

# With you

## What's Inside

### **SUPER TYPHOON RAI (ODETTE) EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

An estimated 5,000 displaced individuals in Siargao and Dinagat Islands were given immediate life-saving assistance in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Odette

### **RECOVERING IN SAFETY AND DIGNITY**

One month after the super typhoon's landfall, displaced families are determined to begin rebuilding their homes and lives despite lingering protection risks compounded further by the resurgence of the pandemic

### **YOUR SUPPORT WAS THEIR LIFELINE**

The solidarity of UNHCR donors like you, campaigners, partners, and humanitarian workers have helped us bring life-saving interventions to areas hardest hit by the super typhoon

Access to utilities such as electricity and water remains out of reach for affected communities, particularly those living in islands and coastal areas. With your support, we will continue to meet the most pressing needs of those forced to flee by Super Typhoon Rai, particularly the most vulnerable elderly, women, and children in the Caraga region. © UNHCR/Elson Monato



Two days before Christmas, UNHCR reached the severely affected island barangays of Lisondra and Buenavista in Surigao City to deliver solar lamps, shelter-grade and fire retardant tarpaulins, and mosquito nets. The damage brought by Super Typhoon Rai left many homeless and out in the cold. These items help reinforce shelter and protect displaced communities, particularly women and children, who are exposed to greater protection risks due to the absence of lighting and the lack of room partitions in evacuation centers. © UNHCR/Elson Monato

**Dear valued donor,**

We thank you for your commitment and generosity as we begin 2022, followed by another year that saw global tests and underscored the need for international cooperation.

The series of crises in the Philippines and around the globe has challenged every aspect of UNHCR's work to stay and deliver for those forced to flee – another year of the global pandemic, the fires in Bangladesh, the insecurity in Afghanistan, the climate crisis compounding the struggles of forced displacement, and most recently, Typhoon Rai (Odette), which has brought devastation in many parts of the Philippines in the middle of the Christmas season.

In this newsletter, we share how your commitment has enabled UNHCR to respond immediately to the needs of those displaced by the typhoon. We witnessed an outpour of concern and additional support in last few days of the year, and we thank you for sharing your warmth to the communities most impacted by the climate crisis.

The stories of displaced families who have survived Typhoon Rai are testament to how your generosity has brought life-saving assistance, protection, and hope in the darkest of times.

**Their determination to recover and rebuild despite the challenges they continue to face is as inspiring as your commitment to journey with them every step of the way.**

With all that has been in the past year, and with hope for what lies ahead in the next one, thank you for remaining to be our partner in addressing generational challenges and rising to the occasion to come to the aid of the forcibly displaced.

**Maraming salamat,  
Your UNHCR Philippines family**

# Super Typhoon Rai (Odette) Emergency Response

## 16 December 2021

Super Typhoon Rai (Odette) brought torrential rains, violent winds, landslides, and storm surges in the provinces of Surigao del Norte and Dinagat Islands in Mindanao, in five provinces of Visayas, and in the island of Palawan in Luzon. In the Caraga region where the typhoon made its landfall, an estimated 255,000 persons fled their homes to seek safer shelters in evacuation higher ground.



## Week 1

Days before Christmas, and despite logistical challenges in ground zero, UNHCR and partners worked round the clock to bring shelter-grade tarpaulins, solar lamps, and mosquito nets to give immediate assistance and protection to severely affected island barangays in Surigao City. The need for emergency shelters were high. Tarpaulins were also provided to the local government for the communal spaces where IDPs are staying.



## Week 3

Thus far, 1,000 solar lamps, 1,000 shelter-grade tarpaulins, 1,000 mosquito nets, and 200 reinforced plastic tarpaulins have been provided to the most affected communities, particularly in the hardest hit island barangays of Surigao City and Siargao. UNHCR continues to monitor the living conditions of displaced families, as well as any threats to their safety.



## First 48 hrs

On December 18<sup>th</sup>, UNHCR responded to the government's request to augment the humanitarian response specifically the provision of non-food core relief items. UNHCR deployed its Emergency Response Team to Caraga Region, bringing a truckload of tarpaulins, mosquito nets, and solar lamps.



