

STY Rai (Odette) Aftermath

Emergency Situation Report

Reporting Period: 06 – 28 February 2022, Issue No. 7

CURRENT SITUATION

Over 50 days after the devastating landfall of Super Typhoon (STY) Rai (Odette) in the country, the affected population continues to bear the brunt of the aftermath of the typhoon.

The province of Southern Leyte which is composed of 19 municipalities, was heavily impacted by STY Rai, specifically those areas along the coastlines. As a result, it has been identified as one of the priority areas by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in its Humanitarian Needs and Priorities that was launched and recalibrated on 24 December 2021 and 2 February 2022, respectively. Based on the report of the Disaster Response Operation Monitoring and Information Center (DROMIC) as of 28 February 2022, there are 119,412 affected families (462,154 individuals). Of the total affected population, 8,797 families (36,130 individuals) remain displaced and are currently staying either in 74 the evacuation centers or at homes of relatives.

It was also reported that IDPs in the Municipality of Libagon who were previously staying in evacuation centers already returned to their damaged houses. In Barangay Lipanto of Saint Bernard, barangay officials launched an Adopt a Neighborhood Program, allowing the displaced to live with host families who are not their relatives.

In Mindanao, the extent of damage is highly visible in the province of Dinagat Islands and in the Province of Surigao del Norte, including Siargao Island. According to the government's DROMIC report dated 24 February 2022, the affected population has reached up to 394,427 families (approximately 1.5 million individuals). Out of these numbers, 1,039 families (around

4,145 individuals) are still displaced and are currently staying in 82 evacuation centers. In the aftermath of the typhoon, most of the affected families have immediately built makeshift shelters out of salvaged materials from the debris left by the storm.

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) brought damage to their homes, livelihood, infrastructural facilities including access roads, electric connections and other utilities, health facilities, schools, dock in port, and others. After two months, the affected population is looking forward to continued food assistance, support for reconstruction of shelters and recovery of livelihood. Evidently, there is a huge gap to fill to accelerate recovery and ensure safe and dignified living of the affected population. Furthermore, the implementation of the policy on non-rebuilding of structures within the legal easements of Siargao Island and Southern Leyte or the No-Build Zone (NBZ) policy has raised concerns among the affected families who face the risk of being evicted from their habitual residences.

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 to the Government in protection coordination and information management.

Caraga Region Response



The Tanod Post in Brgy. Bilabid, one of the island barangays in Surigao City, is the only building that withstood the wrath of STY Rai (Odette) among other structures that were originally standing near this island barangay's wharf.

© UNHCR Philippines / Jalandie Pangaliam



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 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 and stilt houses. Due to this, people are highly exposed to the elements which poses potential adverse impact on their 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 Burgos, Dapa, Del Carmen, Pilar, and Sta. Monica of Siargao Island as well as in Libjo municipality of Dinagat Islands, and some of the island barangays of Surigao City. Thousands of houses in these areas were reported to be severely damaged by the typhoon. While some of the affected families have returned to their places of origin, there are also families who have remained in the evacuation centers while some opted to stay with their relatives. These homebased IDPs remain to be unaccounted for.
3. 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.
4. 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 the said families.



HOUSING, LAND, AND PROPERTY (HLP) ISSUES

1. The implementation of the government's No-Build-Zone (NBZ) policy that started 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. For instance, according to reports, some LGUs (e.g. Burgos Municipality) have already started the strict implementation of the said policy, resulting to residents not being able to rebuild their houses and return. While some municipalities are still allowing repair and construction of temporary shelters within the NBZ, IDPs were reportedly asked to sign a waiver that confirms that their houses are made of light materials.
2. 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.
3. According to reports, some IDPs sheltered in the DPWH Regional Center ECs are facing the risk of being evicted. Most of the IDPs expressed the need for emergency shelter support for them to repair their damaged houses and help them to return.
4. 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 NBZ policy.

PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



THREAT TO LIFE SAFETY AND SECURITY

1. People in makeshift shelters that were built out of salvaged materials are exposed to safety and security risks as well as health risks due to the inadequate protection that the temporary shelters could offer.
2. The return of IDPs prior to clearing of debris continue to pose risks 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 got cuts and scrape wounds from the debris. According to reports, clearing of areas is slowly progressing.
3. Several barangays during the reporting period remain flooded. These are Brgy. Caridad and Bailan of Pilar, Brgy Corazon and Libertad of General Luna, Brgy. Garcia of Sta Monica, Barangay Bitaug of Burgos, and Brgy. Bongdo of San Benito. Given that these barangays are located at the downstream, floodwater from the upstream barangays flow into the area. The DPWH is still in the process of resolving the issue. A site visit was conducted by DPWH.
4. The need for regular police visibility and support to Camp Coordination and Camp management (CCCM) has also been raised to address minor conflicts among IDPs in evacuation centers. According to reports, sectoral issues and concerns of IDPs at the evacuation center are not reported and addressed in a timely manner.
5. Displaced families in Barangay 5 National High School at General Luna municipality were threatened when some unidentified individuals banged at the doors of the classrooms being used as temporary shelter and started a commotion within the perimeter of the school.



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. According to the farmers, given that there is no assurance to recover the damaged crops, the most viable option for them is replanting, thus support for farm inputs/ coconut seedlings and tools are highly needed. On the other hand, most of the fisherfolks reported that their fishing gears and equipment have been damaged.
2. Most of those who used to work for the tourism industry have lost their jobs due to the major damages brought about by the typhoon to the resort structures which may take few years to be restored.
3. The NHA provided cash assistance that was coursed through the PLGU of Surigao del Norte. However, IDPs reported that the amount was not enough for all the affected families, hence the distribution was instead channeled through the LGUs prioritizing the most vulnerable and needy families. A total of 11 municipalities were able to benefit from this cash assistance. Meanwhile, according to reports, the Provincial government through the PSWD also provided cash assistance amounting to PhP1,000 and/or PhP5,000 depending on the family size prioritizing the most vulnerable households.



ACCESS TO FOOD AND NUTRITION

1. There are many families who have difficulty purchasing their own food due to loss of livelihood. Some IDPs reported that emergency assistance is no longer regularly provided. Some food assistance in the reporting period only prioritizes families in severely -affected areas only.
2. Lack of nutritious food pose potential decline on the nutrition of affected population especially among children. The food assistance provided by the LGU are very limited and mostly consisting of canned goods.

PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



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. Drinking water from refilling station in most of the affected areas costs Php 35 –Php 40 per liter. Based on the latest coordination meeting, DSWD-CARAGA committed to follow up on this concern with the Department of Trade and Industries (DTI).
2. Families who had returned and rebuilt their houses in Barangay Poblacion (Boulevard area), and Barangay Poblacion in Pilar and Burgos municipalities had difficulty in accessing sanitary toilets. Due to confusion on NBZ, 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 exposes them to potential risks especially during night time due to the lack of electricity and adequate lighting in the sites.



ACCESS TO LIFELINES

1. Electricity remains unavailable in most part 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 have no access to electricity. IDPs need to pay Php 20 - Php 60 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 for financial help and other assistance from relatives and friends outside the typhoon-affected areas and vice versa. 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 barangay of Catadman, Surigao City is damaged, causing more difficulties in the delivery of assistance to the barangay.



ACCESS TO HEALTH

1. 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 addressed by health workers and parents resorted to self-medication to cure their children.
2. Barangay Caub, an island barangay in Del Carmen municipality, lacks maternity and birthing clinic. IDPs have to travel to the mainland particularly in Dapa municipality 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.

Region VIII (Southern Leyte) Response



UNHCR talks to one of the displaced families in Libagon municipality in Southern Leyte province who has returned to their habitual residence and built a temporary shelter from the remaining structure of their house with plastic sheets as temporary roofing. Shelter is one of the issues faced by displaced families in the community as most of the houses are located within the coastlines and were identified as part of the No Build Zones.

