

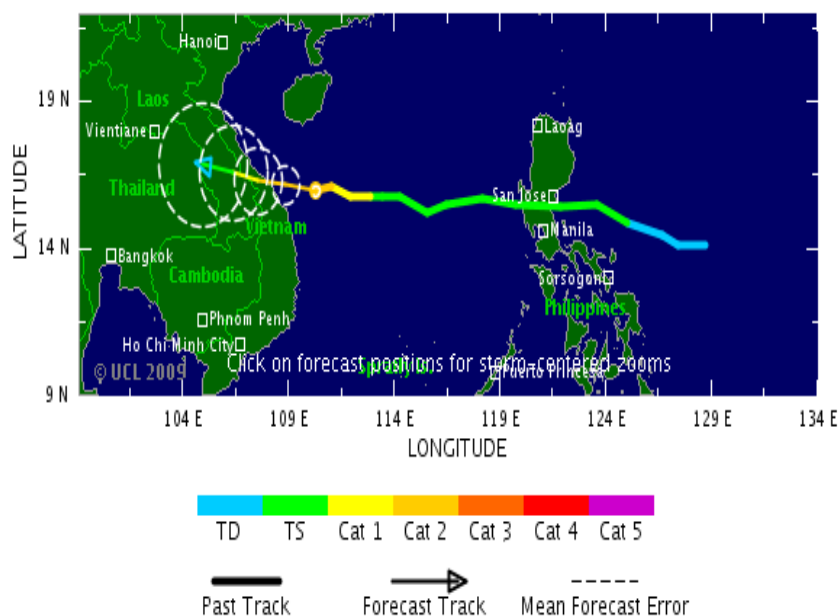


United
Nations

Humanitarian Situation Report for Emergencies, Lao PDR

Date: 11 October 2009

On 29 September 2009, Typhoon Ketsana hit the southern Provinces of Lao PDR. Typhoon Ketsana entered the country from Vietnam as a severe tropical storm then rapidly weakened to a tropical depression before exiting the country into Cambodia. The typhoon swept over Attapeu, Sekong, Saravan, Savvannakhet, and Champassack provinces. Attapeu province was the worst hit, bearing the brunt of the storm, with wind speed of upto 140 kms per hour bringing with it torrential rains. Several villages located along Sekong River in Sekong Province and Sedong River in Saravan Province, were washed away.



On 30 September, the military was deployed to the affected areas, under the leadership of the National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC). Their air and river search and rescue efforts were hampered by high water levels, strong winds, and dangerously strong river currents. The Provincial and District Disaster Committees (PDMC and DDMC) in the affected provinces, also kicked into action immediately on the afternoon of 29 September, before the typhoon hit. They warned villages to move away from flood prone areas to higher

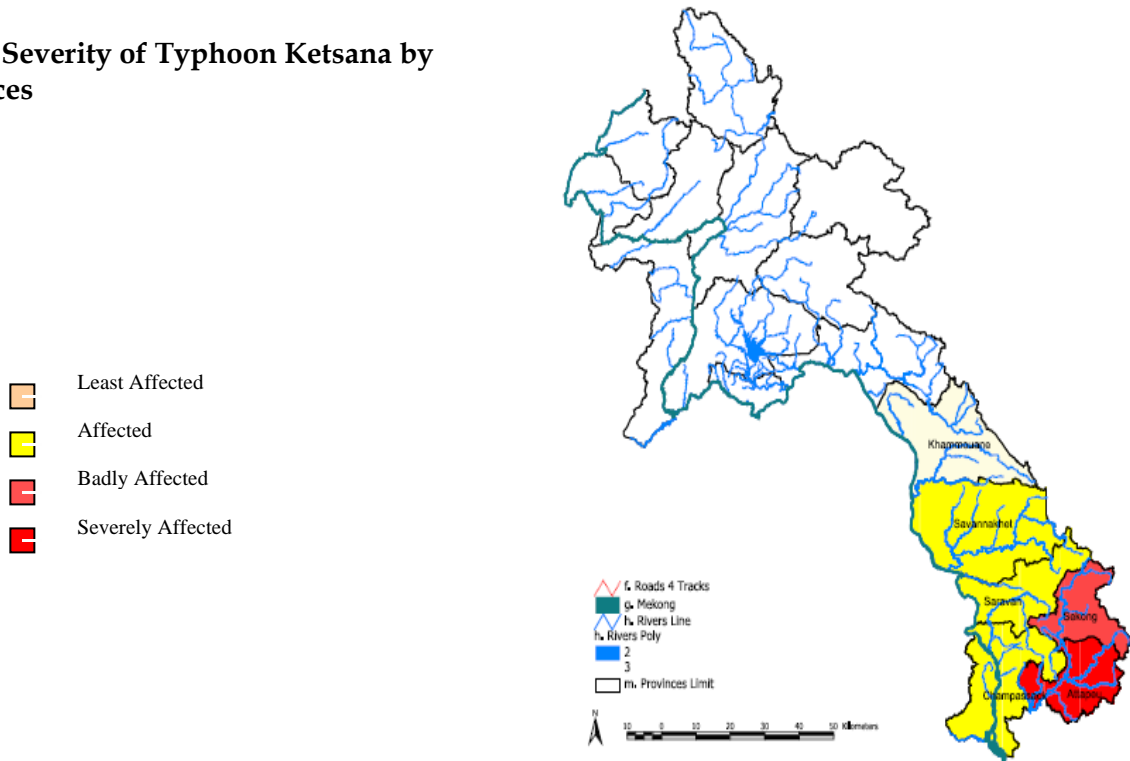
ground. Provinces like Sekong and Saravan where this messaging was effective only reported one death which is commendable when one sees the extend of physical damage caused by Ketsana.