The team is also tasked to provide technical and operation support to the government and assess the immediate needs of the affected families.

UNHCR was the first UN agency to reach the Emergency Operations Center of DSWD Caraga.



## Week 2

Holidays aside, UNHCR continued its life-saving work. Our support to the government extended to information management and coordination of humanitarian actors to ensure a targeted and equitable distribution of aid. We mobilised our community of givers to support our emergency response as needs are on the rise.



## Week 4

Joint protection monitoring continues to determine the psychosocial needs and subsequent interventions needed by affected communities. UNHCR is committed to work with displaced communities to aid in their early recovery, promote and advocate durable solutions to their displacement, and enable them to become self-reliant.

# Recovering in Safety and Dignity

One month after Super Typhoon Rai, displaced families in Caraga Region are determined to begin rebuilding their homes and their lives, after losing their homes, belongings, and livelihoods to the storm.

As of 9 January 2022, an estimated 14,000 families remain in evacuation centers and another 8,000 are hosted by relatives in homes where health protocols are compromised. Access to utilities such as electricity and water remains out of reach for affected communities, particularly those in islands and coastal areas. As displacement prolongs, the elderly, women, and children are particularly vulnerable to protection risks, including gender-based violence.

Despite the challenges they continue to face, displaced families are determined to recover. Thank you for journeying with them every step of the way.



**ROSE ANNE**  
Dapa, Siargao

**“We want to do something, too. We don’t want to just rely on government assistance. We just need help with livelihood and our houses, even just one piece of corrugated iron [for roofing], one tarp, we would happily accept... We will rise again. That’s what I’m looking forward to because our lives won’t end with Typhoon Odette. While we’re still alive, we’ll continue to strive.”**

**“When it rains, we can’t sleep. We just sit awake because of the holes in the roof,”** says Rose Anne, who vividly remembers how very different their experience of Super Typhoon Rai (Odette) was from storms in the past. While the community is used to rainfall and winds from other typhoons that shook their roofs, Typhoon Odette brought total devastation to their barangay and exposed them to different vulnerabilities – from having no light and shelter, to losing their livelihood. She also worries for her two young children who cry at night because of the lack of light and the swarms of mosquitoes.

In spite of all this, Rose Anne believes strongly in their resilience and their sense of community. Days before the super typhoon made landfall in Siargao, their barangay officials ordered an early evacuation. One house in their community hosted some families and served as an evacuation center during the landfall.

With the generous and urgent help sent by donors and supporters, Rose Anne and other families received life-saving assistance in the form of shelter-grade tarpaulins, solar lamps and mosquito nets. She is grateful and hopes that the same kind of assistance reaches other communities in need. Even during this difficult time, Rose Anne with her firm resolve is rallying for the recovery of her community to stand up on their own and pick up the pieces after the tragedy.



**“Thank you for this solar lamp, it helps my children sleep at night. They get scared because they know this is not our home, we’re in a different place... We hope you can reach many more families because many more need help.”**

**MANILYN**  
General Luna, Siargao

When they pre-emptively evacuated to a safer place at the onset of the super typhoon, Manilyn was only able to bring a few pieces of clothing and her children’s certificates of live birth. **“My heart ached when we saw that there was nothing to come home to. Everything we worked hard for is gone,”** she shared. With their home totally destroyed, they are now temporarily staying with relatives in a cramped space with no electricity.

Manilyn is grateful for the solar lamp, which keeps them safe and gives them a sense of home.



**“For our children, we want them to go back to schooling. We hope we can recover. We hope Siargao will rise again.”**

**MARIA MORENA**  
General Luna, Siargao

In her 53 years, Maria Morena recalls other typhoons like Ike (Nita) and Haiyan (Yolanda), but she has never experienced anything as devastating as Super Typhoon Rai (Odette). Their home has been left in ruins, and despite many challenges, Maria Morena and her family are eager to gain back a sense of normalcy and start rebuilding.



