

Updates on Typhoon Ketsana and Response

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Asia Pacific region has been reeling under strain as disasters strike one after another. Not long after typhoon Morakot hit Taiwan, tropical storm Ketsana hit Philippines, tsunami swept through Samoa Islands and two consecutive earthquakes struck West Sumatra in Indonesia.

The incident and crisis

On 26th September, Typhoon Ketsana hit the Philippines and parts of Vietnam and Cambodia, leaving at least 400 people dead and hundreds of thousands more homeless. Just over a week later on 3rd October, another typhoon "Parma" struck again northern Philippines. A total of 640 dead was recorded according to Government sources. Besides that many people lost homes; livestock, food grains and standing crops worth \$350 million were destroyed in heavy flooding. In both the cases, the deaths were mostly due to flood and landslides caused by heavy rains. About six million were affected by the double natural disasters.

In one of the sad incidents, one Ptr. Rey Semilla who belongs to Luzon Convention of Southern Baptist Churches, Inc (LCSBC), lost an elder brother together with his wife and a young child, in a landslide in Baguio, leaving behind their two young daughters aged 8 and 10 years.

Response

Locally, LCSBC has been actively coordinating relief efforts with the local contributions. Its volunteers fanned out to the affected areas and involved themselves in rescue operations, relief provisions of food, water and shelter to the victims. At the same time the Council of Philippines Baptist Churches (CPBC) also has been mobilizing relief efforts in cooperation with Luzon Conference of Baptist Churches. The BWAid-HBAid Rescue24 team were rushed in to work with the local Baptists.

APBAid is in touch with the member bodies in Philippines and mobilizing resources to respond to the needs. APBAid has been in touch with member bodies, and response were - Malaysian Baptist Convention has given \$7,575 (approx), Chinese Baptist Convention (Taiwan) \$20,000, Kuala Lumpur Baptist church \$2,000 and Asia Baptist Women Union \$1,000.

Ground Situation

The situation is slowly returning to normalcy. According to a team working there, stagnant water has been the problem now. It has been already now for three weeks there is great risk of diseases like malaria, dengue fever, diarrhoea, skin infections, leptospirosis spreading out. The need now is to quickly pump out the water and cleanse the places.

For a longer involvement it would be proper to help the Baptist partners in Philippines facilitate livelihood recovery programs and awareness trainings to prepare the churches face any disaster in future.

Sources:

BBC and other internet news
Precy Caronongan, who gave inputs from LBCSC
TV news and Newspaper

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Photographs (BBC and Internet Sources)



A flooded town of Carmen in Pangasinan Province, North Philippines caused by Typhoon



People clearing debris of mud and broken