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THEMATIC PROTECTION

BULLETIN

CLOSING THE GAPS

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY-BASED CAPACITIES IN RESPONSE TO THE MARAWI HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

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BACKGROUND

- The armed confrontation between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Pro-ISIS militants in Marawi City has forcibly displaced 98 percent of the total population of the city, as well as residents from nearby municipalities, who were compelled to leave due to severe food shortage and/or constriction of local economies.
- A vast majority of the displaced population have sought shelter with their relatives, instead of going to evacuation centers. The strong sense of honor – or “maratabat” – of the Meranaw, which is the predominant ethnic group in Marawi City, is key to this phenomenon.
- In response, local governments of host communities such as Iligan City immediately opened evacuation centers in several locations to cater to the humanitarian needs of the displaced population. Also, government established the Regional Command and Coordination Center (RCCC) was transformed into the National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) upon the activation of the National Incident Command System (NCIS) after the first week of June.
- At the early stages, members of the protection cluster reported that some IDPs have set up spontaneous collective centers outside of the officially opened evacuation centers. Spontaneous collective centers are existing structures that are used as temporary living accommodations for hosting displaced populations. UNHCR verified 24 of these sites and presented the IDPs’ concerns to government counterparts.
- While congestion is the common protection issue faced by IDPs in evacuation centers officially opened by local government units, home-based IDPs face the issue of access and assistance. IDPs in spontaneous collective centers have neither camp managers to whom they could refer their concerns, nor host families who can support their needs while displaced. Information dissemination is an underlying issue cutting across all areas of humanitarian response; IDPs who lack information on the registration procedure and pathways to available services are unable to access assistance.

IN FOCUS: COMMUNITY-BASED EVACUATION CENTERS

- In several locations, the existence of “community-based evacuation centers” (CB-ECs) have been observed.
 - The Iligan City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) stated that the 13 spontaneous settlements within the city could not be officially recognized due to constraints in resources to address the humanitarian need at the city level. In addition, concerns over pro-ISIS militant members infiltrating IDP camps, posing as displaced civilians have led to a prioritization of security.
 - In Pantar, although the local government recognized the seven (7) spontaneous

collective centers therein, these are not on the list of the national government yet.

- Spontaneous collective centers have also been verified in Kauswagan (4), Balo-i (1), and Sultan Naga Dimaporo (5). These are not yet on the list of evacuation centers of both local and national governments and IDPs therein and are treated as home-based.
- The national government, through the DSWD and the ARMM responded to this occurrence by initiating registration activities in spontaneous collective centers and provision of assistance.

- For its part, the Protection Cluster identified IDPs in self-settled sites as an added sub-category under “IDPs outside evacuation centers”, together with home-based IDPs. The IDPs found in spontaneous collective centers would then be referred to as “community-based evacuation centers” (CB-ECs).



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CLOSING THE GAPS

Humanitarian actors have the responsibility to ensure that:

- IDPs in “community-based evacuation centers” (CB-ECs) have equal access to humanitarian assistance and are given the same entitlements as IDPs living in evacuation centers and home-based IDPs.
- Camp management is in place to look into the humanitarian gaps present in the CB-ECs and address sectoral gaps. If no equivalent personnel will conduct day-to-day management of concerns in these sites, living conditions may deteriorate and may trigger disease outbreaks and conflict among IDPs and host communities.
- Consistent monitoring of the condition of IDPs is in place in order to address safety

and security concerns. These include risks of eviction and rising tensions between IDPs and host communities and among IDPs themselves.

- There is access to up-to-date information, so that IDPs are kept abreast of what the government is doing for them during their displacement, as well as what government is planning to do on their early recovery and rehabilitation.
- Feedback and complaint mechanism is established, which allows IDPs to communicate their requests and grievances in a confidential manner.
- A community-based approach is adopted to provide incentives to the host population who play a key role in providing support to the IDPs.

Wherever possible, assistance is provided to host families and investments are made to enhance community social service that will benefit the host community. This will help alleviate congestion in evacuation centers.

- Humanitarian access and assistance for IDPs in the affected municipalities of Lanao del Sur is made available.
- Consultation processes, in which IDPs are able to fully participate and express their needs and concerns, are initiated prior to implementation of recovery and rehabilitation plans, or establishment of transitional sites to address cases when return or other durable solutions are not possible in the immediate to medium term.

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