**“We survived, but if one of our family members did not make it, we would go crazy with worry, thinking about our house, the safety of our family, where to find food.”**

**GINA**  
Lisondra, Surigao City

Super Typhoon Rai left Gina and her family with nothing – it swept away their home and destroyed their fishing boats, which they rely on for their livelihood. They have temporarily taken shelter in her mother-in-law’s home – a limited space that they have to share with a PWD family member. They are now using the core relief items given by UNHCR to reinforce their shelter and as protection from the elements.

As they slowly rebuild from what was left behind, Gina chooses to count her blessings and is grateful that her entire family survived the typhoon’s wrath.



**“We hope things go back to normal soon. I am very grateful for this solar lamp because it helps me move around safely at night.”**

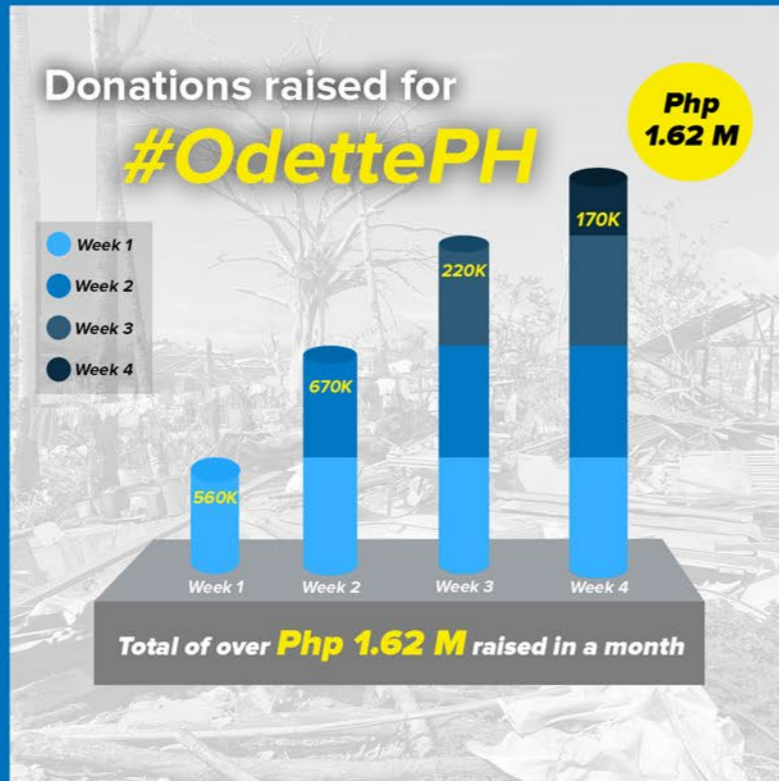
**MARICRIS**  
General Luna, Siargao

Maricris is 9 months pregnant with her fifth child. She takes care of her four young children while her husband is out fishing. With power still yet to be restored in Siargao island a month after the super typhoon, life has been extra challenging for them as they recover, especially now that she is due to give birth.

# Your support is their lifeline

When we were excitedly looking forward to a Christmas to spend with families, December came hard to families in the Caraga region. Since the typhoon wrought havoc, they are now plunged in a desperate situation where every day is a struggle to survive.

We turned to you. Your generosity kept them warm, protected from the elements, and fuels the hopes to recovery. Thank you for being their lifeline.



When Super Typhoon Rai (Odette) ravaged parts of the Philippines so close to Christmas, the student members of De La Salle – Model United Nations Community quickly adjusted their plans and organized a raffle for the benefit of families displaced by the typhoon. They managed to raise PHP 10,000 in just five days, with the generous support from their peers, families, friends, and networks inside and outside the Lasallian community.

“Our hope is to help the victims have a sense of hope that they will recover and thrive once more. No matter how destructive, typhoons cannot be greater than the spirit of a Filipino”

- De La Salle - Model United Nations Community Batch 2021-2022

As an organization focused on learning about and supporting United Nations organizations, they saw the opportunity to fundraise for UNHCR's Emergency Response as a blessing.

