

Situation Overview

Communities from southern Luzon and eastern Visayas continue to suffer from the devastating effects of Tropical Depression Usman, which made landfall on 29 December in Borongan, Eastern Samar. Heavy rains triggered multiple landslides and widespread flooding, which buried rice fields, homes and schools. As of 10 January, at least 140 people have died, with 28 missing, mostly due to landslides.

According to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), more than 680,000 people have been affected by the storm. Nearly 55 per cent are located primarily in the province of Camarines Sur in the Bicol Region. As of 10 January, over 1,900 homes are destroyed and more than 15,000 are damaged. The Department of Education reports that over 14,000 learners have been affected. Most of the schools in Buhi, Camarines Sur, were submerged in floodwaters, which damaged desks, textbooks and school supplies.

Agricultural losses are approaching PHP2 billion (US\$37 million), with over 56,000 farmers and fisherfolk affected, according to the Department of Agriculture and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). More than 23,000 metric tons of rice, corn and high-value crops and over 54,000 hectares of farmland are estimated to have been affected.

Government response and humanitarian coordination

DSWD together with local authorities continue to lead the humanitarian response. Fifty-eight evacuation centres remain open hosting 9,000 people, and as people begin to return to their homes, shelter and cash assistance is a concern. In addition, the Philippine Red Cross has identified water, sanitation and health related supplies, cash assistance and psychosocial support as priority needs. Many of the affected areas are low-income rural communities with homes made with lightweight material and will need assistance with livelihood and rebuilding their homes.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) reports that P83.9 million (\$1.7 million) in assistance has been provided to date by local authorities, NGOs, DSWD, Department of Health and the Office of Civil Defense. In addition to the Red Cross, local and international NGOs with operations in the affected areas have ramped up delivery of good and services, particularly in Tiwi, Albay and Iriga City, Baao, Nabua, Buhi and Sangay in Camarines Sur, which were the most impacted areas.

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