



**USAID**  
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**Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA)**  
**East Asia and Pacific Region, Regional Office for Asia-Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand**

**DISASTER RESPONSE**

**USAID/OFDA Responds to Multiple Disasters in East Asia and the Pacific (EAP)**

In October and November, USAID/OFDA responded to six disasters in five countries in the EAP region, deploying regional advisors and other staff to assess needs and providing more than \$2.9 million in assistance. In each situation, USAID/OFDA staff worked with U.S. Embassy, USAID Mission, host government, and relief agency personnel to provide coordinated U.S. Government (USG) assistance tailored to meet the specific needs of affected individuals.

In response to the diverse impacts of the disasters, which included floods, a cyclone, a typhoon, a tsunami, and a volcanic eruption, USAID/OFDA provided funding for various types of assistance, ranging from distribution of relief supplies to meet immediate needs, to provision of technical assistance, to support for early recovery initiatives to help families rebuild lives and livelihoods. USAID/OFDA staff continue to monitor conditions in affected areas to ensure that individuals continue to receive adequate support.

*With USAID/OFDA funding, the Vietnam Red Cross (VNRC) distributed 1,800 household kits to flood-affected individuals in Vietnam in October and early November. (Photo courtesy of VNRC).*



**DISASTER RESPONSE**

**Responding to Twin Disasters in Indonesia**

In late October, a volcanic eruption and a tsunami occurred within a day of one another in Indonesia, killing an estimated 800 people and displacing tens of thousands of others combined. In response, USAID/OFDA deployed staff to both areas to monitor conditions and determine response priorities in coordination with USAID/Indonesia and the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta.

In both disaster-affected areas, USAID/OFDA staff noted that the Government of Indonesia (GoI), local communities, and the private sector were meeting the immediate needs of affected individuals. As a result, USAID/OFDA-funded activities have focused on providing specialized assistance in support of the GoI in both areas, in addition to providing key relief supplies to assist with the immediate response.

**Merapi Volcano**

Mt. Merapi, located on the island of Java, is one of the most active volcanoes in the world. Recognizing the danger that the volcano continues to pose to surrounding communities, the USG has provided support for risk reduction activities in the Merapi area since 1994. Through the Volcano Disaster Assistance Program (VDAP), USAID/OFDA and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) have partnered with the GoI Center of Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation (CVGHM) to improve volcano monitoring in Indonesia through development of early

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**DISASTER RESPONSE**

**Meeting Immediate Needs in the Philippines**

On October 18, Typhoon Megi, known locally as Juan, passed over northern Luzon Island in the Philippines as a Category Five typhoon, killing 31 people and temporarily displacing hundreds of thousands of others. In response, USAID/OFDA immediately deployed a five-person assessment team to the area to identify needs and coordinate with other USG agencies, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GoRP), and relief organizations.

Based on assessments and discussions with local agencies, USAID/OFDA staff identified three coastal villages in Isabela Province as the most-affected areas, with up to 90 percent of

houses destroyed. However, the isolated location of the villages and typhoon-related damage to the boat system posed a challenge to providing assistance in the area immediately following the disaster. In response, USAID/OFDA worked with the U.S. Military to help coordinate delivery of GoRP-provided relief supplies to the affected communities.



**U.S. Military load GoRP-provided relief supplies. (Photo by Ben Hemingway, USAID/OFDA).**

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## Responding to Twin Disasters

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warning plans, provision of training, and installation of equipment. Earlier this year, USGS provided equipment to CVGHM to upgrade the volcano monitoring network at Mt. Merapi, helping to minimize loss of life during the recent eruptions.

During the October and November 2010 eruptions—among Merapi's most explosive and potentially deadly—these efforts and an unparalleled remote sensing response by USGS



**VDAP staff provide CVGHM with volcano monitoring equipment. (Photo courtesy of USGS).**

and partner organizations enabled CVGHM to issue evacuations that saved thousands of lives. USGS staff note that the CVGHM response to the October and November Mt. Merapi eruptions was one of the most significant successes in modern volcano hazard and risk mitigation to date. With USGS support, CVGHM was able to detect unrest in the volcano early, provide alerts to

the community, and evacuate individuals from dangerous areas.

