

STY Rai (Odette) Aftermath

Emergency Situation Report

Reporting Period: 01 – 30 April 2022, Issue No. 9

CURRENT SITUATION

Four (4) months after the onslaught of the Super Typhoon Rai (locally known as Odette) in December 2021 that caused not only massive displacement but also loss of life and damage to properties, more than 6,000 people remain displaced. To date, a total of over two (2) million people have been reportedly affected by the typhoon. Out of this number, a significant number of individuals are still living in evacuation centers waiting for the government's relocation. According to the government's Disaster Response Operation Monitoring and Information Center (DROMIC) report as of end of April 2022, 73 families or approximately 332 individuals remain in 6 evacuation centers in five (5) provinces in Caraga, while 1,549 families or approximately 5,898 individuals remain displaced in Southern Leyte.

While response slowly transitions to early recovery and many families have already returned to their places of origin, many people are still left in complete devastation without stable shelter, access to essential services and health care, adequate food supply, and access to protective services. Given the extent of damage left by the typhoon, the affected families anticipate that it may still take some time to reach full recovery. Meanwhile, the No Build Zone (NBZ) policy which discourages communities not to return to the sites of their original homes and preventing them to build along the coastal areas, poses a setback to the ongoing rebuilding efforts. This also further exacerbates the typhoon-affected population's exposure to protection risks.

Compounding the displaced families' situation, the Tropical Storm Megi (locally known as Agaton) also struck in early April 2022, across many of the same

areas affected by STY Rai/Odette, causing floods and landslides affecting at least 2,260,000 people. Based on initial assessments, food aid and emergency shelter are some of the primary needs expressed by the affected families. However, in light of the upcoming national elections on 9 May, local government agencies are restricted from responding to the situation due to the election ban (COMELEC Resolution No. 10747) which prohibits any public official or employee to release, disburse, or expend public funds effective until 8 May 2022.

While host communities are able to absorb shocks and fill in humanitarian gaps in providing support to displaced families, the prolonged hosting of IDPs may strain their own food supply and the services within the community which may result to tense relationships and conflict. Even in situations where IDPs are able to return, many of the affected communities remain vulnerable to further displacement due to the lack of concrete support to help in facilitating their recovery. The lack of consultation with affected population on decisions that affect them also remains to be a gap. This also adds up to the uncertainties, which, in effect causes psychosocial distress among them.

In line with its core protection mandate, UNHCR's response to the situation focuses on the following priorities: protection-by-presence through protection monitoring with project partners, protection mainstreaming, advocacy, distribution of core relief items (CRI), and coordination functions which involves providing technical support in protection coordination and information management.

Caraga Region Response



UNHCR, together with its operational partners, continues to monitor the overall situation of the displaced population particularly those in home-based settings and those affected by the No Build Zone policy. In Surigao City, construction of transitory shelters in Brgy. Cagniog for more than 120 families is among the efforts of the Government and the international community to alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable displaced population.

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PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



ACCESS TO HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

1. While some of the affected families have returned to their places of origin, there are still families who remain displaced and have opted to stay in the homes of their relatives or in informal settlements. To date, through the continuous conduct of technical assistance to the LGUs on the encoding of DAFAC Forms, a total of 345,322 forms have been encoded with an accomplishment rate of 84.62% of the total affected families. Despite this, there are still home-based IDPs who are unaccounted for and have limited access to humanitarian assistance from government and humanitarian actors.
2. While LGUs are transitioning to early recovery focusing on shelter reconstruction, livelihoods, and relocations, there are still IDPs and host communities in severely affected areas who are not covered and have received very minimal support to facilitate their recovery. Hence, the need to engage development actors through the Humanitarian Development Nexus (HDN) to ensure continued support to remaining humanitarian needs while in transition phase.
3. In San Benito Municipality, Siargao, 80% of the typhoon affected families have been provided with cash assistance amounting to Php5,800. Based on reports from the DSWD Caraga, a total of 75,575 beneficiaries were also covered with financial assistance through the agency's Assistance to Individuals/Families in Crisis Situation (AICS) program amounting to Php 377,875,000. However, there are still some areas where IDPs reported that emergency assistance is no longer regularly provided. In terms of non-food items, most of the affected families expressed the need for solar lamps specifically in areas where electricity has not been restored yet.
4. At least ten (10) displaced families from Sitio Iba of Barangay Datu in Pilar Municipality in Siargao island have built makeshift shelters using tarps and salvaged materials along the national highway. These families are not able to return to their habitual residences due to the presence of debris in their areas. They continue to face potential safety and protection risks due to the unsafe location, inadequate shelter space and lack of access to basic services and humanitarian assistance. As expressed by the families, some of their pressing needs include food and water supply and access to sustainable livelihoods.