The PDMCs also organized the evacuation of trapped villagers to higher grounds, carried out search and rescue, distributing food, medicine, basic shelter material, and undertook emergency assessments. The UN agencies and NGOs on ground supported these initial efforts by providing food, financial and logistical support. By 1 October 2009, the rains had subsided and the river levels in many places had fallen to normal levels. However, access to the worst hit areas was still being hampered by floods and dangerously strong river currents.

On 9 October 2009, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a press conference to appeal for international assistance and report on the accessed damage and immediate needs of the affected people. Overall damage to the agricultural sector and infrastructure was extensive.

According to NDMO data, a total of five provinces, 482 villages were affected. An estimated 170,000 people, approximately 27, 836 households were affected, with 9,602 households being displaced. Approximately 28,500 Ha of rice and crop field were damaged. The livestock deaths reported were: 551 buffaloes, 1,948 cows, 2,032 pigs, and 11,748 poultry. Reported infrastructure damage included: 825 houses damaged; 1,023 houses destroyed; 32 schools; 3 hospitals; 14 Irrigation systems, and 10 roads.

Map 1: Severity of Typhoon Ketsana by Provinces



Source: FRC

Immediate Response from the Government of Lao PDR

The Prime Minister led a high level Government delegation to assess and monitor the emergency response efforts, and stand in solidarity with the affected people. The Vice Chair of the NDMC who is also the Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Defense led the emergency operations on the ground. Rescue teams were deployed by road, river, and air in Sekong and Attapeu Provinces. Emergency support medical teams, both mobile and in hospitals, were also dispatched. To support these teams military logistics, that is trucks, boats, helicopters, were deployed. These teams provided basic emergency assistance – food, medical, water, non food items, shelter materials –to the most affected households.

Immediate Response from the UN Country Team

The UNORC is coordinating the humanitarian actions, information, and response through the emergency clusters. UN Emergency Clusters under the Inter Agency Standing Committee were activated by 9 October 2009. These clusters and their cluster leads have been aggregated to six for operational efficiency, and are: (1) food security: WFP/FAO; (2) Logistics: WFP; (3) Nutrition, WASH, and Health: UNICEF/WHO; (4) Child Protection: UNICEF; (5) Education: UNICEF; (6) Early Recovery and shelter: UNDP.



Source: PDMC

UNICEF provided financial assistance to Namsat/ Ministry of Health, to carry out a WASH assessment in Sekong Province. UNICEF has also pre-positioned WASH inputs in Vientiane, awaiting the findings of Namsat assessment before delivering them to the provinces. In addition, UNICEF has distributed 1 million chlorine tablets, and 15,000 bars of soap to Attapeu, Sekong, and Saravan provinces

FAO is providing satellite imagery to support emergency assessments and post recovery planning. WFP has supplied 150 tons of food assistance to 51,000 in the affected provinces. WHO gave USD\$ 5,000 and

technical support to MoH to support their mobile health teams. WHO is also supporting the National Centre for Laboratory and Epidemiology (NCLE) in carrying out disease outbreaks surveillance and response. UNICEF and WHO are distributing communication materials. UNFPA gave USD 5,000 to the MoH to undertake assessments and relief, and has pre-positioned emergency reproductive health kits and dignity kits (personal effects) for distribution. UNDP has availed funds to support joint assessments.

The UN will conduct a joint assessment with partners that will be followed by a joint appeal for Lao PDR within the next 2-3 weeks.

Immediate Response from the INGOs, Red Cross, and private sector

The Mekong River Commission (MRC) have been providing flood forecasting information, mainly monitoring the Mekong River levels. They have also provided boats to assist the national authorities' relief efforts. Private companies and individuals have contributed logistical support and cash towards the government led relief efforts.

Other NGOs like CARE, Oxfam Australia, Health Unlimited and World Vision International have provided some food, WASH commodities, non food items, through their PDMCs, in their areas of operation.

Disclaimer: The information in this report is consolidated from Provincial Disaster Management Committee (PDMC) sources, UN, Red Cross Societies, INGOs, and other and subject to availability of data. Although the UN RC Office aims to confirm reports independently, occasional factual inaccuracies can occur. For inputs, questions or comments please contact directly the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator.