

# Outpouring of support

## Aid groups band together for 'Yolanda' relief



PHILIPPINE *Sunday*  
**INQUIRER**  
BALANCED NEWS FEARLESS VIEWS

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

THE GROUPS that banded together to help parched Mindanao in 1998 at the height of the El Niño weather phenomenon have come together once again to help central Philippines, which was devastated by Super typhoon "Yolanda" last week.

The core groups that formed Tabang Mindanao (Help Mindanao), which include the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Ayala Foundation, Assisi Development Foundation Inc. and Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines-National Secretariat for

Social Action-Justice and Peace (CBCP-Nassa), met at the INQUIRER head office in Makati City on Friday to set up Tabang Visayas (Help Visayas) Task Force.

Also on hand were representatives from Peace and Equity Foundation, Metrobank Foundation, Unilab Foundation, Zuellig Foundation and the International Organization for Migration.

Tabang Mindanao Task Force head ambassador Howard Dee and INQUIRER president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez headed the meeting to

OUTPOURING / A6

**FOOD LINE**  
Victims of Super typhoon "Yolanda" line up for food behind a Department of Social Welfare and Development relief truck amid the ruins of Barangay 88 in San Jose, Tacloban City, on Saturday. INQSnap this page (not just the photo) to view more photos and access a guide on how to help the victims of Yolanda. RICHARD REYES



## There's no waking up from this nightmare

By Nikko Dizon

THE SECOND night I spent back home in Manila after five days of covering the aftermath of Super typhoon "Yolanda" in Tacloban City, I had a bad dream.

A man with half his face gone had me in a choke hold. He was drowning in my waterless bedroom and was clinging on to me.

As I struggled to free myself, I woke up with a start. I ran to my parents' bedroom, where I spent the rest of the night.

Tens of thousands of Tacloban residents struggled in the deep, black water that washed away their city as a super typhoon barreled through Eastern Visayas on Nov. 8.

They did not wake from their nightmare.

I saw their bodies lying on the

THERE'S/A8

**Country's richest come together for typhoon victims / A8**



A WOMAN waves from atop her destroyed home at the INQUIRER aerial team, which surveyed the destruction caused by Super typhoon "Yolanda" in Leyte on Saturday. Fluttering in the wind beside her is a Philippine flag. RAFFY LERMA

## City in ruins slowly picking up the pieces

By Michael Lim Ubac

TACLOBAN CITY—People here are slowly picking up the pieces of their shattered lives, with the city that only a week ago found itself in the eye of a monster storm trying to muster the courage to move on.

As litter and debris dominated the landscape of this storm-ravaged capital of Leyte province, pockets of the beaten city are beginning to come alive.

On Saturday morning—the usual market day in the provinces—a few ambulant vendors turned up at the break of dawn on Avenida Veteranos, selling what little they had salvaged from the rubble: vegetables, root crops, bananas and oranges, condiments, noodles, used or water-damaged clothes and toothpaste.

Small boxes for gift-wrapping shared space with picture frames, plastic bowls and glasses.

The smell of rotten food wafted from the piles of garbage as people

CITY/A11

**P-Noy returns to Leyte today / A7**

## Meeting a monster: First person account

By DJ Yap

(Editor's Note: DJ Yap, the INQUIRER's environment reporter, and photographer Niño Jesus Orbeta were the first INQUIRER team sent from Manila to cover Super typhoon "Yolanda" in Tacloban City. They arrived on Nov. 7, a day before the world's strongest typhoon landed. His tweet on that fateful Friday morning—"Sounds of glass shattering; hotel

guests in lobby, restless, alarmed. Jesus Christ,' says our fotog Niño Orbeta. "Worse than Reming."—was the first and last time we heard from them until they sent word through GMA 7 on Saturday night that they made it through the storm.)

THE WOMAN'S smile was a ray of sunshine utterly out of place on that dark and desperate Friday.

She was standing among the ruins of an old church in downtown Tacloban when I chanced upon her, just hours after Super typhoon "Yolanda" (international name: "Haiyan") tore into the city, sending its residents into the clutches of despair.

MEETING/A10

**Global aid converges on typhoon-ravaged areas / A10**

## 'Tabo' is a must for relief package

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

IT WOULD seem that even in the evacuation center, Filipinos cannot do without the "tabo."

Found in the emergency sanitation kits for evacuation centers put together by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the dipper (tabo), an item that aid officials say is probably unique to the Philippines. It won't be found, for example, in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border.

