

Philippines: statements and solidarity calls after tropical storm Ondoy devastation

Wednesday 30 September 2009, by [Akbayan](#), [PLM](#) (Date first published: 29 September 2009).

We are posting below statements and solidarity calls from Philippine left forces after typhoon Ondoy devastation. We shall add more as soon as we receive them.

AKBAYAN

Citizens' Action is Best Response for Disaster

Monday, 28 September 2009 07:32

Saying that the country needs to unite in order to confront and address the calamities brought about by typhoon Ondoy, Akbayan Party-list Rep. Walden Bello on Monday asked every Filipino here in the Philippines and those overseas to summon their Bayanihan spirit and help the victims in any way possible.

"This is the best time possible to show our fellow Filipinos that Bayanihan spirit engrained in all of us," said Bello, saddened and surprised by the catastrophe of Biblical proportion that hit the country.

"We have always taken pride in being the most hospitable race in the whole world; here is our chance to display that hospitality by sharing anything we deem necessary in alleviating the current situation of our fellow Filipinos devastated by the floods typhoon Ondoy brought," added Bello. Metro Manila and nearby provinces were brought down to its knees by floods from rains spawned by typhoon Ondoy with Rizal Province being hit the hardest. Search and rescue operations continue as wide parts of Metro Manila and surrounding provinces remain submerged under water, evacuation centers have been put up to temporarily house almost half a million displaced people

Because of the unforeseen devastation, even the national government failed to cope with the influx of emergency calls while resources of non-governmental emergency groups are fast being depleted. Seeing that even the efforts of the government and non-government organization will not be enough to cope with the emergency situation, Bello reiterated his call on every citizen in the country to help.

"Nanawagan ang Akbayan sa sambayanang Pilipino na magbigay sa abot ng kanilang kakayanan upang tumulong sa ating mga kababayan," Bello said. "Hindi sapat ang kakayanan ng ating pamahalaan para tugunan ang mga pangangailangan ng mga nasalanta, kinakailangan talagang kumilos ang taong bayan."

Bello was also quick to entreat 2010 election candidates not to use the current devastation as opportunity to campaign. "It is also grossly inappropriate to use disaster response and relief

operations as campaign opportunities for people running in the 2010 elections.”

“We can blame government officials for their corruption of public funds and resources in the same way that we can blame individuals and private companies for lifestyles and practices that slowly destroy our environment, but this will not feed the hungry, nor will this save lives” Rep. Bello added. “We must put all our political differences and aspirations aside and pour all our energy and resources into looking after people who have been devastated by this disaster.”

AKBAYAN is organizing a relief drive for Marikina, Cainta, Malabon, Pasig, Escopa and Tatalon. The following items are badly needed:

- Ready to eat food (rice, boiled egg, bread, easy to open canned goods)
- Water (bottled, or in 10-gallon containers)
- Blankets and towels
- Clothes

Volunteers are also needed to help pack and deliver the items.

If you wish to help, you may call or text: 925-58-43/ 09175381816, or visit the Akbayan office at #36 b Madasalin St., Sikatuna Village, Quezon City

Dear Friends,

We know that our friends around the globe has a big heart to help our kababayans/fellow Filipinos after heavy rains hit the country’s capital. The typhoon brought the worst flooding in 20 years.

For your initial financial donations; please use the following bank details below.

Account Name: AKBAYAN Citizens Action Party

Bank Name: Bank of the Philippine Islands

Bank Address: Kalayaan Branch, 114 Kalayaan Avenue, Quezon City

Current Account No: 1991-0031-57

Swift Code: BOIPHMM

In this mailing an announcement is made for the initial AKBAYAN relief operations which is organized along with many other partners and organizations.

Thank you very much.

In solidarity,

AKBAYAN’s International Committee

RELIEF OPERATIONS center: Akbayan office address: #36 b madasalin st sikatuna vill quezon city.

Dear friends (sorry for cross-posting),

AKBAYAN is organizing a relief drive for Marikina, Cainta, Malabon, Pasig, Escopa and Tatalon. The following items are badly needed:

- Ready to eat food (cooked rice, boiled egg, bread, easy to open canned goods)

- Water (bottled, or in 10-gallon containers)
- Blankets and towels
- Clothes

Volunteers are also needed to help pack and deliver the items.

If you wish to help, pls call or txt: 925-58-43/ 09175381816 (Bayantel lines down so use these numbers). Akbayan office address: #36 b madasalin st sikatuna vill quezon city. Tulungan natin ang isa't isa, at buhayin natin ang diwa ng bayanihan.

Maraming salamat!

Ondoy a Reminder of Climate Change Threats

Tuesday, 29 September 2009 08:00

"Ondoy reminds us that the Philippines is ill-equipped to deal with climate change," Akbayan Party-list Rep. Walden Bello commented following two days of rescue and relief operations. Corporate and individual efforts to mobilize funds and resources filled in the huge response gaps left by the inadequate efforts of the national and local government. "The Bayanihan spirit is admirable, but we cannot rely on donations every time a disaster strikes, we need to minimize devastation as much as we can."

As parts of the metro remain submerged in muddy waters, the public is fearful of various weather reports warning of at least 2 impending typhoons to hit the Philippines in the coming week. Scientific studies show increased global temperature brings about extreme weather conditions, the Philippines should expect harsher rains, recurring massive flooding and landslides, and other related disasters. Rep. Bello underscored the importance of a comprehensive disaster mitigation and management plan.

"More than upgrading capacity and equipment for rescue and relief programs, we need a disaster risk reduction plan that will make the Philippines as disaster-proof as possible," Rep. Bello said.

