

The Mindanao Displacement Dashboard is a monthly publication of the Protection Cluster in Mindanao, Philippines which is co-led by UNHCR with the Department of Social Welfare and Development. This publication aims to provide an overview of the protection environment of displacement incidents in Mindanao for each month. Displacement incidents were collected with the support of Protection Cluster members in Mindanao.



MAGUINDANAO LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATION

The skirmishes initiated by the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) last year during the Christmas and New Year's Eve in Maguindanao and North Cotabato provinces has led the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to pursue its Law Enforcement Operation (LEO) in central Mindanao in 2016. In February 2016, military reinforcement, build-up of troops and sporadic armed clashes continue to cause massive displacement of civilians in and around the areas where the BIFF is believed to maintain force.

An armed encounter between the AFP and BIFF forces in barangay Timbangan in the first days of 2016 had led to the displacement of around 3,266 families (estimated 16,330 persons) in Shariff Aguak municipality. In addition, on 08 January, around 1,885 families (9,425 persons) from the municipalities of Shariff Aguak and Shariff Saydona Mustapha had pre-emptively evacuated to neighboring communities due to a heightened presence of government troops and fear that the

government's LEO will be intensified. The IDPs from both incidents had returned home by the end of January.

However, by early February, and in the wake of the Congress' failure to pass the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), the LEO intensified inside the 'SPMS box' (Salbu, Pagatin, Mamasapano, and Shariff Aguak) known to be a BIFF stronghold area. Families who recently had returned from the January displacement incidents were displaced once more as a result.

Four (4) incidents of armed encounter between the AFP and the BIFF were reported in February that triggered the displacement of civilians from the municipalities of Datu Salibo, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Shariff Saydona Mustapha, and Shariff Aguak.

The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) authorities reported the displacement of around 2,390 families (estimated 11,950

persons) when AFP forces advanced their offensives and engaged the BIFF in a firefight in the municipality of Datu Salibo on 05 February. A firefight has also been reported in Sitio Badak, Barangay Madia in the municipality of Datu Saudi Ampatuan on 10 February that displaced about 2,322 families (estimated 11,610 persons). Another armed encounter on 22 February in the municipality of Shariff Aguak prompted 836 families (estimated 4,180 persons) to leave their homes. Local residents interviewed stated that the AFP was firing mortar rounds in the direction of Barangay Bagong-Upam of Shariff Aguak and Barangay Pikeg of Shariff Saidona Mustapha. Another group of 1,274 families (estimated 6,370 persons) have fled Barangay Pandi in Datu Salibo to its adjacent barangays on 24 February out of fear that a firefight from the AFP and the BIFF may erupt again.

By the end of February, a total of 6,822 families (estimated 34,110 persons) have been displaced because of these fresh fightings.



DATU BLAH SINSUAT CLAN FEUD

On 25 February, a gun battle between two non-state armed actors in Datu Blah Sinsuat municipality forced around 230 families (estimated 1,150 persons) from their homes.

According to a report from local authorities, the IDPs coming from barangay Resa fled to the neighboring villages of Kinimi, Lapaken and sitio Turigan of barangay Resa. The conflict,

triggered by a land dispute, has left one civilian dead and one wounded. The families remain displaced as of this report.



Lack of disaggregated information of the displaced population due to conflict hampers a targeted humanitarian response especially to persons with specific needs. © UNHCR/K. Bolisay

MINDANAO PEACE PROCESS

The proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) that was supposed to create a new autonomous political entity for the Bangsamoro people in Mindanao was not passed when the 16th Congress adjourned on 3 February. While much of the delay in the passage of the bill has been attributed to the Mamasapano tragedy in January 2014, the lack of quorum and the problem to sustain it in both chambers were considered the major hindering factors. The halted passage of the BBL does not only impede the establishment of the Bangsamoro but also the process of decommissioning of combatants of the MILF's armed wing, the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces¹. It can be recalled that in June 2015 initial number of firearms were turned over by the MILF to the government despite the uncertainty over the

passage of the BBL. On 18 February, MILF issued an official statement that expressed their frustration over the non-passage of the bill but that they remain firm to continue to uphold the peace process and preserve all of its present gains². MILF expressed to continue to demand from government to implement the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) signed on 27 March 2014, which include the passing of the BBL³. MILF has been consistent on its stand not to accept substitute bills or any diluted version of the original BBL. The BLBAR in the House and Senate have been criticized for envisioning a Bangsamoro less autonomous than the ARMM it seeks to replace.