TABO/A7



FOOD TRUCKS wait in a long line of vehicles carrying relief to Samar and Leyte provinces. The convoy had been held up in the highway leading to the port in Matnog, Sorsogon, where there is a shortage of ferries sailing to Samar. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

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# Global aid converges on typhoon-ravaged areas

NEW YORK—Journey is donating \$350,000 to help relief efforts in the Philippines, and its lead singer has a message for his homeland: “Don’t Stop Believin’.”

Arnel Pineda, a Filipino, and the rest of the band announced the donation on Friday.

The donation will go to the United Nations World Food Program, which is providing Filipinos with food assistance. The donation should provide 1.4 million meals.

In a statement, Pineda referenced the group’s famous “Believin’” song and said “help is on the way.”

Journey made the donation along with Live Nation Entertainment, Creative Artists Agency and their manager, John Baruck.

The central islands of the country were devastated by Super typhoon “Yolanda” (international name: “Haiyan”), which has left more than 3,600 dead and displaced 600,000, according to authorities.

Journey is also calling on fans to donate to the cause.

Online: [www.wfp-usa.org/journey](http://www.wfp-usa.org/journey).

## US leads

Spearheaded by a US aircraft carrier group, foreign relief efforts have stepped up a gear in the storm-devastated Philippines eight days after the monsoon storm struck the Philippines.

Ships and planes from Asia-Pacific nations and Europe have converged on the belt of Philippine islands hardest hit by Yolanda, one of strongest storms to ever make landfall.

The air- and sea-lift has also brought in emergency medical and shelter supplies from global humanitarian groups that have warned of the dangers facing remote, hard-to-access communities.

The United States, which used to rule the Philippines as a colony, is by far the greatest contributor to the effort, spearheaded by the giant USS George Washington.

Below is a breakdown of the international aid being offered:

- In addition to the delivery of relief supplies, US military aircraft have logged nearly 480 flight hours in 186 aircraft sorties, moved nearly 1,200 relief workers into hard-hit Tacloban City and airlifted nearly 2,900 displaced people from the affected areas to date.

- Over the last 24 hours, more than 118 tons of food, water and shelter items have been delivered to Tacloban, Borongan and Guiuan, both on Samar Island, the US military said.

- More than 600 US military personnel are currently on the ground in the Philippines, with 6,200 sailors supporting air oper-

ations from the USS George Washington strike group. An additional 1,000 Marines and sailors with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit are expected to arrive in approximately five days.

- Eight American MV-22 Ospreys—rotor planes that can take off and land like helicopters—are currently in operation, and eight more are being deployed.

- In other contributions, Britain is sending its largest naval ship, the helicopter carrier HMS Illustrious. Also from Britain, heavy transport planes carrying equipment, such as 4X4 vehicles and forklift trucks, have already arrived.

- British Prime Minister David Cameron announced on Saturday that Britain was providing a further \$48 million to help the relief effort, on top of \$37 million already pledged.

“We are also deploying an RAF C-130 aircraft to help ensure that aid workers move between the worst-affected areas and get the aid to those who need it most,” Cameron said in Colombo, Sri Lanka, where he was attending a Commonwealth summit.

The RAF C-130 landed at Cebu-Mactan International Airport on Saturday, with British Ambassador to the Philippines Asif Ahmad greeting the flight and overseeing the unloading of relief supplies.

- The United Nations, which

had launched an appeal for \$301 million in relief funding, said on Friday it had so far received \$72 million.

- Japan has tripled its emergency aid package to more than \$30 million and is preparing to send up to 1,000 troops in what would be the country’s biggest foreign deployment since World War II.

- The European Union upped its contribution by \$7 million on Saturday to \$20 million.
- Australia has provided three C-130 Hercules transport aircraft and the amphibious landing vessel HMAS Tobruk.

- Other C-130s—a warhorse of relief operations the world over—are being deployed by countries including India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Sweden, Taiwan and Thailand, as well as by UN agencies and private charities.

- Other military transporters and aid flights have arrived or are en route from Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain, among other countries.

- China, which is locked in a territorial dispute with the Philippines, has promised \$1.6 million in aid, mainly in tents and blankets, after widespread criticism of its initial modest response of a \$100,000 government donation.

China said on Saturday it was ready to fulfill its aid pledges to the Philippines and help in the reconstruction of storm-ravaged Eastern Visayas.

Chinese Embassy spokesperson Zhang Hua said the aid would arrive soon.

“We are currently focusing on the prompt delivery of the supplies we pledged to the Philippines, which are fully ready now in China. We are waiting for the go-signal from the Philippine side. It’s expected to arrive anytime soon,” Zhang said.

