

Field teams working 'around the clock' in wake of deadly storm in the Philippines – UNICEF

25 December 2017 – Relief supplies prepositioned by the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) are ready for dispatch to areas of Philippines hit by Tropical Storm Tembin (known locally as 'Vinta') and its field teams are working around the clock to assess the scale of damage, the UN agency has said.

'Our heart goes out to the children and families affected and made vulnerable by storm Vinta at this time of the year when majority of Filipinos are getting ready to celebrate Christmas,' said Lotta Sylwander, the head of UNICEF operations in Philippines, in a news release Sunday.

'[We] stand ready to support the Government and partners to address risks on children's life and health and alleviate suffering of affected communities as best as we can,' she added.

The relief materials prepositioned by UNICEF include water and sanitation supplies, such as water kits for families, large water tanks for community use, water purification tablets, jerry cans and tents.

According to the UN agency, the situation of the communities displaced from Marawi earlier this year is of particular concern as the camps they were staying in were badly hit by the storm and tents have been destroyed.

First priority is to ensure children's lives are saved and protected UNICEF

Furthermore, in any emergency, children are among the most vulnerable and are at a heightened risk of contaminated water, lack of food and epidemics, and other hazards which often follow in the wake of a natural disaster.

Saving children's lives and ensuring they are protected is, therefore, its first priority, stressed UNICEF.

According to the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) in the Philippines, severe flooding and landslides have been reported in Cagayan de Oro City and in a number of towns in Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga Sibugay provinces.

So far, some 268,000 people are reported to have been affected by the storm, of whom about 160,000 are said to have been displaced. The storm has claimed at least 200 lives and about 100 more are reported missing.

However, these figures could rise as reports from the field come in and search and rescue efforts by local authorities continue, OCHA said.

Tropical Storm Tembin made landfall in Davao Oriental on 22 December and

swept through various provinces in Mindanao causing flash floods and landslides. Tembin followed another tropical storm, Kai-tak (known locally as Urduja), that struck central parts of the country, affecting some 1.7 million people and displaced about 425,000.