

Natonin hit by worst landslide in decades. Published in Baguio Midland Courier Vol. LXXI, No. 44 issued on November 4, 2018. The article is located at pages 1 and 26. This copy was retrieved from the Cordillera Studies Collection of the University of the Philippines Baguio Library.

Natonin hit by worst landslide in decades

NATONIN, Mountain Province – Government and private rescuers and volunteers are still searching for more than 20 missing persons buried alive when a huge mountain slide that totally destroyed four structures of the Department of Public Works and Highways at Barangay Banawel during Typhoon Rosita

at around 4 p.m. of Oct. 30.

Dozens of lives have been saved by the suspension of work in government offices when Mountain Province Gov. Bonifacio Lacwasan Jr. issued the order on Oct. 29 when Typhoon Rosita was posing threats to some Cordillera provinces.

With the order, the

more than 50 regular workers and more than a hundred job orders and laborers of the 2nd district of the Mountain Province District Engineering Office did not report for work. Only the laborers of private contractors doing expansion works of the DPWH buildings and some residents who evacuated to the building were at the

site when the landslide occurred.

"In just a matter of seconds, the buildings were gone after huge rocks and loosened soil damaged and carried the concrete structures downstream," said Ryan Polic-ew, 27, who survived the landslide along with his younger brother Jordan by running to the highway.

DPWH worker Kaino-an Changiwan, 23, told the *Courier* that she and her co-workers who are not residents of Natonin, were supposed to proceed and seek refuge at the DPWH offices on Oct. 30 but landslides between Poblacion to Banawel prevented them from proceeding to their offices where they were

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FLATTENED -- Rescuers, paramedics, and volunteers work double time to find possible survivors from the rubbles and debris of the Department of Public Works and Highways 2nd District (inset) buildings that were totally wrecked at the height of Typhoon Rosita in Banawel, Natonin, Mountain Province. More than 20 persons are reported still missing while 12 were retrieved as of Nov. 2. -- Harley Palangchao

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supposed to stay overnight before travelling to their hometowns the following day.

The DPWH offices are located some four kilometers away from Poblacion, where some workers who are not residents of Natonin are renting houses.

“By God’s grace we are safe. We were supposed to be in those structures some hours before the incident,” said Changiwan, a resident of Bontoc, Mountain Province.

The DPWH offices began construction in 2012 and started to operate as a second district of MPDEO in 2016. The workers are supposed to celebrate their foundation day later this month.

Sources said contrary to information being circulated in social media, the landslide was not caused by mining activities. The DPWH structures were likewise certified to be stable prior to the incident.

Close to P70 million was allocated so far for the construction of the DPWH offices in staggered basis.

As of Nov. 2, 12 cadavers were recovered while more than 20 are still reported missing.

The military, police, various risk reduction and management councils are leading the search, rescue, and retrieval operations with help from volunteers and paramedics from various government and private groups.

The Philippine Air Force through the Tactical Operations Group 1 and the police brought K-9 dogs capable of sniffing survivors and cadavers. PAF is also helping in relief assistance.

Meanwhile, eight of the 12 cadavers were identified in the list of the Mountain Province Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office as Juanito Longan, Virginia Catet, John Tinmakcheg, Benito Longan, Joel Arevalo, Junjun Laron, Gregorio Castro,

and Elberto Botco.

The names of still reported missing as of Nov. 2 are Reynaldo Ngilin, Eddie Galahaya, Reggue Tayag, Jerry Epan, Jonathan Ngilin, Palichang Limson, Ober Orchinon, Rolando Cristobal, Noel Alvester, Renato Ayung, Garry Hecyawan, Juben Buccan, Obaldo Guihawan, German Bonhian, Esther Galong, Jerry Arenas, Randy Sayod, Inocencio Gollingoy, Coyogan Catet, and Rogel Allubong.

With food supplies for rescuers becoming scarce, those who wish to donate food provisions may contact Chiyawan at 0908-865-9322.

Several families in nearby Paracelis are also in need of relief assistance. Those who wish to reach out to them may contact the town’s MDRRMO hotline at 0921-972-7276.

Coming from Baguio, travel to Natonin’s ground zero via Paracelis from the Isabela route will be at least nine to 10 hours. —
Harley F. Palangchao

Search on for 11 still missing in Natonin. Published in Baguio Midland Courier Vol. LXXI, No. 45 issued on November 11, 2018. The article is located at pages 1 and 40. This copy was retrieved from the Cordillera Studies Collection of the University of the Philippines Baguio Library.

Search on for 11 still missing in Natonin

NATONIN, Mountain Province – After nine days of massive search, rescue, and retrieval (SRR) operation at ground zero that extended to nearby Paracelis, operations have been turned over to the local government unit on Friday with 11 persons still missing.

This means that personnel from the na-

tional and regional government agencies, including the military and the police, will gradually pull out from ground zero, as the LGU through the local police and residents will now take the lead in finding for the 11 missing persons who were buried alive when a huge landslide hit the buildings of the Department of Pub-

lic Works and Highways at the height of Typhoon Rosita on Oct. 30.

