

CRS Responds to Severe Flooding in the Philippines

Background

Tropical Storm Washi (known locally as Sendong) hit Mindanao in the southern Philippines late on Friday, Dec. 16. Heavy rains in the island's mountainous areas caused severe flash flooding downstream. Cagayan de Oro and Iligan City are among the worst affected areas. The current number of dead is estimated at more than 650 and over 800 people are missing. Tens of thousands have been made homeless.

Joe Curry, Catholic Relief Services' country representative for the Philippines, arrived at the flood zone and met people who had lost everything. "Some people don't even have shoes – their sandals were pulled off their feet in the flood," he said. The flood waters came late at night. Radios were switched off for the night. Residents in Cagayan de Oro didn't hear the emergency warnings broadcast by the government shortly before water crashed into their homes on the riverbank. More than 50,000 people are now living in emergency evacuation centers. Government officials say that it could be up to 30 days before water is restored to most of the city. Students at Xavier University, a local CRS partner, are using Facebook to share information about where people can access drinking water.



Some 400 families were living in shanty houses made of plywood on this land near Cagayan de Oro. The houses were completely washed away by floodwaters. Photo by CRS Staff.

How CRS is Helping

Curry reports that CRS is prepared to help those most affected by the floods. "CRS is partnering with the Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro to find how we can help those in greatest need. We've seen that people in the flood's path need basic household goods like water jugs, cooking utensils and soap. Water is most important over the next few days. The government has distributed food to some people, but they don't have water or pots to cook a meal," he said.

"I'm hopeful that we will be able to reach people quickly and help them meet their most urgent needs," said Curry. "We're seeing people in the community pull together and share what little they have."

To read more regarding our response visit www.crs.org. See us on [Facebook](#).

How you can help:

- Please pray for the people affected by the floods. We have included a [prayer and petitions](#) to share within your parishes.
- Donate to the [Philippines Flooding Fund](#) or call 877-Help-CRS (877-435-7277). Mail donations to: Catholic Relief Services, **Attn: Philippines Flooding Fund**, P.O. Box 17090, Baltimore, MD 21203-7090.

Thank you for all you are doing! Please share this Special Report with others.