

Battered Philippines receives aid from world

Weakened Haiyan makes landfall in Vietnam

AFP, Manila

The United States, Australia and the United Nations mobilised emergency aid to the Philippines as the scale of the devastation unleashed by Super Typhoon Haiyan emerged yesterday.

The Pentagon sent Marines and equipment to assist with the relief effort following the typhoon, which may have killed more than 10,000 people in what is feared to be the country's worst natural disaster.

Even Vietnam, despite coping itself with a mass evacuation programme as a weakened Haiyan swung onto its territory, provided emergency aid worth \$100,000 and said it "stands by the Philippine people in this difficult situation".

On the ground, the relief operation was centred on the city of Tacloban on Leyte island, three days after one of the biggest storms in recorded history demolished entire communities across the central Philippines and left countless bodies as well as gnawing desperation in its wake.

Delivering on a promise of quick help from President Barack Obama, about 90 US Marines and sailors based in Japan flew into Tacloban aboard two C-130 Hercules transport aircraft, after receiving a bird's eye view of the immense scale of destruction across Leyte.

They brought communication and logistical equipment to support the Philippine armed forces in their relief operation.

"We are gonna move stuff as they direct, as the Philippine government and the armed forces (ask)," Brigadier General Paul Kennedy, the head of the Okinawa-based 3rd Marine Expedition Brigade, said in Tacloban.

Kennedy's men were the advance guard of a Marine operation that in total will encompass up to nine C-130s plus four MV-22 Ospreys -- tilt-rotor planes that can operate without runways -- and two P3 Orion aircraft for search and



Survivors of Super Typhoon Haiyan at the coastal village of Capiz in the central Philippines carry sacks containing relief goods delivered via helicopter by the Armed Forces of the Philippines yesterday. Philippines rescue workers struggled to bring aid to famished and destitute survivors on November 11 after the super typhoon that may have killed more than 10,000 people, in what is feared to be the country's worst natural disaster.

PHOTO: AFP

rescue.

"That is what I do, I provide capabilities that are not resident here," Kennedy told reporters.

The Australian government pledged Aus\$10 million dollars (US\$9.38 million), with Foreign Minister Julie Bishop describing the unfolding tragedy as "absolutely devastating" and on a "massive scale".

The sum includes Aus\$4 million towards a UN global appeal and Aus\$3 million for Australian non-government organisations. The aid will include tarpau-

lins, sleeping mats, mosquito nets, water containers and health and hygiene kits.

A team of Australian medics will leave on Wednesday via a C17 military transport plane from Darwin to join disaster experts already on the ground, the government said.

Philippine rescue teams were said to be overwhelmed in their efforts to help those whose homes and livelihoods were destroyed after Haiyan ravaged large swathes of the archipelago Friday.

Officials were struggling to cope with the scale of death and destruction, with

reports of violent looters and scarcity of food, drinking water and shelter.

United Nations leader Ban Ki-moon promised UN humanitarian agencies would "respond rapidly to help people in need".

The UN children's fund UNICEF said a cargo plane carrying 60 tonnes of aid including shelters and medicine would arrive in the Philippines Tuesday, to be followed by deliveries of water purification and sanitation equipment.

Pope Francis led 60,000 people in Sunday prayers for the Philippines, urging

the faithful to provide "concrete help" to the largely Roman Catholic country.

Typhoon Haiyan made landfall in Vietnam early yesterday, uprooting trees and tearing roofs off hundreds of homes, but sparing the country the widespread devastation wrought on the Philippines.

The storm weakened significantly since scything through the Philippines over the weekend.

But it still packed heavy rains and winds of 120 kilometres per hour as it hit northern Vietnam and more than 800,000 people were evacuated nationwide over the weekend as the weather system bore down on Vietnam.

In the northern port city of Hai Phong, residents said even a weakened Haiyan had felt like a major storm when it hit.

"The storm was really big. I cannot think of any other bigger storm than this over the past several years. I felt my house shaking last night," resident Nguyen Hung Nam, 70, told AFP.

"We were quite well prepared so I don't think there is that much damage."

The capital Hanoi saw downpours and houses in some northern provinces were damaged by high winds.

