

With you



STORIES

**NIDA YASSIN,
GIVING HOPE**

**THE ROHINGYA CRISIS:
A YEAR AFTER**

**REBUILDING
MINDANAO**

Noor Akij, 50, sits with her 7-year-old daughter Jannat Ara whose leg was blown off of her body as they fled through the Rakhine State. Noor says that the greatest loss her family suffered is Jannat Ara's leg, and "the most important gift we have been given is her life." ©UNHCR/Brian Sokol



In August 2018, Mr. Shinji Kubo assumed his new role as the Representative of UNHCR to the Philippines. He brings with him 25 years of experience with the UN Refugee Agency, having recently served as its Representative to Bangladesh at the onset of the Rohingya refugee crisis in 2017, and as the Head of Sub-Office in Damak, Nepal when the country was hit by an earthquake in 2015. Mr. Kubo has been involved in various units in different UNHCR operations, with his experience spanning protection, external relations, and durable solutions. Aside from his native Japan, he has also been previously stationed in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Malaysia. Prior to joining the humanitarian sector, Mr. Kubo worked in the field of law. He graduated from Soka University in Japan with a Masters in Law. He received his Bachelor of Laws from the same university.

“It was the outpouring of kindness from donors and supporters all over the world including the Philippines that gave me hope.”

To our valued donor,

A person is forced to flee every two seconds. Every day, we hear stories of men, women, and children who are torn from their homes across the world. In 2017, displacement has reached a record high with nearly 68.5 million people forced to flee because of war, violence, conflict, and persecution. These are daunting and heart-breaking numbers.

Yet, still there is hope. Hope from the compassionate men and women who extend a hand to families who lost everything.

In 2015, I was in Nepal when an 8.1 magnitude earthquake struck. I saw how buildings were flattened and families would search through the rubble for survivors. Just last year, I was stationed in Bangladesh where I worked with Filipino staff member UNHCR Field Officer Brenda Escalante in one of the worst humanitarian crisis of our time. When we met Rohingya refugees in the camps, we could see in their eyes the horror that they saw when they were chased out of their homes. It was during those times that I witnessed how communities would stand in solidarity to help the families who have lost everything. There were people who opened their homes and gave what they could just to help.

It was the outpouring of kindness from donors and supporters all over the world including the Philippines that gave me hope. Your support has helped UNHCR do its work as soon as an emergency strikes up to the point that they are able to rebuild their lives in their home country or in a different community.

Truly, you are part of a community of hope-givers making our work possible.

Every peso you donate makes a difference in the lives of forcibly displaced families. This issue of With You will share how you have made a lasting impact on the lives of the most vulnerable families in the Philippines, Bangladesh, and other parts of the world.

As I take on my new role as UNHCR Philippines' Country Representative, I am motivated that together we can continue to save lives, safeguard rights, and build better futures for families not just in the Philippines, but also across the globe.

