



CRS evacuated hundreds of families from Tacloban in advance of Typhoon Hagupit. Photo by Vilma Horca/CRS



CRS transitional shelters built after Typhoon Haiyan stood strong in the face of Typhoon Hagupit. Photo by Joshua Kyller/CRS

December 8, 2013

“During evacuations, one of the first things families packed, even before their important documents, were items tied to their faith: Santo Niño, Bibles and rosaries. You know when people move their Santo Niño, they’re taking evacuation orders seriously.”¹ –Idalia Amaya, CRS program officer in Tacloban

THE CRISIS

Communities across the Philippines—especially those devastated by last year’s catastrophic Typhoon Haiyan—feared the worst in the face of Typhoon Hagupit that struck the country on Saturday, December 6. In advance of the storm, CRS helped some of the 1 million people evacuate from its path on Letye and Samar Islands, areas where CRS is already helping tens of thousands of people rebuild their homes and lives following Haiyan.

The category 3 storm of Hagupit, known locally as Ruby, lost some of its strength over the weekend as it moved northwest across the country, where it was expected to hover for 3 days with sustained winds of 108 mph and heavy rain. The greatest concern is the impact of prolonged rains that can lead to dangerous flooding and landslides in mountainous and densely urban areas. Early reports estimate 4.5 million people are affected across 14 provinces, with the heaviest damage so far in central Samar, where CRS has a base of 120 permanent staff.

CRS RESPONSE

CRS field teams are fanning out across hard-hit areas to evaluate the scale of damage from Typhoon Hagupit, and preparing for more damage from landslides or floods in the coming days. CRS has committed an initial \$100,000 for emergency activities, and will identify funding priorities as needs become clear. CRS is working closely with its local Catholic partners across the country. With 300 staff already working in the Philippines, CRS is well positioned to launch immediate, quality support that is flexible to the realities on the ground, and designed to support people’s safety, dignity and lasting recovery.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM CRS FIELD TEAMS

- CRS transitional shelters, built after Typhoon Haiyan to weather heavy storms, stood strong in the face of Hagupit.
- Logistics of delivering aid will likely face some challenges: At least 92 domestic flights have been cancelled, airports in southeastern Luzon and eastern Visayas are closed, and ferry services have been suspended in all ports.
- CRS field teams say streets are clogged by debris in central Samar, making access to some areas difficult.
- CRS has prepositioned living supplies, water and sanitation, and shelter materials for thousands ready to be deployed.
- Catholic Churches provided refuge to 10,000 people in Palo. In Samar, 804 people took refuge at a Bishop’s residence.

¹ Vested statue of the Christ child

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS & DURABLE SHELTERS SAVE LIVES

In countries like the Philippines that are prone to natural disasters, CRS works with communities, partners, governments and other actors well in advance of crises to mitigate a storm's impact, help communities recover, and strengthen their resilience to future disasters. In the case of Typhoon Hagupit, evacuations took place in the hours and days before the storm, and communities were told where they could find safe shelter. The local Church and government had established evacuation sites. Experience shows that every \$1 spent on disaster preparedness saves \$7 to \$10 in disaster response.

The quality of emergency rebuilding and recovery is essential for community resilience. The transitional shelters CRS has helped communities to rebuild since Typhoon Haiyan are designed to be resistant to heavy storms, made with local materials, and adaptable to people's changing lives as they recover their assets. The 3,178 CRS transitional shelters built in the past year stood strong in the face of Hagupit's heavy winds and rain.



CRS transitional shelters built after Typhoon Haiyan still standing the day after Typhoon Hagupit passes over Tacloban. Photo by Renee Lambert/CRS

IMPACT OF PATRONS, PARISHES ACROSS THE U.S.

We know from previous support during crises in the Philippines the lifesaving difference your donations make. The following costs show the positive impact of your contributions:

\$8 = 1 water kit for a family, including a jerry can, pail and water purification tablets

\$15 = 1 emergency shelter kit with tarps and nails to use with local materials to create emergency shelter

\$22 = Household living supplies, including sleeping mats, blankets, utensils, plastics, glasses and cooking pot

\$28 = Hygiene kits, a 2-month family supply of soap, detergent, toothbrushes, toothpaste, feminine products and towels

\$30 = Income recovery, including seeds, tools and training for farmers to rebuild their assets and income

OUR HISTORY

Catholic Relief Services' program in the Philippines is our oldest continuously operating country program. Prompted by the mass destruction and loss of life in the Philippines during World War II, CRS, then known as War Relief Services, first launched relief efforts there in 1945. Today we focus on agro-enterprise and peacebuilding programs in Mindanao. We have teams ready to respond to natural disasters as well. CRS' Typhoon Haiyan emergency response is among the country program's emergency recovery efforts. This effort has made a remarkable difference in its first year. CRS agricultural programs in the Philippines lift small-scale farmers from poverty by linking them to more profitable markets. In the south, our peacebuilding programs reduce violence, improve livelihoods and help create tolerance.

OUR THANKS

Thank you for your prayers and support. You may contribute

Online: donate.crs.org/Typhoon_Hagupit

By phone: 877-435-7277

By check: Catholic Relief Services, P.O. Box 17090, Baltimore, MD 21297-0303 ("Typhoon Hagupit" in memo line)