

PHILIPPINES:

Displacement increases as Mindanao's peace process stumbles on

A profile of the internal displacement situation

19 August, 2008

This Internal Displacement Profile is automatically generated from the online IDP database of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). It includes an overview of the internal displacement situation in the country prepared by the IDMC, followed by a compilation of excerpts from relevant reports by a variety of different sources. All headlines as well as the bullet point summaries at the beginning of each chapter were added by the IDMC to facilitate navigation through the Profile. Where dates in brackets are added to headlines, they indicate the publication date of the most recent source used in the respective chapter. The views expressed in the reports compiled in this Profile are not necessarily shared by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. The Profile is also available online at www.internal-displacement.org.

About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, established in 1998 by the Norwegian Refugee Council, is the leading international body monitoring conflict-induced internal displacement worldwide.

Through its work, the Centre contributes to improving national and international capacities to protect and assist the millions of people around the globe who have been displaced within their own country as a result of conflicts or human rights violations.

At the request of the United Nations, the Geneva-based Centre runs an online database providing comprehensive information and analysis on internal displacement in some 50 countries.

Based on its monitoring and data collection activities, the Centre advocates for durable solutions to the plight of the internally displaced in line with international standards.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre also carries out training activities to enhance the capacity of local actors to respond to the needs of internally displaced people. In its work, the Centre cooperates with and provides support to local and national civil society initiatives.

For more information, visit the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre website and the database at www.internal-displacement.org.

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

Norwegian Refugee Council
Chemin de Balexert 7-9
1219 Geneva, Switzerland
Tel.: +41 22 799 07 00
idmc@nrc.ch

www.internal-displacement.org

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	3
OVERVIEW	9
DISPLACEMENT INCREASES AS MINDANAO'S PEACE PROCESS STUMBLES ON	9
CAUSES AND BACKGROUND	18
THE MINDANAO CONFLICT	18
BACKGROUND TO THE MORO STRUGGLE IN MINDANAO	18
THE MUSLIM NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT'S (MNLF)	19
THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT (MILF)	20
OTHER CAUSES OF CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT IN MINDANAO: BANDITRY, CLAN CONFLICT AND THE COMMUNIST INSURGENCY (OCTOBER 2007)	23
MINDANAO'S CONFLICT IS LARGELY CONCENTRATED IN RESSOURCE-RICH, UNDER-DEVELOPED, MUSLIM-POPULATED AREAS	25
MUSLIM AND INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS IN THE SOUTH REMAIN SOCIALLY, ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY MARGINALIZED AND SUFFER MOST FROM THE CONFLICT (MARCH 2008)	27
COMPETING CLAIMS OVER LAND IS ONE OF THE ROOT CAUSE AND TRIGGER OF CONFLICT IN MINDANAO (JANUARY 2007)	28
CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT IN MINDANAO (1996-2000)	31
NEARLY ONE MILLION PEOPLE DISPLACED BY GOVERNMENT'S WAR AGAINST THE MILF (2000)	32
GOVERNMENT'S MILITARY OPERATION AGAINST THE MILF DISPLACES SOME 400,000 PEOPLE IN 2003	33
TENS OF THOUSAND DISPLACED DUE TO MILF-GOVERNMENT FIGHTING IN 2007	35
FIGHTING BETWEEN ARMED FORCES AND MILF DISPLACED MORE THAN 250,000 PEOPLE IN 2008 (AUGUST 2008)	36
THE MINDANAO PEACE PROCESSES	38
PEACE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MORO REBELS (1970-2005)	38
GRP-MILF PEACE PROCESS (1997-2007)	40
MILF AND GOVERNMENT REACH AGREEMENT ON ANCESTRAL HOMELAND ISSUE, BUT DEAL IS PUT ON HOLD BY SUPREME COURT (AUGUST 2008)	46
THE COMMUNIST INSURGENCY	48
THE NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY (NPA), ARMED WING OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY (CPP)	48
GOVERNMENT-NPA CONFRONTATIONS ON THE INCREASE SINCE 2003 (JULY 2008)	52
OPLAN BANTAY LAYA II FAILURE CONTRIBUTED TO STOP OF PEACE TALKS AND TO BOLDER INSURGENCY MOVEMENTS (2008)	54
GRP REFUSES TO RESUME TALKS WITH CCP-NPA AND DECIDES TO STEP UP ARMED OFFENSIVE (JUNE 2008)	56
THE "WAR ON TERROR"	58