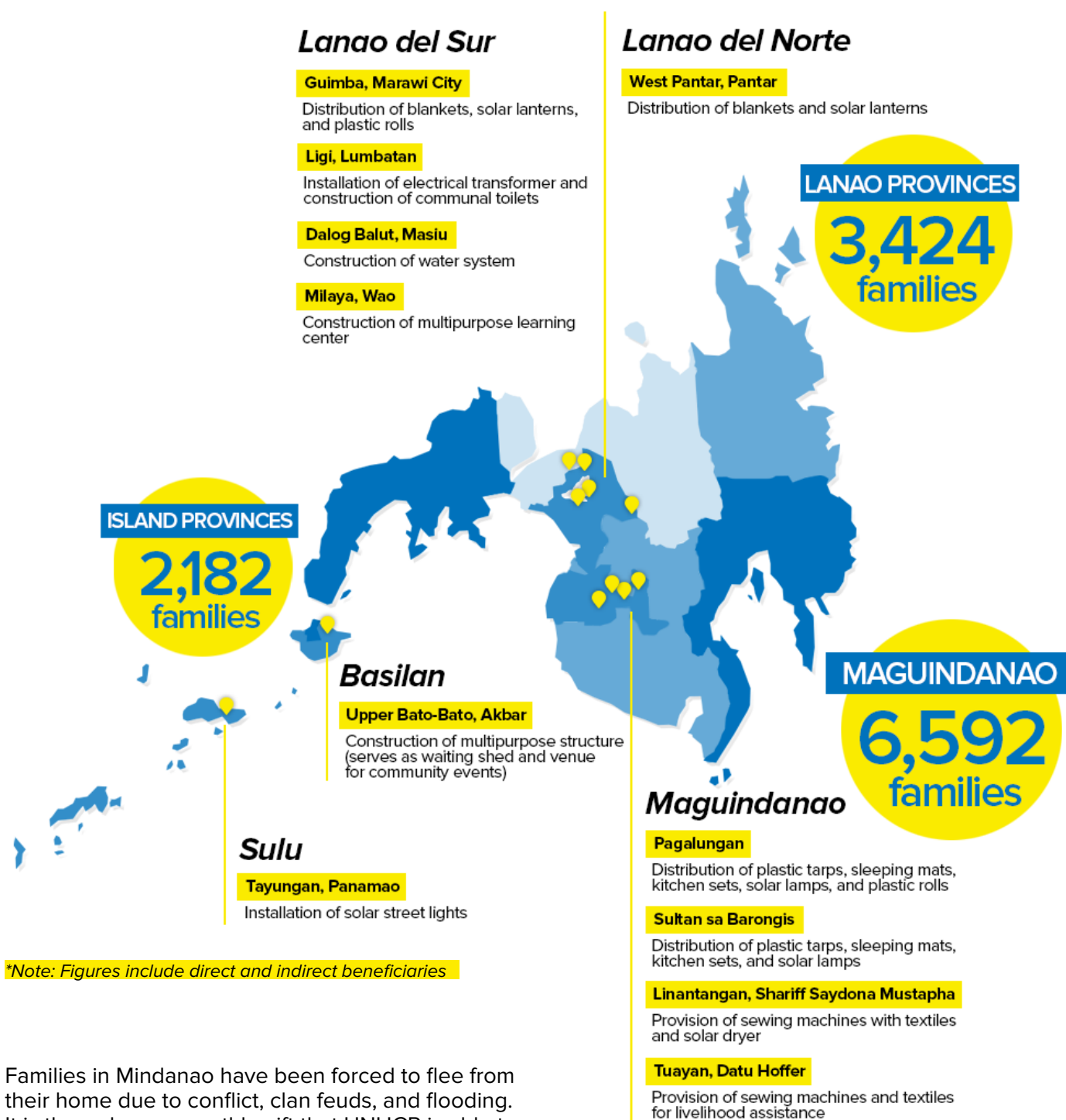
Maraming salamat po.

Sincerely,

Shinji Kubo
Representative
UNHCR Philippines

Rebuilding Mindanao

Supporting families in the region through quick impact projects



Families in Mindanao have been forced to flee from their home due to conflict, clan feuds, and flooding. It is through your monthly gift that UNHCR is able to implement quick impact projects to help address the needs of the forcibly displaced over the past third quarter of the year.

Quick impact projects are low cost projects meant to respond to the basic priority needs expressed by the displaced families and the communities where they are being hosted. Community members are involved in every step of the project from planning, designing and implementation of these high impact projects.

Projects are designed to address the needs of families such as accessing basic social services, providing livelihood assistance, and improving community empowerment and social impact.

It is through the committed support of donors like you that UNHCR is able to help displaced families get back on their feet. You help restore hope to more than 12,198 families in Mindanao.



THE ROHINGYA CRISIS: A YEAR AFTER

It has been 13 months since one of the worst humanitarian crisis of our time erupted. On 25 August 2018, hundreds of thousands of the Rohingya people began their long and grueling journey towards safety. More than 700,000 Rohingya refugees fled from their home in Myanmar due to the inhuman violence that broke out in the Rakhine state.

The men, women, and children who fled recounted stories of trauma. Yet, they also share stories of the most important things they took with them and their dreams for the future.

