

24 February 2010 - The Philippine Embassy in Lisbon reported today that there are no Filipinos affected in the flash floods and mudslides that swept Madeira Island, Portugal last February 20.

Philippine Ambassador to Lisbon Teresa Barsana reported to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) that per information from Philippine honorary consul Manuel Pinhiero, there is no record of Filipinos residing in the Madeira area, and if any one was visiting or was there at that time, Mr. Pinhiero is also not aware of any Filipino who asked for assistance due to the floods.

"Nevertheless, if there are Filipinos who are in need of assistance, the Embassy is ready to help them," Ambassador Barsana said.

According to news reports, the death toll from the flash floods and mudslides on Madeira island continued to rise with officials saying at least 42 people had died and eight villages remained out of reach as of February 21.

Among the victims was a British national. No other nationalities were reported among the fatalities.

Portuguese authorities began rushing aid to the tourist island off the African coast Saturday night, dispatching a Navy frigate and preparing a Hercules C-130 transport plane loaded with rescue teams, divers, and equipment to clear blocked roads, replace destroyed bridges, and repair downed power and telephone lines.

The Portuguese Prime Minister José Sócrates flew to the Madeira, about 900 kilometers southwest of the Portuguese mainland, late Saturday to meet with regional government officials, pledging Lisbon's full support. END