

1-30 April 2011

Key Points

- Alert Level Two (“Alarming”) has been raised over Taal Volcano on 10 April.
- *Rido* or clan feuds continue to cause sporadic displacements in Maguindanao Province in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).
- The UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines agreed to develop an Action Plan to ensure that no children are among the ranks of the New People’s Army or involved in the conflict.

I. Situation Overview

Taal Volcano

The alert level was raised from One to Two (scale of No Alert to Five with Two as “Alarming” and Five as “Eruption”) over Taal Volcano by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) on 10 April 2011. The volcano lies about 70 km south of Manila in the Batangas Province, Calabarzon Region (Region IV-A). As of 22 April, 261 families (1,468 people) have voluntarily evacuated within the 7 km radius danger zone, of which 14 families (58 persons) are in 2 evacuation centers and the rest (or 96% of the evacuees) are staying with their relatives. The government has identified 17,682 vulnerable people within the 7 km radius danger zone who will be evacuated should Alert Level Three is declared. Government authorities at the national, regional, provincial and municipal levels are coordinating their preparedness activities, which include vulnerability assessment and contingency planning, pre-positioning of relief items and stand-by personnel and undertaking information and



Taal Volcano on Taal Lake seen from the City of Tagaytay, April 2011, Photo by OCHA

education campaigns to the residents.

There are 23 active volcanoes in the Philippines. Alert Level One is in effect over Bulusan Volcano in Sorsogon Province and Mayon Volcano in Albay Province, both in the Bicol Region (Region V). Taal Volcano has been on Alert Level One since 2005 with the exception of May-August 2010 when the level was Two. [Sources: PHIVOLCS, NDRRMC]

Landslide in Compostela Valley Province

A landslide caused by unseasonable heavy rains occurred in a small scale mining area in the Compostela Valley Province in Davao Region (Region XI) on 22 April. 13 died, 14 injured and 11 remain missing. 13 houses were totally buried by the landslide. As of 27 April, 112 families (560 persons) have been evacuated in fear of another landslide while search and rescue operations continue for the missing persons.

Heavy rains are unusual at this time of the year in the Philippines. It was only on 12 April that the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) announced the end of the northeast monsoon, forecasting generally good weather in most parts of the country aside from isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms particularly over Visayas and Mindanao. [Sources: NDRRMC, PAGASA]

Localized Cholera Outbreak

The number of new diarrhea cases reported in Bataraza Municipality on the island province of Palawan, Mimaropa Region (Region IV-B), is on the decrease after peaking during the third week of April, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC). There were 563 cases of diarrhea reported from



Map: Location of incidents reported in this Update

1 March to 18 April for ages ranging from one month to 90 years old. Twenty have died, pushing the case fatality rate to 3.6%. The highest attack rate of 52.3% was reported in Barangay Culandanum (total population: 3,786) where most of the affected are indigenous people who are members of the Palawa-an tribe. The Bataraza Municipality declared the State of Calamity on 14 April while announcing that the emergency response is well within the capacity of the municipality at this stage. [Sources: *NDRRMC*]

Earthquakes

Four earthquakes with a magnitude above 5.0 on the Richter Scale were recorded off the coasts of Occidental Mindoro Province in Mimaropa Region, South Cotabato Province in Soccsksargen Region (Region XII), Ilocos Norte Province in Ilocos Region (Region I) and Batanes Province in Cagayan Valley Region (Region II) in April. The strongest tremor was felt in Cagayan Province for the Ilocos Norte earthquake where the PHIVOLCS Earthquake Intensity Scale marked V (scale of I to X with V as “Strong” and X

as “Completely devastating”). No deaths or damages were reported. [Sources: *PHIVOLCS*]

Mindanao

The Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) peace panels have reset their 21st formal negotiations to 27-18 April 2011 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, upon the request of the Malaysian facilitator. It is expected that concerns regarding Commander Ustadz Ameril Umbra Kato and the MILF’s draft Comprehensive Compact will be tabled for discussion.

The elections for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), initially scheduled for 8 August 2011, may be postponed for two years and synchronized with the next national and local elections of May 2013. The proposal for the postponement has been made by President Aquino, who cited the 1987 Constitution as a basis for his argument.

Accordingly, on 22 March, the House of Representatives passed the House Bill 4146 on the postponement with 191-47 votes. The Senate, which will convene on 7 or 9 May, has yet to approve it. [Sources: *Media reports*]

Meanwhile, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) has proceeded with the 10-day voter’s registration from 21 to 31 March. The filing for candidacy will begin on 2 May. [Sources: *COMELEC*]

Rido or clan feuds continue to cause sporadic displacements in Maguindanao Province in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). On 3 April, armed clashes between the supporters of Mangudadatu and MILF followers in Mangudadatu Municipality have left ten dead and several wounded. According to the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) ARMM, 1,689 families have been displaced. The first armed fighting reported between these two groups dates back to February 2011.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Education clusters have each conducted an assessment of the situation in Maguindanao and identified critical needs. Lack of access to safe water and proper sanitation are the concerns in WASH. In Education, psychosocial intervention, psychosocial training for volunteer teachers and provision of learning kits and emergency food for

school are a priority. [Sources: *Mindanao WASH and Education clusters*]

Mindanao Displacement Overview

1,724 IDP households relocated
2,086 IDP households resettled
27,600 IDP households returned
2,767 IDP households reintegrated
2,103 IDP households in evacuation centers

[Sources: *Department of Social Welfare and Development ARMM, 31 January 2011 (latest to date)*]

Unknown IDP households staying with relatives and friends

Food prices to continue to rise

Global food prices remain high and volatile, according to the latest Food Price Watch issued by the World Bank. In the Philippines, seasonally adjusted price of rice in Q1-2011 increased only moderately by 7% compared to Q4-2010, reports the World Food Programme's Market Monitor. Higher increases were experienced by members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations monitored by WFP (Bangladesh by 18%, Cambodia by 17%, Indonesia by 9% and Lao PDR by 12%).

