

# STY Rai (Odette) Aftermath

## Emergency Situation Report

Reporting Period: 01– 31 March 2022, Issue No. 8

### CURRENT SITUATION

Over 100 days after the devastating Super Typhoon Rai (Odette) hit the coastal areas of Surigao del Norte, Dinagat Islands, Southern Leyte, Cebu, and Bohol, many families have already returned to their places of origin and built makeshift shelters using salvaged materials. While response slowly transitions to early recovery, many people are still left in complete devastation without stable shelter, access to essential services and health care, adequate food supply, and access to protective services. Given the extent of damage the typhoon left, the affected families anticipate that it may take some time to reach full recovery.

After three months, a significant number of the affected population are still living in evacuation centers waiting for the government's relocation. According to the government's Disaster Response Operation Monitoring and Information Center (DROMIC) report as of end of March 2022, 73 families or approximately 332 individuals remain in 6 evacuation centers in three (3) municipalities in Caraga, while 2,686 families or approximately 10,640 individuals remain displaced in Southern Leyte. Meanwhile, the No Build Zone (NBZ) policy, discouraging communities not to return to the sites of their original homes and preventing them to build along the coastal areas, poses a setback to the ongoing rebuilding efforts. This also further exacerbates the typhoon-affected population's exposure to protection risks.

While host communities are able to absorb shocks and fill in humanitarian gaps in providing support to displaced families, the prolonged hosting of IDPs may strain their own food supply and the services within the community which may result to tense relationships and conflict. Even in situations where IDPs are able to return, many of the affected communities remain vulnerable to further displacement due to the lack of concrete support to help in facilitating their recovery. The lack of consultation with affected population on decisions that affect them also remains to be a gap. This also adds up to the uncertainties, which, in effect causes psychosocial distress among them.

In line with its core protection mandate, UNHCR's response to the situation focuses on the following priorities: protection-by-presence through protection monitoring with project partners, protection mainstreaming, advocacy, distribution of core relief items (CRI), and coordination functions which involves providing technical support in protection coordination and information management.

# Caraga Region Response



*Student volunteers assist in constructing temporary shelters for the IDPs at the relocation site in Brgy. Cagniog in Surigao City*

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# PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



## ACCESS TO HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

1. While some of the affected families have returned to their places of origin, there are still families who remain displaced and have opted to stay in the homes of their relatives or in informal settlements. Most of these home-based IDPs remain to be unaccounted for and have limited access to humanitarian assistance from government and humanitarian actors.
2. Both IDP and host families in the severely affected areas receive minimal support in facilitating their recovery. Some IDPs reported that emergency assistance is no longer regularly provided. In terms of non-food items, most of the affected families expressed the need for solar lamps specifically in areas where electricity has not been restored yet. Pending the clearing of debris, families expressed the need to be provided with tools and equipment for them to go back to their livelihoods or find an alternative source of income.
3. At least ten (10) displaced families from Sitio Iba of Barangay Datu in Pilar Municipality in Siargao island have built makeshift shelters using tarps and salvaged materials along the national highway. These families are not able to return to their habitual residences due to the presence of debris in their areas. They continue to face potential safety and protection risks due to the unsafe location, inadequate shelter space and lack of access to basic services and humanitarian assistance. As expressed by the families, some of their pressing needs include food and water supply and access to sustainable livelihoods. Before the typhoon, these families used to be engaged in informal work such as home-based livelihoods, food vending, and selling of non-food items.

2. There are very limited women and child-friendly spaces available in the evacuation sites to address psychosocial and mental health concerns of the IDPs.
3. In Dinagat Island, all the three district hospitals are severely damaged hindering the effective delivery of safe and confidential life-saving services to gender-based violence (GBV) victims-survivors.
4. According to reports, there are pre-existing cases of human trafficking such as alleged prostitution of women and young girls in Surigao del Norte. Following the typhoon, the province ranks number two in GBV cases in the region. Due to the lack of livelihood opportunities post disaster, women and adolescent girls are left with few real options which puts them at heightened risk for dangerous or potentially exploitative work.