## Kuwait, UAE aid

Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates have given \$10 million each to the UN appeal for donations.

In a statement issued on Saturday, the UAE announced the assistance ordered by UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The UAE also extended its deepest sympathies for the loss of life and property in the Philippines.

“The UAE believes the international community must stand together in times like these and assist the relief efforts. With this contribution, the UAE government affirms its deep solidarity with those affected by this natural disaster in the Philippines,” the statement said.

“Money is coming very quick-

ly,” UN humanitarian operations director John Ging said on Friday.

“We have to keep our foot on the accelerator. Too many people have not received assistance but they should know that the assistance is on the way,” Ging said.

Thailand is helping restore communications in central Philippines.

Thaicom Plc. has installed communication lines using its IPStar or Thaicom 4 satellite in the typhoon-ravaged areas.

Thaicom CEO Suphaje Suthumpun said the equipment would provide Internet connection and voice call services in Tacloban and other cities in the Visayas.

## Birth in Bogo

Israel is also involved in the response to Yolanda, with about 150 members of the Israeli Defense Forces Home Front Command setting up a field hospital in Bogo City in northern Cebu province.

On Friday, the Israeli army medics delivered a mother, who named her baby Israel.

An Israeli Embassy statement said on Saturday the attending physician, Dr. Reuven Keidar, held Israel in his arms and offered the traditional Hebrew congratulations to the parents: “Mazel Tov. It’s a boy.” **Reports from Tarra Quismundo, Amy R. Remo, AP and AFP**

# Meeting a monster: First person account

From page A1

Hers was the first true smile I saw that day, the sight of it so unexpected, so jarring, that I found myself asking the one question journalists were supposed to avoid during a catastrophe: “How are you?”

“We are all right. With God’s mercy we are all safe,” she replied.

Her name is Julita Jaca, and she is 65 years old. She was paying a visit to all the churches in town to say her prayers as her “way of thanking Mama Mary” for saving her and her neighbors.

Along with those neighbors, Jaca had taken refuge on the second floor of their house in a village overlooking Cancabato Bay. They survived, almost miraculously, the ferocious surge of wind and water that flattened entire villages and killed multitudes in the coastal parts of Leyte.

But something was bothering Jaca.

Her 33-year-old son, she said, was reluctant to let the neighbors stay with them and to share the week’s supply of food and water the family had stocked up in preparation for the storm.

“I want to tell my son that it’s not the time to be selfish,” she said, her eyes welling up. “I want him to understand that it is during times like this that we must help others. We should not be selfish.”

Her voice broke then, replaced by quiet sobs.

For the first time that day, I came close to crying, too.

All day, the INQUIRER team consisting of myself and photographer Niño Jesus Orbeta walked the streets of Tacloban, absorbing the scenes of shock, terror, grief and desolation that had engulfed this city of 220,000 people.

Of the emotional stories we documented, it was Jaca’s account, punctuated by smiles and tears, that struck the most strident chord in me.

Here was a mother driven to tears not by the loss of her loved ones or the deaths all around her, but by the erosion of her son’s humanity.

It was at some level a triumph of the spirit.

Orbeta and I arrived in Tacloban early Thursday morning. It was drizzling when our plane touched down in what then seemed to be an auspicious time.

## Nothing to worry about

On the way to the hotel, the tricycle driver told us that there was nothing to worry about downtown. “The most it [the flooding] will reach is up to the knee,” he said. We were almost reassured.

“We need to find a solid building,” said Orbeta, who hails from Bicol, one of the places frequently battered by tropical cyclones blowing in from the Pacific.

A lot of hotels downtown were fully booked, with mostly resi-

dents of low-lying settlements. We checked in at Asia Stars Hotel on one of the main avenues not far from the Port of Tacloban.

We spent the rest of Thursday surveying the storm preparations around the city and the adjacent town of Palo, where Douglas MacArthur famously landed in 1944.

Residents went about their business unmindful of the ominous clouds on the horizon. It was calm, perhaps too calm.

That night, Orbeta and I discussed our game plan for the next day, Yolanda’s landfall. The expectation was Tacloban would be hit, but not too badly. We were to hire a vehicle to take us to the areas expected to be most devastated from the storm, and we would return to Tacloban to file our stories and photographs.

But as I browsed for weather updates on the Internet and checked Yolanda’s track, I thought, “Aren’t we on the direct path of the storm?”

Coming into Tacloban, we had gathered that Yolanda would hit the “Samar-Leyte area,” and there were indications it would be moving northwest, theoretically hitting Samar more heavily than Leyte.

