

UPU Emergency and Solidarity Fund response report – supporting Lao Post following Typhoon Yagi in 2024

In September 2024, Super Typhoon Yagi – the most powerful storm to strike the South China Sea in three decades – unleashed catastrophic destruction across south-east Asia. In Lao People's Dem. Rep., the storm's remnants caused prolonged rainfall and massive flooding in northern regions, particularly affecting Luang Namtha Province. Approximately 140,000 people were impacted and key postal operations were damaged. Postal services in Luang Namtha were heavily disrupted, with all inbound and outbound mail services suspended. While there were no injuries or fatalities among postal staff, three staff members lost their homes, and a mini truck essential for mail transportation was damaged.

UPU Emergency and Solidarity Fund responds

Recognizing the critical need for recovery, the UPU activated its Emergency and Solidarity Fund (ESF) to support Lao Post's restoration efforts. The ESF, managed by the disaster risk management team, was mobilized to coordinate emergency communications, assess needs and facilitate international assistance. In response to a formal request from Lao Post, the UPU issued an international appeal to garner financial and technical support to restore essential postal services, ensuring affected communities could reconnect through the postal network.

Global solidarity in action

In a strong gesture of international solidarity, the UPU provided support through its regular budget, which enabled the procurement of a brand-new mail transport vehicle. The replacement mini truck – customized to UPU-recommended specifications (1–1.5T payload, 4x2/4x4 drive, diesel engine, power steering) – is essential for restoring reliable postal operations in the flood-affected areas.

Conclusion

The aftermath of Typhoon Yagi in Laos highlighted the vulnerability of postal services during natural disasters, as well as the critical role of international cooperation in recovery. With the intervention of the ESF, Lao Post was able to initiate its restoration process. This case stands as a powerful reminder of how the global postal community comes together to ensure that no member is left behind during emergencies.