Before the typhoon, these families were engaged in informal work such as home-based livelihoods, food vending, and selling of non-food items.



ACCESS TO FOOD AND NUTRITION

1. Food supply remains a concern for most of the IDPs due to the lack of access to various sources of income especially for those in the hardly-hit barangays. Most of the families who had gone home rely on assistance from the government and humanitarian agencies, while those who are currently staying with their relatives rely on the food supply of their host families who are also affected by the typhoon. While host families are still able to fill in the gaps in providing support to the displaced families, prolonged hosting may strain their own food supply which may result to tension and conflict, as well as possible violent domestic situations.
2. Markets are highly functional however price hikes due to war in Ukraine have resulted to rising prices of basic commodities such as meat products, vegetables, and fuel.
3. Lack of nutritious food pose potential decline on the nutritional condition of affected population especially among children. The food assistance provided by the local government units are becoming limited and mostly consisting of canned goods. Under the "Pamilya Mo, Pamilya Ko" (PMPK) program, the provincial government continues to provide food items prioritizing families in highly affected areas only. Meanwhile, the District Nutrition Program Officer of PSWDO Surigao del Norte, in partnership with UNICEF, is also conducting health assessment to the selected settlers in the localities of Siargao Island.



ACCESS TO LIVELIHOOD

1. As expressed by the residents of Siargao Island and the island barangays of Surigao City, one of the crucial needs at this time is support for livelihoods. Most of their crops, specifically coconut, have been severely damaged by the typhoon. Also, most of the fisherfolks have reported that their fishing gears and equipment were damaged. Hence, to avoid reliance on food aid and prevent food insecurity and malnutrition, support for the re-establishment of livelihood assets to restore income capacity is needed.

PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



HOUSING, LAND, AND PROPERTY (HLP) ISSUES

1. The implementation of the government's No-Build-Zone (NBZ) policy that commenced with the installation of 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 imposition of such policy, without due process provided by existing laws, may constitute forced eviction where restrictions or accompanying relocations render individuals with no choice but to leave their lands or properties.
2. In Burgos Municipality in Siargao, the LGU have already started the strict implementation of the said policy and have disallowed the rebuilding of houses and return of IDPs in the affected areas. According to reports, there is already an approved plan for the relocation site in Brgy. Patag in Burgos but the details and specific date of the relocation has not been communicated to the affected families yet.
3. Some of the communities in Siargao Island (e.g., Brgy. Dayaohay, Pilar) are against the NBZ policy due to concerns on livelihoods in case they are relocated. They also expressed that they have not received full information about the policy and consultations are yet to be conducted by the DENR.
4. In Dapa Municipality in Siargao, around 3,500 households coming from three barangays in Dapa have been identified for relocation. Accordingly, consultations about their relocation have already been conducted. Some of the affected families living within the identified NBZ were made to sign a waiver for building temporary housing in their areas. Meanwhile, the DENR have reportedly identified a temporary relocation site for the affected families and site development planning following the criteria of the DENR is set to be conducted. However, according to the MDRRMO, the identified site is a protected area and may not be suitable for relocation, thus further delays in the implementation of the relocation is expected.
5. Meanwhile, there are also LGUs that have deferred implementation of the said policy due to the lack of clear guidelines and in consideration of the situation of the affected families. Some of these LGUs are calling for support from the humanitarian agencies to provide flexible loan arrangements to help the affected families rebuild their homes. In Surigao City, the LGU is considering the request of the affected residents who are willing to relocate but wanted to keep their houses along the coastal area.
6. The City LGU and National Housing Authority (NHA) will construct 123 houses and will be prioritizing the remaining families from existing evacuation centers in Surigao City. The construction of housing units is still on-going.
7. There are also reports of families residing within the NBZ areas who were allegedly excluded from shelter assistance, e.g. in Sta. Monica Municipality in Surigao del Norte. This issue has also impacted the implementation of the conditional support program of some LGUs such as the Emergency Shelter Assistance (ESA) program which requires IDPs to have a house or a piece of land for them to qualify as beneficiaries. This limitation had already resulted to exclusion of some of the displaced families.
8. The LGUs are having difficulties in finding a suitable location for relocation of the affected population due to lack of available lands. Based on initial consultations with LGUs, there are lands that they could use but these lands are expensive (e.g. in General Luna, Siargao). Further, some locations identified as potential sites had been assessed as inconducive or unsafe for relocation. According to data shared by DSWD Caraga, the Task Force Build Back Better had identified 1,966,070 sq.m. of potential land in Siargao Island for relocation of families which will potentially be affected by the No-Build Zone policy.