In fact, my biggest concern at that point was that the storm might strike another area too distant for us to go.

I was very, very wrong.

## ‘This is a strong one’

At 4 a.m. on Friday, we woke to the howling and whistling of the wind outside, punctuated by what sounded like booms and crashes, of things slamming into buildings, the grating noises of metal hitting metal, of glass breaking and shattering. It was so fierce the walls of the hotel shook lightly.

“Jesus Christ. This is a strong one,” Orbeta said, quickly slinging his camera around his neck to snap pictures of the scene outside. We went to the fire exit on the fourth floor to look through the glass window.

The view was white. Sheets of water were sweeping furiously inland, practically horizontally.

We saw corrugated metal roofing and other things we couldn’t identify flying past. Cars were being dragged through the flooded street. An electric pole was swaying dangerously. The tide was sweeping inward, unbelievably strong, fast.

We rushed out the fire exit, afraid that debris might hit the window. And soon enough, just as we closed the door, we heard the shattering of glass.

A sharp object had pierced the fire exit window, letting the water in and flooding our floor.

## What’s going on?

Downstairs, the water had

reached the ceiling of the ground floor. Hotel guests were leaving their rooms, filling the lobby, alarmed and restless.

“What is going on?” one whispered.

Conversations were hushed, as though people were afraid of further angering the heavens.

The lights went out.

Orbeta and I went back to our room. Our phones and modems had no signal. The hotel Wi-Fi was no longer accessible. There was no water from the faucet.

I took stock of our supplies: just a 1-liter bottle of water for each of us, a couple small packs of SkyFlakes crackers, a handful of Fudge cake bars. How are we going to survive on this?

I thought of my family back home. I had not even told them where I was.

I entertained morbid thoughts. Before shutting down my phones and laptop to save on battery, I deleted everything I didn’t want people to find there should I be killed. I felt like laughing at the ridiculousness of it.

I lay in my bed, Orbeta in his. “Many people are probably dying right now,” I said aloud. Orbeta agreed.

In the darkness we listened in silence to Yolanda’s roar.

By 9 a.m., the waters had subsided, but the winds remained strong, and a current still ran through the streets, only this time moving in the opposite direction, back east where the disturbance had come.

From our vantage point at the hotel entrance, we could see children wading through ankle-deep waters, some of them entering shops forced open by the surging water. They were already looting even before the storm had completely blown away.

By noon, we headed out to assess the damage, to talk to people who were affected, to record their ordeal.

## First bodies

I saw the first bodies almost immediately. They were of a woman and her young son on a wooden cart being pushed by two men.

I signaled to Orbeta, and he began taking pictures.

I chased the tragic carriage through the main thoroughfare to the small alleys. Everywhere the pushcart went, residents mutely watched, some of them coming closer to look at the faces of the dead.

The two corpses were taken to a village outpost. Then on top of the mother, somebody placed a dead baby that had gotten separated from them.

It wasn’t difficult to spot the woman’s husband and the children’s father. He was weeping on the pavement, a broken man. He had lost his entire family.

This story was repeated everywhere I went in what re-

mained of Tacloban, of mothers and husbands and children, dead or missing. Some of the bereaved had faces so racked with pain I couldn’t bear to watch, let alone try to talk to them.

And those I managed to interview spoke of a heart-wrenching grief.

Len de Guzman emerged, hysterical from a public elementary school that was supposed to be an evacuation center. Her 6-year-old daughter Ellen Shane had died in her arms, drowned as they clung to the ceiling of a classroom, frantically trying to keep their heads above the water.

Bodies were everywhere, under the rubble, on the sidewalks, some covered with blankets, others uncovered, still dripping blood.

## Tragedy up close

We didn’t need to look for them. All we needed to do was follow the trail of men and women, dazed, crying, helpless, in the streets.

I had never seen a tragedy this close. My emotions were drained, my mind numb. That was when I met Julita Jaca with her incongruous smile. Maybe it was she who saved my sanity.

Orbeta and I walked for hours that first day, recording harrowing stories and images even as we had no way of transmitting them to our editors.

Our feet were blistered, our backs sore. We returned to the hotel in the evening, spent and hungry.

“We will have to ration our food,” I told Orbeta in jest. We laughed at our meager supplies laid out on the bedside table.

The hotel management had served porridge and boiled eggs to the guests earlier that day, but the porridge was gone by the time we came back. We ate a boiled egg and drank precious sips of water for dinner that night.