THE ABU SAYYAF GROUP (ASG) (MAY 2008)	58
THE ANTI-TERRORISM LAW (ATL) OR HUMAN SECURITY ACT (HAS) (OCTOBER 2007)	60
PHILIPPINE'S 'WAR ON TERROR' IN SULU CREATES LARGE-SCALE DISPLACEMENT (2005-2006)	62
SULU CLASHES BETWEEN ARMY, MNLF AND ASG DISPLACE UP TO 50,000 PEOPLE IN 2007 (DECEMBER 2007)	64
'WAR ON TERROR' IN SULU AND BASILAN RUNS THE RISK OF INFLAMMING THE CONFLICT (MAY 2008)	66
OTHER CAUSES OF DISPLACEMENT	71
MILITARY OPERATIONS, DISPLACEMENT, EVICTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (MARCH 2008)	71
NATURAL DISASTERS ARE THE MAIN CAUSE FOR DISPLACEMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES (JULY 2008)	74
<u>POPULATION FIGURES AND PROFILE</u>	78
GENERAL	78
NUMEROUS RELATIVELY SMALL-SCALE DISPLACEMENTS ADD UP QUICKLY, WHILE RESPONSE IS INSUFFICIENT (MARCH 2008)	78
THE MAJORITY OF THE DISPLACED ARE MUSLIM AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE (DECEMBER 2005)	78
GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS IN ARRM AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS (2003)	79
GLOBAL FIGURES	81
UP TO 300,000 PEOPLE COULD REMAIN DISPLACED IN THE PHILIPPINES (AUGUST 2008)	81
UP TO 300,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED BY CONFLICT IN 2008 (19 AUGUST 2008)	86
UP TO 170,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED BY CONFLICT IN 2007 (JANUARY 2008)	93
CLOSE TO 100,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED BY CONFLICT IN 2006	99
<u>PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT</u>	103
GENERAL	103
UP TO 80 PER CENT OF NORTH COTABATO'S DISPLACED SOUGHT REFUGE OUTSIDE EVACUATION CENTERS (AUGUST 2008)	103
MOST OF THE ESTIMATED 57,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED IN LANA DEL NORTE, SARANGANI AND SULTAN KUDARAT PROVINCES ARE HOSTED IN EVACUATION CENTERS (AUGUST 2008)	105
LENGTH AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF DISPLACEMENT VARY DEPENDING MAINLY ON TYPE OF ARMED CONFRONTATION CAUSING THE DISPLACEMENT (OCTOBER 2006)	106
'MOBILE' EVACUEES DO NOT TAKE REFUGE WITH FAMILY AND AVOID EVACUATION CENTERS (JANUARY 2007)	107
PATTERNS OF CONFLICT-INDUCED DISPLACEMENT AND COPING MECHANISMS (OCTOBER 2006)	108
PEOPLE FLEEING POLITICAL PERSECUTION AND COUNTER-INSURGENCY TACTICS ARE LARGELY INVISIBLE (OCTOBER 2006)	110
POLITICALLY PERSECUTED 'INVISIBLE' IDPs ARE MORE DIFFICULT TO ASSIST (OCTOBER 2006)	111
<u>PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT</u>	113

