

Philippines

Impact of Typhoon Rai

OVERVIEW

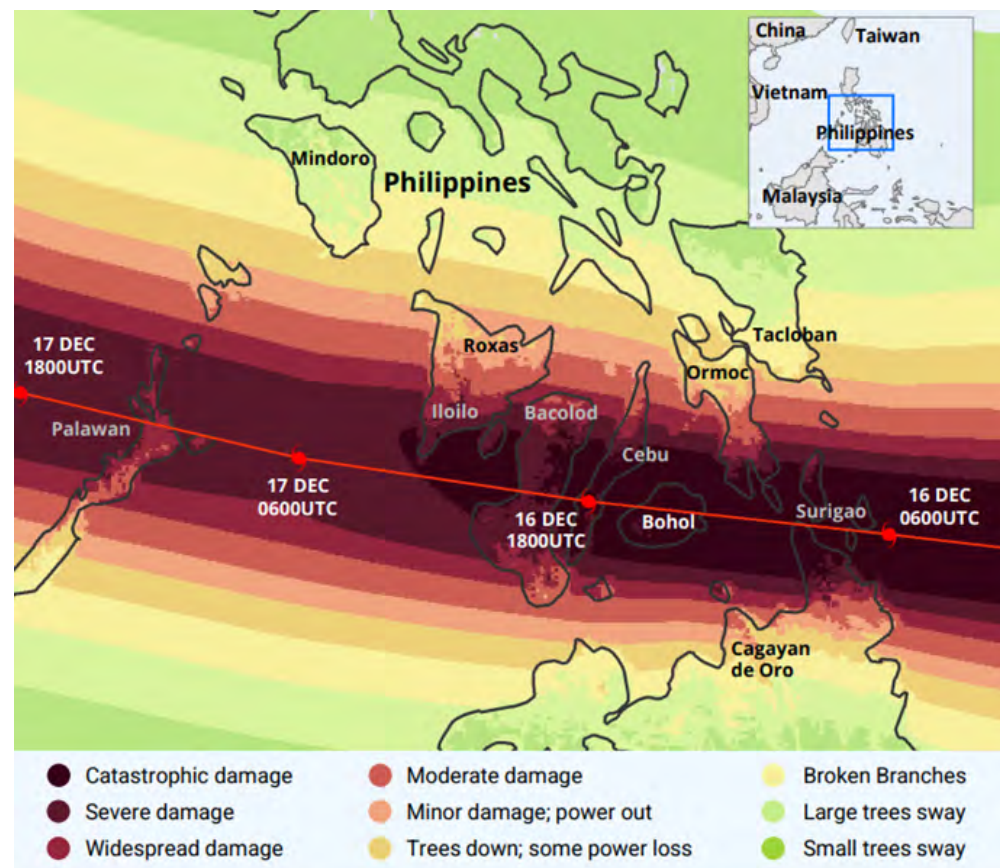
On 15 December 2021, tropical depression Twenty-Eight intensified over the western Pacific into typhoon Rai (locally known as Odette) (ECHO 13/12/2021; OCHA 15/12/2021). The typhoon reached category 5 and, after the first landfall on 16 December, weakened to categories 4 and 3 (CNN 17/12/2021; Yale Climate Connections 16/12/2021).

The total number of casualties was at least 146 as at 19 December (AP News 19/12/2021). Over 780,000 people were affected by the typhoon and have received some form of support or assistance (Government of the Philippines 19/12/2021).

The typhoon made nine landfalls in seven provinces on 16–17 December. The total population in these provinces is over eight million people (PSA 23/08/2021). The following landfalls took place on 16 and 17 December (Government of the Philippines 18/12/2021):

- Siargao island, Surigao del Norte province (Caraga region)
- Cagdianao municipality, Dinagat Islands province (Caraga region)
- Liloan and Padre Burgos municipalities (two landfalls), Southern Leyte province (Eastern Visayas region)
- President Carlos P. Garcia and Bien Unido municipalities (two landfalls), Bohol province (Central Visayas region)
- Carcar city, Cebu province (Central Visayas region)
- La Libertad municipality, Negros Oriental province (Central Visayas region)
- Roxas municipality, Palawan province (MIMAROPA region)

On 18 December, Rai left the Philippine area of responsibility (Inquirer 18/12/2021).



