

# Withyou

## The Difference We Make

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- How Your Gift Brought Back Hope
- Philippines and Asylum: A Historical Perspective

**A UNHCR staff member** commemorates World Humanitarian Day with members from indigenous communities in North Upi, Maguindanao. World Humanitarian Day celebrates the inspirational spirit of humanitarian work around the world. (© UNHCR/Keneath John Bolisay/2015)

## Message from the Representative



### The Difference We Make

With the number of forcibly displaced people registering at its highest in UNHCR history, the gap between the needs and available humanitarian resources continue to widen. Hence, we are deeply grateful that 2,500 Filipino donors are committed to supporting us with the daunting task of providing life-saving aid to families surviving the terrors of wars and the havoc of natural disasters.

Over a year since we launched our giving program in May 2014, our pool of financial supporters have raised a total of Php 8.1 million, enabling us to deliver life-saving assistance and protection to up to 12,000 persons-of-concern. Your donations were especially crucial when we responded to address the needs of internally-displaced populations in central Mindanao at the peak of the law enforcement operations in February; the survivors of the devastating earthquake Nepal in April; and our continued advocacy for durable solutions for the indigenous communities recovering from the Zambaonga conflict in 2013.

Your generosity and commitment defined UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, as a lifeline for people displaced by violence, conflict and persecution, and resources permitting natural disasters—helping them survive, recover and build a better future. **We couldn't have done it without you.**

We cannot stop war, but we can help people who are affected by it. We have to respond. We have to protect. Because we are all human beings.

**“ We commit to tirelessly work to meet the spiraling needs of an unprecedented number of displaced people around the world. ”**

Bernard Kerblat  
Country Representative, Philippines  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

## UNHCR Philippines celebrates World Humanitarian Day



© UNHCR/Keneath John Bolsay/2015

August 19 is World Humanitarian Day, a day that recognizes the inspirational work of humanitarians done in service of millions of people in need around the world. This year, UNHCR Philippines commemorated the event bearing in mind the vulnerable populations it serves. UNHCR staff members in Cotabato and Zamboanga, along with members of the Mindanao Humanitarian Team, government and indigenous peoples communities held a held joint activities like photo exhibits, sharing stories of community resilience, musicals and a tree-planting activity, and a programme filled with music and stories highlighting the resilience of humanity and strength of humanitarian heroes.

In Metro Manila, a special campaign called on Filipinos to become “Messengers of Humanity” for people who have been forcibly displaced. A UNHCR booth in Trinoma mall featured a replica of emergency shelter, interactive digital games and other information that shed light on the conditions of forcibly displaced people and the number of ways they can be supported.



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## UN Special Rapporteur on IDPs visits the Philippines



© UN Photo/Jean-Marc Ferre/2012

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani, has urged the Government of the Philippines to follow through on its commitments to help internally displaced persons (IDPs) attain durable solutions and secure futures. Throughout his official 10-day visit to the Philippines, Mr. Beyani visited areas such as Tacloban and South Cotabato, where he assessed the impact of all forms of internal displacement, including those caused by natural disasters, armed conflict, and projects on the ancestral lands of indigenous people.

**“My visit allowed me to witness firsthand the extraordinary efforts to rebuild devastated communities as well as the resilience of displaced persons, which offers an example to us all.”**

– Chaloka Beyani, UN Special Rapporteur for IDPs.

In Tacloban, Mr. Beyani welcomed the significant progress in providing transitional and permanent homes and livelihood support to those affected by Typhoon Haiyan, as well as policies such as “Build Back Better” to mitigate the effects of future disasters.

Nevertheless, he expressed surprise that many displaced communities continued to lack basic services such as water, sanitation, and electricity nearly two years after the typhoon.

Mr. Beyani also urged the Government to rapidly take concrete steps to resolve problems affecting IDPs, including to adopt what would be a landmark law on the rights of internally displaced persons following more than a decade of deliberation. “For a country prone to disasters and the displacement effects of long-standing conflicts it is essential to enshrine the rights and protection of IDPs into law,” he said. “Not to do so after a decade of debate sends a wrong signal about the Government’s commitment to ensuring respect for their rights and withholds essential legal protection from IDPs.”