A rise in food prices is a cause for concern because they have been a factor in increase in extreme poverty. The World Bank estimates that an increase in global food prices since mid-June 2010 has led to a net addition of 44 million people

Living below US\$1.25 a day poverty line

The Philippines

19.7 million
people or
22.6 %
of the Philippine
population (2006)

[Sources: *World Bank*]

The World

1.4 billion
people or
27%
of the people living in
developing regions
(2005)

[Sources: *United Nations*]

living below the \$1.25 per day extreme poverty line in the low- and middle-income countries. Meanwhile, a study by the Asian Development Bank finds that a 10% rise in domestic food prices from the current level in developing Asia could result in an additional 64 million extreme poor, an additional 1.4 million in Philippines alone and 47.3 million people in China and India combined. [Sources: *World Bank, World Food Programme, Asian Development Bank*]

II. Humanitarian Action

Preparedness: Common needs assessment template

The draft common rapid needs assessment template for natural disaster settings is close to finalization. This template was initially circulated to humanitarian partners by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) during the Typhoon Megi response. It provided the basis for the inter-agency Working Group on Rapid Needs Assessment, which was established in late 2010 with OCHA as the lead. All cluster leads have been involved in the development of this common template and the final comments has been received during the first quarter of 2011. For more information, contact palacio@un.org.

III. Thematic Issues

National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Framework and Plan

Following the enactment of the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Act of 2010 (Republic Act No. 10121), the NDRRMC has embarked on the development of the NDRRM Framework that will serve as the principal guide to disaster risk reduction and management efforts in the country and the basis for the NDRRM Plan. The Framework will adopt an all-hazards, multi-sectoral, inter-agency and community-based approach to DRRM. Meanwhile, OCD has tasked its Regional Centers to prepare all-hazards contingency plans in preparation for the formulation of the NDRRM Plan. The timeline for the two processes have yet to be announced. [Sources: *OCD*]

Protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse

The UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Children and Armed Conflict and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) have agreed to develop an Action Plan, which will ensure that no children are



UN SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict at a media conference in Manila in April 2011. Photo by Kat Palasi

among the ranks of the New People's Army (NPA) or involved in the conflict. The announcement was made on 8 April at the end of SRSG Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy's return visit to the Philippines (3-9 April). She met with the Executive Secretary of the President, the Secretary of Defense, senior commanders of the Armed Forces, the Secretary of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process and humanitarian partners, among others, during her trip. The SRSG also recognized the progress made in implementing the Action Plan signed by the MILF, which was agreed during her earlier visit in December 2008.

In the Philippines, the MILF, NPA and the Abu Sayyaf Group are listed in the Secretary-General's annexes to the report on children and armed conflict for using and recruiting girls and boys. The UN Resident Coordinator and the UNICEF Representative co-chair the Philippine Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting on Grave Child Rights Violations and ensure an effective monitoring and reporting as well as engage with government authorities and non-state actors for a dialogue. [Sources: *UN Office of the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict, UNICEF*]

Global: Sphere Handbook 2011 edition launched



UN USG for Humanitarian Affairs Ms. Valerie Amos and Sphere Board member Ms. Gillian Dunn at the launch of the Sphere Handbook 2011 edition. Photo by David Ohana, OCHA

The English version of the Sphere Handbook 2011 edition was released on 14 April. The Handbook is one of the most widely known set of minimum standards in four life-saving areas of humanitarian response, namely water and sanitation, food, shelter and health care. The document can be downloaded at

[OCHA Philippines, Manila](#)

<http://www.sphereproject.org/>. [Sources: *The Sphere Project*]

IV. Funding Update

Mindanao Humanitarian Action Plan

The Mindanao Humanitarian Action Plan of US\$34,527,526 is currently 4.9% funded at \$1.7 million. This amount has been contributed by the Government of Japan for the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster Response Plan. Seven other cluster response plans remain severely underfunded. [Sources: *Financial Tracking Service http://fts.unocha.org*]

34.5 million
requested (US\$)

4.9 %
funded

All humanitarian partners including donors and recipient agencies are encouraged to inform FTS of cash and in-kind contributions by sending an email to: fts@reliefweb.int.

CERF releases 2010 Annual Report

In 2010, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocated \$415 million to humanitarian agencies that helped more than 22 million people in 45 countries. Nearly \$430 million were donated by member states, corporations and private individuals last



year, including \$10,000 from the Philippine Government. The Philippines received \$3 million from the underfunded emergency window to address the humanitarian needs of the displaced persons in the provinces in Mindanao (<http://www.unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/cerf-releases-2010-annual-report>).

V. Upcoming Events

- **9-13 May**
Télécoms Sans Frontières - Emergency Information and Communication Technology Training
Venue: Camp Aguinaldo, Manila
Contact: philippines@tsfi.org

- **12 May, 10:30 a.m.**
Humanitarian Country Team Meeting
Venue: UNICEF Conference Room
Contact: yoshidaa@un.org
- **16-20 May**
UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination
Asia/Pacific Refresher Course 2011
Venue: Manila
Contact: palacio@un.org
- **17-18 May**
International Federation of the Red Cross -
Forum of Experts on Legal Preparedness for
International Disaster Response
Contact: Helgabara.BRAGADOTTIR@ifrc.org
- **24 May, 09:00 a.m.**
National Disaster Risk Reduction and
Management Council and Humanitarian
Country Team
Venue: Camp Aguinaldo, Manila
Contact: palacio@un.org

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Visit the Humanitarian Response in the Philippines website at <http://www.un.org.ph/response>