## ACCESS TO FOOD AND NUTRITION

1. Food supply remains a concern for most of the IDPs due to the lack of access to various sources of income especially for those in the hardly-hit barangays. Most of the families who had gone home rely on assistance from the government and humanitarian agencies, while those who are currently staying with their relatives rely on the food supply of their host families who are also affected by the typhoon. While host families are still able to fill in the gaps in providing support to the displaced families, prolonged hosting may strain their own food supply which may result to tension and conflict, as well as possible violent domestic situations.
2. Lack of nutritious food pose potential decline on the nutritional condition of affected population especially among children. The food assistance provided by the local government units are becoming limited and mostly consisting of canned goods. Under the "Pamilya Mo, Pamilya Ko" (PMPK) program, the provincial government continues to provide food items prioritizing families in highly affected areas only.



## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND CHILD PROTECTION

1. Due to the limited support services available for children and their caregivers, there is an increased risk for sexual abuse and exploitation. For those who are still staying in evacuation centers, this situation is further compounded by the lack of electricity, proper lighting of the sanitation facilities, and lack of partition.



# PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



## HOUSING, LAND, AND PROPERTY (HLP) ISSUES

1. The implementation of the government's No-Build-Zone (NBZ) policy that commenced with the installation of NBZ signages by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in the coastal areas of Siargao Island is adding to the anxieties of the affected population. The imposition of such policy, without due process provided by existing laws, may constitute forced eviction where restrictions or accompanying relocations render individuals with no choice but to leave their lands or properties.
2. In Burgos Municipality in Siargao, the LGU have already started the strict implementation of the said policy and have disallowed the rebuilding of houses and return of IDPs in the affected areas. According to reports, there is already an approved plan for the relocation site in Brgy. Patag in Burgos but the details and specific date of the relocation has not been communicated to the affected families yet.
3. Some of the communities in Siargao Island (i.e., Brgy. Dayaohay) are against the NBZ policy due to concerns on livelihoods in case they are relocated. They also expressed that they have not received full information about the policy and consultations are yet to be conducted by the DENR. In Dapa Municipality in Siargao, some of the affected families living within the identified NBZ were made to sign a waiver for building temporary housing in their areas.
4. Meanwhile, there are also LGUs that have deferred implementation of the said policy due to the lack of clear guidelines and in consideration of the situation of the affected families. Some of these LGUs are calling for support from the humanitarian agencies to provide flexible loan arrangements to help the affected families rebuild their homes. In Surigao City, the LGU is considering the request of the affected residents who are willing to relocate but wanted to keep their houses along the coastal area.
5. The City LGU and National Housing Authority (NHA) will construct 123 houses and will be prioritizing the remaining families from existing evacuation centers in Surigao City. However, based on reports, some IDPs have not fully decided yet if they want to be relocated in

Brgy, Cagniog due to the distance of the relocation site from their sources of livelihoods.

6. There are also reports of families residing within the NBZ areas who were allegedly excluded from shelter assistance, i.e. in Sta. Monica Municipality in Surigao del Norte. This issue has also impacted the implementation of the conditional support program of some LGUs such as the Emergency Shelter Assistance (ESA) program which requires IDPs to have a house or a piece of land for them to qualify as beneficiaries. This limitation had already resulted to exclusion of some of the displaced families.
7. The LGUs are having difficulties in finding a suitable location for relocation of the affected population due to lack of available lands. Based on initial consultations with LGUs, there are lands that they could use but these lands are expensive (i.e. in General Luna, Siargao). Further, some locations identified as potential sites had been assessed as inconducive or unsafe for relocation. According to data shared by DSWD Caraga, the Task Force Build Back Better had identified 1,966,070 sq.m. of potential land in Siargao Island for relocation of families which will potentially be affected by the No-Build Zone policy.



## THREAT TO LIFE, SAFETY AND SECURITY

1. In Surigao City, around 179 displaced Bajau families are still living beside the road under makeshift shelters that were built out of salvaged materials. These families are exposed to further protection and safety risks, especially the small children who play by the side of the road unattended. According to the City LGU, these families could not be relocated yet due to strong oppositions by the receiving community in the proposed relocation site.
2. People in makeshift shelters that were built out of salvaged materials are exposed to safety and security risks as well as health risks due to the inadequate protection that the temporary shelters could offer. The return of IDPs prior to clearing of debris continue to pose risks to the physical safety of the affected population. In San Francisco, Surigao del Norte

# PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS

- and in the island barangays of Surigao City, there are IDPs who got cuts and scrape wounds from the debris. According to reports, clearing of areas is slowly progressing.
3. Brgys. Caridad and Bailan of Pilar, Brgy Corazon and Libertad of General Luna, Barangay Garcia of Sta Monica, Barangay Bitaug of Burgos, and Barangay Bongdo of San Benito, are still flooded. Given that these barangays are located at the downstream, flood waters from the upstream barangays flow into the area.
  4. On 26 March, an armed encounter between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and alleged members of the New People's Army transpired in the mountainous areas of Brgys. Tinago and Binucaran in Malimono Municipality in Surigao del Norte resulting to the displacement of typhoon affected families to the nearby communities within the municipality. Two days following the incident, all affected families have returned to their places of origin, but have requested for continued support on food supply since most of the families have not returned to farming due to security issues.
  2. Construction materials to repair damaged houses are among the priority needs of the affected populations in the municipalities of Pilar, Del Carmen, Burgos, Dapa and Sta. Monica of Siargao Island as well as in Libjo municipality of Dinagat Islands, and some of the island barangays of Surigao City. Thousands of houses in these areas were reported to be severely damaged by the typhoon.
  3. According to reports, the Provincial government through the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office provided cash assistance amounting to Php1,000 and/or Php5,000 depending on the family size prioritizing the most vulnerable households. However, according to accounts from IDPs whose houses are within the NBZ, they have not been covered in the said assistance. Based on their claims, they only received assistance from private donors.
  4. In Brgy. Cuarinta of San Jose Municipality of Dinagat Island, 200 families will have to be relocated as their habitual residences are within a landslide prone area. The provincial government had allocated funds for this relocation and was also able to receive support from a charitable institution.
  5. In Barangay Laguna of Cagdianao Municipality, 48 families will have to be relocated as their habitual residences are within a flood-prone area. The local government is still in the process of identifying the best way to relocate the said families.



## ACCESS TO SHELTERS

1. Most of the IDPs have returned to their respective places of origin. Only those whose houses were totally damaged and have no means to rebuild them are still displaced. However, IDPs who have returned to their habitual places of residences still face further protection risks as most of the affected sites remain uncleared of debris. Moreover, most of those who have returned used salvaged materials in the construction of their makeshift dwellings. Due to this, people are highly exposed to the elements which poses potential adverse impact to their health. Evidently, while most displaced families may have returned, attaining durable solutions with due consideration of their safety and dignity remains to be unaddressed.

# PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



## ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION

1. Families who had returned and rebuilt their houses in Barangay Poblacion (Boulevard area), and Barangay Poblacion in Pilar and Burgos municipalities have difficulty in accessing sanitary toilets. Due to confusion on No-Build-Zones, families had not installed their own toilets because of fear of being evicted or transferred. Most of the IDPs are using the toilets of their neighbors but this also poses them to potential risks especially during nighttime due to the lack of electricity and adequate lighting in the sites.
2. The water supply at Surigao del Norte National High School and Surigao City National High School ECs is not potable. Drinking water from refilling station in most of the affected areas costs P35-40 per liter. Based on the latest coordination meeting, DSWD-CARAGA committed to follow up on this concern with the Department of Trade and Industries (DTI).



## ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

1. Electricity remains unavailable in some parts of Surigao City. IDPs in home-based settings or returned sites have no proper source of lighting. This situation may pose safety and security risks to IDPs, especially to women and children, to the sick and the elderly, especially at night. In Siargao Island, the majority still has no access to electricity. IDPs need to pay P20-P60 for charging cellphone and laptop.
2. The dock-in port in the island barangay of Catadman, Surigao City is damaged, causing more difficulties in the delivery of assistance to the barangay.



## ACCESS TO HEALTH

1. Psychosocial support is among the identified needs of the affected populations. In the island barangays of Surigao City, barangay health centers are still damaged affecting immediate response to health needs of the affected population. Children in Surigao del Norte National High School Evacuation Center are not sufficiently being addressed by health workers and parents resorted to self-medication to cure their children.
2. Barangay Caub, an island barangay in Del Carmen municipality, lacks maternity and birthing clinic. IDPs must travel to the mainland particularly in Dapa municipality, to be able to receive medical attention. However, the number of boats that are operational in the area is limited thus, posing potential risks to those about to give birth and severely ill people.

# HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

## OPERATIONAL SUPPORT



**Protection Monitoring and Mainstreaming.** UNHCR continues to conduct protection monitoring in severely affected areas and in the evacuation sites in Surigao City and Siargao Islands through the support of its local partners. UNHCR also continues to coordinate and provide technical support in the reporting and referral of protection issues. These issues are also documented through the regular release of Situational Report and IDP Protection Assessment Reports to government and humanitarian partners.



**Advocacy Work.** As part of its advocacy and protection mainstreaming work, UNHCR advocated with the government to issue protection advisories to address pressing protection concerns. The DSWD Caraga issued an advisory on the prohibition of begging to cite the provisions in the Anti-Mendicancy Law. In one of the meetings of the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group, UNHCR reported on pressing issues concerning housing, land, and property rights that were monitored on the ground. On 8 March 2022, UNHCR released its first Thematic Bulletin that highlights housing, land, and property issues in Caraga region and Southern Leyte province. UNHCR also supported the development of the HCT advisory on the No Build Zone (NBZ) that was endorsed on 6 March 2022. As co-lead of the Protection Cluster, UNHCR is supporting the roll-out strategy of the advisory note with key government partners at both national and local levels. Further, UNHCR will also be engaged with the government's Build Back Better task force at the regional level for the implementation of the recommendations stated in the advisory note. UNHCR also continues to work with the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines in advocating and referring any human rights related issues in the context of the ongoing displacement to concerned government agencies

## COORDINATION SUPPORT



**IDP Protection Cluster Co-Leadership.** UNHCR provided technical support to the DSWD in co-leading the Protection Cluster and the Regional Disaster Response Committee (RDRC) in general. While the RDRC and the clusters were deactivated in March, UNHCR as part of its operational priority will continue to monitor the displacement situation in the region and assures the DSWD of its sustained efforts to mainstream pressing protection issues.



**Information Management Support.** As part of UNHCR's exit strategy in this emergency response, it had fully handed over the RDRC Information Management System to the DSWD. It can be recalled that DSWD issued the Advisory No. 17 on 30 December 2021, highlighting the utilization of the then Tri-Cluster (Protection, Food/NFI, CCCM) IM System as the Regional Disaster Response Committee (RDRC) Information Management System by all responding organizations and agencies. UNHCR IM specialists conducted dedicated training about the system with the DSWD-RDRC's technical staff to ensure the proper management and utilization of the system.

*UNHCR conducted an exit meeting with DSWD Caraga as part of its transition to ad hoc and virtual support for the Super Typhoon Rai (Odette) response in the Caraga Region.*



