

'Nina' leaves three dead, 19 hurt and 14 others missing. Published in Baguio Midland Courier Vol. LXI, No. 39 issued on September 28, 2008. The article is located at pages 1 and 38. This copy was retrieved from the Cordillera Studies Collection of the University of the Philippines Baguio Library

'Nina' leaves three dead, 19 hurt, and 14 others missing

Three persons in Baguio were killed due to landslide while 19 others in the city and nearby Benguet province were injured as typhoon Nina battered the Cordillera region on Sept. 22.

Cordillera Office of Civil Defense (OCD) director Olivia Luces named the three casualties due to landslide in Guisad Surong in Baguio as Lolita Baroma, 76, and her son Juan Baroma, 40, while the reported casualty in Dominican Extension was named as Lailani Fecha, 39.

The 19 injured victims were residents of Baguio and La Trinidad,

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NINA . . .

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Benguet, according to Luces.

Around 56 families representing 280 persons in Barangay City Camp Proper were also affected due to flooding. They were evacuated to a school but have now returned to their respective homes.

The City Disaster Coordinating Council also recorded 52 cases of landslides, soil erosion, or mud flow; 17 eroded ripraps, cul-

verts, and stairways; 19 fallen trees; 19 incidents of flooding; one case of trash slide; and two cases of washed out drainage pipelines as of Sept. 23.

Close to 800 families, mostly from Itogon, Benguet, were affected by the strong winds and heavy rains. Of the affected households, 153 families representing 765 persons were evacuated to safer grounds when their houses were hit by landslides and floods, according to the OCD report.

In Itogon, Benguet, 16 private miners were trapped inside a gold field mine tunnel when a large volume of runoff water flooded the tunnel *(see related story)*.

Families numbering to 96 from Barangay Loacan in Itogon, Benguet were affected when a big landslide deformed the landscape of the area at the height of the typhoon.

Some of the major routes — Acop-Kapangan-Kibungan-Bakun road; Tawang and Alapang provincial roads; Balbalan-Pinukpuk Road; Abra-Cervantes Road; and Claveria-Calanasan Road — were also closed to vehicular traffic as of 5 p.m. of Tuesday but clearing operations are ongoing.

The Regional Disaster Coordinating Council chaired by Cordillera police director C/Supt. Eugene Martin and its

partner agencies are now exerting efforts to provide assistance to the affected families and individuals in the region.

No estimate of amount for damages was released as investigations of the damaged infrastructure continued as of Friday. — *Harley F. Palangchao with reports from Aileen P. Refuerzo*

Huge landslide damages barangay in Itogon town. Published in Baguio Midland Courier Vol. LXI, No. 39 issued on September 28, 2008. The article is located at pages 8 and 40. This copy was retrieved from the Cordillera Studies Collection of the University of the Philippines Baguio Library.

Huge landslide damages barangay in Itogon town

BENGUET – A landslide that occurred afternoon of Sept. 22 at the height of typhoon Nina has literally deformed Barangay Loacan in the mineral-rich town of Itogon.

It was considered a miracle that no one was injured when the landslide, measuring to about 300 meters wide and more than 30 feet high, cascaded down a slope and damaged almost 100 houses.

Several houses were also left hanging,

including an Iglesia ni Cristo church, which served as a landmark in one of the villages where former and current private miners and other migrants have been staying for decades now.

Benguet Gov. Nestor Fongwan, who immediately rushed to the area along with the Benguet Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council, the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office, and other volunteers, said that the partially damaged houses are

no longer safe to be occupied.

Fongwan said that some of the residents there whose houses were totally damaged have already traveled back to their respective hometowns while others were temporarily evacuated in a barangay hall and government buildings.

“As of now, the provincial government and its partner agencies are distributing food supplies and other basic needs of the affected families.”

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HUGE ...

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Fongwan said in a telephone interview.

Engr. Felizardo Gacad of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said in a separate interview that their office is checking its records if Barangay Loacan is one of the surveyed geological hazardous areas in the Cordillera.

Barangay Loacan overlooks the open pit mine once operated by the Benguet Corporation, the oldest mining company in the country.

To recall, the DENR-MGB has reported that almost 480,000 hectares of the 1,829,368-ha total land area of the Cordillera region has been surveyed for geo-hazard mapping by the said office.

The provinces of Apayao, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, and Mountain Province were listed in the top 10 provinces nationwide that are prone to landslides and floods.

– Harley F. Palangchao

Landslide displaces 186 school children. Published in Baguio Midland Courier Vol. LXI, No. 42 issued on October 19, 2008. The article is located at pages 12 and 43. This copy was retrieved from the Cordillera Studies Collection of the University of the Philippines Baguio Library.

Landslide displaces 186 school children

The Sept. 22 landslide that totally damaged 37 houses in Itogon's Barangay Loacan also rendered the decades-old Loacan Elementary School edging dangerously close to the slide, forcing school authorities to abandon it.

"We have to farm out the school's 186 schoolchildren to two separate chapels and to private residences momentarily," said Aniceto Canuto, punong barangay of Loacan.

The Benguet Corporation has pledged to set aside an area to accommodate a new school site, aside from a 1.5-hectare lot to accommodate the 122 families displaced by the landslide.

Engr. Neoman dela Cruz of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) said both sites will be subjected to geological tests to ensure that the areas are stable.

The landslide was triggered by the flooding of a diversion tunnel of the Benguet Corporation that accumulated in the underground tunnels then burst open on the side of the mountain, and also led to the death of six miners in the tunnels.

Barangay Loacan remains practically isolated as of last week, although villagers have cleared a path barely enough to accommodate four-wheel drive vehicles to bring supplies. "But this is only possible when there is no rain," said Canuto.

Gov. Nestor Fongwan said efforts are being fast-tracked to build an access road to connect the village to the outside world.

School authorities have proposed that the

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LANDSLIDE ...

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new school building be built on an area declared earlier by MGB as stable. The proposed site is described as accessible to schoolchildren and is located inside Barangay Loacan itself.

The schoolchildren are currently holding classes in two chapels each owned by the Episcopalian and Roman Catholic Churches, as well as in private residences volunteered by residents.

Fongwan said the school would be built once the Benguet Corporation, the MGB, and the municipal government of Itogon headed by mayor Mario Godio agree on the exact location. —
Jimmy K. Laking