"While there are many factors that contributed to the recent disaster, we cannot deny that the administration's preoccupation with corruption scandals and campaign preparations for the 2010 elections has exacerbated this crisis," Rep. Bello added.

"Ondoy is our wake up call," Rep. Bello concluded. "We should make it legislative priority to pass an effective disaster risk reduction bill."

Partido Lakas ng Masa (PLM)

www.masa.ph for more information.

PLM Statement on Ondoy's Devastation:

Calamity Funds Must be Released for Immediate Relief Now!
Maximum Transparency in the Disbursement of International Relief Funds!
Stop Mining, Quarrying, Logging: Implement the Kyoto Protocol!

Tropical storm Ondoy left a devastating trail of destruction in Luzon. So far it has left possibly hundreds dead and hundreds of thousands displaced mainly in Metro Manila. Filipinos from all walks of life suffered greatly from gigantic floods of unprecedented levels that destroyed lives, homes and properties, in a matter of a few hours.

The Partido Lakas ng Masa (PLM) is now conducting relief operations in the NCR region. PLM is the national political party of the mass organizations which include the labor organization BMP, the multisectoral organization Sanlakas, the urban poor organization KPML and ZOTO, the youth organization SDK and the rural workers and peasant organizations AMA and Makabayan. Many of our members' homes and even the lives of their family members have been destroyed. We know that relief is needed NOW, not tomorrow or the day after - but immediately.

We note that despite the billion-peso budget allocated to the Department of National Defense and the National Disaster Coordinating Council for calamity response, these agencies can only afford a meager supply of rubber boats and rescue materials. We are getting reports from our members that the victims, particularly in Marikina and Pasig, have to themselves brave the strong currents and rescue family members from the raging waters. As of this writing, there are reports of victims stranded in still-flooded areas in Pasig waiting for rescue - boats, food and water — but to no avail.

To ensure a swifter and better response by the national government, we urgently demand that the government maximize its resources for the immediate relief of the evacuees and for the rescue of the remaining victims in the still-flooded communities.

We call on the State-funding agencies like the SSS and GSIS to expedite the calamity funds to the affected members within the next 24 hours. The government must also utilize its budget for relief operations. This means that other government funds, such as the national government's huge intelligence funds and the funds used for the war in Mindanao, should also be shifted towards helping our people in the aftermath of Ondoy's devastation.

Our experience so far also indicates that the figures of the numbers dead and missing are hard to come by. The reports that we are gathering from the ground indicate numbers much larger than the ones released by the NDCC. While the National Disaster Coordinating Council to date states that only 8 died in the National Capital Region, according to latest reports in Brgy. Bagong Silangan alone 36 people are dead and 28 bodies have been excavated so far. In Marikina there are reports from our organizers of around 100 deaths.

The NDCC must account for the discrepancy in the data. We have the right to be informed, with accurate and up-to-date data, of the actual state of the calamity facing us.

We also note that funds are starting to come in from international agencies and governments. We must ensure that these funds are used strictly for relief efforts and fear that these funds may be depleted through corruption. We demand maximum transparency in the collection and disbursement of international relief funds.

Furthermore, we wish to emphasize that this ordeal must now be a wake-up call to all the authorities to take the necessary and proactive steps in protecting our environment. We strongly demand that the government immediately put a halt to all mining, quarrying, and logging activities in the mountainous regions. With denuded forests and damaged mountains, flooding and mudslides will

torment lowland communities lying in the mountain basins, such as in Marikina and Pasig Cities, and the lowlands of Rizal Province.

We call on the Philippine Government to strictly implement the provisions of the Kyoto Protocol with regard to greenhouse gas emissions and toxic wastes cuts as the latter distorts the normalcy of the atmosphere, resulting in much stronger storms and droughts worldwide.

The Philippine Government must address these demands NOW as we expect more disasters to come. Only through concrete measures and strong political will to implement pro-people and pro-environment measures can we prevent a humanitarian crisis of this scale in the future.

September 29, 2009.

Dear Friends,

Typhoon Ondoy swept through the Philippines on Saturday, September 26, displacing some 250,000 people and according to the most recent reports, has left some 86 people dead. Urban centres, such as Metro Manila, were also badly affected with over 80% of the city under water. In some areas the water was around 4'-5' deep. Apparently one months rainfall poured down in a matter of a few hours.

We are conducting relief operations through our own networks and we are appealing for funds to support our relief work. The typhoon has now cleared and today we will be assessing the situation based on reports from our organisers on the ground. This will also include getting information on the state of the government's disaster management response. Reports are coming in about the inadequacy of the government's response — in some areas people are still waiting for rescue operations to get to them and in other cases people are still waiting for food assistance.

According to one of our organisers around 30 people are buried in the mud in an urban poor community in Payatas and there is still no sign of assistance. This means that the media reports of the casualties are clearly under-reported. We are also receiving reports of some children of one of our members having perished in the floods as a result of electrocution – an especially dangerous problem during flooding. Our hearts go out to Alin Linda.

We will also be conducting local mobilisations over the next few days to ensure that people get adequate relief support.

We are appealing for donations from our overseas friends and networks to assist with our relief operations Please send donations to the following NGO associated with our networks.

Transform Asia

Account Number: 3042304004562

Swift Code: MBTCPHMM

Bank Name: Metro Bank

Address: Anonas Branch, Caly Building, Aurora Blvd cnr Castillo St, Project 4, Quezon City, Metro

Manila

The office address for Transform Asia is 25 F Calderon St, Project 4, Q.C. Metro Manila, Philippines.

Please indicate that this is for 'Flood Relief'

In Solidarity,

Reihana Mohideen
International Desk
Partido Lakas ng Masa
