

## Surviving the Strongest Storm

Andrea, her husband and their three grown sons took shelter at a relative's stronger, larger home when Typhoon Haiyan first hit. Parts of the roof flew off, water came in the house where they were sheltered, and she could see a tree fall on her own home in the distance. After the family thought the furious storm was over, they went back to their damaged home. They were eating when the winds struck again from the other direction.

Andrea protected her her son, Raffy, who is blind and also suffers from anxiety and other symptoms left after a childhood illness.

'I just hugged him,' she said. 'He was asking me, 'What are you doing mom? What's going on?' And I told him, 'There's a storm. It's here.' He was telling me that it feels very cold.'

Suddenly, they heard the loud crack of another tree falling on their house, and they rushed outside and hid under the chicken coop, hugging each other to keep from being blown away.

'It was so strong. We didn't expect that it would be that strong,' she said. 'We were just praying to God that nothing would happen to us and we were already so wet from the rain.'

'Then the wind was so strong I couldn't stand up. If I tried, I would be blown away. We had no choice but to crouch on the ground underneath the chicken cage while all four of us were holding each other tight. If we didn't hold each other like we did, we would be blown away because of how strong the wind was. So we just held each other for as long as we could.'

The wind was ear-splitting and violent: 'I could see rooftops flying out, trees blown away like plants being pulled out then thrown away. It really hurts to see trees flying out and slamming into houses. I would pray to God and ask him, 'Please Lord, Please. That's enough?'

Finally, alhamdulillah, the storm was really over, and they were alive. But their home was destroyed, and their possessions were tossed, mixed with debris and soaked with filth and water. After staying a night with relatives in case the storm came back, the family set to work clearing debris from their land, dragging away metal roofing and fallen trees, and Andrea washed laundry for a week.

'The morning after [the storm] ' they started working on a shack immediately so we would have a place to sleep,' Andrea said. 'But it would still leak when it rains because we're using damaged roofing materials.'

The work has just begun, and the family plans to work to repair their house bit by bit, as they get some money, until it's done. In the meantime, however, they no longer have to sleep in a leaking shack, because Islamic Relief USA donors gave them a tent.

'Thank you so much that you're giving us a tent,' Andrea said. 'We can finally get some sleep without worrying about any leaks when it rains. Thank you so much!'

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