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ASIA/PHILIPPINES - Simple boats transformed into mobile clinics to deliver humanitarian and medical aid

Guiuan (Agenzia Fides) - In order to have the possibility to deliver medical and humanitarian aid in five islands in the south of Guiuan, affected by Typhoon Haiyan, the NGO Doctors Without Borders has organized mobile clinics on boats. The team includes a doctor, two nurses, a psychologist, a translator and two Filipino caregivers. They can treat up to 200 patients per day, and transfer the most complicated cases to the MSF hospital in Guiuan. According to the testimonies spread by operators engaged in these clinics, priority was to reach the most isolated areas. The inhabitants, who remained completely isolated because of the destroyed boats and the lack of means of transport available to leave the islands, have not been able to communicate with anyone.
Many were injured following the collapse of their homes. There is a lot of destruction, debris, glass and cans, one of the doctors visited 250 patients in one day. If it rains, roads become muddy and vans can no longer continue their journey and operators have difficulties walking along the roads to carry medicines and equipment. The climate is hot and humid and there is a high risk of infection to the skin and some cases of tetanus. There are patients who suffer from stress and psychosomatic disorders, physical pain, depression, numbness of hands and feet, headaches , palpitations, and insomnia. One of the smaller islands visited by the operators is called Victory. It takes 15 minutes to cross it. Sixty people live there and all the houses have been destroyed. Many are still missing, more than half of them are children. The islands are still completely destroyed and it will take a long time for a possible recovery. In the two months MSF worked in the Philippines, emergency teams carried out 66 795 visits, admitted 1552 patients in hospital, carried out 365 surgeries, and assisted 395 deliveries. (AP)
(Agenzia Fides 07/02/2014)

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