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## Gordon: Prepare for mass casualty incidents

Following the series of earthquakes that rocked various parts of the country as well as the bombings in different parts of the globe, Senator Richard J. Gordon on Monday called on the whole country and the government to prepare for mass casualty incidents.

Gordon, chairman of the Philippine Red Cross, underscored the need for swift response in case any untoward incident occurs, which would be ensured if the government and the whole country is prepared.

“I am calling on the country to prepare for any mass casualty incident. I’m calling on the whole country and the government to prepare for any untoward incident such as that (Sri Lanka bombings), including mass casualty incidents caused not only by bombings but by epidemics or earthquakes,” he said.

At the same time, Gordon assured that the Philippine Red Cross has been continuously preparing for the occurrence of mass casualty incidents, adding that the humanitarian organization is ready to provide the necessary assistance should an MCI occur.

“Simultaneous bombings occurred in Sri Lanka. Did you see the Red Cross there? Yes they were there and we will be in the frontline if something like that happens. We are prepared for that, we are continuously preparing,” he said.

The senator said PRC staff and volunteers have been training with the Magen David Adom, Israel’s national emergency medical, disaster, ambulance and blood bank service, in the hope of gaining more knowledge from their expertise in responding to disasters and terrorist activities.

On Easter Sunday, simultaneous bombings at churches and luxury hotels across Sri Lanka killed more than 250 people. Just recently, a blast during a raid on the house of one of the suspected Easter bombers killed 15 people, including children.

In the Philippines, the magnitude 6.1 earthquake that hit Luzon, including Metro Manila, Monday afternoon left 18 people dead and 243 others injured – of which 174 have been validated by the Department of Health. A magnitude-6.5 quake in Eastern Samar; while a magnitude-4 earthquake struck Leyte and was felt at Intensity III in the province’s Ormoc City. The latest in the string of tremors is the magnitude-5.5 earthquake that jolted Surigao del Norte last Friday afternoon.

The Philippines sits on the Pacific “Ring of Fire” where tectonic plates collide and many of the world’s earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are recorded regularly.