PHYSICAL SECURITY	113
FIGHTING BETWEEN MILF AND ARMY IN LANA DEL NORTE REPORTEDLY CLAIMS 21 CIVILIAN LIVES (AUGUST 2008)	113
INTENSE FIGHTING BETWEEN MILF REBEL AND GOVERNMENT FORCES IN NORTH COTABATO LEAVES SIX CIVILIANS DEAD AND MANY VILLAGES IN RUIN (AUGUST 2008)	113
MILITARY ACCUSED OF DISREGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS OF CIVILIANS IN SULU OFFENSIVE AGAINST ABU SAYAFF (JUNE 2008)	114
LANDMINES POSE A COMPARATIVELY MINOR THREAT TO THE POPULATION (JUNE 2008)	117
AFP'S COUNTER-INSURGENCY APPROACH TENDS TO DISREGARD ANY DISTINCTION BETWEEN COMBATTANTS AND CIVILIANS (JUNE 2008)	118
LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP ACCUSES ARMY OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN SURIGAO DEL SUR (NOVEMBER 2007)	119
MILF REBELS ACCUSE MILITARY OF ABUSE AGAINST 4 IDPs (FEBRUARY 2007)	121
MILF-AFP POSITIONAL WAR RESULTS IN LARGER CIVILIAN CASUALTIES AND DISPLACEMENT THAN NPA-AFP CONFRONTATIONS (OCTOBER 2006)	122
DURING 2006, MILITARY COUNTER-INSURGENCY OPERATIONS RESULTED IN HIGH NUMBER OF ABUSES IN AFFECTED COMMUNITIES (FEBRUARY 2007)	124
MALE YOUTH IN MINDANAO SEE THE PRESENCE OF GOVERNMENT FORCES AS A THREAT TO THEIR SAFETY (JULY 2006)	126
FIGHTING AND INSECURITY IN MINDANAO DISRUPT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LIFE AND THREATENS PEOPLE'S PHYSICAL SECURITY (JULY 2006)	127
FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT	128
MILITARY RESTRICT MOVEMENTS OF IDPs OUT OF EVACUATION CENTERS (OCTOBER 2006)	128
DISPLACED PEOPLE FORCED TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES (AUGUST 2005)	129
<u>SUBSISTENCE NEEDS</u>	132
GENERAL	132
IMPORTANT HUMANITARIAN NEEDS FOLLOWING THE DISPLACEMENT OF NEARLY 160,000 PEOPLE IN NORTH COTABATO (AUGUST 2008)	132
HUMANITARIAN NEEDS FOR THE DISPLACED IN MINDANAO'S REMOTE RURAL AREAS NOT ALWAYS COVERED (MARCH 2008)	133
BASILAN: NO IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE FOR DISPLACED FROM UNGKAYA PUKAN TOWN DUE TO BUREAUCRATIC HURDLES AND FINANCIAL LIMITS (AUGUST 2007)	134
CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT IN MINDANAO HAVE INCREASED THREAT TO HUMAN SECURITY: JNA STUDY (DECEMBER 2005)	135
DISPLACED WOMEN SEE BASIC NEEDS AND ACCESS TO LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES AS MOST PRESSING (OCTOBER 2006)	136
Food	137
INSUFFICIENT FOOD RATIONS FOR TENS OF THOUSANDS OF IDPs IN EVACUATION CENTERS (AUGUST 2008)	138
RISE IN FOOD PRICES CAUSE INCREASED MALNUTRITION IN ARMM (JUNE 2008)	138
BASILAN: UNASSISTED IDPs GO HUNGRY AS MILITARY WON'T ALLOW THEM TO GO BACK HOME YET (MAY 2008)	139
OVER ONE MILLION PEOPLE ON MINDANAO RECEIVE DAILY WFP AND NGO FOOD RATIONS IN A FIGHT OF ALARMINGLY HIGH MALNUTRITION DUE TO CONFLICT (APRIL 2008)	139
RIGHT TO FOOD VIOLATED IN CONFLICT AREAS (OCTOBER 2007)	141
THE 2007 OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE IN SULU PROVINCE MAKES TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE DEPEND ON FOOD AID (APRIL 2007)	142

HEALTH	143
CHILDREN AND ELDERLY'S PHYSICAL HEALTH AT RISK IN THE OVERCROWDED EVACUATION CENTERS (MARCH 2008)	143
GENERAL HEALTH CARE IS ALREADY STRETCHED, WITH VERY RESTRICTED ACCESS TO HEALTH IN POOR AND RURAL AREAS (NOVEMBER 2007)	147
SURIGAO DEL SUR EVACUEES FACE DISEASE OUTBREAK AS GOVERNMENT DOES NOT PROVIDE AID (NOVEMBER 2007)	147
THE RIGHT TO HEALTH IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS (OCTOBER 2007)	148
DISPLACED AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED CHILDREN BOTH AFFECTED BY PSYCHOSOCIAL PROBLEMS (MARCH 2007)	149
FORCED EVACUATIONS BEARS CONSIDERABLY ON WOMEN'S HEALTH (OCTOBER 2006)	152
WATER AND SANITATION	153
WATER AND SANITARY CONDITIONS IN EVACUATIONS CENTERS GROSSLY INADEQUATE (OCTOBER 2006)	153
HYGIENE PROBLEMS AND POOR SANITATION CITED AS MOST COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS LINKED TO DISPLACEMENT (JUNE 2004)	153
SHELTER & NON-FOOD ITEMS	154
IDPs IN AND OUTSIDE EVACUATION CENTERS LIVE IN UNSATISFACTORY MAKESHIFT STRUCTURES WITH LITTLE PROTECTION FROM THE ELEMENTS (AUGUST 2008)	154
IDPs REQUEST TO BE CONSULTED PRIOR TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SHELTER PROJECTS TO MAXIMISE CHANCES OF SUCCESS (DECEMBER 2005)	156
VULNERABLE GROUPS	157
CHILD RECRUITMENT INTO ARMED FORCES AND REBEL GROUPS (JUNE 2008)	157
CHILD RIGHTS GROUP IS ALARMED BY THE HIGH NUMBER OF CHILDREN AFFECTED BY WAR (MAY 2008)	159
UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORT ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT IN THE PHILIPPINES (APRIL 2008)	160
MANY CHILDREN JOIN THE MILF, NPA AND ABU SAYYAF GROUP, SOME REPORTEDLY VOLUNTARILY (MARCH 2008)	160
CHILDREN VICTIMS OF THE ARMED CONFLICT (DECEMBER 2007)	161
NEEDS OF MALE YOUTH ARE OFTEN FORGOTTEN (JULY 2006)	162
DISPLACED WOMEN ARE SPECIFICALLY AND ADVERSERLY AFFECTED BY ARMED CONFLICTS (OCTOBER 2006)	163
CHILDREN, WOMEN AND ELDERLY HARDEST-HIT BY DISPLACEMENT (DECEMBER 2005)	164
ACCESS TO EDUCATION	167
GENERAL	167
DRAFT PROPOSAL TO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AIMS AT IMPROVING SCHOOL SITUATION FOR DISPLACED CHILDREN (JUNE 2008)	167
DISPLACED CHILDREN'S EDUCATION IS DISRUPTED FOR A LONGER TIME THAN FOR CHILDREN WHO REMAIN IN THEIR COMMUNITY (OCTOBER 2006)	167
MORE THAN 4,400 ADDITIONAL CLASSROOMS NEEDED IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS (DECEMBER 2005)	170
OBSTACLES TO EDUCATION	171
IN NOVEMBER 2007, THE MILITARY OCCUPIES SCHOOLS IN SURIGAO DEL SUR (FEBRUARY 2008)	171
YOUTH IN MINDANAO IDENTIFY EDUCATION AS THEIR TOP PRIORITY AND CONFLICT & POVERTY AS THE MAIN BARRIERS TO SCHOOLING (JULY 2006)	172
WAR AND POVERTY ARE THE MAIN OBSTACLE TO EDUCATION (JULY 2006)	174

ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION **176****SELF-RELIANCE** **176**

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS MAKE RE-BUILDING A LIVELIHOOD ADDITIONALLY DIFFICULT (MARCH 2008) 176

VERY LOW DEVELOPMENT LEVEL IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS SUFFERING FROM ACCUMULATED EFFECTS OF CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT (OCTOBER 2006) 176

CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT HAS INCREASED POVERTY AND REDUCED LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES (JULY 2006) 180

DISPLACED WOMEN AND MEN FORCED TO ENGAGE IN IRREGULAR, LOW-PAID WORK TO MAKE ENDS MEET (OCTOBER 2006) 181

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION **182**

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS INTEND TO BOOST AWARENESS OF IDP RIGHTS (JANUARY 2008) 182

IDPS IN MINDANAO FORM EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY GROUPS TO PREVENT FIGHTING AND DISPLACEMENT (NOVEMBER 2007) 184

PROVIDING INFORMATION TO IDPS IS KEY TO THEIR EMPOWERMENT (MARCH 2007) 186

SULU GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION PROCEDURE FLAWED BECAUSE THOUSANDS OF IDPS WERE NOT ABLE TO VOTE, SAYS MNLF (MAY 2007) 187

IDPS HELP EACH OTHER WHERE NO HUMANITARIAN AID REACHES THEM (MARCH 2007) 188

ACCESS TO LAND **189**

PRESENCE OF ARMED GROUPS OR MILITARY LIMITS IDPS' ACCESS TO THEIR LANDS (AUGUST 2005) 189

MOST IDPS SURVEYED ACCESS AGRICULTURAL LAND THROUGH TENANT OR SHARECROPPING SITUATIONS (JUNE 2004) 190

ISSUES OF FAMILY UNITY, IDENTITY AND CULTURE **191****IDENTITY AND CULTURE** **191**

MILITARY OFFENSIVE DISRUPTS RAMADAN (OCTOBER 2007) 191

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION EDUCATION ARE IMPORTANT FACTORS TO RE-CREATE FUNCTIONING COMMUNITIES AFTER DISPLACEMENT (MARCH 2007) 191

MORO PEOPLE SURVEYED DESCRIBE AFP SOLDIERS AS SHOWING LITTLE RESPECT FOR THEIR CULTURE AND RELIGION (OCTOBER 2006) 192

DISPLACEMENT UNDERMINES SOCIAL TIES WITHIN A COMMUNITY (OCTOBER 2006) 193

FAMILY UNITY **193**

DISPLACED CHILDREN FACE THE RISK OF FAMILY-FRAGMENTATION DURING DISPLACEMENT (OCTOBER 2006) 193

PROPERTY ISSUES **195****GENERAL** **195**

DESTRUCTION OF CROPS, HOMES AND PROPERTY IS RECURRENT DURING FIGHTING AND DISPLACEMENT (AUGUST 2008) 195

LOW-INTENSITY FIGHTING IN NPA GUERRILLA FRONTS LEADS TO SMALLER-SCALE DESTRUCTION, ALTHOUGH PROPERTY AND LIVESTOCK OF IDPS IS OFTEN LOOTED (OCTOBER 2006) 197

