



Philippines

Bangkok, 2 November 2020

SITUATION

On the morning of Sunday the 1 November 2020, the region of Bicol in the Philippines, was battered by violent winds and intense to torrential rains as super typhoon Goni (local name Rolly) made its first landfall at 4:50 AM in Bato municipality in Catanduanes. The second and third landfall were monitored in Tiwi, Albay and San Narciso, Quezon, respectively. According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), the super typhoon, considered as the world's strongest typhoon this year, had maximum sustained winds of 225 km/hr and gustiness of up to 280 km/hr and moving at 25 kph. As of 8:00 AM, Signal No. 5 was raised over the provinces of Catanduanes, Albay, and the eastern portion of Camarines Sur which placed these areas under extremely dangerous situation. Although super Typhoon Goni has slightly weakened and been downgraded to a typhoon level by PAGASA later that morning, Signal No. 4 (extreme damage potential) was still raised in several provinces/cities in Regions V (Bicol), IV-A (CALABARZON), IV-B (MIMAROPA), III (Central Luzon), and Metro Manila in NCR. According to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, a total of 96,543 families or nearly 347,000 persons were pre-emptively evacuated in seven regions. At 5:30 PM, Typhoon Goni made its 4th landfall in Lobo, Batangas with a lower intensity.

Information from the affected region, particularly Catanduanes has been difficult as communication lines are still down. Some photos and information from social media showed massive destruction brought by the super typhoon. Mudflows and floodwaters submerged villages in the towns of Daraga, Camalig and Guinobatan due to the overflowing of rivers, while severe flooding was seen in Quezon province, Batangas and other areas in Catanduanes. Albay Governor said the damaged structures include some 150 houses in a community in Guinobatan engulfed by lahar and mudflow from the Mayon volcano. By Monday, local news reported 11 casualties. During a briefing of government officials, NDRRMC executive director estimates 19.8 million Filipinos or 4.2 million households may be exposed to the weather system (based on the population count within the 60 km diameter of the super typhoon's track) while affected population may reach up to 31.9 million or 7.1 million households (within the 120-km diameter). There are 372,716 families or 1.4 million people that were affected in five regions from Central and Southern Luzon.

This super typhoon came after the onslaught of Typhoon Quinta on October 25 which affected almost 200,000 people in the same areas and leaving at least 22 casualties and four missing persons. While another tropical storm Atsani (local name: Siony), has entered the Philippine Area of Responsibility on a Sunday morning with the present typhoon with a slightly different path. These extreme weather events exacerbate the already dire situation brought by the COVID-19 pandemic to the most vulnerable and poorest Filipino families.

Since COVID-19 cases in the Philippines is still high, the government has to consider physical distancing and necessary precaution to avoid infection in the evacuation areas.

NEEDS

The typhoon has put the region in a state of crisis. The typhoon affected persons find themselves in a desperate situation, with many unmet vital humanitarian needs such as access to food, shelter materials, safe drinking water and hygiene materials, and livelihood activities.

The dire situation is further compounded for the typhoon affected people with vulnerabilities: the elderly as they have to leave their homes and stay in the evacuation centers or temporary shelters, together with other displaced families, which makes them vulnerable to acquire SARS-CoV-2 and possibly lead to health problems. There is a pressing necessity to provide immediate assistance to minimize loss of life and to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are covered first.

STAKEHOLDERS

The emergency response is currently being coordinated by NDRRMC conducts continuous monitoring and dissemination of weather forecasts and other advisories to the regional DRRM councils for further dissemination to their respective Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils (LDRRMCs). Authorities have implemented preventive evacuation through the LGUs, organize rescue teams, conduct clearing operations in some villages and towns within the typhoon track especially in coastal and low-lying areas. Declaration of State of Calamity in provinces and cities are possible in the next hours/days as the wrath of the super typhoon unfolds. International NGOs have convened through their Philippine INGO network where they will conduct a joint assessment together with UN agencies and their respective local partners. ACT Alliance members will be participating in the coordination mechanisms that will be established on the ground.

Faith-based organisations, through the Philippines FBO Forum, are coordinating their plans while sharing information from their respective constituents. PCEC-PHILRADS have posted its call for donations while Caritas Philippines have launched its Global Appeal. NCCP member churches and ecumenical partners are currently monitoring the progress of this tropical cyclone and is ready to assess its aftermath on the ground.

ACT Alliance

The humanitarian team of NCCP has been regularly disseminating weather bulletins/precautionary notices to the Regional Ecumenical Councils present in the provinces/region within the typhoon track. Currently, NCCP is also gathering situation/ disaster impact reports from the Ecumenical Disaster Response and Management Committees in the affected region. NCCP has encouraged its member churches to open their facilities as evacuation areas and pre-positioned relief items in NCR for those who will be evacuated in churches

ACT Philippines Forum has been active since 2013 and have responded to several disasters particularly typhoon and floods including typhoon Haiyan in 2013. ACT members plan to respond and raise an appeal to provide assistance based on their assessments, particularly addressing food supply and immediate physiological needs. Furthermore, ACT Alliance will engage in advocacy on the national and international level to ensure that the voices of those affected by the typhoon are amplified.

Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to the Finance Officer, Marjorie Schmidt (marjorie.schmidt@actalliance.org) with a copy to Cyra Bullecer (cyra.bullecer@actalliance.org)

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