



## ShelterBox establishes its first operations base outside the UK in time for typhoons in Philippines

**New Philippines base in the path of Typhoon Alley has 'already improved our ability to respond to this season's storms'**

Disaster relief agency ShelterBox set up its new operations base in the Philippines in time for tropical storms Kai Tak and Tembin.

A team from ShelterBox has been working with the Philippines Government and the Rotary Club of Biliran Island, focusing on the municipalities of Caibiran, Almeria, Naval and Biliran which suffered serious flooding, mudslides and loss of homes and livelihoods when two months of rainfall fell within two days. ShelterBox aid distributions have been carried out on the island of Biliran, providing families with vital weather-resilient tents, shelter kits for weatherproofing damaged properties, and other desperately needed items including solar lights, water carriers, blankets and mosquito nets.



The more than 7,000 islands of the Philippines sit right in the firing line of one of the world's most deadly storm systems, known by meteorologists as 'Typhoon Alley'. On average, ShelterBox responds to disasters here around twice a year and it is intended that the new office 'ShelterBox Operations Philippines' sited at Cebu, the first of its kind for the UK-based

organisation, will help get vital emergency shelter to vulnerable families even more quickly.

Dave Ray, an experienced member of the UK-based Operations team, has recently returned from Biliran Island, and says, '**Since Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 the Philippine Government has strongly favoured agencies that are registered and sited in the Philippines, as well as those sourcing their aid from within the country. ShelterBox Operations Philippines, with its aid supplies for 1,000 to 2,000 families, has already improved our ability to respond to this season's storms, and when it is fully staffed and operational later this year its local expertise will make us even more efficient and effective.'**

**‘Of course, it was always likely we would be called into action before our new office was fully open. The prepositioned aid items and local contacts were already there, and our response team was on the ground with Rotary partners able to act faster because of our new in-country status. A new Philippines project Office Development Manager has also joined the organisation recently.’**

ShelterBox is a UK based international disaster relief charity specialising in emergency shelter. Since its start in 2000 it has helped more than one million people worldwide rebuild their lives, and it has fundraising affiliates cross the world. However, whilst ShelterBox pre-



positions aid in storage hubs such as Panama, Dubai and Malaysia, all operational activity including deploying aid and volunteers to disasters zones has always been coordinated from the UK headquarters in Truro.

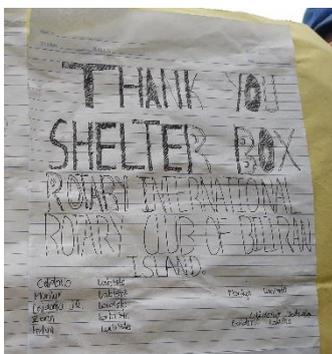
ShelterBox has responded to catastrophes in the Philippines more frequently than to any other country in the world - 24 times in the last 13 years. Located on the island of Cebu, one of the areas worst hit by the record-breaking Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, ShelterBox Operations Philippines already stores enough shelter items to help around 2,000 families, with capacity for far more in the future.

ShelterBox Chief Executive, Chris Warham

**says, ‘This is a first for ShelterBox, and a huge achievement. It shows ShelterBox’s flexible and agile model at work. We have assessed and understood the situation of some of the most vulnerable communities in the world, and come up with a different approach to make sure we are best placed to help quickly whenever disaster strikes. As a charity with limited resources, having teams and aid ready where and when they are needed will be more efficient, which is also an absolute priority for us.’**

ShelterBox Operations Philippines has been created by working closely with local Rotary groups. ShelterBox is Rotary International’s official Project Partner in disaster relief, and together they form one of the world’s most effective humanitarian collaborations, with many Rotarians around the world volunteering and raising money for ShelterBox. The fully trained team for the new base will be in post soon, a new arm of the HQ Operations staff in the UK.

Meteorologists refer to the West Pacific as ‘Typhoon Alley’ with good reason. Tropical storms gather out at sea with almost no landfall to slow them down before they hit South East Asia. Between 2000 and 2014, 41 super typhoons were recorded there. That’s almost four times as many as are generated in the Atlantic.



Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013, the deadliest typhoon on record killing 6,300 people, triggered major changes in how the Philippines responds to its constant barrage of tropical storms. The Philippine Government now requests international assistance less often, limiting tax-free importing. They also now strongly favour agencies that are registered and sited in the

Philippines, as well as those locating their aid from within the country.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

- Photos show above are free to publish in the context of this press release. Please request originals if needed, and credit © **ShelterBox**. They show ShelterBox aid being distributed on Biliran Island, and a note of thanks to ShelterBox and Rotary from local people.
- We have experts available for interview, including those who have recently returned from the Philippines. Please arrange via [marknicholson@shelterbox.org](mailto:marknicholson@shelterbox.org) or 07584 489194.
- For institutional partnership please contact Jose de la Cruz [josedelacruz@shelterbox.org](mailto:josedelacruz@shelterbox.org) or Tel 07384 255936