

## POS100 – A

## The Philippines in a State of Calamity: Typhoon Yolanda

Super Typhoon Haiyan, or Yolanda as it is known locally in the Philippines, is one of the strongest storms that mankind has ever known. It was classified as a Category 5 hurricane, and it dwarfs even the hurricane Katrina of 2005, which ravaged New Orleans in the United States of America. Reaching wind speeds of up to 315 km/h, Yolanda made its first landfall in the fishing town of Guiuan, Samar on November 8. Successive landfalls were made throughout the Visayas region, devastating coastal towns and cities such as Tacloban in Leyte.

Before Yolanda had struck, preparations were already being made by the local government units in the affected areas to brace for the incoming tempest. People living in flood and landslide prone areas were evacuated. However, the preparations were insufficient, as the affected areas were soon sustaining heavy damage and casualties. All basic utilities such as water and power were cut off. Most areas lost road accessibility due to debris. Communications were severed in most places due to damaged telephone and communication towers and lines. Aside from the rain and strong winds, the typhoon also caused storm surges throughout the affected areas. The Tacloban airport was put out of commission by one such wave. According to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, the death count is at least 4,000 people and PHP 12 billion in damages.

The government immediately initialized relief operations for the victims of typhoon Yolanda during the aftermath. Rescue teams and emergency workers were immediately dispatched to the stricken areas to assist the survivors. Several relief centers opened throughout the country, such as the Ateneo, to receive, collect, and send donations and relief goods to the victims. The Department of Social Welfare and Development works closely with most of the relief centers to coordinate the distribution of relief goods in an orderly manner.

Since the media are the eyes and ears of everyone, it is imperative that they focus on covering the most affected areas, so that the public would know how critical their participation is in the relief efforts. Showing the actual relief operations would also inspire the public to give and do more towards their contribution for the typhoon victims. Effective and efficient information dissemination is important in events such as this, because it allows for immediate action, especially when human lives are at stake.

The President declared that the Philippines is in a state of calamity alerted the international community to our plight. Assistance from other nations like USA, Germany, Russia, Japan, etc. was immediately on the way after the declaration. Foreign contributions came in the form of relief goods such as food, water, and other

necessities, relief workers such as volunteers and military personnel, and various resources such as vehicles and building materials.