



THEMATIC PROTECTION BULLETIN CLOSING THE GAPS

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY-BASED CAPACITIES IN
RESPONSE TO THE MARAWI HUMANITARIAN CRISIS
IN FOCUS: COMMUNITY-BASED EVACUATION CENTERS

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BACKGROUND

- On 23 October 2017, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) ended combat operations in Marawi City against pro-ISIS militants after Government forces killed Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon, Maute group leader Omar Maute and Malaysian militant Dr. Mahmud Ahmad.
- The armed confrontation between the AFP and Pro-ISIS militants has forcibly displaced a total of 359,680 individuals (78,466 families) coming from the city itself, as well as residents from nearby municipalities, who were compelled to leave due to severe food shortage and/or constriction of local economies.
- In response, local governments of host communities immediately opened evacuation centers in several locations to cater to the humanitarian needs of the displaced population, of which sixty-seven (67) remain active.
- Based on government sources, about 95% of the displaced population have sought shelter with their relatives, while only 5% fled to evacuation centers. The strong sense of honor – or “*maratabat*” – of the Meranaw, which is the predominant ethnic group in Marawi City, is critical to this phenomenon. The IDPs find staying in these facilities as demeaning not only to themselves, but also to the entire clan, and thus generally opt to stay with their relatives.
- At the early stages, members of the protection cluster reported that some IDPs have set up spontaneous collective centers outside of officially opened evacuation centers. Spontaneous collective centers, later referred to as “community-based evacuation centers,” are existing structures that are used as temporary living accommodations for hosting displaced populations. UNHCR verified up to 25 of these sites and presented the IDPs’ concerns to government counterparts. The Protection Cluster subsequently placed 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). The national government, through the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) responded to this occurrence by initiating registration activities in spontaneous collective centers.

- As mentioned in the previous issue of the Thematic Bulletin bringing into focus these CB-ECs, the situation of the IDPs found therein is unique. While congestion is the common protection issue faced by IDPs in evacuation centers officially opened by local government units, home-based IDPs face the issues on access and assistance. IDPs in spontaneous collective centers have neither camp managers to whom they can 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.
- By the end of October, about 6,463 IDPs will be returning to their habitual residences in nine barangays in Marawi City, namely: 1) Matampay, 2) Tampilong, 3) Panggao Saduc, 4) Datu saber, 5) Green (Buadi Sacayo), 6) Moriatao Luksadatu, 7) Poblacion Marawi, 8) East Basak, and 9) Basak Malutlut. The nine “pilot” barangays are part of an IDP Return Plan developed by the Marawi City local government and affirmed by Joint Task Force Lanao.



CURRENT SITUATION

- As of 16 October 2017, a total of **twenty-two (22) CB-ECs remain active**, from a cumulative total of 25 verified CB-ECs.
- Eleven of these CB-ECs are found scattered around Iligan City, four are in Pantar, one is in Balo-i, one is in Kauswagan, and five are in Sultan Naga Dimaporo.
- Both government and non-government humanitarian actors, as well as protection partners have taken cognizance of these CB-ECs and have responded to the sector gaps present therein, providing humanitarian assistance that is appropriate to the status of IDPs in CB-ECs as a sub-category of home-based IDPs.
- However, as experienced by those who are categorized as “home-based” IDPs, and based on protection monitoring done by UNHCR and protection partners, IDPs in CB-ECs complain that they receive far less humanitarian assistance compared to IDPs in evacuation centers. It was also monitored in several locations that the last humanitarian assistance that they have received was more than a month to more than two months ago.
- Based on the results of the Intention Survey and Needs Assessment (ISNA) conducted by UNHCR and 22 partner agencies, IDPs in CB-ECs interviewed say that food (94%), hygiene kits (45%) medical assistance (40%), and water (26%) are the four types of humanitarian assistance received.
- Eighty-six percent of IDPs in CB-ECs also say that they can freely move in and out of their current displacement, but for those who cannot, state that lack of fare money to move around is the top factor that limits their freedom of movement, while safety in the area is the second factor that constraints their movement.
- Of the 94% of IDP respondents who say that they want to return to Marawi when able, 5% are IDPs from CB-ECs.

CLOSING THE GAP

- 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 IDPs who are home-based.
 - 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 amongst IDPs and host communities.
 - Consistent monitoring of the condition of IDPs is provided 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.
 - Access to information is consistent, so that IDPs are kept abreast of what the government is doing for them during their state of displacement, as well as what government is planning to do on their early recovery and rehabilitation.
 - An appropriate 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 also provided to host families and investments are made to enhance community social service that will benefit the host community.
 - Delivery of assistance to host communities is enhanced to help address congestion, and humanitarian access and assistance in affected municipalities in Lanao del Sur is made available.
 - In light of the recent end of hostilities and the declaration of President Rodrigo Duterte that Marawi City has been “liberated,” consultation processes in which IDPs are able to fully participate and express their needs and concerns, are made prior to implementation of recovery and rehabilitation, or resettlement/transitory plans to address cases when return or other durable solutions are not possible in the immediate to medium term.

DISCLAIMER

The Thematic Protection Bulletin 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 Bulletin reflects the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and other sources of international law and practice. The information reported in the Thematic Protection Bulletin 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 Thematic Protection Bulletin does not necessarily reflect the views of UNHCR or any individual member of the Protection Cluster. Photos featuring children were taken with their consent.

COMMUNITY-BASED EVACUATION CENTERS

Armed Confrontations and Displacement in Marawi (AFP vs Pro-ISIS Militants)

Thematic
Protection
Bulletin



PHILIPPINES

22 COMMUNITY-BASED EVACUATION CENTERS



967 Families or
4,827 individuals