“As Lasallians, we believe in demonstrating our core value of **service** by reaching out to marginalized communities, especially the forcibly displaced families served by UNHCR. Beyond the reputation as people of privilege, we're sincerely and innately people of **passion to serve**.”

Members: Rochelle Rodriguez and Whistler Uy with the guidance of Romjin Miller (DLSMUNCom President) and Lanz Chua (DLSMUNCom Executive Vice President), along with the co-organizers namely Nicole Beltran, Althea Dizon, Keindyl Bongado, Nadine Chua, Arrabella Lumanglas, Sherina Peña, Ericka Sanchez, Francine Gañgan, Adrielle Peñacerrada, Jacqueline Galo, Kenneth Julio, Martina Torres, Eunice Lao, Clara Revilla, and Rian Riguera



HO HO HOME

De La Salle – Model United Nations Community



Lester Abonales

Face-to-Face Campaigner

“Fundraising for Odette can be an arduous task because of the pandemic but being a **Yolanda survivor** myself, I could easily share my personal experiences to every potential donor. Despite the situation, we regularly meet a lot of people who are encouraged to aid our fellow kababayans and who are willing to share a portion of their blessings to others. **It warms my heart to witness that helping is not measured by your economic status but by how big your heart is.** I'm always delighted to share that with the help of organizations like UNHCR, Filipinos can overcome any battles and rise from the ashes.”



Jasmine Cruz

Donor Care Intern

“Despite the severity of the natural calamities that strike our country every year, I realize that it's difficult to envision any other population being as resilient and as upbeat as Filipinos. **Appealing for support during a pandemic wasn't simple but every donor I've spoken with made it so easy regardless of their situation, knowing their overwhelming desire to help those affected by typhoon Odette is heart-warming.** I am happy to encounter reassuring supporters who readily share when they can despite of their status in life. Every Filipino's heart is truly 'waterproof'.”



Elizabeth Valmorla

Emergency Response Coordinator, ACCORD

“When we went to Brgy. Danawan, an island barangay in Surigao, just before we reach the shores, you can already see the devastation. From afar, you can see fallen trees or without leaves, wrecked boats, and debris everywhere. Seeing them survive the calamity, I was filled thoughts on how they will be able to live through the coming days.”

The day UNHCR distributed the relief items was the happiest day – for the communities and for us who helped facilitate the distribution. Kahit malayo sila ay nakapag-abot ng tulong dito sa mga apektado ng bagyong Odette. Ang araw na 'yun ay masaya para sa beneficiary at para sa akin din personally dahil nakita ko silang masaya. **May mga luhang tumulo mula sa mga nanay pero alam mong luha 'yun ng saya lalo na 'yung alam nilang may plastic sheet tayo dahil hindi na sila matutulog na nakaupo.** Masaya akong naibaot ko ang tulong mula sa iba't ibang donors at iba't ibang individuals na nagbigay ng kanilang resources at tulong. I thought to myself, “worth it naman yung hard work.”