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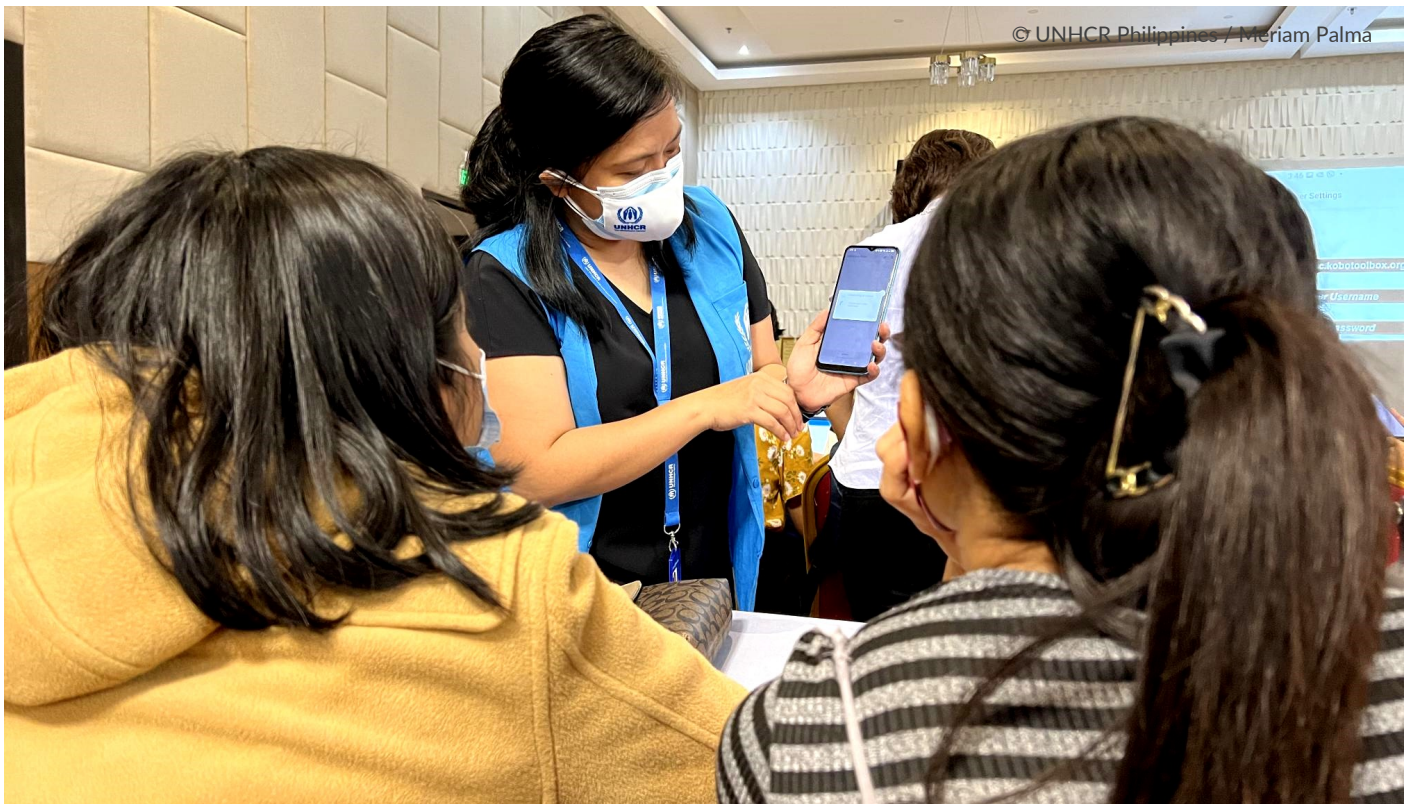
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# Region VIII (Southern Leyte) Response



*UNHCR conducts KOBO training to partners from the government agencies in Region VIII as part of the Protection and Information Management Workshop on 24 March 2022 in Tacloban City. The activity forms part of the support extended to the government in line with the Typhoon Odette Response in Southern Leyte.*





# PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



## ACCESS TO SHELTER AND HOUSING AND LAND AND PROPERTY ISSUES

1. The 20 meters No Build Zone (NBZ) easement from the coastline, and 3 meters for urban areas will be implemented in local government units heavily impacted by the typhoon, but no specific relocation site for the IDPs, specifically those houses situated in between the coastline and mountainside. IDPs have been advised to look for their own relocation sites with no specific guidelines from the local government units. Most of the municipalities have yet to identify relocation sites for the IDPs whose houses have been totally damaged and are situated in No Build Zones. One barangay in Saint Bernard reported that they have a relocation site but will not be able to accommodate all the displaced families who need to relocate.
2. The lack of specific relocation sites would force IDPs to return to their habitual residences along the coastlines and/or mountainsides exposing them to further risks and harm.
3. For affected populations whose houses were in the identified NBZ, no consultation has been conducted in relation to the policy and their access to shelter. However, people were made aware of the danger that it may pose should they decide to get back to their habitual residences
4. Affected population whose houses are partially damaged find it hard to rebuild their houses since most of the assistance focus on totally damaged houses. In effect, these families feel that they are being left behind.
5. Absence of LGU guidelines or legal framework on the relocation could cause tension between the landowners and IDPs. There have been reports in Sto. Rosario, Macrohon and Lipanto, Saint Bernard of landowners refusing to lease their land to tenants. IDPs cannot rebuild their homes or repair those that have been partially damaged.
6. IDPs who are staying in schools were informed that face-to-face classes will start soon so they were requested to move to other evacuation centers.



## CHILD PROTECTION/GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

1. Two (2) cases of physical abuse against women (Limasawa and San Ricardo) were reported but were not pursued up to the court level. Counselling sessions were provided to the victim/survivor and their offenders.
2. A total of five (5) CP-GBV cases were documented in March. Three (3) of which are in San Juan and two (2) in San Francisco. It was noted that the distance of municipalities to the regional center where services for medico legal and psychosocial tests can be availed has caused a delay in the filing of complaints. This poses greater risk for survivors as criminal cases have not been filed against perpetrators who are freely moving within the community. While multi-disciplinary teams have already been established in hospital-based Women and Child Protection Units (WCPU) in strategic locations to cater to the cases in far-flung municipalities, stakeholders and duty bearers are not yet aware of this.