GOVERNMENT AGREES TO AWARD REPARATIONS FOR THE PROPERTIES LOST OR DESTROYED BY REASONS OF THE CONFLICT (SEPTEMBER 2002) 199

PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT **200****GENERAL** **200**RETURN AND RECOVERY IN MORO AREAS COMPOUNDED BY WIDESPREAD SENSE OF
UNCERTAINTY AND HELPLESSNESS (OCTOBER 2006) 200**RETURN** **202**END OF FIGHTING ALLOWS THE GRADUAL RETURN OF NORTH COTABATO'S IDPs (AUGUST
2008) 202LUMAD FAMILIES IN SURIGAO DEL SUR, DISPLACED IN NOVEMBER 2007, RETURN TOWARDS
THE END OF THE YEAR (DECEMBER 2007) 204

SLOW RETURN OF IDPs IN SULU (MAY 2006) 204

POLICY **205**TRIPOLI PEACE AGREEMENT OF JUNE 2001 PROVIDES FOR THE RETURN OF EVACUEES AND
THEIR REHABILITATION (SEPTEMBER 2002) 205**OBSTACLES TO RETURN** **206**ABSENCE OF PEACE AND SECURITY IS OFTEN THE MAIN REASON FOR NOT RETURNING (MARCH
2007) 206MANY OF THE NORTH COTABATO DISPLACED ARE STILL TOO AFRAID TO RETURN HOMES
DESPITE THE END OF FIGHTING (AUGUST 2008) 208POVERTY AND LACK OF LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES SEEN AS THE MAIN OBSTACLE TO
SUSTAINED RETURNS (OCTOBER 2006) 208

LANDMINES AND UXOs IMPEDE RETURN OF DISPLACED (2006) 209

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS **211****GENERAL** **211**MONITORING OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IS DIFFICULT IN SOME INACCESSIBLE REBEL-HELD
PARTS OF THE PHILIPPINES (DECEMBER 2007) 211LACKING HUMANITARIAN AID FOR SULU POPULATION DUE TO FIGHTING AND POLITICS (MARCH
2007) 211INGO'S TENDENCY TO RELY ON MAINSTREAM IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS RUNS RISK OF BIASED
AID DISTRIBUTION (FEBRUARY 2007) 212PERSONAL SAFETY OF HUMANITARIAN WORKERS IN MINDANAO IS AT RISK (DECEMBER 2006)
214

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES **217****NATIONAL RESPONSE** **217**

NATIONAL RESPONSE 217

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE **219**

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE 219

REFERENCES TO THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT **222**KNOWN REFERENCES TO THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT AS OF
DECEMBER 2006 222

LIST OF SOURCES USED **226**

OVERVIEW

Displacement increases as Mindanao's peace process stumbles on

Executive summary

Fighting and displacement in the Philippines have increased in the past two years. From less than 100,000 in 2006, the number of people displaced by conflict reached 170,000 in 2007 and has exceeded 290,000 during 2008. Most are in the southern region of Mindanao, where the government has been fighting secessionist Moro (Muslim) rebel groups for the past 30 years. Although hopes of an imminent formal peace agreement were raised in July 2008 as the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) reached a consensus on the issue of Moro territory, strong opposition to the deal by Christian groups and growing Moro frustration led to intense fighting in early August in North Cotabato Province, resulting in the displacement of more than 160,000 people. Further violence, affecting mainly Lanao del Norte, forced an additional 60,000 people to leave their homes in Mindanao in mid-August.

The government's "war on terror" against groups and people suspected of links with the al-Qaeda network is another important cause of displacement, mainly in the south-western Provinces of Sulu and Basilan, stronghold of the Abu Sayaff Group (ASG) and also of the second-largest Moro rebel group, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). At the same time, government efforts to root out the communist rebels, the New People's Army (NPA) has led to an increase in confrontations and in extrajudicial killings of leftist leaders over the past years. Military-NPA confrontations continued to displace people all over the country during 2007 and 2008. A peace agreement with the NPA remains elusive.

