

Volunteers Rush to Provide Food to Tembin Victims

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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On Friday, volunteers in southern Taiwan rushed to provide cooked food and comfort victims of Typhoon Tembin that flooded their homes earlier in the day. More than 4,000 households in the Hengchun township were flooded and power and water supplies were cut.

On the morning of August 24, the typhoon made landfall over Mudan township in Pingtung, on the southern tip of Taiwan. From 5.00 a.m. on Friday, the rainfall became very heavy over Hengchun Road and Longluan Lake area; it reached 20 inches, nearly double the forecast amount and the heaviest in many decades. The water covered the first floor of many building and started to recede after midday. Only then could the residents begin the hard work of cleaning up their furniture, covered in mud and soaked with water.

The force of the water was so strong that residents could find no way to hold it back. Even heavy items like refrigerators were pushed to the ground like blocks. In some streets, not a single house was spared. In despair, the residents said they did not know how such a disaster had happened. Since the power was cut, they could not lower their iron gates. As the water flowed in, they could only use their own arms to pour it away.

According to the government of Hengchun, about 4,000 households suffered from the flooding. Without water and electricity, it will take time for the residents to clean up their homes and return to normal.



When the volunteers of Tzu Chi's Pingtung branch heard the news of the flooding, they immediately came forward to provide cooked food and liaised with the army to deliver it to Hengchun, to help the residents recover from the disaster and not go hungry. In the kitchen of the branch of Pingtung port, the volunteers were hard at work, rushing to prepare the food as soon as possible. Volunteer Huang Li-xiang said: "At 1.30 p.m., we decided to prepare 1,000 cooked meals for Hengchun township. Then came a demand for clean clothes."

Because the flooding was so severe, some residents had to take refuge in the government office of Checheng village. For them, the volunteers prepared a bag with daily necessities to meet their immediate needs. They ask the army to deliver them and the items to Hengchun district. Lin Yuan-xu, deputy platoon leader of the Army, said: "We will take route 17, route 11 and route 26 to the primary school in Checheng. Then the government office there will take over and deliver to Hengchun."

By eight o'clock in the evening, electricity was gradually restored to the Hengchun peninsula. With the help of the soldiers, the volunteers were able to deliver 1,000 cooked vegetarian hot

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meals to the government office of Hengchun. Because there is low-lying land at the foot of the mountains in the district, some of the flood water had not receded. So 50 residents had to spend the night in the office; the volunteers went to talk and comfort them.

“You must be terrified!” a volunteer said to the residents. They delivered the hot meal and spoke softly to them as if they were members of their own family. “When we reached the street, we found the residents busy cleaning up. They were exhausted. When they saw the Tzu Chi volunteers come with hot meals to ease their hunger, their faces lit up with a big smile,” one volunteer said.

The volunteers of Pingtung heard that the situation in the mountain areas remains serious, with 95 per cent of the residents affected. So they delivered meals to each home. Tzu Chi volunteers will continue the relief aid and assist the residents to restore their homes.