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Information bulletin

Philippines: Surigao earthquake

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Information bulletin n° 1	GLIDE n°
Date of issue: 11 February 2017	Date of disaster: 10 February 2017
Host National Society: Philippine Red Cross	Point of contact: Atty. Oscar Palabyab, Secretary General

This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Philippine Red Cross (PRC) is currently conducting needs assessment. Based on the findings, PRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) will determine whether external assistance is required.

The situation

At 22:00H local time Friday 10 February 2017, a 6.7 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of north-easternmost Mindanao, Philippines. According to the Philippines Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS), the earthquake was relatively shallow, with a depth of 10 kilometres, and its epicentre was about 14 kilometres from Surigao City, the capital of Surigao del Norte Province which is located about 700 kilometres south of Manila. No tsunami alert was issued.



As the quake struck at night, information about its humanitarian impact started to emerge at first light on Saturday morning, 11 February 2017. Government teams, Red Cross personnel and emergency responders from other agencies are currently undertaking rapid assessments. Prior to that, an initial briefing on the situation was provided by the City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (CDRRMC) at 08:00h local time.

According to the Surigao CDRRMC, there are six confirmed deaths – with the number likely to increase – and at least 120 injuries as a result of the earthquake. Many families stayed outside on the pavements last night due to the fear of aftershocks. PHIVOLCS has reported that at least 89 aftershocks have been felt so far.

Based on media, government and other sources, there has been some structural damage to buildings – including cracks, collapsed balconies and wall collapse – but no major destruction has been observed. This, coupled with the aftershocks, may impact on how and when people can return to their homes, work and school. City authorities have suspended classes at all levels, along with work in government and private offices. The city's Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is validating numbers of people in evacuation centres, with initial reports indicating that more than 1,000 people evacuated.

The quake disrupted electricity supply in parts of Surigao City and caused total blackouts in the adjacent municipalities of Malimono and San Francisco. Mobile phone networks have also been affected while the runway of Surigao airport has been damaged, prompting the suspension of flights until repair works are undertaken. Based local government reports, the Anao-aon bridge in San Francisco Municipality has been damaged, isolating two towns. In addition, part of Surigao City's water supply pipeline has been damaged, disrupting water supply.

Assessments continue and will reveal more information on the impact in the surrounding smaller towns or rural areas. While the figures on damages and casualties will likely to increase, PHIVOLCS has projected that based on historical data, the extent of damage will not be major. According to PHIVOLCS, last night's quake was due to the movement of the Surigao segment of Philippine fault zone. Its last movement was in 1879, that caused a 7.4 magnitude earthquake.

Action by the authorities

The seismological observation and earthquake prediction division of PHIVOLCS monitors seismic events in the Philippines and has so far issued three earthquake information updates. The agency is also issuing real-time [updates](#) on all seismic events, including aftershocks.

Following the Surigao earthquake, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) immediately disseminated information to city, provincial, municipal and barangay disaster risk reduction and management councils as well as other concerned stakeholders. NDRRMC has issued one [situation report](#). The Surigao CDRRMC is coordinating the response at local level, closely with the local government units.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is consolidating data on displacement and assistance provided. Thus far, [one update](#) has been issued by the Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center (DROMIC) of the DSWD.

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) has ordered the closure of the Surigao airport due to the damage caused on the runway. The port authorities are also taking action to divert ferries where there has been damages to road and bridges. All vessels bound for Lipata Port Station has been redirected to the Surigao City Port because some roads and bridges leading to Lipata Port are not passable.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Philippine Red Cross (PRC) national headquarters made contact with all its chapters in the affected areas, within a few hours of the earthquake. Based on information obtained so far, all chapters have accounted for their personnel and assets, with the Surigao chapter office building having sustained slight damage – with cracks in the walls – but still fully functional. The operations centre at the PRC national headquarters continues to collect information – from the chapters and directly from Red Cross 143 volunteers in the areas – and has so far issued four disaster incident updates and one situation report. Red Cross 143 is a flagship programme of PRC in which

the National Society aims to have in place 44 volunteers in every village, i.e. one team leader and 43 members, as first responders on the ground in times of disaster.

The Surigao chapter of PRC is coordinating with the city authorities and CDRRMC, and its assessment teams are working alongside those of the public authorities and other actors. The chapter's Red Cross 143 volunteers and staff are currently rolling out the standard PRC services, including setting up of welfare desks at the CARAGA Regional Hospital (which are one-stop desks for registering affected people, determining their immediate needs and referring them to the relevant PRC department or another agency for assistance) and provision of hot meals in evacuation centres. So far, personnel of the Surigao chapter have provided psychosocial support to 15 people.

The IFRC Country Office is supporting PRC in disseminating updates to Movement partners with in-country presence and the Asia Pacific Regional Office (APRO) in Kuala Lumpur. The Country Office is also in close contact with ICRC on any security-related considerations and with the Netherlands Red Cross, which supports PRC programmes in Surigao City and normally has a delegate stationed there.

The IFRC Country Office continues to coordinate closely with PRC and is ready to provide support, including personnel and relief supplies, should there be a request from the National Society. IFRC will, today, analyse with PRC the option of undertaking an aerial assessment in areas outside Surigao City since the information available until now has been focused on Surigao City.

At the moment, the situation seems to be within the capacity of local authorities and agencies to handle. However, as more information comes in from PRC chapters, assessment teams, the government and other actors, IFRC and PRC will review and plan accordingly.

Meantime, based on information available at this point, IFRC has classified the earthquake as a Category Yellow disaster according to the Secretariat's operational response framework. The categorization implies that the response intervention is within the capacity of PRC to manage with resources available in-country. If requested, the IFRC Country Office may provide any necessary technical or management support to the National Society, and if required, the APRO may support the mobilization of at least one member of the regional disaster response team (RDRT), with Geneva supporting the allocation of Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF).

Contact information

For further information, specifically related to this report, please contact: **Philippine Red Cross:**

- Atty. Oscar Palabyab, secretary general; phone: +63 2 790 2300; email: secgen@redcross.org.ph
- Resty Lou Talamayan, manager for disaster management services; email: restylou.talamayan1@redcross.org.ph

IFRC Philippines country office:

- Kari Isomaa, head of country office; phone: +63 928 559 7170; email: kari.isomaa@ifrc.org
- Patrick Elliott, operations manager; phone: +63 998 960 2140; email: patrick.elliott@ifrc.org

IFRC Asia Pacific regional office, Kuala Lumpur:

- Martin Faller, deputy director; phone: +603 9207 5700; email: martin.faller@ifrc.org
- Nelson Castano, head of disaster and crisis unit (DCU); email: nelson.castano@ifrc.org
- Necephor Mghendi, operations coordinator; phone: +60 122 246 796; email: necephor.mghendi@ifrc.org
- Patrick Fuller, communication manager; phone: +60 12 230 8451; email: patrick.fuller@ifrc.org
- Diana Ongiti, relationship manager; email: diana.ongiti@ifrc.org
- Peter Ophoff, head of planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER); email: peter.ophoff@ifrc.org



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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.**

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives,
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote **social inclusion**
and a culture of
non-violence and **peace.**

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