"Several hundred houses had their roofs ripped off. Thousands of trees in the province were uprooted," said Nguyen Cong Thuan, a disaster official in Quang Ninh province.

"Three people were reported missing."

The government said no deaths had been reported so far, although five people died during preparations for the typhoon.

"Up to now, we have been successful in minimising human and material losses," Deputy Prime Minister Hoang Trung Hai said, according to a statement.

In Quang Ninh -- the most-affected province which borders China, where at least six people have been killed by Haiyan -- images on state media showed high winds and heavy rain lashing towns.



'NSA Chief should resign or be fired'

Says US senator

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

Senator John McCain has called for Keith Alexander to "resign or be fired" as the head of the National Security Agency, in an interview with the German news weekly Der Spiegel published on Sunday.

The senator for Arizona, a former Republican presidential candidate, said Alexander should be held accountable for the leaks of thousands of documents by the whistleblower Edward Snowden, which revealed NSA surveillance and spying on a massive scale. McCain said Snowden, who worked for the NSA as a contractor, should never have had access to classified information.

President Barack Obama, the NSA and the congressional intelligence committee had responsibility for the sharing of classified information, he said.

Asked if Alexander should resign, McCain said: "Of course, he should resign, or be fired. We no longer hold anybody accountable in Washington."

Asked if the US intelligence services were out of control, McCain said: "There's not been sufficient congressional oversight, and there has been an absolutely disgraceful sharing of information that never should have taken place. For many years, we had an absolute provision that any classified information, which was going to be shared, is based on need-to-know information."

He also said it was "conceivable" that President Obama had not known about the German chancellor's phone being monitored, but added that he should have.

'Govt will look into CBI's legality'

Says Indian prime minister

PTI ONLINE

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh yesterday said the government will look "seriously" and "promptly" into the legality of the Central Bureau of Investigation in the wake of some questions being raised about the legitimacy of the investigation agency.

Addressing a CBI conference on tackling corruption, he also asked probe agencies to tread cautiously when it was handling cases related to policy decisions.

NEWSIN brief

'Mangalayam' suffers glitch but 'no setback'

AFP, New Delhi

India's Mars spacecraft suffered a brief engine failure yesterday as scientists tried to move it into a higher orbit around Earth, but controllers denied any setback to the ambitious low-cost mission.

The Mars Orbiter Mission, which blasted off on November 5 for a 11-month trip to the Red Planet, is being launched on its way via an unusual "slingshot" method for interplanetary journeys.

British TV crew face Sri Lanka demo

AFP, Colombo

Pro-government activists demonstrated outside Sri Lanka's main international airport yesterday denouncing a visit by Britain's Channel 4 which produced an award-winning documentary on alleged war crimes during the island's ethnic war.

Activists shouted slogans against a crew from the network as they arrived to cover a meeting of Commonwealth countries in Colombo on Friday.

"Channel 4 divides Sri Lanka, supports terrorism," said a poster carried by a demonstrator at the Bandaranaike International Airport, where the authori-

'DR Congo conflict far from over': Oxfam

AFP, Kampala

British charity Oxfam warned yesterday that the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo was far from over and said it was vital to set up a political process to address deep-seated grievances in the troubled region.

The Kinshasa government and the M23 rebel group which was defeated in a UN-backed offensive this month were set to sign a peace deal yesterday in what diplomats hope will be a key step in efforts to end decades of war.

NUCLEAR TALKS

Kerry says Iran walked out; IAEA and Iran seal deal

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Secretary of State John Kerry yesterday defended US moves to reach a nuclear deal with Iran, saying it would protect Israel and stressing Tehran walked away from the deal.

His comments came as France yesterday said that world powers were close to an agreement with Iran on its disputed nuclear drive, despite failure to reach a deal at crunch talks in Geneva on the weekend.

Kerry's remarks also come as Israel and the US are locked in a bitter war of words over the negotiations to halt Iran's nuclear drive, which is believed to be a front for developing a military capability.

"Our hope is that in the next months we can find an agreement that meets everyone's standards," Kerry told reporters in Abu Dhabi.

"The P5+1 was unified on Saturday when we presented our proposal to the Iranians... But Iran couldn't take it, at that particular moment they weren't able to accept," he said.

The top US diplomat insisted that a deal with the Islamic republic would protect Israel and other allies.