ACCESS TO SHELTER

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 still face further protection risks as most of the affected sites remain uncleared of debris. Moreover, most of those who have returned used salvaged materials in the construction of their makeshift dwellings. Due to this, people are highly exposed to the elements which poses potential adverse impact to their

PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS

health. Evidently, while most displaced families may have returned, attaining durable solutions with due consideration of their safety and dignity remains to be unaddressed.

2. Construction materials to repair damaged houses are among the priority needs of the affected populations in the municipalities of Pilar, Del Carmen, Burgos, Dapa and Sta. Monica of Siargao Island as well as in Libjo municipality of Dinagat Islands, and some of the island barangays of Surigao City. In Dapa municipality, they requested for more Galvanized Iron sheets and other construction material like Plywood for 8,0000 families affected, including Marine Plywood for the 2000 fisher folks for the for the construction of new fishing boats.
3. According to reports, the Provincial government through the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office provided cash assistance amounting to PhP1,000 and/or PhP5,000 depending on the family size prioritizing the most vulnerable households. However, according to accounts from IDPs whose houses are within the NBZ, they have not been covered in the said assistance. Based on their claims, they only received assistance from private donors.
4. In Brgy. Cuarinta of San Jose Municipality of Dinagat Island, 200 families will have to be relocated as their habitual residences are within a landslide-prone area. The provincial government had allocated funds for this relocation and was also able to receive support from a charitable institution.
5. In Barangay Laguna of Cagdianao Municipality, 48 families will have to be relocated as their habitual residences are within a flood-prone area. The local government is still in the process of identifying the best way to relocate them.



ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION

1. Families who had returned and rebuilt their houses in Barangay Poblacion (Boulevard area), and Barangay Poblacion in Pilar and Burgos municipalities have difficulty in accessing sanitary toilets. Due to confusion on No-Build-Zones, families had not installed their own toilets because of fear of being evicted or transferred. Most of the IDPs are using the toilets of their neighbors but this also poses them to potential

risks especially during nighttime due to the lack of electricity and adequate lighting in the sites.



ACCESS TO HEALTH

1. Health care workers are reportedly overstretched due to competing priorities in covering the provision of routine and essential care, including vaccinations and controlling the spread of COVID-19.
2. There are a limited number of maternity waiting homes in close proximity to hospitals for women living in far-flung communities. These homes will allow immediate attention and provision of emergency care to patients with pregnancy complications.
3. Psychosocial support is among the identified needs of the affected populations. In the island barangays of Surigao City, barangay health centers are still damaged affecting immediate response to health needs of the affected population. Children in Surigao del Norte National High School Evacuation Center are not sufficiently being addressed by health workers and parents resorted to self-medication to cure their children.
4. Barangay Caub, an island barangay in Del Carmen municipality, lacks maternity and birthing clinic. IDPs must travel to the mainland particularly in Dapa municipality, to be able to receive medical attention. However, the number of boats that are operational in the area is limited thus, posing potential risks to those about to give birth and severely ill people.



ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

1. Electricity in San Jose Municipality in Dinagat Island had been fully restored, while the rest of municipalities are considered as partially restored including those in Siargao Island and the mainland of Surigao Del Norte and Surigao City. With regard to restoration of telecommunication networks, Globe network is now 100% operational in Dinagat while 75 to 80% in Surigao Del Norte. Smart network is also around 11% operational in Dinagat while 52-54% operational in Surigao Del Norte province.

PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



THREAT TO LIFE, SAFETY AND SECURITY

1. In Surigao City, around 179 displaced Bajau families are still living beside the road under makeshift shelters that were built out of salvaged materials. These families are exposed to further protection and safety risks, especially the small children who play by the side of the road unattended. According to the City LGU, these families could not be relocated yet due to strong oppositions by the receiving community in the proposed relocation site.
2. Barangays Caridad and Bailan of Pilar, Barangays Corazon and Libertad of General Luna, Barangay Garcia of Sta Monica, Barangay Bitaug of Burgos, and Barangay Bongdo of San Benito, are still flooded. Given that these barangays are located at the downstream, floodwater from the upstream barangays flow into the area.
3. Electricity remains unavailable in some parts of Surigao Del Norte and Dinagat Island province. 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 elderlies, 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.
4. Solar Lamps/lights as alternative solution to areas without electricity is needed to mitigate the risks being face by affected families, especially the women and children who are vulnerable to any type of gender and sexual violence. Priority should be given to those living in remote and island barangays without adequate access to lifelines and electricity. Specifically, Dapa Municipality in Siargao Island requested for solar lamps/lights for their constituents in the island barangays without power or electricity sources.



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND CHILD PROTECTION

1. Children are often left without adult supervision, increasing the risks to abuse and exploitation while their caregivers are busy repairing their houses and looking for livelihood. For those who are still staying in evacuation centers, this situation is further compounded by the lack of electricity, proper lighting of the sanitation facilities, and lack of partition.
2. There are very limited women and child-friendly spaces available in the evacuation sites to address psychosocial and mental health concerns of the IDPs. In some areas, communities are also not aware how to report if there is an allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse, including possible abuse committed by aid workers.
3. In Dinagat Island, all the three district hospitals are severely damaged hindering the effective delivery of safe and confidential life-saving services to gender-based violence (GBV) victims-survivors.
4. According to reports, there are pre-existing cases of human trafficking such as alleged prostitution of women and young girls in Surigao del Norte. Following the typhoon, the province ranks number two in GBV cases in the region. Due to the lack of livelihood opportunities post disaster, women and adolescent girls are left with few real options which puts them at heightened risk for dangerous or potentially exploitative work.

Region VIII (Southern Leyte) Response



UNHCR supports government officials in Southern Leyte in the conduct of the Protection Working Group Meeting every two weeks to ensure timely coordination for the resolution of and monitoring of protection issues in the response to STY Rai.

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PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



ACCESS TO SHELTER AND HOUSING AND LAND AND PROPERTY ISSUES

1. While LGUs have commenced site identification process with consideration on geo-hazards and other factors such as access to livelihood, majority of LGUs have yet to secure lands for relocation sites due to the following reasons: (a) unavailability of funds to facilitate the purchase of land as current LGU Annual Investment Plan (AIP) does not include budget for land acquisition; (b) limited availability of lands that are hazard-free and suitable for relocation, specifically in Panaon Cluster (Liloan, San Francisco, Pintuyan, San Ricardo); and (c) in case of availability of funds, purchase of land is prohibited in view of COMELEC Resolution 10747 if the local government unit (LGU) does not request for a Certificate of Exception.
2. No uniform standard guidelines or identifiers for partially and totally damaged houses. Absence of streamlined guidelines causes varying interpretation and or description of totally and partially damaged houses.
3. The lack of specific relocation sites would force IDPs to return to their habitual residences along the coastlines and/or mountainsides exposing them to further risks and harm.
4. For affected populations whose houses were in the identified NBZ, no consultation has been conducted in relation to the policy and their access to shelter. However, people were made aware of the danger that it may pose should they decide to get back to their habitual residences.
5. Majority of the schools have resumed to face-to-face classes, hence, IDPs had to be relocated to temporary sites at the back of schools on makeshift structures, which is exposing them to more vulnerabilities.



CHILD PROTECTION/GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

1. Increased referral of GBV cases from municipalities overwhelmed the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) in Saint Bernard.
2. There is a limited number of facilities offering GBV services in Southern Leyte.



ACCESS TO HEALTH

1. Health facilities in some municipalities have been damaged making it difficult for the affected population and IDPs to access to health services.
2. Psychosocial support is identified as one of the most pressing needs by the affected population considering the psychological distress and trauma caused by the typhoon, especially to the women and children, including the duty bearers who are experiencing double impact since they also need to absorb the issues of the affected population.



