

Tzu Chi Aid Comforts Quake Victims in Philippines

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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Tzu Chi volunteers in the Philippines have provided relief to hundreds of victims of an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.2 which struck the island of Bohol, in the centre of the country, on October 15. The disaster has forced thousands of people to live in makeshift tents which hold three to five families.

The deadliest earthquake to hit the country in 23 years hit Bohol in Central Visayas. According to official reports, it left at least 211 people dead, nine missing and 762 people injured and damaged or destroyed more than 55,000 structures.

On October 19, the volunteers conducted a survey of the disaster survey; they distributed relief supplies in five towns in Bohol. One of them was Loon, which is reported to have had the largest number of fatalities and damage to structures, including churches and businesses. At least 54 people in the town were killed; the number of fatalities has been increasing every day as search and rescue operations continue.



On October 20, a total of 273 families benefited from the two relief distributions organized by the foundation at two evacuation sites in the town.

Rosalinda Dospueblos, a mother of three, could not hold back her tears on receiving from the volunteers a thermal blanket and an envelope containing 2,000 pesos. "I am so happy to receive help from you. I will use the money to buy food, as well as school supplies for my children to prepare them as soon as their classes resume," she said. She arrived at the distribution point barefoot. "We were not able to save anything."

The family of Edelfreda Demeterio also was unable to save anything during the earthquake, except for some clothes. "We have been here for six days now," she said. "When it rains, we cannot sleep because the grass is damp. There are 20 of us in one tent. Most tents provide shelter to three to five families. It is especially difficult for my husband who is confined to a wheelchair and needs an oxygen tank for his chronic asthma. Most of my family members are still anxious due to continuous aftershocks."

Despite their difficult situation, the residents have shown unwavering confidence in God's mercy. Demeterio and her sister Gemma Murcia have been praying incessantly even in the evacuation site.

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