Source: OCHA, PDC, and WFP (15/12/2021)

IMMEDIATE HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

400,000 people require urgent relief and long-term support, including housing and livelihood assistance (IFRC 18/12/2021).

Overall immediate needs include food, WASH (including drinking water), shelter, health, NFIs, and cash. The response is largely national, and local authorities in the affected provinces are coordinating directly with the Government regarding their needs.

- Priority needs include food packs, ready-to-eat meals, drinking water, medicine, medical personnel, personal protective equipment, clothing (including footwear and rain gear), cooking equipment and utensils, family kits, shelter and sleeping materials, hygiene kits, disaster kits, and waterproof bags (PDRF 17/12/2021).
- Cash assistance is needed, and in-kind donations are welcomed (PDRF 17/12/2021).
- Dinagat Islands province urgently requires food assistance, drinking water, shelter, fuel, hygiene kits, and medical supplies. The province also requires assistance to restore electricity, communication lines, and running water (Rappler 18/12/2021).
- Surigao Del Norte and Dinagat Islands provinces (Caraga region) require urgent food assistance, as national response remained delayed by access constraints as at 19 December (Al Jazeera 19/12/2021).

Bohol province requires relief items such as blankets, hygiene kits, face masks, disinfection alcohol, bottled water, and food assistance (including rice, canned food, noodles, biscuits, and instant coffee) (Inquirer 17/12/2021).

IMPACT

Initial assessments by local authorities and relevant humanitarian agencies are in progress, including aerial (Inquirer 17/12/2021) and satellite image assessments. According to visual footage and reports from the media, there is widespread damage and destruction (Al Jazeera 17/12/2021; IFRC 17/12/2021). Information on the full extent of the damages is not yet available because of access constraints – particularly communication outages in the affected areas. Torrential rains, landslides, and strong winds resulted in flooding, road blockages, and power and communications lines being knocked down (OCHA 17/12/2021).

Over 780,000 people were affected by the typhoon as at 18 December and have received some form of support or assistance (Government of the Philippines 19/12/2021). This number is likely to increase in the coming days as assessments and response are in progress. Over 140,000 people were severely affected as at 17 December (IFRC 17/12/2021), and 400,000 people required urgent relief and long-term recovery assistance as at 19 December (IFRC 19/12/2021).

The Caraga region was the most affected as at 17 December (Save the Children 17/12/2021) because the typhoon was at its strongest level (category 5) before its first landfall over the region (CNN 17/12/2021). Available information reported in the media suggests that Siargao island and Dinagat Islands provinces in Caraga are the most affected areas (Al Jazeera 19/12/2021). Approximately 218,000 people have been affected in the Caraga region (Government of the Philippines 19/12/2021). Aerial assessments are in progress, but information is delayed by communication outages (BBC 19/12/2021). Access constraints are delaying national response and assistance to the provinces affected by the first two landfalls in Surigao del Norte and Dinagat Islands provinces, in the Caraga region (Al Jazeera 19/12/2021).

On 15 December, before the typhoon made its first landfall in the Philippines, the UN estimated that Rai would affect a total of 15.9 million people (OCHA, PDC, and WFP 15/12/2021). This number is likely based on total population figures from the regions along the path of the typhoon.

AFFECTED AREAS

Although the full extent of damages is still unknown, the following has been reported in the affected areas:

- In Siargao island, where the typhoon made its first landfall, communication lines remained down as at 17 December. Although Siargao Airport terminal sustained significant damages, the runway is free of debris, and planes and choppers are able to carry relief items to land. The damages in Siargao island are estimated at around PHP 20 billion (USD 400 million) (*Inquirer* 17/12/2021). National assistance to the province is delayed by access constraints (*Al Jazeera* 19/12/2021).
- In Dinagat Islands province, electricity and communications have been down since 16 December. There are road blockages caused by fallen trees, debris, and landslides. The full extent of the damages is still unknown because of these access constraints (*Rappler* 18/12/2021; *BBC* 18/12/2021), which were still delaying national response in the province as at 19 December (*Al Jazeera* 19/12/2021).
- Southern Leyte province had no power or communications as at 17 December. An emergency communications system is being set up so that local authorities in Maasin city (the capital of Southern Leyte province) can communicate with national agencies via satellite phones. The Department of Social Welfare and Development allocated 20,000 food packs to the province (*PNA* 17/12/2021).
- The entire province of Bohol has sustained widespread damages and destruction. Power and communications are down in many areas (*CNN* 18/12/2021), preventing 27 out of 48 local mayors in the affected areas from reaching out to the provincial governor for assistance and exchange of information (*Al Jazeera* 19/12/2021). The province was impacted by flooding (including of many roads), particularly in the northern and eastern parts of the province (*Inquirer* 17/12/2021). The damages in Bohol have been estimated at PHP 5 billion (USD 100 million) (*CNN* 17/12/2021).
- In Cebu province, volunteers have helped clearing some of the roads blocked by fallen trees and debris, but some major roads are still inaccessible. Most of Metropolitan Cebu is without electricity and water, and the internet is intermittent. Local assessments of damages are taking place (*PNA* 17/12/2021).
- In Negros Oriental province, power outages have been reported (*Inquirer* 18/12/2021)

RESPONSE

National authorities have been planning precautionary actions since 10 December (*Philippine Red Cross* 10/12/2021), including conducting preemptive evacuations of around 365,000 people from the seven affected provinces and providing shelter and food assistance for the evacuees (*NDRRMC* accessed 18/12/2021; *Government of the Philippines* 18/12/2021). These early precautions are likely to have prevented higher numbers of casualties and injuries (*Inquirer* 18/12/2021). The total number of casualties was at least 146 as at 19 December (*AP News* 19/12/2021).

National search and rescue operations were in progress as at 18 December, with 18,000 soldiers and emergency personnel deployed (*CNN* 17/12/2021; *Al Jazeera* 18/12/2021), but access constraints prevent rescuers from reaching all areas (*Al Jazeera* 19/12/2021).

National relief and response is taking place but is limited by access constraints, particularly communication outages. The Humanitarian Country Team is preparing for response if needed (*ECHO* 17/12/2021).

The Government is raising funds for the provinces affected by the typhoon, citing depleted funds as a result of the COVID-19 response over the past months (*Inquirer* 17/12/2021). Prior to typhoon landfalls over the Philippines, the UN had estimated that the cost of rebuilding the most affected areas would reach USD 66 billion (*OCHA, PDC, and WFP* 15/12/2021).

AGGRAVATING FACTORS

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy is an additional challenge for the funding of crisis-affected regions (*Inquirer* 17/12/2021). The negative economic impact of the pandemic has likely reduced the resiliency of the population and their ability to bounce back from losses to private properties and livelihoods (*World Bank* 10/11/2021).

The spread of COVID-19 is more likely in the crowded shelters people have been evacuated to (*Save the Children* 17/12/2021). Only 45% of the population is fully vaccinated (*WHO* 06/12/2021). The Delta variant was detected in the Philippines in July (*Al Jazeera* 16/07/2021), and by September the number of new cases was at its highest since the start of the pandemic. The country has seen a sharp decrease in COVID-19 cases since, with 826 new cases reported on 13 December compared to over 140,000 on 13 September. 400 COVID-19-related deaths on 13 December was the lowest number recorded since April (*WHO* accessed 17/12/2021). The Omicron variant has been detected in the Philippines around the same time as typhoon Rai arrived (*ABC* 16/12/2021). In the coming month, it is likely that the spread of COVID-19 will be an additional aggravating factor in the response for the typhoon Rai crisis.