© MSWDO Libagon



PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



ACCESS TO SHELTERS

1. As of this reporting period, around 34,000 houses were totally damaged and 17,000 houses were partially damaged. Among the seven priority municipalities (Anahawan, Liloan, Limasawa, Pintuyan, San Francisco, San Ricardo and Saint Bernard) for the shelter assistance program of the National Housing Authority, as of 17 February 2022, only the 1,195 families with totally damaged houses in San Francisco were able to receive the shelter assistance.
2. In Libagon municipality, as shared by the authorities, the IDPs returned to their damaged houses. The IDPs prefer to stay in their damaged houses rather than staying in evacuation centers with limited number of available latrines/toilets. In one of the evacuations centers in Saint Bernard, the IDPs have been informed that the classes will resume in March and, thus, they will have to vacate the evacuation center. Moreover, some have already returned to their damaged houses along the coastline and built makeshift dwellings exposing them to further risks and harm, specifically during heavy rains.
3. Although not heavily affected, the Mamanwa tribe, an indigenous people's group living in the area expressed concern regarding access to shelter. They live in a village managed by the international humanitarian organization Korean Food for the Hungry Incorporated. However, the organization imposes a policy that only 10 individuals could dwell in the village housing. Those who will exceed the quota being accommodated are forced to vacate with no definite solutions regarding access to either temporary or permanent shelter.
4. There have been reports from humanitarian workers that there are no camp managers in some of the evacuation centers.



HOUSING, LAND, AND PROPERTY (HLP) ISSUES

1. The 20 meters No-Build Zone (NBZ) easement from the coastline, and 3 meters for urban areas will be implemented, but no specific relocation site for the IDPs had been identified, specifically those houses situated in between the coastline and mountainside.
2. 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. There are already existing cases in Amparo, Macrohon where IDPs returned to their place of residence and built temporary shelters even in danger zones and barangay officials allowing IDPs to rebuild their shelters in adjusted NBZ (e.g. 3 meters from coastline instead of 20 meters). IDPs are advised to look for their own relocation sites with no specific guidelines from the local government units. One barangay in Saint Bernard reported that they have a relocation site but will not be able to accommodate all the displaced families who need to relocate.
3. The Southern Leyte Provincial Government wanted to expedite the shelter assistance programmes and will prioritize those who meet the LGU requirements (e.g. those with available lands).
4. Absence of LGU guidelines or legal framework on the relocation could cause tension between the landowners and IDPs. There have been reports in Sto. Rosario, Macrohon and Lipanto, Saint Bernard of landowners refusing to lease their land to tenants. IDPs cannot rebuild their homes or repair those that have been partially damaged.



ACCESS TO LIFELINES

1. There is limited access to communication as only 60% of electricity has been restored as of 12 February and is concentrated on main highways and municipal poblacions / administrative centers.

¹Based on the results of the interview and discussion with government interlocutors and humanitarian organizations and protection monitoring.

PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



ACCESS TO LIVELIHOOD

1. As expressed by the authorities, access to livelihood is one of the main concerns. Once the distribution of relief ends by 25 March in view of the election ban, the authorities may not be able to address the issue of food security.
2. In Barangays Amparo and Rizal in Macrohon, only boats insured by Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC) were provided assistance for boat repair. Meanwhile, in Lipanto, Saint Bernard, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has provided assistance only to a limited number of fisherfolks.
3. While seedlings have been provided, it will take months before the crops or food products could be harvested. The coconut plantations were severely damaged by the typhoon.



ACCESS TO FOOD

1. IDPs are dependent on limited food assistance due to price increase of basic commodities and construction materials. The price of commodities had increased by 50%. The IDPs in Saint Bernard, specifically in Barangay Lipanto, prefer to receive more supply of rice rather than canned goods. They have access to the supply of fish as their EC is near the shoreline.



PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

1. An alleged case of rape has been committed by a stepfather of a child in one of the municipalities. The provincial Crisis Center has been made aware of this case.
2. In some of the barangays in Saint Bernard, some of the children have been lining up along the road to beg for food and assistance and PSWDO has been made aware of this.



ACCESS TO EDUCATION

1. Authorities shared that there is a decrease in enrollment especially at the tertiary level in view of the concerns on the transportation expenses of students.



ACCESS TO HEALTH

1. There is a report on granular lockdown in Pontana, Silago due to COVID-19 cases.
2. IDPs and affected population have expressed concerns regarding access to health services due to damaged health facilities.
3. Psychosocial support needs to be provided to the affected population and IDPs in view of the psychological distress caused by the typhoon. Government authorities has acknowledged the need to provide psychosocial support as well to government workers/staff as they have also been affected by the typhoon.



ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION

1. There have been reports of an E. coli outbreak in some barangays in Macrohon municipality (Asuncion and San Roque) and in some barangays in Malitbog and Padre Burgos municipalities.
2. In view of the limited supply of potable water, the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO) has been providing bottled water to the affected communities and IDPs as part of the food pack being distributed.



RESTORATION OF CIVIL DOCUMENTATION

1. Authorities assumed that that families with totally damaged houses, specifically those in the coastlines, would have lost their civil documentation, including PhilSys claim stubs. Saint Bernard shared that those residing in the 8 barangays which were heavily affected by the typhoon in their municipality will eventually need to restore their civil documentation.
2. The indigenous people of Mamanwa, while not heavily affected by the typhoon will need assistance on delayed registration of birth in coordination with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples.

¹Based on the results of the interview and discussion with government interlocutors and humanitarian organizations and protection monitoring.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

COORDINATION SUPPORT



IDP Protection Cluster Co-Leadership. In Caraga Region, the Tri-Cluster Coordination Platform (Protection, Food and NFI, and CCCM Clusters) led by the DSWD that was organized with the support of UNHCR has been integrated into the Regional Disaster Response Committee (RDRC). UNHCR also supports the existing platform that is the RIACAT-VAWC and RCPWG which highlights IDP Protection cum International Humanitarian Assistance.

In Region VIII, the team coordinated with the Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD) Field Office on the offer of technical assistance of UNHCR, in its capacity as the Protection Cluster lead in the Humanitarian Country Team. The DSWD Field Office formally accepted UNHCR's offer of technical support on protection coordination and monitoring, including information management. Coordination meetings were conducted with provincial authorities as well as with the regional offices of the Commission on Human Rights and Public Attorney's Office to share UNHCR's purpose and scope of deployment for the coming two months and to request for support for advocacy on any human rights-related protection concern and legal issues in the context of displacement.



Information Management Support. In Caraga Region, the UNHCR initiated Tri-Cluster Information Management System has been adopted as the official repository of all STY Odette-related data and information from all 11 clusters that DSWD is leading and monitoring. DSWD issued Advisory No. 17 on 30 December 2021, highlighting the utilization of the said Tri-Cluster 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 technical staff. UNHCR is coordinating with the other IM experts from other clusters to help maintain the IM system with the DSWD.

In Region VIII, a planning workshop with the DSWD was conducted on 18 February 2022 to give an overview of protection mainstreaming and information analysis tools. UNHCR presented the protection and information management issues on the ground. UNHCR will design the module for the 9 March 2022 session based on the output of the workshop. DSWD, with the support of UNHCR, will roll out the training at the provincial and municipal levels.



© UNHCR Philippines / Iris Tayag

In collaboration with the Global Protection Cluster, UNHCR facilitated a workshop on protection mainstreaming and information management to the staff of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in Tacloban City.



Inter-Agency Coordination. In Caraga Region, UNHCR participated virtually in the International Humanitarian Assistance Cluster meeting on 10 February 2022. In the said meeting, UNHCR encouraged the cluster members to reflect activities in the 3W through the RDRC IM system that is launched at the regional level.

In Region VIII, UNHCR participated (face-to-face) in the Emergency Shelter meeting on 14 February 2022. While UNHCR has no specific programming on shelter, it will ensure protection monitoring to ensure the centrality of protection in the humanitarian intervention in Southern Leyte. Also, UNHCR participated in the 3rd joint Protection Working Group/ Provincial Council on the Protection of Children (PCPC) and Provincial Council on Anti-Trafficking and Anti-Violence against women and their Children on 17 February 2022. UNHCR's proposal for capacity building activities at the provincial and municipal levels has been adopted by the body.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

Protection Monitoring and Mainstreaming. In Caraga Region, UNHCR conducted monitoring in the evacuation sites in the Municipalities of Dapa, General Luna, Pilar, and Burgos on 12-13 February 2022. UNHCR also continue to coordinate and provide technical support to its project partner, ACCORD, and CHR to monitor and report protection issues gathered in the typhoon affected areas. These issues are reported through the regular releases of 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 has 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. The release of a Thematic Bulletin is underway to highlight these issues. UNHCR had also requested support from CHR for advocacy and possible referral to concerned government agencies on any human rights related concern in the context of ongoing displacement.

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 City Social Welfare and Development Office of Surigao City, the Philippine National Police (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 indigenous 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.

Displaced families in island barangays in Surigao City such as this in Barangay Bilabid remain vulnerable as they continue to face the challenges brought about by the aftermath of the typhoon. The core relief items from UNHCR and its donors have alleviated their suffering.

© UNHCR Philippines / Jalandie Pangalilan



UNHCR is very grateful to donors who have provided contributions directly to the Philippines operation and to donors who have provided softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions to the organization: Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland.

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