KALIMA*

The 20-year-old says that nothing is important to her after the hardships that she faced in Myanmar. She was a tailor in her village when armed men came and began shooting people. They burned houses, and killed villagers and left a trail of destruction in their wake.

“I don’t know why Allah did not let me die,” Kalima said. She was married for three months when she witnessed the men slaughter people in her village. Kalima recalls how she children and houses were set on fire, how her husband and little sister were killed. She was then brutally beaten and raped before being knocked unconscious. Kalima escaped with her brother and cousin. They walked for three days before arriving to Bangladesh.

In spite of going through such unspeakable horror, Kalima still manages to smile when asked about her talents as a dressmaker. “Anything you need,” she says when asked about what she can tailor. She dreams of one day being able to sew again.

NURAS

Nuras, a 25-year-old mother recalls how her neighbors were slaughtered as they tried to flee from their houses. Nuraz and her four children ran away from their homes as they were chased and fired at. She ran with her four children to escape the massacre of her village.

As she was fleeing, she heard the sound of a baby crying nearby. The infant was dry, flailing, and huddled between two dead bodies in a rice paddy. She took the child in her arms and resumed the journey with her children. They walked for days until they reached the Bangladeshi border where she was reunited with her husband who fled earlier. They

searched for the infant’s family, but no one claimed him in the site. She and her husband now take care of the baby. They named Mohammed Hasan, after the prophet Mohammed’s grandson. She hopes that Mohammed will grow up into a strong man.

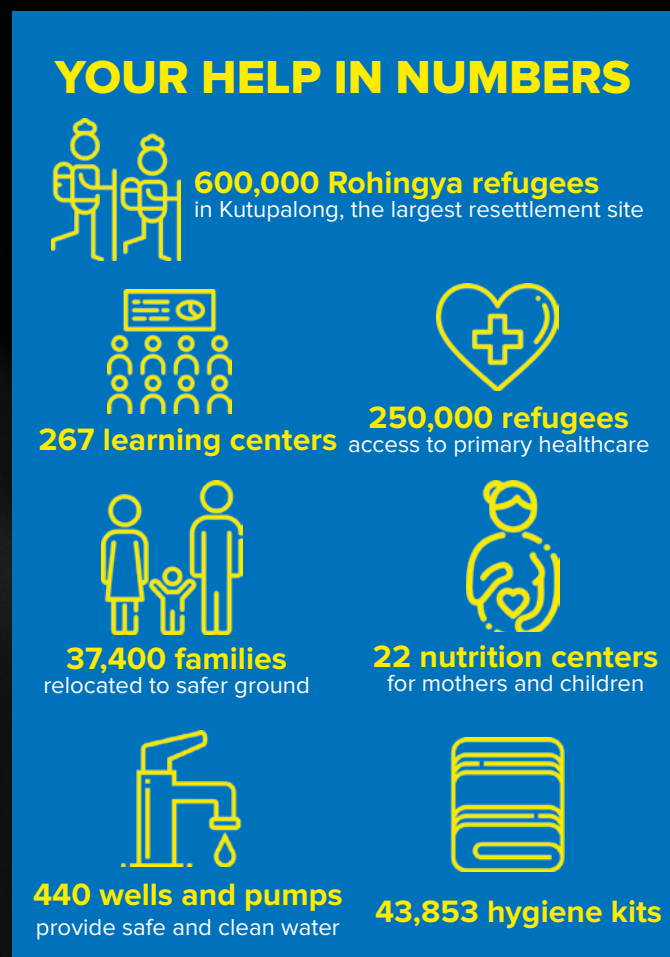
OMAR

Omar was 102-years-old when he was forced to flee because of the attacks and brutal killings in a neighboring village. The blind man escaped with other members of his village, bringing with him a walking stick.

Leaving his village was the hardest thing he had ever done. But now, Omar is reunited with his family in a camp. He feels safe and at peace.

Kalima, Nuraz, and Omar are some of the 720,000 Rohingya refugees living in Bangladesh. It is through your generosity and kindness that UNHCR is able to restore hope to many of the most vulnerable Rohingya families who have lost everything.

