

Disaster Relief Ministries Aid in Philippines Flood Clean-Up

Disaster officials in the Philippines began a massive clean-up effort in its capital city Friday after nonstop torrential monsoon rains battered Manila and 17 nearby provinces.

The rains began Sunday, causing the worst flooding in Manila since 2009, and have left at least 60 dead according to CBS News. At the peak of the floods, more than half of the city of 12 million was underwater. The flood has affected more than 2 million people.

“In one 24-hour period earlier this week they got a month’s worth of rain,” explained Peter Howard with Food for the Hungry, an international relief and development organization that has done extensive work in the region. “It literally flooded the area.”

Howard said that because the Philippines has a culture of volunteerism, Food for the Hungry is ready to help. “We have the people, we have the volunteers. The churches are ready to go,” he noted. “So as long as we can come alongside and support them with resources, they’re going to take that out and spread the love of Christ through their acts of kindness and generosity into their communities.”

CBN Disaster Relief is also involved. Using a rubber boat, the organization helped rescue people stranded from high floodwater.

Many people have decided to stay in their water-logged homes, despite their difficult circumstances, rather than seek shelter in the crowded evacuation centers.

"We cannot leave our house because if we do, robbers will wipe out all our belongings," flood victim Analia Elvinea told CBN News. "They don't care at all. These things happen because life is so hard nowadays."

The sun was out for a second day on Friday, but Howard said there is still much work to do.

"After a house has been flooded, much of it is destroyed. So there is a lot of work ahead," he explained. "Our hope is that Food for the Hungry and the local churches can be a source of encouragement and hope, even as families rebuild and try to salvage their possessions or what they can within their homes."

The cleanup phase has officially begun, and residents are hard at work fixing flooded homes and seeking shelter in government-run evacuation centers.

"When the monsoon rains stop, we set up teams and go to the different places that we have identified with our partners and do the relief phase," Disaster Relief's Dr. Kim Pasual told CBN News. "We give them food, medical assistance; we ask them what they need."

Christian Broadcasting Network partner, Pastor Balter Diega, also a flood victim, sought help for his community from CBN Disaster Relief. Diega worked with the ministry, which handed out rice, noodles and canned goods to hungry flood victims.

Residents are grateful for the assistance in their community. "This is really a big, big help!" Elvinea thanked the relief team. "As you can see it's very difficult to go out and get supplies, but now we have food for the next days. I really hope you can help more people."

Diega is happy to help, but what gives him even more joy is being able to share Christ's salvation with flood victims.

“One time, a flood victim approached me crying. She said, ‘Now I realize that it’s not the material things that is important but our relationship with God,’” he said.