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Philippines

A progress report on the campaign of solidarity with the victims of Typhoon Washi / Sendong in Iligan (Philippines)

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On the night of December 16 2011, the northern coast of Mindanao, the Philippines was hit by a violent typhoon and floods whose severity is based on massive deforestation. Our association, Europe for Solidarity Without Borders (ESSF) has supported the Ranaw Disaster Response and Rehabilitation Action Centre, Inc.. (RDRRAC - Action Center Ranaw disaster response and reconstruction) that organizes relief in the province of Iligan [<http://www.internationalviewpoint.org>]. We present a first assessment of this initiative.

According to official reports on a provisional basis, Typhoon Washi (international name) or Sendong (its Philippine name) was responsible for 1 260 deaths and more than 750 000 victims on the island of Mindanao (not just in the province of Iligan)

RDRRAC puts accurate information about its solidarity activities on its website on a regular basis [1], information is reproduced widely in the English section of the ESSF website [2].

In summary:

* RDRRAC has mobilized a network of grassroots organizations, associations and NGOs in Iligan and in the surrounding provinces to collect aid, including in kind, bringing together logistics, especially for vehicles [3] and bring up dozens of volunteers.

* It has received support (financial or material) of a wide range of organizations both in the Philippines and in Europe or North America. It announced that it had received on January 8 296,936.50 pesos (Philippine currency), 765.38 USD, 200 Canadian dollars, Euro 2230, 760 pounds. It also received food (bags of rice and flour, cans of sardines ...), and various essential items (from blankets to kitchen utensils, clothes to toothbrushes) for families who have lost everything in the disaster.

* RDRRAC is itself based in Iligan, its members were victims of the floods, even if no one has died, and logistics have been disorganized. However, they quickly reorganized to start providing relief (a preliminary list of actions on the ground has been put online).

* It has mobilized medical teams of popular and alternative medics (including acupuncturists) to bring emergency care and counseling [4].

* It has trained volunteers in emergency management and Internally Displaced People's camps with the help of Tri-Peoples Organization against Disasters (TRIPOD) Foundation that has accumulated significant experience in this area of Mindanao.

* RDRRAC has informed displaced people of their rights, victims who often feel they don't have any - in fact they often feel no longer require or deserve any respect, depend entirely on charity and goodwill of the institutions [5]. Similarly, they became interested in displaced persons who have not found a place in formal childcare centres and that the administration does not list. This did not prevent the RDRRAC to answer a call of the municipality to adopt an evacuation centre in the city of Iligan, the elementary school Mangga (barangay Tubod). More broadly, it coordinates with the competent authorities to "ensure that relief and rehabilitation aid arrive on a regular basis to survivors, whether they are in or outside the camps."

* The campaign initiated by RDRRAC in response to this emergency is called "Duyog Iligan Tri-People Solidarity for Sendong Survivors" [6]. This brings together volunteers from the three "peoples" of Mindanao - Christian communities, Muslim (Bangsamoro) and Lumads- in a region that is the scene of violent conflicts - that are often at root socio-economic but take intercommunal and sectarian forms. This solidarity with all communities affected by floods gives an opportunity to strengthen solidarity between communities, something which is an issue of major importance.

Because it relies on a network of militant popular organizations - including in areas directly affected by the disaster – RDRRAC's action can be sustainable and help the victims to overcome a situation of absolute dependence and to regain control of their own destiny. It also helps to break with a fatalistic attitude - "It was the fault of the Typhoon" - which exempts state enterprises and large property owners from their responsibilities. It is obvious that the magnitude of the disaster is due to the massive deforestation of mountain slopes, as a result of uncontrolled logging and the activities of the mining companies, together with the impotence and complicity of the administration. In addition, numerous fallen logs, gathered along the river were washed away doing terrible damage in their wake [[See <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spi...>]]

Financial solidarity

Our campaign of solidarity is conducted in a militant way and does not have the same administrative costs as mainstream NGOS but it obviously requires a lot of resources. ESSF involved in a program of international solidarity. Donations can be transferred directly to the account of RDRRAC in Iligan, or when it's easier, sent to ESSF

By 22 January 2012 we had received € 3,548.87 on behalf of ESSF for typhoon victims in Iligan

These were gifts from:

Germany: 1270 (individual donations)

Spanish State: € 100 (IA)

France: € 1,230 (individual donations)

United Kingdom: € 58.48 (individual donation)

Japan: € 400 (JRCL-NCIW)

Quebec: € 250 (individual donation)

Switzerland: € 240.39 (GA)

For financial solidarity

Ranaw in Disaster Response and Rehabilitation Centre, Inc. (RDRRAC)

Donations can be transferred by bank transfer or through Pay Pal. Information available on their website:

<http://rdrrac.wordpress.com/donate>

You can also send donations through ESSF:

Do not forget to write "Philippines" on the back of cheques or during transfers.

Cheques

Cheques in euros only and payable in France to the order of ESSF to be sent to:

ESSF

2, rue Richard Lenoir

93100 Montreuil

France

Bank:

Credit Lyonnais

Agency Croix-de-Chavaux (00,525)

10 Boulevard Chanzy

93100 Montreuil

France

ESSF, in No. 445757C

International bank details:

IBAN: FR85 3000 2005 2500 0044 5757 C12

BIC / SWIFT: CRLYFRPP

On behalf of: ESSF

In France, these donations are eligible for tax deductions. To send you a tax receipt, we need your address (usually indicated on the cheques).

[1] <http://rdrrac.wordpress.com/>

[2] <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spi...>

[3] An association of the Netherlands, MIVA-Nederland, has also provided vehicles.

[4] These include the Medical Action Group (MAG), Medical Society of Bangsamoro-Cotabato Region and volunteer nurses and social workers of the Bangsamoro Development Authority (BDA) and the National Acupuncture Detoxification Association and (NADA)

[5] <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spi...>

[6] Duyog means "solidarity".