The Special Rapporteur visited regions in Mindanao affected by displacement caused by protracted conflicts with between non-state armed groups and the military. He urged intensified efforts to achieve inclusive and lasting peace as an essential means of ending the conflicts which have displaced millions over the last four decades. “Conflict, militarization and displacement have become the common pattern in some localities and responses to conflict driven displacement crisis need to be more effective in some areas where they have gone from poor to almost non-existent,” Mr. Beyani said. “Armed conflict or intrusive development projects not only displace indigenous peoples and subject them to conditions that may bring about their destruction as peoples, they also destroy their homes and livelihoods.”

The Special Rapporteur thanked the Government for its cooperation with his mandate and is committed to continuing his constructive engagement with national authorities. He will produce a full report and recommendations based on his visit to be presented to the Government of the Philippines and the UN Human Rights Council in 2016.

# How Your Gift Has Helped: Year 1 in Review



© UNHCR/Phil Behan/2014

**UNHCR** began to mobilize financial support from the private sector in the Philippines last 2014. The monthly contribution of Filipino supporters help us provide a pipeline of resources to bring life-saving aid to forcibly displaced families in the Philippines and where help is needed the most. The commitment to give on a regular basis enables UNHCR to act immediately when an emergency strikes, and to continue its presence in the field until durable solutions guaranteeing safety and dignity are accorded to the populations-of-concern.

**With your support, we raised PHP 8.1 million since we began our program in May 2014, helping provide:**

**1,350  
families**

with Protection Packs consisting of thermal blankets, solar lamps, kitchen sets, hygiene kits and jerry cans. These supplies are vital to helping displaced families survive while they are in temporary shelters.

**1,125  
families**

with emergency shelter. This is essential to keeping families protected from harsh weather conditions as well providing privacy and safety, especially for women and children.

**over  
12,000**

persons-of-concern provided with life-saving assistance



© UNHCR/Phil Behan/2014



© UNHCR

## Nepal Emergency Response

When Typhoon Haiyan (local name “Yolanda”) hit the Philippines in 2013, there was an outpouring of aid from the international community. After a 7.2 magnitude earthquake and a series of aftershocks devastated Nepal, Filipinos responded with generosity and compassion, heeding the urgent call to help save lives and recognizing that it was our way of paying forward the goodwill that we received when it was our time to be in crisis.

UNHCR was the first agency on the ground in Nepal, delivering life-saving supplies to survivors within 48 hours of the earthquake. Globally, UNHCR mobilized resources and raised over USD 4,000,000 to reach more people, faster, with vital supplies – helping ensure that no more lives were lost following this tragedy.



With your support, we raised PHP 370,000 in the Philippines, helping provide

**154**  
families



with solar lamps

**615**  
families



with emergency shelter

**4,100**  
families



with access to safe drinking water

**20,000**  
survivors



given emergency relief supplies



## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why is UNHCR asking for donations?

Conflict, persecution, and natural disasters forced millions of people from their homes over recent years. In several regions of the world, civilians suffered horrific violence and shocking human rights violations. The ability of humanitarians to provide relief increasingly fell short of the immense needs, highlighting the insufficiency of humanitarian funding in today's complex global environment.

### How is my gift used?

UNHCR is a humanitarian organization that relies on the trust, goodwill and generosity of its stakeholders (the people of concern we protect and the actors with whom we partner with – including donors, implementing partners, host governments, and the public) to fulfil its mandate. By holding ourselves accountable, we demonstrate that we are worthy of this trust.

Over 90 percent of funding goes directly to humanitarian aid and programs, and just 10 percent goes to administrative expenses, including public awareness campaigns and fundraising. That means that for every peso you give, 90 centavos go directly to benefit displaced families.

