



International Medical Corps staff providing much-needed supplies in a Philippines village after Typhoon Haiyan in 2013.

FAST FACTS

- On November 1, Super Typhoon Goni struck the Philippines with sustained winds of 140 mph and gusts as high as 195 mph.
- The typhoon killed more than 20 people and displaced more than 517,000.
- The typhoon made landfall on Catanduanes Island before striking the main island of Luzon, which houses the capital city, Manila.
- Rapid assessments of damages and impact are ongoing; some areas remain unreachable.

On November 1 at 4:50 a.m. local time, Super Typhoon Goni, known locally as Rolly, struck the Philippines and caused widespread destruction. Upon impact on the main island of Luzon, the storm packed 10-minute sustained winds of 140 miles per hour (mph) and maximum sustained winds that reached 195 mph.¹ Over the course of two days, Goni caused significant damage to the surrounding area, with volcanic mudflows, flooding and wind damaging nearly 80% of shelters there. About 2.1 million people were affected by the storm, with more than 517,000 people displaced. So far, 25 people have been reported dead as a result of the storm, with 399 injured, with those numbers expected to rise in the coming days as more information comes through. Local governments are reporting that more than 170,000 houses were either damaged or destroyed, and 11 towns remain inaccessible.

The typhoon's violent winds and torrential rains blew away roofs, toppled structures and caused severe flooding and landslides throughout the Bicol Region, including Albay province, which is home to the active Mayon Volcano, where [lahar deposits](#) on its slopes liquefied into mud flows and buried at least 300 houses in Guinobatan.

The typhoon has caused substantial damage—on the order of \$230 million—across the island of Luzon, where the capital city of Manila is located. The damage includes extensive damage to health facilities, schools and essential services. The storm damaged thousands of schools and caused damage to telecommunications and electrical infrastructure that will likely take months to repair. According to the Philippine government, 67 health facilities were damaged, including the government's main COVID-19 laboratory, based in Bicol. COVID-19 testing has since been suspended, and cold-chain management has been affected. In addition, evacuation centers are overcrowded and lack sufficient access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure. Much of the affected population are now forced to rely on surface water sources, which are much more likely to be contaminated by flood and sea water. The lack of testing, paired with lack of proper sanitation and hygiene equipment, could lead to an increased risk for the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

On November 4, the Philippine government formally requested assistance from humanitarian agencies, stating that it would allow assessment teams into the affected areas without quarantine, as long as they follow strict health protocols. However, assessment teams have thus far still been blocked from entering a number of affected areas. There are hopes that this will change in the coming days.

¹ <https://reliefweb.int/disaster/tc-2020-000214-phi>

International Medical Corps' Response

International Medical Corps' team members in the Philippines are currently meeting with partners and other INGOs in the area, and is working to conduct assessments and identify needs in affected areas. Thus far, progress on assessments has been slow, due to restrictions on travel imposed based on concerns about the spread of COVID-19. The national government initially said it would wave travel restrictions for humanitarian workers, but restrictions by local governments have thus far remained a hindrance for first responders.

Initial assessments conducted by other organizations that already were in affected areas have so far shown needs in evacuation centers, which are congested and have limited WASH facilities. These problems are compounded by crowding and the potential for the spread of COVID-19. Power and communication are down in many communities, while other infrastructure—including water systems, roads, etc.—has sustained significant damage.

As International Medical Corps staff completes their assessments, we are focusing on possible interventions that will increase the capacity of the badly damaged healthcare system and prevent the spread of COVID-19 among the displaced population. Likely interventions include providing hygiene kits, cleaning and disinfection supplies, personal protective equipment (PPE), generators for rural health units and mental health and psychosocial support, including psychological first aid. Initial efforts will likely focus on municipalities in Albay and Camarines Sur provinces, which were severely affected by the typhoon, though the situation is fluid and our response approach will shift depending on where the need is greatest.