In recent days Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has furiously denounced the emerging agreement as "dangerous" while his defence minister, Moshe Yaalon, called it a "historical mistake."

Kerry insisted that the United States has the interests of ally Israel at heart and that he shares Netanyahu's "deep concerns".

"But I believe the prime minister needs to recognise that no agreement has been reached about the endgame here that's the subject of the negotiations," said Kerry.

He said sanctions were imposed on Iran to force it to negotiate.

"And if we had to turn to a military option, because we are left no other option, we must show the world we've exhausted every possible remedy and opportunity."

Israel views a nuclear Iran as an existential threat and has

said it will not be "bound" by any world deal with Tehran, refusing to rule out the threat of military action to halt it.

"Iran gives practically nothing and it gets a hell of a lot. That's not a good deal," Netanyahu told CBS on Sunday.

And in a speech to Jewish-American leaders in Jerusalem he added, "It is a bad and dangerous deal that deals with the thing that affects our survival. And when it comes to the question of Jewish survival and the survival of the Jewish state, I will not be silenced."

But Kerry insisted in Abu Dhabi that "war should be the last resort" to resolve the dispute with Iran and that no state has "existing right to enrich".

The Iranian press, on the other hand, yesterday rounded on France and its top diplomat Laurent Fabius, after reports emerged he scuttled a deal in nuclear negotiations in Geneva at the weekend.

"France ruined its image in Geneva," where talks between Iran and world powers sunk after Fabius expressed dissatisfaction with a draft text of an agreement, the English-language Tehran Times said.

According to the government-run Iran daily, Iranian businessmen have decided to "review their relations" with their French counterparts and find "a more trustworthy partner."

Meanwhile, Iran and the UN nuclear watchdog agreed yesterday on a "roadmap for cooperation" over Tehran's controversial atomic drive.

The announcement of the breakthrough came during a visit to Tehran by International Atomic Energy Agency chief Yukiya Amano.

"The joint statement that was signed today details a roadmap for cooperation that determines mutual steps to resolve remaining issues," Iranian nuclear chief Ali Akbar Salehi said at a joint news conference with Amano.

Amano hailed the deal as "an important step" but added "much more must be done", in remarks were carried by the ISNA news agency.



John Kerry



Benjamin Netanyahu



Laurent Fabius



Afghan Shiite Muslims participate in ritual self-flagellation to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Islam's last Prophet Muhammad, at a mosque in Kabul yesterday. The Islamic month of Muharram marks the seven-century martyrdom of Prophet Mohammad's grandson Imam Hussein who was killed in battle in Karbala in Iraq 680 AD.

PHOTO: AFP

UN climate talks open amid 'sobering' typhoon

AFP, Warsaw

Nations launched a new round of talks yesterday for a 2015 deal to cut Earth-warming greenhouse gas emissions in the aftermath of a deadly Philippines typhoon the UN's climate chief labelled "sobering".

The 12-day United Nations talks opened amid a slew of warnings about potentially disastrous warming with increasingly extreme weather phenomena unless human-kind changes its atmosphere-polluting, fossil-fuel burning ways.

"What happens in this stadium is not a game. There are not two sides but the whole of humanity. There are no winners and losers, we all either win or lose in the future we make for ourselves," UN climate chief Christiana Figueres told climate negotiators.

The UN has set a target of limiting global average warming to two degrees Celsius over pre-Industrial Revolution levels -- at which scientists believe we can avoid the worst effects of climate change.

The world seeks to reach that goal by curbing emissions of invisible, heat-trapping gases from burning fossil fuels which provide the backbone of the world's energy supply today.

Reducing this pollution requires a costly shift to cleaner, more efficient energy, which helps to explain why the UN negotiations have been such a battlefield.

Experts say the 2 C objective, set in 2009, is likely to be badly overshot on current emissions trends.

ODDLY enough

The Criminal Dark Knight

REUTERS, Singapore

A Singaporean man with an unusual superhero-like name turned out to be a villain who consumed drugs and stole from his brother.

Batman bin Superman, which means Batman son of Superman in the Malay language, was jailed yesterday for two years and nine months for various offences including stealing his brother's automated teller machine card to make withdrawals, media reported.