

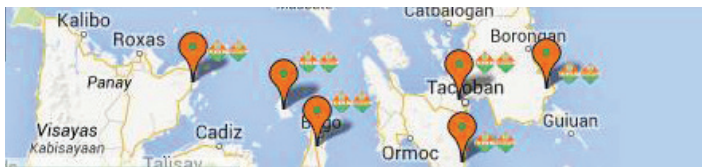


Typhoon Relief in Philippines



AMURT & AMURTEL relief teams are working on five islands serving tens of thousands of people and are expanding operations to assist more communities affected by Super-Typhoon Haiyan, known locally as Yolanda.

The typhoon devastated wide swathes of the central Philippines and has displaced 4 million people. The official death toll continues to rise well over 5000, making it the deadliest natural disaster in the country's history. Thousands are still missing and more than a million houses have been totally or partly destroyed.



AMURT relief teams on Leyte, Panay and Bantayan islands, and another in northern Cebu province, have all been providing cooked food and bottled water; a further team on Samar island assessed the worst-affected areas in preparation for a possible longer-term recovery intervention.

In Tacloban AMURT has 22 stoves operating around the clock, the only source of cooked food and rice for the homeless and hungry survivors of the disaster. In some outlying areas, AMURT also provided basic

medical care to the many people with injuries that remained untreated due to the lack of medical supplies.

AMURT's local volunteer base is unique, says Visayas Relief Coordinator John Fields. "Like in the earthquake, we were definitely the only ones giving cooked food; NGOs usually only collect and distribute because cooking is too much work, but cooked food is a really, really good thing."

AMURT has established a base in what remains of Tacloban's City Hall, but has also been expanding feeding programs to many far-flung towns around the city. A recent supply shipment, escorted by the military, included diesel fuel for trucks to reach more distant places.



Philippines, continued...

In northern Cebu province, many young children attending AMURT feedings told staff that their schools are ruined and they've just been cleaning; a task especially difficult without electricity or water. The whole community is dependent upon sending a truck for drinking water once a day; there's no other water available for personal hygiene use.



One child said, "It's difficult because of no water, no house and our farms are totally destroyed."

Security has naturally been a concern due to people's desperation, but response to AMURT teams has been very positive.

"Of course – how are they going to steal cooked food from us?", points out John. "We do have to be very secretive where our supplies are. All of our team members are coming from other cities, because if the local people find out where our food is, yeh, then it is a bit dangerous."

He shares his experience of people's spirit in northern Cebu: "They have prayers and then they're cheering. It's almost like there was no problem. It's like a celebration for them in the midst of their agony – and it is agony; their lives are horrible. But, when we give them the cooked food, it is a big sunrise in their life for the time being."

Donations and other offers of help for the relief effort

have poured in from all over the world. The government estimates the total reconstruction cost at up to \$6 billion.

Kurt Behringer, AMURT's recovery specialist, led a team conducting an assessment of a more isolated area of the country out of the media spotlight. They landed by plane in Guiuan, in south-east Samar. It was here that the super-typhoon first made landfall.

Travelling up the coast through six towns, to Borongan, they documented very extensive destruction as far north as Balangkayan. The mayor of Salcedo reported 30 dead and in the Hernani area, which has 3 barangays (towns), housing was 100% devastated. Even concrete houses were beyond repair and often unrecognisable, with just a foundation remaining. 100% of the fishing boats were destroyed, threatening their local economies long term. Locals described three gigantic surge waves that came at the time of the typhoon, wiping out almost everything in their path.

AMURT is exploring ways to help these communities rebuild. Support for affected children, housing, and measures to restore local economic capacity are all urgently needed.



A little kindness goes a long way

www.amurt.net

*Gifts can transform
lives of desperation
into lives of hope*

This gift program enables you to share your holiday and birthday gifts with other less fortunate people around the world, to make a permanent difference in their lives. It is a great way to remember others in our larger human family. Visit www.amurt.us for more information.