Mountain Province Provincial Risk Reduction and Management Officer Edward Chumawar, Jr. said the SRR operation is not being terminated; it will still continue with the provincial local government through the PDRRMC personnel on the ground

to assist the LGU of Natonin.

Groups willing to help the LGU in the SRR operation are welcome.

Besao Mayor Johnson Bantog II said he will mobilize community folks from three barangays to proceed to Natonin to help in the retrieval operation for at least two days after

the SRR operation has been turned over to the LGU.

Engr. Esther Galong, a native of Besao, is one of the 11 missing persons as of Nov. 8.

The other missing persons are Randy Sayod of Villaviciosa, Abra; Inoncencio Golinogoy of Natonin; Rolando Cristobal of Isabela;

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and Noel Alvester of Tabuk, Kalinga. The missing persons from Aguinaldo, Ifugao are Eddie Galahya, Reggie Tayag, Jonathan Ngilin, Obaldo Guihawan, Linson Pallichang, Jovel Bucan, Leobel Orchihon, and Jonathan Gano.

Fifteen of the 17 retrieved bodies were identified as Joel Arevalo, Gregorio Castro, Juanita Longan, Virginia Malucay, Coyugan Catet, John Tenmache, Jerry Epan, Raymundo Ngilin, Benito Longan, Junjun Laron, Elberto Cano, Reynato Ayom, Gary Hecyawan, Rogelio Alubong, and Jerry Arenas.

The two still unidentified cadavers were brought to Carbonel Funeral Parlor Service in Alfonso Lista, Ifugao.

Key persons at the incident command post under the watch of Lt./Col. Narciso Nabulneg, Jr. decided to turn over the SRR operation to the LGU after no bodies were recovered from Nov. 6 to 8.

On Nov. 7, National Risk Reduction and Management Council Exec. Director and Usec. Ricardo Jalad went to the ground zero and met with Natonin Mayor Mateo Chiyawan and Office of Civil Defense-Cordillera Director Ruben Carandang to determine the needs at the site.

Jalad vowed that he will coordinate with the concerned agencies for possible resources to be extended to Natonin.

Before the turnover of the SRR operation, responders were divided into five sectors where they were assigned to locate for the missing, almost

15 kilometers away from ground zero.

Natonin and Paracelis are still in need of relief assistance until the SRR operation shall have been fully terminated. –
Harley F. Palangchao

Search ends for 8 missing in Natonin. Published in Baguio Midland Courier Vol. LXXI, No. 47 issued on November 25, 2018. The article is located at pages 1 and 34. This copy was retrieved from the Cordillera Studies Collection of the University of the Philippines Baguio Library.

Search ends for 8 missing in Natonin



FULL BLAST -- Close to 500 responders from the government and private sector went full blast on the last day of the search and retrieval operation on Nov. 22 in Banawel, Natonin, Mountain Province with hopes of finding the remaining missing individuals. With a heavy heart, leaders decided to terminate the SAR and incident command post operations. -- Natonin PNP photo

MOUNTAIN PROVINCE -- With a heavy heart, leaders of the incident command post (ICP) have agreed to terminate the search and retrieval (SAR) operation for the eight missing individuals from a landslide in Banawel, Natonin, Mountain Province on Nov. 22.

But the local government of Natonin still welcomes private groups and individuals who would like to continue the SAR operation, provided that they coordinate with the LGU, as the ICP near the ground zero has also been terminated last week.

The decision to terminate the ICP and SAR operation was reached after no body was recovered from Nov. 15 to 21, since two bodies were recovered on Nov. 14.

At least 22 bodies and one lower extremity were recovered since the

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SAR operation was launched at ground zero where the buildings of the 2nd Engineering District of the Department of Public Works and Highways on Oct. 31. A huge mountainside hit the DPWH buildings at the height of Typhoon Rosita on Oct. 30.

The SAR operation and Management Council, which has been acting as the liaison and support group at the ICP, reported that the Natonin Municipal Police Station will assist individuals or groups that will continue searching for the eight still missing persons after Nov. 22.

On Nov. 24, community residents in Barangay Banawel will observe the time-tested "tengaw" or "ngilin", a customary "holy-day" for indigenous peoples in the Cordillera. During the observance of the "tengaw" any non-resident is not allowed to enter or go out from the barangay.

Aside from the six missing individuals from the landslide-triggered ground zero, two more individuals were recovered in Natonin but remain unidentified and were buried in nearby Alfonso Lista in Ifugao. Under the guidelines of the Office of Civil Defense, the two unidentified cadavers will remain in the list of missing persons.

The reported eight missing individuals based on the list of the Mountain Province PDRRMO are Esther Galong from Besao, Mountain Province; Randy Sayod from Villaviciosa, Abra; Inocencio Golingoy from Banawel, Natonin; and Noel Alvester from Tabuk City, Kalinga. The missing persons from Aguinaldo, Ifugao are Eddie Galahya, Obaldo Guihawan, Leobel Orchinon, and Jonathan Gano.

Residents and the local government of Natonin under Mayor Mateo Chiyawan expressed gratitude to the responders who tirelessly helped in finding for the missing persons.

They likewise thanked the donors and benefactors who provided food and non-food relief assistance to the responders and affected residents. -- Harley F. Palangchao