



UNOCHA, January 13, 2020

SITUATION UPDATE

On January 12, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) issued a Level 4 alert for the **Taal Volcano**, located in the Calabarzon region 70 kilometers south of the capital, Manila. Alert Level 4 indicates that a hazardous explosive eruption is possible within hours or days. According to PHIVOLCS, Taal Volcano entered a period of unrest that then progressed into a magmatic eruption at 2:49 a.m. local time on January 13. This magmatic eruption is characterized by lava fountaining, accompanied by thunder and flashes of light. The Philippine Seismic Network recorded 49 volcanic earthquakes in the Taal region from 2:00 to 10:00 a.m. local time on January 14. Seven of these earthquakes were felt with intensities ranging between magnitudes 2 and 4 in Tagaytay City. More than 200 volcanic earthquakes have been recorded in the region since Sunday.

This intense seismic activity, coupled with the fissuring reported throughout the region, indicates continuous magma intrusion, which may lead to further eruptive activity. This increased seismic activity comes on the heels of **Typhoon Phanfone** (locally named Ursula), which made landfall on December 24, affecting more than 3.2 million people and displacing more than 130,000 in more than 3,000 communities.¹ The Category 2 storm, which caused at least 57 deaths and 369 injuries, damaged more than 530,000 houses, destroying more than 60,400.

In response to Taal, national authorities have evacuated areas at risk within a 8.6 mile (14 km) radius of the main crater of the volcano. UNOCHA reports that approximately 460,000 people reside within this exclusion zone. As seismic activity increases, PHILVOCS has requested to extend the danger zone to a 10.5 mile (17 km) radius, an area that is home to more than 900,000 people.² As of January 14, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Coordination Center for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Center) reports that 159 evacuation centers have been established.

¹ National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council. "NDRRMC Update: Situational Report No. 26, 10 Jan 2020." Retrieved on January 14, 2020, from http://ndrrmc.gov.ph/attachments/article/3986/update_re_situational_report_no26_preparedness_measures_and_effects_of_TY_URSULA_as_of_10_January_5PM.pdf.

² BBC. "Taal volcano: Lave spews as 'hazardous eruption' feared. 13 January 2020. Retrieved on January 14, 2020, from <https://bbc.com/news/world-asia-51086961>.

FAST FACTS

- Typhoon Phanfone made landfall on December 24 as a Category 2 storm, with sustained winds of 120 kilometers per hour and gusts up to 150 kph.
- PHIVOLCS has issued a Level 4 alert for Taal Volcano, indicating a hazardous, explosive eruption is possible within hours or days.
- Nearly 460,000 people reside within the danger zone.

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

- Initial priority needs include nonfood items, including hygiene/dignity kits, WASH items for evacuation centers, and mental health and psychosocial support.

Local authorities and communities to the north of Taal Volcano have been advised to guard against the effects of heavy and prolonged ashfall, and have been advised to stay indoors. A shortage of face masks has been reported in Metro Manila.³

National authorities are continuing to lead response efforts, establishing an incident command post at the air force base in Lipa City, Batangas. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) is on red alert, and residents within the exclusion zone are continuing to be evacuated by federal authorities. The army has provided 20 military vehicles and more than 120 personnel to help affected residents, and the Secretary of National Defense has confirmed that helicopters are on standby to assist with evacuations. The Philippine Red Cross is providing rescue vehicles and water tankers to support operations, and is working to provide ambulances, hot-meal vans, face masks and psychosocial support services.



Typhoon Phanfone destroyed more than 60,400 homes.

NDRRMC has reported that three road sections have been temporarily closed around the volcano and more than 600 flights—both domestic and international—have been cancelled due to ash fall. Power interruptions have been reported in seven towns within the exclusion zone. Several towns, including some cities in Metro Manila, have cancelled classes and work.

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS RESPONSE

International Medical Corps is scaling up activities to provide support to national and local partners in response to both Typhoon Phanfone and Taal Volcano. Following the typhoon in December, International Medical Corps deployed to the most affected areas, including Eastern Visayas, to assess the most urgent needs. Teams will meet needs spanning water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health and/or distribution of relief supplies to support affected households and sheltering facilities. As the Taal Volcano became active this week, International Medical Corps met with national and local partners to identify additional needs related to this response, and is moving forward with procuring and pre-positioning supplies to support increased needs. Additionally, the team is developing a distribution strategy to ensure that it reaches residents located in the most vulnerable communities with support services and supplies. Critical supply needs include face masks, hygiene/dignity kits and WASH items to support sheltering efforts.

Though the national government has not requested international assistance at this time, International Medical Corps will continue to coordinate with national authorities and local partners. International Medical Corps will continue to monitor the situation in the Philippines and remains on alert should support be requested.

³ Association of Southeast Asian Nations Coordination Center for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Center). "Taal Volcano Eruption, Philippines. Flash Update #1." 13 January 2020. Retrieved on January 14, 2020, from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/FlashUpdate_01_13Jan_PH_Taal-Volcano-Eruption.pdf.