

Situation Overview

As of 24 December, more than 378,000 people are affected by the 6.9-magnitude earthquake that occurred on 15 December in Davao del Sur, Mindanao, with about one third of those affected – an estimated 108,000 people – already struck by the previous October earthquakes. The numbers are expected to rise as authorities continue to validate the number of people affected and the extent of damage caused by the earthquake.

Over 210 people are injured and 13 fatalities were reported due to the earthquake, which displaced over 131,000 people in the Region XI (Davao) and Region XII (SOCKSARGEN). Of the displaced, nearly 37,000 are staying in 58 evacuation centres, while over 94,000 are staying with host families or in open spaces, according to the Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center (DROMIC). A majority of the displaced are in the Davao Region. Many are currently camping in makeshift tents in open spaces near their homes or in evacuation centres, usually open areas near their barangay (village) hall or church, adding to displaced communities who lost their homes and have been staying in tents and evacuation centres since October. The physiological trauma of the affected population is aggravated by continuous aftershocks.

The quake also caused significant damage to buildings and infrastructure, with over 26,000 homes nearly 400 schools, and over 60 health facilities damaged, mostly in the Davao del Sur province. The damage to classrooms have affected more than 188,000 enrolled students, and an estimated PhP1.9 billion (US\$37 million) will be needed for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of damaged schools, according to the Department of Education.

According to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) latest figures, the municipalities of Hagonoy, Kiblawan, Magsaysay, Malalag, Matanao, and Padada in Davao del Sur were among the hardest hit by the December earthquake with a total of over 327,000 affected people. Magsaysay was already strongly affected by the October earthquakes which initially displaced about 40,000 people in the municipality of which 1,700 people were still seeking shelter outside their homes, when the latest earthquake struck.

Government response and humanitarian coordination

Provincial and local authorities continue to lead response efforts, assisted by the Philippine Red Cross and humanitarian partners. The Department of Social Welfare and Development is distributing food and relief assistance, with the transportation of the relief items handled by the Philippine Armed Forces. The Department of Public Welfare and Highways continue to validate the structural integrity of major roads, bridges and other public buildings. The Department of Labor and Employment has started a cash-for-work livelihood programme. As of 24 December, the Government has provided about PhP18.6 million (US\$367,000) worth of assistance to the affected families.

The Mindanao Humanitarian Team, composed of in-country UN agencies, international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations, is coordinating with provincial and local authorities and conducted a joint [rapid assessment of impact and needs](#) together with local authorities in the most affected municipalities. Assessment teams identified displaced, vulnerable and low-income households, indigenous populations in high-risk areas and those with psychosocial trauma from repeated strong earthquakes as those that require immediate assistance. Priority needs reported are shelter and camp management assistance, with many displaced people forming spontaneous camps; potable water and WASH assistance, and psychosocial support. The assessment [report](#) also cited access issues due to damaged roads and bridges to barangays (villages) of predominantly indigenous communities. Livelihoods have also been interrupted, with seaweed farmers not been able to harvest or fish since late October, according to [IOM's displacement report](#). As displacement becomes protracted for those who have lost their homes from both October and December earthquakes, affected communities and especially women, girls, boys and at-risk groups are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation in evacuation centres, and protection must be integrated in humanitarian response to ensure their safety and security.

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