1. The water supply at Surigao del Norte National High School and Surigao City National High School ECs is not potable for drinking. Drinking water from refilling station cost P35-40 per liter.
2. Improper disposal of human waste among IDPs at Surigao City National High School EC was reported.



ACCESS TO HEALTH

1. Psychosocial support is among the needs of the affected populations. In the island barangays of Surigao City, barangay health centers are still damaged affecting immediate response to health-related needs of the affected population.
2. Children's health needs in Surigao del Norte National High School Evacuation Center are not sufficiently addressed by health workers. Parents resorted to self-medication to cure their children.



ACCESS TO LIVELIHOOD

1. The main sources of income of the residents in Siargao Island and in the island barangays of Surigao city are farming and fishing. Most farmers are used to growing coconut trees which are now mostly, if not all, damaged by STY Rai (Odette). According to farmers, there is no assurance of recovery for the remaining coconuts hence, replanting is the more practical option. And while this option will take years again before their first harvest, they are willing to do it anyway as they see no other option other than this. For them to start replanting, they are in need of coconut seedlings. On the other hand, most of the fisherfolks have either left with damaged or have lost their fishing gears and equipment.
2. Some of the locals used to work in various tourist spots and resorts in Siargao Island. However, this sector has been long challenged by the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, which situation has only been worsened by the aftermath of STY Odette (Rai) as the damaged structures and resort buildings may take some years to be restored to their functioning state again.



ACCESS TO LIFELINES

1. Electricity remains unavailable in most parts of Surigao City. Majority of evacuation centers, IDPs in home-based settings or returned sites have no proper source of lighting. This situation may pose safety and security risks to IDPs, especially to women and children, to the sick and the elderly, especially at night. In Siargao Island, the majority still has no access to electricity. IDPs need to pay P20-P60 for charging cellphone and laptop.
2. Access to communication and internet remains a challenge in Siargao Island especially in the municipalities of Sta. Monica and Del Carmen. It is difficult for the affected families to seek and receive financial help and other assistance from relatives and friends outside the typhoon affected areas. This also hampers the response operations both from the government and non-government organizations/agencies as reports and communications are not being sent and received in a timely manner.
3. The dock-in port in the island of Catadman is damaged, causing more difficulties in the delivery of assistance to the barangay.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT



Protection Monitoring and Mainstreaming. UNCHR and CHR conducted a joint protection monitoring on the island of Siargao on 7-8 January 2022. UNHCR joined the IDP team of DSWD that was deployed in different affected areas to conduct monitoring and psychosocial support. UNHCR mission teams have also reached and are still reaching a number of barangays both in Siargao and Dinagat Islands for a continuous field protection monitoring.



Advocacy Work. 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. A Thematic Bulletin is also underway to highlight the concerning housing, land, and property issues being monitored on the ground.



Emergency Assistance Augmentation. 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.

On February 4 & 5, 2022, UNHCR and its partner, ACCORD, in coordination with the CSWO of Surigao City, the PNP Maritime and respective LGUs, provided life-saving CRIs to 577 displaced families in San Francisco and Surigao City, both in the province of Surigao del Norte. In Surigao City, one of the five recipient barangays is an IP community in the mainland; while three (3) out of five (5) are island barangays that are hard-to-reach. Included in the CRIs are hygiene kits, solar lantern, plastic sheets and mosquito nets.

COORDINATION SUPPORT



IDP Protection Cluster Co-Leadership. 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 that holds its meeting every Monday. UNHCR also participates in the different cluster meetings being called by the government lead.



Information Management Support. 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 is coordinating with the other IM experts from other clusters to help maintain the IM system with the DSWD.



Inter-Agency Coordination. UNHCR participated in two (2) in-person coordination meetings with the Humanitarian Team to the Local Government Units in Siargao Island and in the Province of Dinagat Islands on January 28 and 31, 2022.

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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.