In support of CVGHM's ongoing efforts, USAID/OFDA has provided funding to replace volcano monitoring equipment damaged during the eruptions, as well as supported the deployment of a three-person VDAP crisis response team to the area to assist CVGHM.

### Tsunami Response

Following the late October tsunami in West Sumatra Province, the Gol and relief agencies mobilized a large quantity of relief supplies to provide to the estimated 7,000 tsunami-displaced individuals—many of whom had lost relatives, houses, and most of their possessions. However, poor weather conditions and a limited supply of boats hampered early relief efforts.

To improve delivery of relief items, USAID/OFDA provided \$400,000 to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to establish logistical hubs in the area, providing land and sea transportation services to relief agencies. At present, 18 agencies are using IOM's services, delivering water containers, tarpaulins, and other essential items to affected individuals.

## DISASTER RESPONSE

### Mitigating Morbidity and Mortality Following Cyclone Giri

On October 22, Cyclone Giri made landfall in Burma as a Category Four cyclone. While Government of Burma and Red Cross warnings and evacuations helped to mitigate the number of casualties, heavy rain, wind, and tidal surges damaged or destroyed water, sanitation, and hygiene infrastructure. According to a Save the Children (SC) assessment, the cyclone destroyed, badly damaged, or flooded drinking water sources in 71 percent of villages assessed.

Although organizations began distributing water immediately following the disaster, relief agencies noted a need for more sustainable sources of potable water. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$200,000 to SC to help restore water supply infrastructure and promote good hygiene practices for an estimated 11,280 individuals. SC will also provide individuals with key relief supplies, such as water containers, buckets, and soap. To date, USAID/OFDA has provided \$300,000 for the Cyclone Giri response.

## Meeting Immediate Needs in the Philippines

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Working with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, U.S. Military personnel delivered more than 170,000 lbs of relief supplies, including food, tents, and water containers, to the three communities over a three-day period. USAID/OFDA staff highlighted the importance of the assistance, noting that the commodities helped meet the immediate needs of affected individuals and gave the GoRP the time necessary to re-establish the boat system.

USAID/OFDA and U.S. Military staff emphasized that close coordination had contributed to the quick and effective response. Prior to the onset of the typhoon, USAID/OFDA and U.S. Military staff participated in a combined exercise in Okinawa, Japan, that included disaster response simulations. Several weeks later, many of the same USAID/OFDA and U.S. Military staff found themselves participating in a real disaster response, using the relationships and knowledge gained in the exercise to rapidly respond to needs.

### USAID Hosts the First Annual Pre-Typhoon Planning Meeting in FSM and RMI

From October 18 to 22, USAID staff from Washington, D.C.; Manila, Philippines; and Bangkok, Thailand; attended the Operational Blueprint Tabletop Exercise in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)—the first annual pre-typhoon planning meeting in the two countries. The Operational Blueprint guides the USAID program in FSM and RMI and provides a framework for coordination and delivery of mitigation, relief, and recovery support.

Attended by the host governments, relief organizations, and numerous USG agencies, such as the Joint Task Force Homeland Defense, USAID, and the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, the tabletop exercise provided participants with the opportunity to plan and coordinate response efforts, assess their disaster assistance and response capabilities, and gain a better understanding of the Operational Blueprint. During the exercise, USG and host government staff participated in a simulation of a typhoon response, discussing and analyzing various response and reconstruction options and going step-by-step through the process for requesting USG assistance.

"The tabletop exercise was successful in providing participants with a common understanding of the Operational Blueprint, bringing together key stakeholders, and creating interest in future collaborative efforts between the FSM and RMI governments and the USG," USAID Disaster Assistance Coordinator for FSM and RMI Bart Deemer noted. Participants highlighted the utility of the simulations and expressed a desire to continue developing and executing exercises like these in the future.



**USAID staff work with IOM and FSM officials during a disaster simulation. (Photo by Erin Magee, USAID/OFDA).**

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