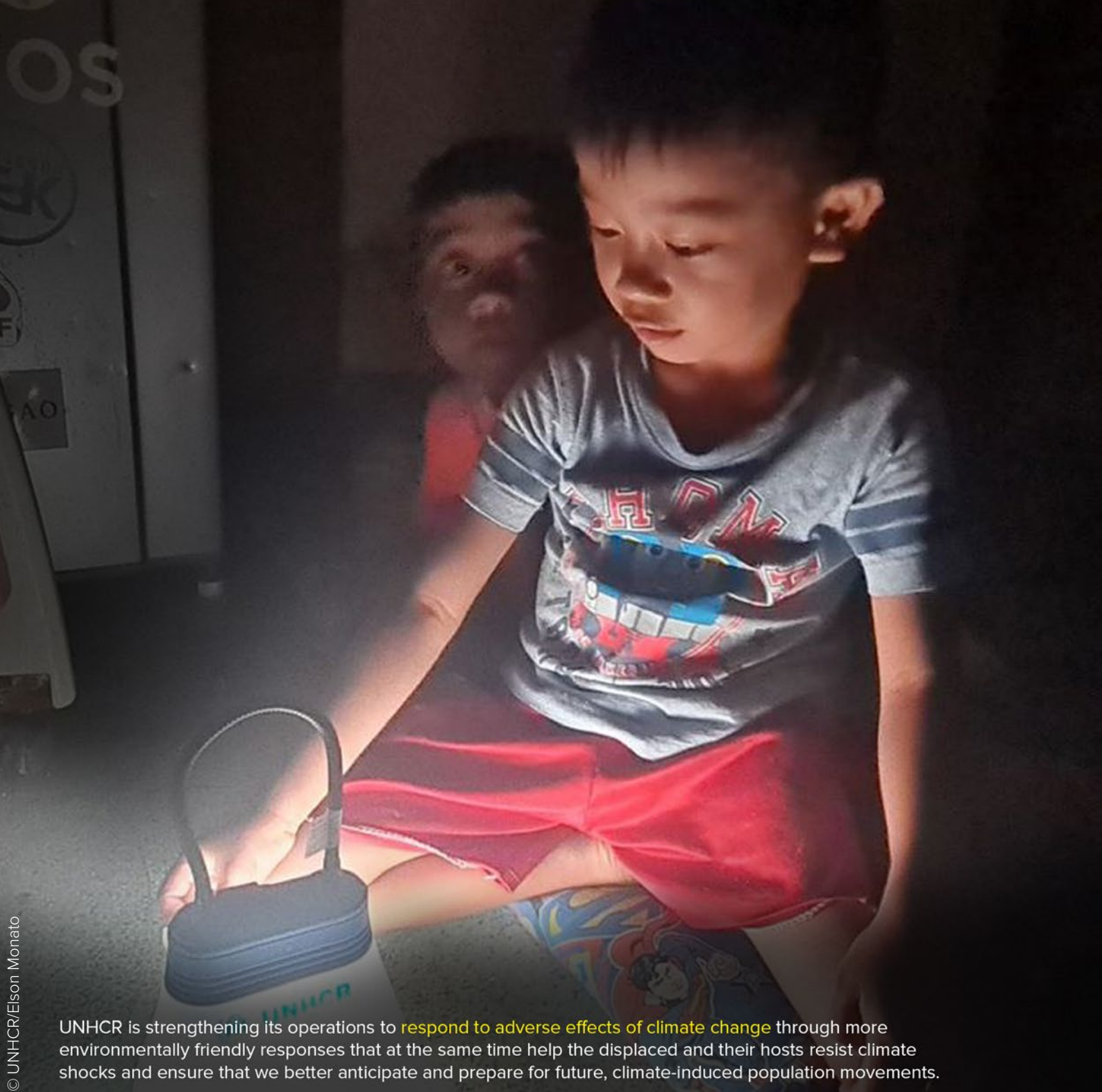


Elson Monato

Field Protection Associate

“In Siargao, mahirap ang sitwasyon; devastated masyado yung isla. When I arrived, it was difficult for me to see their situation and witness how Typhoon Odette destroyed the island. It reminded me of the situation back in 2013 with Typhoon Yolanda. On the other hand, I was also happy to see that there weren't as many casualties, although **you can witness the devastation in the communities**, affecting their houses, their livelihoods. Nakakapanglumo, especially when you see the more vulnerable ones like children, women, the elderly.”

But what stood out for me as we talked to the communities is a young mother who told me, “**just support us. Tulungan niyo kaming makabangon, makapanimula muli, at kakayanin namin.**” Masaya akong marinig na full of hope pa rin ang mga na-apektuhan ng bagyo and that they still look forward to recover at makabangon, through their own efforts.



UNHCR is strengthening its operations to **respond to adverse effects of climate change** through more environmentally friendly responses that at the same time help the displaced and their hosts resist climate shocks and ensure that we better anticipate and prepare for future, climate-induced population movements.



## THE CLIMATE CRISIS IS A HUMAN CRISIS

Thank you for helping us protect the most vulnerable.

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