ACCESS TO FOOD AND NUTRITION

1. Increase in the prices of basic commodities affects food consumption of the IDPs.
2. There are challenges in the LGU's food distribution due to COMELEC Resolution 10747, which prohibits the disbursement, release and expenditure of public funds from 25 March to 8 May. This prohibition, however, is not absolute as the resolution provides for the filing of a Certificate of Exception.



ACCESS TO LIVELIHOOD

1. The provision of livelihood support is limited. IDPs continue to express needs for livelihood support in order for them to strengthen their recovery process.

PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION

1. In the municipality of Tommas Oppus, the affected population expressed the need for additional support for the repair of latrines. While humanitarian agencies have provided WASH assistance to IDPs, the support is limited only to families who have the capacity to construct or those with existing septic tanks, leaving other IDPs behind.



ACCESS TO EDUCATION

1. Some schools were damaged and have yet to be rebuilt/repared. DepEd requested for temporary learning centers in Saint Bernard and Liloan as an alternative for damaged classrooms.



ACCESS TO LIFELINES

1. In some areas, internet connection is unstable which affect the immediate transmission of vital information.



RIGHT TO INFORMATION AND PARTICIPATION

1. IDPs and affected population have expressed that they would want to be involved and consulted in decisions that affect them especially on shelter and livelihood. They are less informed and consulted in the response and intervention activities.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT



Protection Monitoring and Mainstreaming. UNHCR continues to conduct protection monitoring in severely affected areas and in the evacuation sites in Surigao City and Siargao Islands through the support of its local partners. UNHCR also continues to coordinate and provide technical support in the reporting and referral of protection issues. These issues are also documented through the regular release of Situational Report and IDP Protection Assessment Reports to government and humanitarian partners.



Advocacy Work. As part of its advocacy and protection mainstreaming work, UNHCR advocated with the government to issue protection advisories to address pressing protection concerns. The DSWD Caraga issued an advisory on the prohibition of begging to cite the provisions in the Anti-Mendicancy Law. In one of the meetings of the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group, UNHCR reported on pressing issues concerning housing, land, and property rights that were monitored on the ground. On 8 March 2022, UNHCR released its first Thematic Bulletin that highlights housing, land, and property issues in Caraga region and Southern Leyte province. UNHCR also supported the development of the HCT advisory on the No Build Zone (NBZ) that was endorsed on 6 March 2022. As co-lead of the Protection Cluster, UNHCR is supporting the roll-out strategy of the advisory note with key government partners at both national and local levels. Further, UNHCR will also be engaged with the government's Build Back Better task force at the regional level for the implementation of the recommendations stated in the advisory note. UNHCR also continues to work with the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines in advocating and referring any human rights related issues in the context of the ongoing displacement to concerned government agencies. UNHCR also supports the Protection Cluster, together with the Shelter Cluster and other humanitarian organizations, in advocating with the provincial government the concerns of the LGU on site identification and unavailability of funding to purchase lands.

COORDINATION SUPPORT



IDP Protection Cluster Co-Leadership. UNHCR provided technical support to the DSWD in co-leading the Protection Cluster and the Regional Disaster Response Committee (RDRC) in general. While the RDRC and the clusters were deactivated in March, UNHCR as part of its operational priority will continue to monitor the displacement situation in the region and assures the DSWD of its sustained efforts to mainstream pressing protection issues. In Southern Leyte, UNHCR through its local project partner, ACCORD, continues to provide protection monitoring and coordination activities in Southern Leyte. A total of 35 planning officers from 17 local government units of Southern Leyte were provided with capacity building activities on protection coordination and mainstreaming and information management. The Protection Core Working Group (ACCORD, PLAN International, UNFPA) provided support to the Provincial Social Welfare Development of Southern Leyte in finalizing the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Southern Leyte Protection Cluster.



Information Management Support. As part of UNHCR's exit strategy in this emergency response, it had fully handed over the RDRC Information Management System to the DSWD. It can be recalled that DSWD issued the Advisory No. 17 on 30 December 2021, highlighting the utilization of the then Tri-Cluster (Protection, Food/NFI, CCCM) IM System as the Regional Disaster Response Committee (RDRC) Information Management System by all responding organizations and agencies. UNHCR IM specialists conducted dedicated training about the system with the DSWD-RDRC's technical staff to ensure the proper management and utilization of the system.

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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.