The displaced often live in inadequate evacuation centres or with relatives. While many are able to return home quickly, a consistent group of several hundreds of thousands of people remains displaced without sufficient access to clean water, food or education and job opportunities. The continuing conflict in Mindanao contributes to its continuing status as the poorest region in the Philippines. Increased food prices and the impact of Typhoon Frank in June 2008 have only made matters worse for Mindanao's poor.

National and international agencies continue to have difficulties in their humanitarian response, due to financial constraints, coordination problems, and insecurity on the ground. Increased international interest in human rights violations in general, and the fate of the displaced in particular, would be necessary in improving the human rights situation in the Philippines. Greater engagement in the peace process would contribute to putting an end to the cycle of violence and displacement.

Background and causes of displacement

Conflict-induced displacement in nearly all regions of the Philippines has affected several million people over the last decades, mainly in the southern island group of Mindanao. In the past years, people have fled from both small-scale confrontations between the army and the communist rebels of the New People's Army (NPA) and heavy fighting between the army and Muslim (or "Moro") separatist rebels in Mindanao since the 1970s. Since September 2001, the government has also conducted its own "war on terror" against the Abu Sayyaf Group. Counter-terrorist military operations in Basilan and Sulu Provinces, sometimes also involving Moro rebels, have resulted in the displacement of several hundred thousand people.

The conflict in Mindanao is rooted in the underdevelopment of the region, the unequal distribution of wealth both within the region itself and between Mindanao and other regions, and the lack of government efforts to integrate the Muslim minority into the political and institutional fabric of the overwhelmingly Catholic country. The establishment of ARMM provided the Muslims of Mindanao with some degree of autonomy and raised hopes of social and economic development, but eighteen years later, all six ARMM provinces are still the poorest in the country. While the Muslims blame the government for not providing development support and failing to implement the 1996 MNLF-government peace agreement, the government points to conflict and insecurity as the main cause for the region's underdevelopment (GRP, 29 July 2008).

In addition to fighting between the government and rebel groups, widespread banditry and clan disputes have also caused displacement, mainly in Mindanao. Some disputes have degenerated into wider armed incidents involving militia, the army and Moro groups.

Land issues are also an important source of conflict between the government and indigenous and Moro communities. During the nineteenth century, the government encouraged the migration of Christian settlers from the north to the predominantly Muslim south, thereby pushing many Muslims and indigenous people off their land. As a result there are still conflicting claims over land between Muslims and indigenous people, who traditionally own land on a communal basis, and the government, which upholds the property claims of settlers. The 1997 Indigenous Peoples Right Act (IPRI) included measures to help indigenous groups secure tenure over traditional ancestral land, but communities have been frustrated by the slow pace at which the government has responded to their land tenure requests. As of 2008, it is estimated that land titling certificates distributed so far only covered one per cent of the entire claimed ancestral indigenous domain (Mindanews, 25 July 2008).

Meanwhile, the government has promoted development projects in Mindanao such as mining and dams, most of which operate in territories claimed by the indigenous people. These projects are often accompanied by military or paramilitary support to secure the sites and deter opposition (IPRM, April 2008, p.6). Indigenous areas have also been reportedly subjected to sweeping military operations which have officially targeted rebel groups, but have ended up clearing the way for development projects, sometimes through the forced displacement of indigenous people (CHR, 5 March 2003, p.17; Pinoy Press, 24 December 2007). In February 2008, the government decided to secure development projects against attacks by various insurgency groups by creating the Investment Defense Forces, a military unit tasked with the safeguarding of vital infrastructure such as power facilities but also the protection of foreign investment such as large-scale mining projects.

Development projects across the country and so-called "beautification projects" in urban areas further displace hundreds of thousands each year. Worldwide, the Philippine government ranks among the top violators of housing rights (COHRE, November 2007; COHRE, 5 December 2006). In addition, the Philippines is one of the most natural-disaster-prone countries in the world, with hundreds of thousands of people displaced each year due to floods, storms or volcano eruptions.

Status of the conflicts and new displacements

It is estimated that over two million people have been displaced by armed conflict in the country since 2000, the majority forced to flee fighting between the government and the MILF in Mindanao. However, sporadic clashes and ongoing displacements and return movements make it difficult to confirm displacement figures, particularly in Mindanao's provinces where access is limited (Bantay Ceasefire, 29 January 2007; IRIN, 18 March 2008). Fighting and displacement have increased in the past two years.

Source: compiled by IDMC from various sources, including government and media reports

So far in 2008, more than 290,000 people have been reported displaced by armed conflict. During 2007, a total of 170,000 people were displaced. It is unknown how many of these managed to return in the following days or weeks, although it is believed that only a minority remained displaced for long periods. Most people displaced in the past couple of years fled the Muslim-populated areas of the ARMM region, including Maguindanao, Sulu and Basilan and Provinces. The August 2008 fighting which triggered massive displacements affected mainly North Cotabato and Lanao del Norte provinces.

