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Information bulletin Palau:Typhoon Bopha

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation.

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The situation

Between 27 November and 2 December, the National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) issued more than ten detailed public announcements warning residence of Typhoon Bopha's approach, precautionary measures to be taken, and the opening of the evacuation

centres. Before the typhoon started, residents boarded-up homes while 45 evacuation centres opened across the country where many families sought shelter over the weekend in anticipation of the typhoon. The National Emergency Committee declared "Condition 1" on the afternoon of 2 December, when typhoon force winds were expected to hit within 12 hours, and restricted movements of the population.

The typhoon passed south of the larger islands of Palau in the early hours of 3 December 2012 with winds up to 250 kilometres per hour. The affected areas include Koror, Angaur, Peleliu, Babeldoab, Kayangel and Sonsorol.

By noon of 3 December, the government declared "Condition 4: normal conditions" allowing evacuees to return to their homes and begin assessing the damage and cleaning up debris. Electricity was switched off at 6:00pm on 2 December and is now being restored in Koror where internet, mobile services and land lines are operational. Many other parts of the country remain without power and disrupted communications are being restored.



Residents looking at their damaged house caused by Typhoon Bopha. Photo: IFRC/David O'Meara

Flights were suspended at Roman Tmetuchl International Airport but the airport was re-opened on 3 December. All main roads in Koror are open. The north-east coast road has sustained damages due to the storm surge. The hospital is open and has reported no major disruptions or health issues. Critical patients had been safely evacuated over the weekend to the old President's Office.

To date, no casualties or major injuries have been reported. Initial damage assessments, still ongoing, show 92 houses as completely destroyed and 59 houses with major damage. Schools, other public buildings, crops and infrastructure have also been destroyed.

The President of Palau declared a State of Emergency on 5 December and Congress authorized USD10 million and appropriated USD5 million for response and recovery efforts. No international assistance has been requested. The Government of Palau has established a Recovery Task Force to oversee the response. This includes the provision of housing to those who lost their only residence and to restore services such as electricity, water and sewage systems in the affected communities. The accelerated programme proposes to alleviate some of the suffering before Christmas.



A damaged house in Palau caused by the severe winds and heavy rains. **Photo:** IFRC/David O'Meara.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the tropical storm made landfall, the Palau Red Cross Society (PRCS) has been on alert and met with NEMO. On 29 November, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Pacific Regional Office deployed a delegate (acting disaster management coordinator) to support PRCS contingency planning activities in preparation for the approaching tropical storm. The delegate has been working alongside PRCS and NEMO to assist with coordination of preparedness and response activities.

To date, PRCS volunteers have assisted with the distribution of non-food items (sheets, towels, tarpaulins, soap, jerry cans and hurricane lamps, etc). PRCS has also distributed clean-up kits (spades, rakes, crowbars and disinfectant) as communal tools to the eastern states of Ngaraard, Ngiwal and Melekeok. Assessment and distribution is to be undertaken in the southern islands of Anguar and Peleliu on 8 December. The PRCS will continue to distribute non-food items and assess the damage done by Typhoon Bopha.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **Micronesia Red Cross Society:** Suzie G Yoma, Executive Director; office phone: +691 320 7077; email: mracs@mail.fm.
- **Palau Red Cross Society:** Mary-Anne Delemel, Acting Executive Director, +680 488 5780/5781/3166; email: palredcross@palaunet.com.
- **IFRC regional office:** Acting Regional Disaster Management Coordinator, David O'Meara; office phone: +679 331 1855; email: david.omeara@ifrc.org.
- **IFRC Zone:** Operations Coordinator, Christine Strater; office phone: +60 3 9207 5814; mobile phone: +6012 213 0149; email: christine.strater@ifrc.org.

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#) and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.