The next day, the scene on the streets downtown was postapocalyptic: barefoot residents sifting through trash that remained uncollected, the homeless wandering around, stores looted and emptied, the looters still around howling.

“It’s anarchy,” the owner of our hotel said, expressing his fear that people might soon try to break into the building out of desperation.

Lawlessness had gripped Tacloban, and nowhere was this more evident than in the establishments stripped not only of food and water but practically anything of value: bags, clothes, shoes and slippers, appliances, TV sets, DVD players.

## Human nature

The paranoia and panic were contagious. Truthfully, I was

feeling it, too. Our drinking water was running out. Our empty stomachs were groaning.

Were we to resort to looting, too? It was unconscionable, but in some ways, understandable.

Was Thomas Hobbes right after all? Was this the true nature of humans without law and without government?

Fortunately, Orbeta and I came across a woman selling bottled water, soft drinks and potato chips from a roadside. She allowed us to buy two big bottles of water and a couple of packs of chips. She couldn’t sell us more, the woman said, as she had nothing else to feed her family.

By our fourth day in Tacloban, we were brimming with stories and images, but with nothing to show for it.

Orbeta was concerned that the longer we stayed there, unable to send our materials, our stories and photos would no longer be usable, overtaken by newer developments.

“They do not even know yet that we are OK,” I reminded him, referring to our editors.

By chance, we met a team from GMA 7 network led by reporters Jiggy Manicad and Micaela Papa. They were on their way to Palo, where they had set up to broadcast live via satellite.

(The INQUIRER would later acquire satellite phones to be used by subsequent teams sent to the area.)

We had also wanted to visit Palo, so we accepted the GMA 7 team’s kind offer to join their party.

## Heart-wrenching scenes

Palo was 13 kilometers away, and the walk was punishing. My feet bled from chafing. The streets were filled with people carrying all sorts of things taken from stores, anything that could be useful.

Others were looking for their loved ones in the piles of bodies.

Two young men were peering at the faces of the corpses lying in front of a building. I witnessed the exact moment they recognized their dead father.

Tears streamed down their faces, and the older brother could only sit down beside the body, his face crumpled.

It was heart-wrenching.

Palo was just as devastated as Tacloban, if not more so.

The corpses, most of them now in body bags, were taken to a cathedral. They had started to putrefy. Family members stood some distance away.

The somber silence was interrupted by a commotion on the road. Men aboard a moving truck were giving away dressed chickens.

People immediately swarmed around the truck as chickens flew like projectiles from it.

Although deep in grief, the residents erupted with laughter, de-

livered by the unexpected treat.

A little boy who got a chicken played with it, flapping its wings and clucking his tongue, as he walked home, bringing dinner for his family.

## We’re alive

Later that night, toward the end of his report, Jiggy Manicad announced on live TV that we were safe. (One editor, Juliet Labog-Javellana, would tell me later how worried sick she was about us, and how Manicad’s announcement eased her worries).

The GMA 7 team also told us that they were to hitch a ride on a C-130 military transport plane, which was to land in the Tacloban airport early the next morning. Manicad offered to let us come with them, and we gladly accepted.

The news team had also invited a few others who were stranded in Tacloban. They didn’t need to do it, but they did. I am forever thankful to them for their generosity.

On the ride to the airport, in two rental vans, Orbeta and I saw dozens of people, including little children, walking aimlessly in the streets, in the stillness and darkness of the wee hours, against a backdrop of a city in ruins. It was 3 a.m.

Where will these people sleep? What will become of them? Will help ever reach them? I wondered.

What I saw in the broad light of day had been horrible. But nothing prepared me for the night. It was far grimmer, darker, what “nightmare” means, but real.

The buildings of Tacloban will rise again, no doubt, but it will take much longer to heal the people.

## Meeting a monster

I am no stranger to monster typhoons.

I’d flown to Mindanao for two Decembers in a row, in 2011 and 2012, to report on the aftermath of Tropical Storm “Sendong” (“Washi”) and Typhoon “Pablo” (“Bopha”), respectively. I covered the devastation inflicted by Tropical Storm “Ondoy” (“Ketsana”) on the eastern parts of Metro Manila four years ago.

But Yolanda was the first monster I set out to meet a day before it came.

It was the first one to truly take me out of my comfort zone, to make me fear for my life, and to show me a terrifying glimpse of the nature of people at their best, at their most desolate, and at their most wicked.

I arrived in Tacloban a veteran reporter of disasters, mistakenly believing I had seen it all. I left the broken city humbled and grateful, sure only of the knowledge that I knew nothing at all.

I won’t ever forget what happened there. May it never happen again.