### How can I give to UNHCR?

You can sign-up to be a hope-giver to families forced to flee through the following channels:

- **In person.** Sign up with one of our frontliners at UNHCR booths in shopping malls and other event sites.
- **Online.** Select your pledge and fill out our form at [donate.unhcr.ph](http://donate.unhcr.ph), then choose to give via credit card or bank deposit.

For any other questions or concerns, e-mail [phimapsfr@unhcr.org](mailto:phimapsfr@unhcr.org) or call our donor hotline at **(+63 2) 403-8471**.



**Zoe Manguilimotan, Oya Manzano, and Melanie Faigane (left to right in photo)** are three of the top frontliners who work across spaces such as offices and malls to connect the general public with the issue of forced displacement and the work of UNHCR. They play a critical role in growing UNHCR's community of Filipino givers, helping gain the committed support that helps UNHCR sustain its programs for displaced families in the country and around the world.

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## Briefly introduce yourselves.

**Zoe:** I'm Zoe Manguilimotan. I began campaigning for UNHCR last year. We're here to help by calling for public support around the Philippines. Displaced families don't enjoy the same kind of opportunities we do, and we want to encourage people to help UNHCR provide them with that.

**Oya:** I'm Oya Manzano, and I've been a frontliner for UNHCR since last year. Our goal is to convey the story of displaced families, and make the public realize that they are blessed. If they were ever displaced, how would they feel? What would they do? Putting the public in the position of these families is our job. We want them to make that first step in signing up to support UNHCR.

**Melanie:** I'm Melanie Faigane, and I started as a frontliner when UNHCR began its giving program in the Philippines last year. In Manila, many people don't see the realities that these families face. I want people to know that sharing just a little of our time and our blessings means so much to those who have been displaced.

## What motivates you to campaign for UNHCR?

**Oya:** It's very fulfilling and very rewarding. The rejections you receive are not comparable to the hardships displaced families go through. Getting a couple of "no"s every day shouldn't hurt as much as not having a home.

## How did seeing UNHCR's work in the field affect your role as a frontliner?

**Zoe:** We went to Tacloban during the first year anniversary of Typhoon Yolanda. We met some of the families, and we saw everything that UNHCR provided. People said "thank you" — thank you for your help, thank you for your support, thank you for everything.

**Melanie:** We didn't realize how large of a scale the efforts were until we saw the camps and projects. Before that, it was just big numbers and statistics. But after I saw the families, there was a bigger responsibility to not end the day without signing up a new supporter.

**Oya:** When something big like Yolanda hit, it was so much easier for us to understand what UNHCR does. What happens in places like Syria now hit home. We believe in our cause. Seeing Tacloban gave me a greater sense of pride to go out there and talk to people.

## What are the most common challenges you face as frontliners?

**Oya:** We encounter plenty of objections and misunderstandings. Most of the time, people think that all United Nations organizations have one mandate or that we are the government. We have to explain that UNHCR focuses its care on displaced persons and refugees.

**Zoe:** Some people say they would like to give to charities that help children. But if you help entire families like what UNHCR does, that includes helping children, too.

## What is the most rewarding aspects of your work as frontliners?

**Melanie:** It's really encouraging to meet people who genuinely want to help these families.

**Oya:** Hearing stories such as how UNHCR was able to provide a community with solar dryers for farming — you can imagine how farmers who earn so little now have a better life because of what we do. That community may not know us, but they may be grateful for people like us who are doing our job.

## What have been some of your most memorable moments on the job?

**Melanie:** In Tacloban, a lady recognized UNHCR and stopped to shake our hands and say, "Please keep doing what you do". She was a beneficiary of a UNHCR tent in Guinan after Yolanda. We learned that her family was better off due to the assistance. There are people who want to help because they know exactly what the displaced families are going through.

**Oya:** I had a donor who had already signed up, but later came back to give a check. She said that although she wasn't part of the population living in UNHCR tents, she saw how it affected her community. She said, "The fact that UNHCR is there to set up [shelter] is a big help. It surprised me so much that people cared about a smaller city like Tacloban."

