

## Negros flood affects more than 60,000

by Cheryl Baldicantos

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NEGROS OCCIDENTAL -- "Grandma, the water is already so high (*La, ang tubig, lawom na kaayo*)," 73-year-old Linda Villamil recalls her granddaughter speaking in alarm when she woke up early last Sunday, October 6. She had six children with her and the floodwater was starting to come in.

More than 60,000 people have been affected by the recent heavy rains in Negros Oriental and Occidental. The Provincial Social Welfare & Development Office (PSWDO) of Negros Occidental lists 50, 972 affected individuals. In Negros Oriental, PSWDO lists more than 12, 200 individuals.

Due to nonstop heavy rainfall since Saturday, huge portions of the two provinces were covered in water. In this agricultural province, rice fields became lakes and sugarcane plantations became large fishing canals.

PAG-ASA reported that the heavy rain was brought by the Inter-tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ).

In Negros Oriental, areas hit by the flood are the towns of Sta. Catalina, Siaton, Basay and Valencia and also the cities of Bayawan and Dumaguete. Of the six, Bayawan City is the hardest hit.

Based on the Philippine Real-Time Environment Data Acquisition and Interpretation for Climate-Related Tragedy Prevention and Mitigation (PREDICT) website rainfall values reached maximum levels of about 15mm on October 6 resulting to flooding in Bayawan City.

There are currently 454 persons at the Bayawan City Gym. The other more than 2,000 families in evacuation centers have already gone back to clean their homes or salvage whatever they can.

Bayawan City Mayor Gerry Sarana hopes that they can already decide on the financial assistance and relocation sites for the affected individuals by Thursday.

The National Housing Authority may give at least P5,000 to each family once requirements such as the declaration of calamity, list of affected families and kinds of help they need is submitted.

Seven people died due to the flood. The Public Safety Office in Bayawan City has listed their casualties as 60 to 70-year-old Tanorio Bacorio, 29-year-old PO1 Rodelyn, 14-year-old Ronald Gargarian, 74-year-old Puriciano Sedo, pregnant Maricel Escora Bordago, and 56-year-old Shirley Tombrador Bayawan City in Negros Oriental. A fisherman was also found floating dead at a coast outside the city.

The three missing persons from Brgy. Tayawan in Bayawan City were already found alive yesterday afternoon.

In Negros Occidental, the affected areas are the towns of Ilog, Hinobaan, Isabela, Hinigaran, San Enrique and the cities of Kabankalan, Sipalay, Himamaylan and La Carlota. Of the nine, Ilog town is the hardest hit.

The PSWDO lists 5,634 families in 11 villages in Ilog town, 986 families in 9 villages in Hinobaan, 100 families in 2 villages in Isabela, 540 families in 6 villages in Hinigaran, 1,852 families in 4 villages in San Enrique, 147 families in 5 villages in Kabankalan City, 137 families in 5 villages in Sipalay City, 8 families in 3 villages in Himamaylan City and 42 families in 3 villages in La Carlota City.

Currently, relief operations and field assessments are still ongoing.