Moro rebels: MNLF and MILF

At present, there are two main Moro rebel groups in the south of the Philippines: the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which was the first Moro armed separatist group, founded in 1971, and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a more pronouncedly religious splinter group formed in 1984 by former MNLF fighters (USIP, 31 January 2005, p.5). In 2000 the government's "all-out war" against the MILF resulted in the displacement of up to one million people in Mindanao; the next year both parties signed the Tripoli Agreement, under which the return of the people displaced would be supported by rehabilitation programmes and compensation for lost or destroyed properties. Although the majority did return home in the following months and some level of assistance was provided, most of the rehabilitation efforts were wasted as conflict resumed in the same areas in 2003, again forcing hundreds of thousands of people into displacement. A ceasefire agreement in July 2003 allowed for the return of most of the people displaced, although conditions were often not conducive to sustainable reintegration.

Between 2003 and 2007, dialogue and confidence-building measures prevented the continuing sporadic skirmishes and army operations against criminal gangs from turning into large-scale confrontations involving the MILF. A Malaysian-led International Monitoring Team (IMT) also helped maintain the ceasefire from October 2004. Nevertheless, these regular armed encounters between the army and its paramilitary allies and the MILF continued to displace tens of thousands of people each year.

Since 2007, armed encounters have increased, causing the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, mainly in North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Basilan and Lanao del Norte provinces. In Midsayap, North Cotabato Province, some 25,000 people fled intermittent clashes between MILF rebels and government forces between January and March 2007 (Bantay ceasefire, 4 April 2007, p.1). In Basilan, fighting between the army and the MILF led to the displacement of over 24,000 people between July and September 2007 (Davao Today, 18 October 2007). In Datu Piang, Maguindanao Province, clan fighting broke out in December 2007 alongside conflict between the MILF and the army. By June 2008, a total of almost 45,000 people had been displaced, most of them in January. In what is already the largest single displacement incident in the past years, an estimated 160,000 people have fled their homes in several municipalities of North Cotabato Province following clashes between the army and MILF rebels frustrated over the stalled territorial deal with the government (Reuters, 11 August 2008, NDCC, 13 August 2008). Further violence spreading to various provinces in Mindanao in mid-August, but affecting mainly Lanao del Norte displaced an estimated 60,000 people (NDCC, 19 August 2008, ABC, 18 August 2008).

Since 2006, peace negotiations have stalled. The IMT monitors started to withdraw in May 2008, a move followed a few weeks later by increased fighting, particularly in North Cotabato Province (COE-DMHA, July 2008; DPA, 2 July 2008; Reuters, 9 July 2008). At the end of July, the government and the MILF announced a major breakthrough in the peace talks with a compromise

reached on the issue of the Moro homeland (Reuters, 27 July 2008). A plebiscite would be held in more than 700 villages in Mindanao in 2009 to ask them to join the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The deal, which would represent a major step towards the finalization of the peace agreement, has drawn strong opposition from Mindanao Christians and was put temporarily on hold by the Supreme Court pending a review of its constitutional validity.

The “war on terror” in Sulu and Basilan

Since 2001, the army, supported by the United States, has carried out several large-scale operations in the south-western island provinces of Sulu and Basilan against the Abu Sayaff Group (ASG), a guerilla organisation known for kidnapping and extortion and listed by the United States as a member of the al-Qaeda network. Over the years, these operations have resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people in both provinces. During 2007 and 2008, anti-terror operations in Sulu and Basilan continued to displace thousands of people; in June 2008, 4,000 were displaced in Basilan (NDCC, 6 June 2008), while a similar operation in Indanan, Sulu Province displaced more than 500 families.

Carried out in the framework of the US-led global “war on terror”, these military operations are met with scepticism by many Moro civil society groups who see them as a pretext for continued warfare against the Muslim population (Mindanews, 6 August 2006; Davao Today, 9 September 2006). Indeed, while most military operations in Sulu and Basilan have been justified by the government as anti-ASG, they have at times also targeted the MILF and the MNLF, who they have accused of harbouring or colluding with ASG militants.

In Basilan, the ASG, the MILF and the MNLF all have a strong presence, with clan and family structures often intertwined between the three groups. Security forces looking for ASG militants therefore also run the risk of penetrating MNLF or MILF territory and starting up armed hostilities degenerating into wider confrontations. In July 2007, armed skirmishes between MILF militants and security forces in search of ASG members triggered a two-month conflict which forced 24,000 people from their homes (AFP, 23 August 2007).

