



NO FORBIDDEN FOODS.  
NO REQUIRED FOODS.

Eat your own food.

WeightWatchers.ca  
Stop Dieting. Start Living.

GO! ▶

the star.com

## GTA reaches out to Manila flood victims

### Disaster relief team heads to Philippines as death toll hits 240

September 29, 2009

**DALE ANNE FREED**  
STAFF REPORTER

While Manila reels from one of its worst ever tropical storms, a Toronto paramedic is flying over to lend a hand and a Scarborough MP is calling on Ottawa to commit \$5 million in humanitarian aid.

It's the second disaster relief trip to the Philippines in almost three years for paramedic Rahul Singh, 38, who is flying Tuesday to the ravaged capital region where massive flooding has killed at least 240 people. Singh is part of a GlobalMedic team, a Toronto-based charity that provides international disaster relief with 400 volunteers in Canada.



ERIK DE CASTRO/REUTERS  
A man takes a break from cleaning a house swamped by flash floods brought on by Typhoon Ketsana in Marikina city east of Manila on Sept. 28, 2009.

He will be joined by two other team members – a B.C. firefighter and a Toronto GlobalMedic manager – to set up disaster relief in Cainta, a hard-hit town near Manila. They will take along six water purification units, one of which can clean 64,000 litres of water a day. About 1.4 million water purification tablets have already been flown into the disaster zone, Singh said.

"If we don't do it people will die. That's horrific if we have the capacity to help and don't," said Singh, who had previously gone to the Philippines after a typhoon and a volcano caused massive damage in Albay province.

With tens of thousands displaced from their homes after Tropical Storm Ketsana ripped through the northern Philippines, Liberal MP Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough-Agincourt) is calling on the Harper government to commit \$5 million in aid.

Karygiannis, who has about 1,500 families in his riding with relatives in the affected area, also wants the government to match dollar for dollar what the community raises for disaster relief. He is also urging Ottawa to expedite family class sponsorship applications from the disaster zone and to issue visitor visas to people in the affected area who have family in Canada.

"I hope our government can extend help," said an emotional Monina Lim-Serrano, 70, an Agincourt resident and president of the Federation of Filipino-Canadians.

"This is the worst flood in almost 50 years. It's very tragic," said Lim-Serrano, who plans on initiating a community fundraising effort. "I can't reach my relatives there. The phones are out. I wish I could bring them over until the storm ends. They have no place to go."

In Manila, the National Disaster Coordinating Council said the homes of nearly 1.9 million were inundated, with nearly 380,000 people brought to schools, churches and other evacuation centres.

Rescuers pulled more bodies from swollen rivers Monday as residents started to dig out their homes from under carpets of mud. The storm dumped more than a month's worth of rain in just 12 hours, fuelling the worst flooding to hit the country in more than 40 years.

Ads by Google

Overwhelmed officials called for international help, warning they may not have sufficient resources to withstand another storm that forecasters said was brewing and could hit as early as Friday.

The Canadian Red Cross is accepting donations to help relief efforts at [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca) or by calling 1-800-418-1111.

*With files from the Star's wire services*