¹<http://www.mindanews.com/peace-process/2016/01/30/bbl-passage-decommissioning-etc-passed-on-to-next-administration/>

²<http://www.mindanews.com/peace-process/2016/02/28/duterte-pass-bbl-and-make-bangsamoro-an-example-for-the-rest-to-follow/>

³<http://www.mindanews.com/peace-process/2016/01/17/milf-the-bbl-will-pass-if-congress-decides-to-pass-it/>

⁴<http://www.mindanews.com/peace-process/2016/01/17/milf-the-bbl-will-pass-if-congress-decides-to-pass-it/>



BUTIG, LANA DEL SUR ARMED CONFLICT

On 21 February, armed clashes, which lasted more than a week, between government troops and a non-state armed group triggered the displacement of about 6,501 families (estimated 32,491 persons) in Poblacion Bayabao and eight (8) other barangays in Butig municipality in the province of Lanao del Sur. The non-state armed group, now identified as led by the Maute brothers, allegedly affiliated with the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), reportedly harassed and assaulted a military base, which prompted retaliation by the 51st Infantry Battalion of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

By 29 February, around 90% of the population of Butig had fled their homes seeking refuge among host families in nearby municipalities

(as far as Marawi City). There are few designated evacuation centers in Butig, which makes it more difficult for the government and humanitarian actors to effectively respond and address the concerns of the IDPs. Access to affected areas were also restricted by the military for security reasons.

Military offensives, including aerial bombardments, carried out in areas where the rebels were allegedly hiding caused destruction of civilian properties as the armed conflict spread to the nearby municipality of Sultan Dumlundong. Protection actors reported safety and security, food and non-food assistance, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and health as main protection issues facing IDPs. Reports from community

volunteers suggest that the armed groups are recruiting minors. Residents also mentioned minors who participated in the actual combat that resulted in the death of one minor (male).

As of this report, the military offensive has ended and tension in the affected areas has waned. Local authorities and the State Security Sector said that IDP returns will be facilitated once the areas are cleared from possible IEDs⁴. However, local non-government organizations report that most of the displaced families are reluctant to return as they are still concerned that a firefight may erupt anytime⁵.

⁴<http://cnnphilippines.com/regional/2016/03/02/Butig-Lanao-del-Sur-clashes-Maute-group.html>
⁵<http://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2016/03/04/now-safe-for-butig-villagers-to-go-home-military/>

ZAMBOANGA PROTRACTED DISPLACEMENT

The achievement of durable solutions for the displaced population in Zamboanga City continues to be impeded by outstanding protection concerns. Such concerns include housing, land and property issues and access to sustainable livelihoods and basic services, including adequate water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities.

As of the end of February, around 2,849 families (estimated 16,055 persons) continue to live in substandard conditions in transitory sites waiting for relocation or transfer to permanent sites while around 4,000 families (estimated 21,000 persons) are in host communities awaiting inclusion in the government's rehabilitation programmes.

As improvements to road access, water and power facilities are ongoing in transitory sites, particularly the biggest transitory site in Mampang, IDPs are requesting information on whether there are plans to make Mampang a permanent site especially for those who are not considered owners, unregistered or "untagged" by the housing department of the city government.

The National Housing Authority (NHA) reported that out of the 6, 500 permanent housing units under the Zamboanga City Roadmap to Recovery and Reconstruction (Z3R) Plan, only 40 to 45% have been constructed and only 1,347 housing units

were awarded to the IDPs. There is no definite timeline yet as to when IDPs will be transferred. 500 temporary sanitation units will have to be installed in the largest permanent housing site in Kasanyangan before IDPs can move there. Resolving the issue on the access road connecting Kasanyangan also remains a concern. In Mariki, people have neglected the local authorities' standing order on the installation of the sanitation units and have started moving to, and occupying the permanent housing units.

There is confusion and frustration among IDPs over the lack of information on the status and the target completion of the permanent housing units. The non-implementation of the Code of Beneficiaries and the Implementing Rules and Regulations in the beneficiary selection adds to the confusion. Although local authorities are projecting that relocation will be carried out by end of March 2016, there are no indications that this will be realized due to the delay in the construction and installation of basic facilities in the housing units. The Governance and Rule of Law sector, comprised of protection actors such as the City Legal Office and Commission on Human Rights, has been pushing for the reactivation of the Grievance Committee to look into these concerns.

