

News Brief

Typhoon Haiyan Leaves Ordnance Contamination in its Wake

On 8 November 2013, Typhoon Haiyan, a category 5 super typhoon, landed in the Philippines causing widespread destruction. According to the U.S. Agency for International Development, 16 million people have been affected, with 6,155 confirmed deaths and 4.1 million people displaced.¹

During the typhoon, a military armory was destroyed near Tacloban, one of the cities most affected by Typhoon Haiyan. With 273.6-kmh (170-mph) winds and 4.572-m (15-foot) wave surges, Typhoon Haiyan scattered explosive remnants of war (ERW) throughout the surrounding area.^{2,3}

The Philippines does not have an official ERW clearance program, and various government agencies, including the Armed Forces of the Philippines and local police, handle clearance operations.⁴


Natural disasters can spread ERW and landmine contamination while exacerbating the difficulties of current humanitarian clearance efforts. Mines relocated by floodwaters are particularly dangerous. Deminers are trained to clear land-



A young resident of Tacloban City walks through debris left behind by Typhoon Haiyan.

Photo courtesy of U.N./Evan Schneider.

mines placed upright; however, floodwaters can cause landmines to sink into the mud in any position.⁵

The Philippine army is attempting to keep people away from contaminated areas, but locating the ordnance is difficult because many of the explosives, ordnance and grenades are covered by mud.² 

~ Brenna Feigleson, CISR Staff

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