**name changed for protection*





Notes from the field by Nida Yassin
Za'atari Camp, 2013

“Frazzled from a heavy workload, I jumped out of my office pre-fab, looking for fresh air in a sandy area. In the opposite corner I found a little girl, covered in dust, biting her nails and looking scared.

I approached her softly. I could see the tears pouring down her thin, little dusty cheeks. She was crying quietly. I asked her if I could be her friend. She looked at me and nodded. I sat her on my lap and held her, tried soothing her. I could hardly see the details of her feet in the chalky mini-slippers of hers, worn on the wrong feet. She was too shy to look at me; I started asking her about her parents and siblings. She didn't respond. And then, while I sat there with her seated on my lap and patting her back, she finally looked up at me, straight into my eyes, and said, ‘water.’

And it was my turn to bawl. Amneh, a 4 year old Syrian refugee, who touched my heart.”

Nida Yassin, Giving Hope

Be inspired by Assistant External Relations Officer Nida Yassin's dedication to speaking on behalf of refugees, some of the most vulnerable people of our time.

© UNHCR/Sebastian Rich

Why did you choose to work in the humanitarian sector in particular?

I didn't choose to work for UNHCR, I think UNHCR chose me to work with them.

My father is a Palestinian refugee, and I know exactly what he went through. Growing up, I listened to his stories about being a refugee—how he left his homeland for his family, and that journey to safety. And while growing up, I felt that I wanted to be a part of the UN and to make as much possible of my capabilities to make it better for refugees.

What was the best day you had at work?

It was after the Government of Jordan has allowed refugees to work legally here, and there were certain challenges in terms of refugees applying for jobs and that their skills and talents were not very well known.

So, with the refugees community and with the employer community, we held the very first winter bazaar in UNHCR. It had a small scale and was very low key, and lasted for three days. But the smiles and the encouragement that the refugees got from the organizers of the bazaar was something remarkable, something that I would not trade anything for.

What do you think are the misconceptions about refugees?

Home is dear to anyone; it doesn't matter if there is a crisis or not. So imagine how it is for those who have left forcibly. A lot of the refugees from Syria left with the idea that they were leaving for a few hours, and then they'll go back home. That they'll just stand behind the tree until the bombing is done. But they ended up at the borders with Jordan so they came with literally nothing. And it's been more than seven years into the war, and what would happen later to them?

This is what I love about UNHCR: That we are here to support them, we are here to provide whatever they lack, whatever we and they took for granted for the past years, now it actually counts, it makes a difference.

This is the most important role of UNHCR: It is to protect those and to safeguard their rights and safety.

Can you share a message to our supporters in the Philippines?

Thank you so much to the people of the Philippines for their support that has been provided to the Syrian refugees.

The needs are growing, and the years have been passing by so quickly. It has been seven years into the war and the refugees that we have been supporting are now in urgent and greater need of your assistance and your solidarity.

You have done a great job. Please continue to stand with refugees.



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UNHCR Field Officer Brenda Escalante is one of the Filipinos on the ground, providing protection for Rohingya families at risk of flooding and landslides. Together with implementing partners, UNHCR has relocated over 600,000 refugees to safer ground in Bangladesh.

The gift of shelter

For years, UNHCR has been helping shelter thousands who have endured difficult journeys in search of safety.

After undergoing such violence and trauma, Rohingya families were able to find safety in Bangladesh. Yet for months, they were at risk of some of the heaviest rains ever seen in the country.

Through your generosity we have been able to give vulnerable families the safety, warmth, and protection they need. It is because of your kind gift that we are able to help build shelters for Rohingya refugees and other forcibly displaced families in emergency hotspots like Iraq, Kenya, and Uganda.

Together, we can continue delivering much needed shelter aid to families who have been forced to flee. Your support can help us provide emergency shelters, improve existing settlements, support the most vulnerable families in building durable shelters.



37,400 Rohingya refugees

at risk during the monsoon season
moved to higher ground



**12,500 men,
women and children**

sheltered in collective
homes in Iraq



13,603 shelter

provided to the most
vulnerable families in
Uganda






1,500 accessible homes


constructed for families caring for
those with disabilities in Kenya

It's the season to share
the Gift of Hope



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