

This report was issued by OCHA HQ in New York. It covers the period from 6 August to 18 August 2009.

I. HIGHLIGHTS/KEY PRIORITIES

- **Over 650 people feared dead.**
- **Rescue efforts pick up as heavy lift aircrafts arrive in Taipei.**
- **More than 24,000 evacuated. 5,300 evacuees housed in emergency temporary shelters.**
- **Aid assistance provided by 59 countries.**
- **Transportation infrastructure and potable water identified as priority concerns.**

II. Situation Overview

On 7 August 2009, landfall resulting from Typhoon Morakot hit the south-east coast of mainland China and the island of Taiwan, resulting in hundreds of casualties and extensive damages to livelihoods and infrastructure. In mainland China, the most affected provinces, according to the Ministry of Civil Affairs are - Fujian, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Anhui and Jiangsu, where eight people are reported dead and three are missing. More than 14.3 million people were directly affected in these five provinces. Around 16,000 houses were damaged. The local authorities had to evacuate and relocate 1.6 million people. The Ministry of Civil Affairs estimates direct losses of CNY 9.7 billion (USD 1.4 billion) in the mainland alone.

As of 19 August 2009, 136 deaths had been confirmed and 45 people were reported as injured in the typhoon battered island of Taiwan. Among the dead, six were rescue workers. More than 386 people are still missing. Local disaster response authorities said that these figures do not include 523 people who are believed to have been buried under mudslides in Kaohsiung County for the past eleven days. This puts the estimated number of deaths over 650.

Typhoon Morakot has been labeled as one of the deadliest typhoons to have hit the island in the past 50 years. Between 6 and 9 August, the typhoon dumped more than 3 meters of water, and caused an estimated loss of TWD 110 billion (USD 3.4 billion). Pingtung, Tainan and Kaohsiung are the three most affected counties. According to the Council of Agriculture in Taipei, agricultural losses alone have exceeded TWD 12 billion (USD 364 million), while Taipei's transportation agency expects to spend TWD 20 billion (USD 607 million) to rebuild roads and bridges. On a positive note, over half of the water systems in the affected villages have been fixed, and the majority of the power supply has been restored by the authorities in Taipei, leaving around 15,000 families without water and electricity. Since the typhoon hit remote mountain regions, and not the industrial heartland, experts say that the overall impact on the economy might be limited.

III. Humanitarian Needs and Response

Initial search and rescue efforts were hindered by bad weather and lack of adequate number of rescue helicopters. The Agence France Presse reported that rescue operations have also been slow as many typhoon victims, mostly aboriginal people, do not want to leave their villages for fear of not being allowed to return at a later stage. On 16 August, island authorities said that more than 1,600 people still needed to be airlifted from 44 badly affected villages. Currently, 40,000 troops are searching for survivors. The arrival of US aircrafts on 17 August has expedited ongoing excavation and rescue efforts. So far, more than 24,000 people have been evacuated.

The Taiwan Red Cross Organization (TRCO) has mobilized 1,500 volunteers, together with non-food items from its disaster preparedness stocks. In-kind donations of emergency relief supplies have also been made more than 59 countries, including by the United States, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Israel, and through private donations and international NGOs. These contributions include food, medicines, shelter-boxes, water purifiers, plastic sheeting, sleeping bags and blankets.

As of 17 August, the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) reported around 5,300 people staying in 55 temporary shelters, in six affected counties on the island. People living in the temporary shelters have been provided with food, shelter materials and hygiene kits.

On 17 August, according to Xinhua news agency, China sent 100 pre-fabricated houses to help reconstruction efforts in the island of Taiwan; the first in a batch of 1,000 homes, worth USD 2.9 million. China has also sent two consignments of relief to the typhoon hit island, including shelter materials and sterilizers.

The international community is concerned about the timely delivery of relief assistance in remote, affected villages. To this end, some needs assessment missions are underway. On 17 August, a four-member team from the Monitoring and Information Centre of the European Commission reached Taipei for an initial needs assessment. The mission has identified transportation infrastructure and water purification equipment as priority areas for future assistance. In this regard, water purification items offered by Sweden are on their way and Poland is looking for pooling solutions. Another assessment team from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) reached Taipei on 18 August and is assessing outstanding needs.

IV. Coordination

OCHA, through its offices in New York, Geneva and Bangkok is monitoring the situation. A United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team has been alerted. On 17 August, OCHA convened an Interagency Meeting in New York and Geneva where the situation, possible needs and responses were discussed.

V. Funding

Authorities in Taipei have reported the receipt of humanitarian assistance, both cash and in-kind donations, from 59 countries, organizations and private donors.

On 19 August, Xinhua news agency reported that organizations and individuals in the mainland have donated about CNY 176 million (USD 26 million) to the typhoon battered island for disaster relief. The mainland had also donated CNY 25 million (USD 3.6 million) worth of relief materials to the island, including prefabricated houses, sleeping bags, blankets and sterilizers.

On 18 August, the Hong Kong Special Administration Region (SAR) government and Macao SAR government have also sent TWD 210 million (USD 6.3 million) and TWD 40 million (USD 1.2 million) respectively.

Japan has pledged USD 1million.

Donations are also being channeled through the TRCO. The Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) headquarters issued CNY 15 million (US\$ 2.1 million) to support the TRCO in providing relief assistance to communities. Guangdong, Shanghai and Fujian branches of the RCSC further supplemented their headquarters' support with CNY 1 million (US\$ 146,150) each to TRCO for relief efforts. IFRC in New York has channeled private donations worth US\$ 500,000 to the TRCO as well.

The need for future funding and support from the international community will depend on the outcome of the ongoing needs assessments.

VI. Contact

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