

The Philippines - Typhoon Rai/Odette

ETC Situation Report #1

Reporting period: 21/12/2021 to 24/12/2021

Following Super Typhoon Rai/Odette that first made landfall in the Philippines on 16 December 2021, the Global ETC has been coordinating with its partners globally to support the government response efforts.

Highlights

- Super Typhoon Rai/Odette made first landfall on 16 December and left devastation in its wake as it passed through the central Philippine islands.
- The Government of the Philippines Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) has since been providing communications services in the affected locations thanks to their Mobile Operations Vehicle for Emergencies (MOVE).
- On 21 December, WFP as the UN ETC lead agency supporting the DICT in-country, was asked to support the government response efforts with additional resources to provide urgent connectivity services in affected areas.
- Global ETC partners are mobilizing equipment and staffing to support in up to five locations.



Photo credit to WFP/John Lobaton - Surigao City - 21 December 2021.

Situation Update

Making its first landfall in the afternoon of 16 December 2021, Super Typhoon Rai, locally known as Odette, brought torrential rains, violent winds, mudslides, floods and storm surges to central-southern Philippines, specifically the Visayas and Mindanao Islands, with maximum sustained winds of 195km/h and gustiness of 260km/h.

The Typhoon affected an estimated 16 million people across the six worst hit regions, leaving about 2.4 million people in need of assistance. According to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), it killed at least 258 people, injuring 568 people and displacing 631,000 people as of 23 December and across ten regions. The number of casualties, injured and displaced people is expected to increase as debris clearing progresses, communication and electricity are reestablished and isolated areas are reached.

Based on initial reports, the hardest hit areas include Surigao City in Northern Mindanao, Surigao Island, Dinigat Island, Masin city in southern Visayas, and Cebu island. For more information, see the Humanitarian Country Team’s [Consolidate Rapid Assessment Report](#) and the [Humanitarian Needs and Priorities](#) launched on 24 December 2021.

Activities

Connectivity and Electricity Situation

- Most of the island of Mindanao, south of the typhoon’s path, lost electricity and communications (connectivity). Electricity and connectivity are in the process of being restored.
- Surigao City, on the mainland of Mindanao has been without connectivity and electricity for almost a week. Voice and text communications are starting to recover in most areas. In some locations, including central Surigao City, data connectivity has started to return on 23 December.
- On the mainland of Visayas, north of the Typhoon’s path, most connectivity seems to have been restored already despite heavy storm impacts.
- On Visayas island connectivity services are also starting to come back along with electricity in many locations.
- On the eastern islands electricity and connectivity are gone. All the commercial suppliers are out of service. The area was previously supplied by connectivity over microwave.
- The impacts on the western islands, including Cebu, seem to have been less as the Typhoon had lost some strength by the time it hit there. However, information gathered by ITU in the Disaster Connectivity Map and by NetHope based on facebook data and reports from members on the ground suggest that there are also large connectivity gaps on the western islands.
- As per one of the OCHA SitReps, power may not be back in all areas for another 5-6 months. Sustainable power sources for any solutions deployed should be considered.

Ongoing Response

- DICT – national ETC lead - had a team prepositioned with telecommunications equipment and Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSAT) in Masin City and Surigao City. They have been providing connectivity services using the [Mobile Operations Vehicle for Emergencies \(MOVE\)](#). Two sets are deployed in Surigao City. One is supporting the government coordination hub with comms and connectivity while the other set is on stand-by to be deployed in the field. Another two sets are currently on the move and will be deployed in the government hubs at Iloilo City and on Cebu.
- Two small Ku-band VSATs have also been deployed to Surigao Island and Dinagat island, where there is currently no connectivity or power.
- A WFP IT technician, John Lobaton, has been supporting the DICT in setting up their operations in Surigao city and providing connectivity to the affected population there.
- WFP is mobilizing three staff – two from WFP FITTEST and one from Global ETC team – to support with coordination and technical expertise.

- Ericsson Response and Cisco Crisis Response are looking at equipment that can be mobilized quickly and can support user management and distribution of connectivity services.
- Ericsson Response also put forward two staff names to be deployed, pending visa and security clearance.
- The Government of Luxembourg is mobilizing three of its VSATs prepositioned in Dubai, UAE, to the Philippines and can provide remote support for their setup.
- ITU has begun a data collection campaign on 22 December to populate the [Disaster Connectivity Map](#), which is an initiative of ITU and the ETC with support from the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA). The gaps are quite apparent across the central islands, including the western islands, compared with the baseline data gathered in May last year. ITU will provide regular updated data for the next few days.
- NetHope had a first call with all their members on 23 December. 27 of them are on the ground in the Philippines. The next NetHope meeting will be held on 27 December, at which members will share their SitReps. NetHope has set up a form where people can request connectivity support, which can be accessed [here](#). NetHope may have some usable equipment in Dubai, including point-to-point and offered to mobilize it as well to support with NGO coordination.

Planning and Coordination

- The plan is to support the government with communication and technology solutions, particularly connectivity services. The focus the humanitarian response will be initially on Dinagat Island and Surigao Island. 30 potential sites are under discussion, however initial plan would be to support up to 20 sites.
- The ETC Coordinator is ready to deploy along with two WFP FITTEST personnel. They will be deployed as soon visas are granted.
- A first Global ETC teleconference was held on 23 December to exchange information with partners and identify any support.

Challenges

- All COVID-19 travel restrictions remain in place so far and have not been waived for humanitarian responders and this include quarantine on arrival.
- Anyone who wishes to travel to the Philippines needs a visa. The application make take up to one month or more. WFP has been asking the government for a fast track of visas to be able to mobilize staff rapidly in the affected areas.

Meetings

- The next Global ETC teleconference call will take place on 27 December 2021.

Contacts

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All information related to ETC operations can be found on the website:

www.etcluster.org/emergency/super-typhoon-rai-odette-philippines

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