The city of Zamboanga has been experiencing a water shortage brought about by El Niño. This has

affected IDPs both in transitory sites and host communities where water rationing has now been put in place. The City Water District and the Philippine Red Cross are delivering water tanker trucks to supply water in the transitory sites. Risks of disease outbreaks may increase should the situation persist.

While the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) agreed that the profiled and verified 1,224 home-based IDP families (estimated 7,638 persons) can now be used as initial and official reference for any government rehabilitation assistance. The remaining 3,248 home-based IDP families who were not covered in the re-profiling exercise last December 2015 need to be re-validated and included in the government master list.

The City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO), City Legal Office, Commission on Human Rights, Department of Education and other line agencies under the Basic Services and Education & Governance and Rule of Law sectors launched the Free One-stop Shop Mobile Birth Registration in transitory sites in mid-February. The registration activity focused on the issuance and re-issuance of certified true copy of birth certificates. Another round of the registration exercise will be conducted by end of March 2016.



MIDSAYAP, NORTH COTABATO CLAN FEUD

Two warring clans engaged in a firefight on 18 February that resulted in the displacement of around 400 families (estimated 1,570 persons) in barangay Mudseng in the municipality of Midsayap, North Cotabato province. Another firefight erupted the following day. The

clan feud is believed to stem from a land dispute. The displaced families returned home after two days.

▶ Children who comprise the majority of displaced population remain one of the vulnerable sectors needing protection support.
 © UNHCR/K. Bolisay



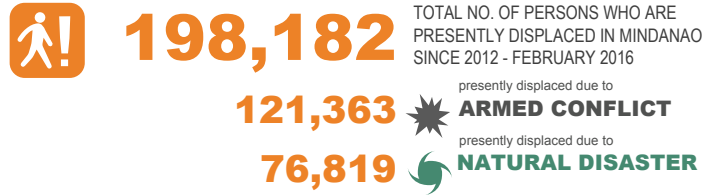
DISCLAIMER
 The Monthly Mindanao Displacement Dashboard aims to provide a starting point for information and analysis that can help protection agencies, policy makers and other stakeholders concerning instances of forced displacement or solutions (repatriation, resettlement, integration). The number of people displaced / affected may differ from the number in need of humanitarian assistance. To the extent possible, the terminology used in the Dashboard reflects the *UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* and other sources of international law and practice. The information reported in the Monthly Mindanao Displacement Dashboard has been received from members of the Protection Cluster across Mindanao. Consequently, unreported cases of forced displacement and solutions are not reflected. Updates will be provided as and when more information is received from members. Although efforts are made to verify the data, the UNHCR Mindanao, Philippines takes no responsibility for the incompleteness or inaccuracy of the information. The information provided in this Monthly Mindanao Displacement Dashboard does not necessarily reflect the views of UNHCR or any individual member of the Protection Cluster.



The *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* note that “internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.”

Durable Solutions - UNHCR with Protection Cluster members continue to identify communities that are subjected to protracted displacement over the course of the year to ensure all IDPs are identified and the appropriate attention and resources can be obtained to support finding a durable solution to their displacement.

CURRENT NUMBER OF IDPS IN NEED OF DURABLE SOLUTION



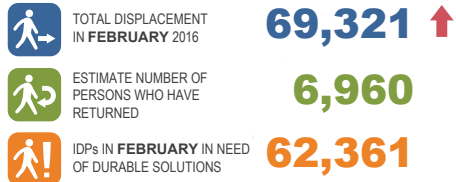
CLARIFICATIONS

Typhoon Pablo displacement - A large number of IDPs remain displaced from Typhoon Pablo in December 2012 in Eastern Mindanao, Region XI who are still in need of a durable solution. Many of these families remain in temporary shelters where local authorities have been slowly obtaining access to land and constructing permanent housing for these IDPs. As of October 2015, there are still an estimated 76,819 IDPs in need of a durable solution in this region.

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS CAUSING DISPLACEMENT IN 2016

	TOTAL IN FEBRUARY 2016		TOTAL SINCE JAN 2016	
	INCIDENTS	DISPLACEMENT (persons)	INCIDENTS	DISPLACEMENT (persons)
ARMED CONFLICT incidents with displacement	4	69,321	13	104,253
NATURAL DISASTER incidents with displacement	0	0	0	0

DISPLACEMENT MOVEMENT IN FEBRUARY 2016 (see details in boxes)



LEGEND