**Zoe:** I had a donor who was tearful throughout the sign-up process because he remembered the fear he experienced when Yolanda hit. He was unable to contact his family for two or three weeks, and he didn't know whether they were still alive. The fear that you can lose your family in an instant: he didn't want to feel that again, and he didn't want other people to feel that.

## What do you hope to achieve in the years ahead by campaigning for UNHCR?

**Melanie:** I'd like to see awareness and recognition spread in the Philippines about UNHCR and the issue of internally displaced persons.

**Oya:** Little by little, more and more people are becoming aware about displacement. What happens in war-torn or conflict areas is a reality. The first year of being a frontliner is always hard, but looking back, I've seen that things have started to change. People are starting to help more.



Photo credit: Elpidio Quirino Foundation.

## The Philippine and Asylum: A Historical Perspective

### The Nine Waves of Refugees

Last May 2015, 300 Rohingya boat people from Myanmar drifted afloat in sea after being pushed back in their attempts to seek refuge in neighboring shores. One country, however, expressed its willingness to take them in: the Philippines.



Photo credit: Elpidio Quirino Foundation.

The historical tradition of accepting refugees in the Philippines offers a new perspective on the progression of the country as country of asylum for refugees. It began at the end of World War I, with the first wave of 800 “White Russians” escaping persecution from supporters of the Socialist Revolution of 1917. Two hundred fifty (250) of them migrated to Mindanao to work in then-prospering abaca plantations. Eventually, the refugees were resettled in countries such as the United States or stayed in the Philippines.

This paved the way to the admittance of the second wave of refugees: European Jews escaping Nazi persecution in World War II. One thousand two hundred (1,200) Jewish refugees fled to the Philippines under the admittance of President Manuel L. Quezon and U.S. High Commissioner Paul V. McNutt in 1934. The second wave became the basis of President Quezon’s issuance of the Commonwealth Act 613, later The Philippine Immigration Act of 1940.

In 1939, Spanish Republicans fleeing Spanish Civil War entered as the third wave of refugees, benefiting from the Philippine government’s policy of absolute neutrality.

The succeeding year, Chinese immigrants sought refuge after the Chinese Civil War. Notably during this period, the Philippines gained full sovereignty and allowed the naturalization of Chinese immigrants. Philippine-born children of Chinese immigrants could now become full-fledged Filipino citizens with their parents’ naturalization.

Then came the “Tiempo Ruso” (“Time of the Russians”): a second wave of 6,000 White Russians welcomed under President Elpidio Quirino. It was an important act that called for a regime for the international protection of refugees. The White Russians who settled in the Tubabao Camp in Guiuan, Eastern Samar set a precedent for the amendment of the Displaced Persons Act of 1948. The Philippines stood out as the only nation who expressed willingness to accept them even while the young republic was still reeling from the havoc of war.

From 1975 to 1992, Vietnamese refugees fleeing the Vietnam War and reunification of the North and South made up the sixth wave, followed by a seventh wave in 1979 of Iranian refugees who were allowed to stay after the Iranian Revolution. The eighth wave covered 400,000 the Indo-Chinese refugees helped in transit through the Philippines from 1980 to 1994 after regime changes in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Finally, in 2000, a ninth wave of East Timorese people were given temporary protection during their country’s struggle for independence.



Photo credit: Elpidio Quirino Foundation.

This historical perspective opens up the gradual progress of the Philippines as an asylum for those who have been forced to flee their countries from war, conflict, and persecution, and presents the history of the Philippines’ goodwill towards asylum seekers.

UNHCR lauds the expression of the Government of the Philippines in continuing to uphold its commitment as signatory to the 1961 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol to extend humanitarian relief and succor to those seeking protection in its shores.



**Become a hope-giver**  
to families forced to flee.

[donate.unhcr.ph](https://donate.unhcr.ph)



**UNHCR**  
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**PHILIPPINES**

**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

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