## ACCESS TO HEALTH

1. Health facilities in some municipalities have been damaged attributing to the concern on access to health services of the affected population and IDPs.
2. Psychosocial support is identified as one of the most pressing needs by the affected population considering the psychological distress and trauma caused by the typhoon, especially to the women and children, including the duty bearers who are experiencing double impact since they also need to absorb the issues of the affected population.



## ACCESS TO FOOD AND NUTRITION

1. Most of the IDPs are dependent on food assistance as they don't have other sources to purchase food and other needs. IDPs shared that, after the typhoon, the prices of commodities have increased by 50-100% of its original price.

<sup>1</sup>Based on the results of the interview and discussion with government interlocutors and humanitarian organizations and protection monitoring.

# PROTECTION ISSUES AND NEEDS



## RIGHT TO INFORMATION AND PARTICIPATION

1. IDPs and affected population have expressed that they would want to be involved and consulted in decisions that affect them especially on shelter and livelihood.



## ACCESS TO LIVELIHOOD

1. As expressed by the authorities, access to livelihood is one of the main concerns. Once the distribution of relief ends by 25 March in view of the election ban, the authorities may not be able to address the issue of food security.
2. The two main sources of livelihood (fishing and farming) were affected causing people with no options but to rely on government's support for food and livelihood.
3. While there are support and ongoing assessment from the Department of Agriculture (DA) Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and Philippines Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC), people are still finding other means to support for their needs. DA has offered a zero-interest loan program but most of the fisherfolks and farmers did not avail because they said that they could not pay for it.



## ACCESS TO EDUCATION

1. Some schools were damaged and have yet to be rebuilt/repaired. This affects the planned face to face classes, which started last March 7.
2. DepEd requested for temporary learning centers in Saint Bernard and Liloan as an alternative for damaged classrooms.



## ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION

1. Water system has been restored in most of the communities. Earlier finding on e-coli bacteria in water has already been addressed.



## ACCESS TO LIFELINES

1. Electricity has been restored but mostly in the town center area only, but internet connectivity remains to be unstable in all municipalities and mobile signal remains to be a challenge in most municipalities.

<sup>1</sup>Based on the results of the interview and discussion with government interlocutors and humanitarian organizations and protection monitoring.

# HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

## OPERATIONAL SUPPORT



**IDP Protection Cluster Co-Leadership.** UNHCR continues to work with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office, the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO), and the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in the conduct of capacity building activities and in the institutionalization of the enhanced protection coordination framework as a response to the identified gaps and challenges in terms of disaster response and IDP protection in the region. An IDP Profiling training was conducted for the data focals of the municipalities to ensure the collection of disaggregated data. Moreover, a series of training-workshops on protection mainstreaming and coordination and information management has been provided to government partners at the regional, provincial and municipal levels.

## COORDINATION SUPPORT



**IDP Protection Cluster Co-Leadership.** UNHCR provided support to the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO) in the conduct of two (2) Protection working group meetings within March. The meetings served as a venue for UNHCR and protection partners to discuss on the responses, needs, gaps and constraints as well as identify levels of collaboration to ensure centrality of protection in the response. Moreover, the group is in the process of drafting the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Protection cluster, which aims to further strengthen coordination among relevant actors during emergencies and ensure sustainability of the initiatives, which were jointly conducted by cluster members.



**Inter-Agency Coordination.** UNHCR participates in coordination and cluster meetings to advocate for protection issues gathered during protection monitoring. It has also provided technical support to the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in the drafting of HLP Advisory on NBZ and the guidance note on the provision of humanitarian assistance during election period. As of 18 March, UNHCR's project partner ACCORD has also been deployed in Southern Leyte. ACCORD is expected to carry out UNHCR's activities in related to its role as Protection cluster co-lead.



*UNHCR convenes an advocacy meeting and conducts a protection orientation with the Office of the Southern Leyte DILG Provincial Director in line with strengthening the protection coordination framework for the provincial, municipal and barangay level.*

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