Tacloban City received the heaviest brunt of the fury unleashed by tropical storm Yolanda. Video footages from major television networks show the city in a total wreck. Many buildings and houses are destroyed, power lines and cell sites knocked down and the streets are littered with debris and dead people after a storm surge reaching over ten feet flooded the city.

In a report by Philstar.com, government officials declared the airport in Tacloban completely in ruins as only the runway remains. Commercial flights to Tacloban remain suspended and only military rescue and relief operation flights are allowed access.

As of November 9, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) raised to the official death toll at 138, however, it is feared that it could reach more than a thousand as volunteers continue to retrieve bodies from the wreckage and in the streets. Recorded injured is 14 with 4 missing and around 4.2 million individuals affected.

Other hardest hit areas include Palo, Tolosa and Ormoc City in Leyte, Guiuan, Balangkayan, Balangiga in Eastern Samar and Barotac Viejo in Iloilo.

According to reports, local government authorities are virtually not functioning in Tacloban and other areas due to the chaos. A lot of people are hungry and dazed. Some of them began looting malls and grocery stores for food and clothing. To immediately attend to the basic needs of people affected by the disaster, the national government plans to fly in much needed supplies, like food, water and medicines.

Even non-government organizations engaged in relief work, like UCCP, have difficulty in responding immediately to the situation because of power outage and communication facilities breakdown. Telecom companies have yet to restore communication services by repairing knocked down facilities.

“We cannot contact our colleagues there to give us the specific situation on the ground. We have to rely on radio and television for news,” said Ric Jontarciego, coordinator of UCCP disaster response and management program. “Many are offering help. But we cannot assess the actual needs and capacities in disaster areas if the grassroots remain incommunicado.”

The relief coordination center of UCCP is temporarily set up at the West Visayas Jurisdictional Area Headquarters of UCCP in Cebu City due to its proximity to Leyte, Samar and Negros islands. Relief donations coming from church members and different sectors will be processed in Cebu and will be shipped to Tacloban and other disaster areas.