Syria Crisis Response



1 Year Snapshot:

- School support for 550 kids
- 3,000 refugees kept warm
- 15,000 refugees given food
- Facilitated 1,000 families' refugee status

Innocent children are suffering most as a result of the Syrian war that began more than two years ago. Many have gone without education for a long period since the outbreak of fighting and the vast majority of refugees streaming into Lebanon remain outside the school system.



AMURT pays school fees and arranges transport for refugees spread throughout the mountains in a scheme sponsored by Kinder Not Hilfe (Germany). It is a vital help to get these youngsters back into school, where they can experience social inclusion, stimulation and a stable routine to help soothe the horrors of war and dislocation. AMURT also engages psycho-social specialists to assist their healing process and conducts teacher training to provide children a broader support network.

Help for Struggling Schools

Many Lebanese schools were already struggling before the enormous wave of refugees. Now refugees fill 30% of the classes in some schools, which is becoming a considerable burden on resources. Upgrading essential equipment is one way AMURT helps schools cater for newly arrived Syrians.



Education: Hope for the Future

Last year, this Syrian girl's parents had to choose which of their children to educate, as they couldn't afford the expenses for all of them. Teachers recognised she was unusually gifted, and requested she stay in school, helping as they could. She adapted quickly to the Lebanese curriculum, which employs less Arabic, and proceeded to excel in all her subjects. This year, due to AMURT's intervention, she is fully registered in school along with all of her siblings. AMURT also provided text books and their very first school uniforms.



The Joy of Belonging: Wearing a School Uniform

Children affected by the trauma of war and being uprooted from their former life require quick re-establishment of an educational routine and psycho-social support to regain a normal development path.



(continues over)

Winter Relief



To help vulnerable refugee families though the bitterly cold mountain winter, AMURT is distributing heating stoves and fuel on behalf of the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Harsh Conditions

This family is smaller than most, but endures harsh conditions all too common. Referred to AMURT by the local municipality, they live in a 10m² section of a concrete shed used for farm machinery. There is no window glass, just holes, and no running water. They collect water from a spring 200m away; bathing and toilet are outdoors. The mother, when already 9 months pregnant with her second child, slipped and fell in the icy cold: the baby did not survive. The father works long hours for the farmer, earning under \$5 a day.



Winter Stoves

Weather forecasters predict an especially cold winter this year for Lebanon's mountains, where snowfall of 2 meters occurs in some areas.

Fuel-burning stoves are essential items, particularly for the many families living in poor housing or

caring for a relative with a medical condition.

Motherless Children

Two girls now in their grandmother's care, who explains how their mother died in a bombing just one hour after giving birth to the younger child. She points to the eldest. "She kept asking for her mother for one month; but after that she came close to me." Their father remains in hospital in Syria.



Food Distribution

Refugees just arriving from Syria often lack even the most basic essentials. AMURT provides all who reach Chouf District with certain emergency assistance they may require: ranging from food to blankets, mattresses, and special kits for hygiene or baby needs.

AMURT is the main international NGO based in upper Chouf and works with village coordinators, municipalities and local and international NGOs. In addition to international support personnel, AMURT Lebanon has a ready pool of dedicated local staff and volunteers: team members include Lebanese and displaced Syrians, who have a strong desire to ease the suffering of their country-folk.



According to the UN, this is the worst refugee crisis for 20 years. More can and must be done. AMURT is uniquely positioned to make a difference. Your help will make that possible.

Help expand services for the flood of new refugees seeking assistance: make a secure online donation now: www.amurt.net



TeamTalk is published by

AMURT • 2502 Lindley Terrace, Rockville MD 20850, USA • +1.301.738.7122 • www.amurt.net • info@amurt.net

AMURTEL • PO Box 232, Warren VT 05674, USA • +1.877.864.1553 • www.amurtel.org • info@amurtel.org