

Headline	Be ready for mass-casualty incidents–Gordon to government	
MediaTitle	Business Mirror (www.businessmirror.com.ph)	
Date	30 Apr 2019	
Section	NEWS	
Order Rank	1	
Language	English	
Journalist	N/A	
Frequency	Daily	

Be ready for mass-casualty incidents–Gordon to government

THE Duterte administration should start preparing “for mass-casualty incidents” given the recent series of earthquakes that shook Metro Manila and other parts of the country, as well as recent bombings abroad, Sen. Richard Gordon said on Monday.

Gordon, who also chairs the Philippine Red Cross, said he was alerting “the whole country and the government to prepare for mass- casualty incidents” because only a swift response to any untoward incident would mitigate the casualty numbers, and such quick response is only possible “if the government and the whole country is prepared.”

The senator, whose mettle in disaster and crisis management was tested in the aftermath of the 1991 Mount Pinatubo earthquake followed by the pullout of the US military forces from bases in Clark and Subic, made the warning on week after a 6.1-magnitude earthquake struck Luzon, causing the collapse of a supermarket in Pampanga. A day after, an even stronger temblor shook the Visayas. The latest was the 5.5-magnitude earthquake that jolted Surigao del Norte last Friday afternoon.

Gordon noted that 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.

The Luzon quake left 18 people dead and 243 others injured, of which 174 have been validated by the Department of Health.

Gordon said he was “calling on the whole country and the government to prepare for any untoward incidents such as the [Sri Lanka bombings], including mass-casualty incidents [MCIs] caused not only by bombings but by epidemics or earthquakes.” The Sri Lanka incident he referred to was the simultaneous, orchestrated bombings of Christian churches and luxury hotels that killed more than 250 people.

Meanwhile, Gordon gave assurances that the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) is continuously preparing for the occurrence of mass-casualty incidents, and is ready to provide the necessary assistance should an MCI occur.

In a statement, the senator recalled the simultaneous bombings that hit Sri Lanka. “Did you see the Red Cross there? Yes, they were there. And we will be in the front line if something like that happens. We are prepared for that, we are continuously preparing,” Gordon assured the public.

He disclosed that the PRC staff, as well as volunteers, have been training with the Magen David Adom, Israel’s national emergency medical, disaster, ambulance and blood bank service, aiming to gain “more knowledge from their expertise in responding to disasters and terrorist activities.”