

30 September 2025 Earthquake in Northern Cebu, Philippines

- Brief on ADRC's Field Visit -

1. Introduction

A [Mw 6.9](#) earthquake jolted Cebu Province, Philippines at 21:59 on 30 September 2025. As reported by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS), this earthquake was caused by an offshore fault that had been dormant for over 400 years. The epicenter was located near [Bogo City](#) in northern Cebu, occurring at a shallow depth, about five kilometers, causing strong and intense shaking that resulted in significant destruction, such as building collapse, road damage, and power outage ([PHIVOLCS, 2025](#)). Based on the official report from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council ([NDRRMC, 2025](#)), 79 people were killed, 559 injured, and 754,733 affected in 18 of the [53](#) primary local government units (i.e., 44 municipalities, 6 component cities, and 3 highly-urbanized cities) of Cebu Province. Considering the extent of the damage, the national government, led by the Office of the President, took part in emergency response and early recovery operations, including the conduct of cabinet meeting in [Bogo City](#) ([RTVM, 2025](#)).

1.1 Field Visit

In line with its mandate to collect and share disaster information among its member countries and partner organizations, ADRC conducted a field visit to the earthquake-affected towns on 22 November 2025. A senior researcher, together with a government official from the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG-Cebu), visited three severely affected local governments:

- Bogo City
- San Remigio
- Medellin

The objective of the field visit was to observe the situation, through visual assessment, including efforts related to response and early recovery. As shown in Figure 1, the three severely affected towns are located on the northern



Figure 1.1 (Yellow circles) Earthquake affected towns visited; (Orange box) Flooded towns by typhoon Tino

part, which is more than 100 kilometers away from Cebu City. On the day of the field visit, it took more than three hours to travel by car from Cebu City to reach these towns. Along the way, disaster debris caused by typhoon [Kalmaegi](#) (local name: Tino) could still be observed in the affected municipalities (especially those municipalities indicated within the orange box).

1.2 Focus of Observation

Observations made during the field visit were focused on the short-term adaptive measures implemented during emergency and early recovery phases by the local governments to reduce disaster impacts. These include:

- Use of tents and containers
- Water distribution
- Online and modular learning
- Relaxation of safety regulations
- Immediate release of housing aid

2. Use of tents and containers

As observed (and based on the interview with the camp manager from Red Cross), the earthquake caused destruction to the designated evacuation centers, schools, government buildings, churches, and homes. Although some other buildings did not collapse, the structural integrity may be compromised and could potentially collapse – considering a series of aftershocks. Under this situation, the national and local governments utilized tents and modular shelter units (MSUs)/containers as short-term adaptive measures.

2.1 Tents and containers as temporary shelters

In Bogu City, “tent city” was established with 176 tents (Figure 2.1 left photo below) in Barangay Cogon on 4 October 2025. A total of 162 families occupied the tents since 7 October 2025. However, during the field visit, the tent city was already dismantled (Figure 2.1 left photo above) due to typhoon Tino that landed on 4 November 2025. Victims were moved to the sports complex while other victims went to stay with their relatives.

In San Remigio, the “tent city”, including the prefabricated modular homes (made of containers), was installed on 5 October 2025 in the [Bayanihan village](#) for 100 families. Occupants of the tents are victims whose houses were partially damaged (Figure 2.1 middle photo above), and the occupants of container homes are victims whose house were totally damaged (Figure 2.1 middle photo below).

In Medellin, “tent city” was established with 63 tents on 4 October 2025. Victims occupied

the tents since 11 October 2025. However, during the field visit, the tent city was already dismantled due to typhoon Tino that landed on 4 November 2025. The local government provided modular homes to victims whose houses were fully damaged (Figure 2.1 right photo below).



Figure 2.1 Tents and container homes in the three impacted towns of Cebu Province

2.2 Tents/containers as temporary offices

Government office buildings in Bogo City, San Remigio, and Medellin incurred damage. For continuity of operations and services, local governments used tents/containers as temporary offices (Figure 2.2) as short-term adaptive measures before transitioning to safer and permanent buildings.



Figure 2.2 Damaged local government buildings (above), tents/containers as temporary offices (below)

2.3 Tents serving as temporary structures for church services

It can be seen that the earthquake brought structural damage to churches in the three towns, and these are unsafe. As short-term adaptive measure, church services (e.g.,

mass, thanksgiving, and baptism) are held in the tents just beside the churches (Figure 2.3).



Figure 2.3 Photos (above) damaged churches; Photos (below) tents for church services

2.4 Tents as temporary “night sleeping lodges”

For fear of aftershocks, some residents (whose houses were not totally damaged by the earthquake) opt to sleep in tents (privately installed) at night. Only during daytime that they go back to their houses. This is a short-term adaptive measure by residents.



Figure 2.4 Private tents serving as night sleeping lodges of some residents

3. Water distribution

As of 22 November 2025 (during the field visit), the water system was not yet fully restored. Many villages of Bogó City did not have running water at their respective households. As short-term adaptive measure, the local government delivers water using trucks, and residents put their water containers along the roadside (Figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1 Containers along the roadside waiting to be filled with water

4. Online/Modular Learning

As visually observed, all public-school buildings were deemed unsafe and cannot be used (Figure 4.1). As short-term adaptive measure, elementary schools implemented a “modular learning”, where students are given a module to complete within designated period and to be evaluated by the teacher. On the other hand, high schools implemented “online classes” since electricity and network connections were already restored in most of the affected areas.



Figure 4.1 Public school buildings in Medellin

5. Relaxation of safety regulations

In principle, local governments (i.e., building officials, engineers, and fire protection officers) must conduct rapid and thorough inspections of buildings prior to re-occupation as well as inspection of roads prior to reusage to ensure integrity and safety. This type of inspection is [ordered](#) by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). As visually observed during the field visit, the impacted local governments relaxed the implementation of the order for lack of officials to perform the inspections. This is a short-term adaptive measure to address the basic needs of victims. As a result, business buildings and houses were reoccupied without thorough inspections (Figure 5.1).



Figure 5.1 Damaged buildings, houses, and roads occupied and used without thorough inspections

6. Immediate release of housing aid

Based on visual observations, ADRC took photos as examples of houses classified as “totally damaged” and “partially damaged” (Figure 6.1). Under the [Philippine regulation on housing support](#), victims whose house is totally damaged can receive financial assistance of PHP30,000 (local currency) while those whose house is partially damaged can receive PHP10,000. According to the beneficiaries, the local governments (i.e., Bogo City, San Remigio, and Medellin) negotiated with National Housing Authority (NHA) to immediately release, as first tranche, PHP10,000 for families with totally damaged houses and PHP 5,000 for families with partially damaged houses based only on the visual assessment and list of beneficiaries. The second tranche of payment will be released following official assessment of housing damage. This process of immediate release of housing aid is a temporary adaptive measure for housing recovery.



Figure 6.1 Totally damaged houses (left), Partially damaged houses (right)