

## Catholic students use Jesuit house as base to help Thai flood victims

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**BANGKOK** -- Catholic university students and staff used the Jesuit residence Xavier Hall as a base for relief efforts for flood victims on the outskirts of the capital.

About 30 students from the Catholic Undergraduate Center of Thailand joined hundreds of other volunteers at two relief centers in Don Muang and Chatuchak sections of the city, reported the Asian church news agency UCA News.

The students helped fill sandbags and prepare emergency relief packages -- distributed by the Thai military -- for residents displaced by flooding.

"During this semester break, our students had planned to go to Mae Hong Son (province), but because of the flood situation the CUCT committee decided to cancel the trip and offer volunteer service for flood relief work," said Jesuit Father Maharsono Probo, chaplain at the Catholic center.

"We students have to contribute our support when society is facing a crisis," said CUCT president Setthawut Chanpensuk, a student at Assumption University.

Setthawut has also volunteered in Rangsit, north of Bangkok, to help fill and place sandbags, noting, "People there are facing a very difficult situation."

Students at Assumption University have asked their clubs to suspend all activities and pitch in for flood relief work.

"We have been able to recruit about 300 student volunteers and send them to various relief centers as requested by authorities, but mainly they have been working at Don Muang," said Yotsawee Chaopaknam, head of student affairs. "Our students have also been assigned to serve as translators for tourists and foreigners."

More than 350 people have died so far nationwide as a result of flooding that began in the north in early August. The flooding has affected an estimated 2.8 million households.

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