In Sulu, MNLF’s historical stronghold, military operations against the ASG have often crossed into MNLF territory and dragged their militants into open conflict with the army. In February 2005, fighting triggered by the killing of a local family in the course of an operation against ASG members resulted in the displacement of up to 85,000 people (ABS-CBN, 27 April 2007). Between April and May 2007, conflict between the MNLF and the army resumed, forcing an estimated 80,000 people to leave their homes.

The communist rebels of the NPA

The New People’s Army (NPA) communist rebel group is active in almost all provinces of the country, and armed encounters between the army and the NPA have been on the increase in recent years since the government switched its military focus from the MILF to the NPA. In 2002, the government launched a five-year national counter-insurgency plan “Oplan Bantay Laya” (OBL), which was extended five years later as OBL II, to crush the NPA by the end of President Arroyo’s term in 2010. In March 2008, President Arroyo decided to increase military spending in the fight against the NPA (UPI Asia, 27 March 2008). OBL priority regions particularly affected by the counter-insurgency activities include Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Bicol, Eastern Visayas and Northern Mindanao (Karapatan, January 2008, p.1).

Thousands of people were displaced by armed clashes between the government and the NPA during 2007 and 2008. Indigenous populations were displaced in Surigao del Sur Province in

November and December 2007, and in Davao del Norte and Compostela Valley Provinces in the first half of 2008. In comparison with clashes between the government and Muslim rebel groups, in particular the MILF, confrontations between the army and the NPA have tended to result in more regular but also more limited displacement. Armed encounters between the NPA rebels and government forces generally take place at some distance from villages.

Protection of the civilian population

Counter-insurgency and anti-terror military operations causing large population movements are often accompanied by reports of widespread human right abuses against civilians suspected of supporting rebel groups or “terrorist” groups (Mindanaw Martus Community, 11 March 2008; Karapatan, January 2008, p.2; Kawagib, 15 December 2007; Consuelo Foundation, October 2007, p.16). Visiting the country in February 2007, the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions called on the government to do more to ensure a clear distinction between civilians and members of rebel groups in its counter-insurgency campaign. The army’s “guilt by association” tactics, where civilians suspected of associating with rebel groups were considered as legitimate targets, were seen as having been responsible for a large number of civilian casualties in the past years (UNHRC, 16 April 2008).

In 2007, the Congress enacted the anti-terror Human Security Act. Moro civil society groups expressed concerns that the Act would further curtail civil and political rights in Mindanao while also playing a dangerous inflammatory role by supporting a repressive military approach to solve the Mindanao conflict (Mindanews, 10 October 2007; Davao Today, 11 February 2007).

Heavy-handed operations, including aerial bombardments and the use of heavy artillery by the army have regularly put civilian’s lives at risk. In February 2008, seven civilians including two children and a pregnant woman were killed by government security forces in Sulu during an attack on a village suspected of hosting ASG members (ICG, 14 May 2008, p.18). In June 2008, during a military operation aimed at ASG militants the army is reported to have fired howitzer cannons into a civilian community in Indanan, Sulu, wounding four civilians, destroying the villagers’ farms and causing the displacement of more than 500 families (Bulatlat, 28 June 2008, MPW, 19 June 2008).

Armed confrontations between the MILF rebels and the government have tended to be of a conventional positional type which repeatedly affects the same communities. The fighting often takes place within the villages themselves, resulting in the destruction of houses and property and the displacement of villagers to safer areas. At risk of harassment and abuses by the military during counter-insurgency operations, civilians also risk getting killed when caught in the crossfire. The major military operation launched by the army in August 2008 to flush out MILF rebels who had forcibly occupied a number of Christian villages in North Cotabato reportedly resulted in the death of six civilians despite the fact that most villagers had managed to evacuate to safer areas ahead of the military operation (Reuters, 14 August 2008). Muslim rebels were accused of the death of an old villager and his wife in Pikit town as well as of the looting and burning of up to 80 houses (The Inquirer, 13 August 2008).

Clashes between government forces and NPA rebels have often led to serious protection concerns for the displaced population and other civilians suspected of supporting the NPA. Indeed, during its counter-insurgency operations, the army has frequently committed human rights violations against people suspected of supporting the insurgents, and failed to distinguish between combatants and civilians. (UNICEF, October 2006, pp. 35-36).

Living conditions of IDPs in Mindanao

In addition to threats to their physical security, most people living in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao – especially in ARMM – experience constant economic and social insecurity. Living in provinces ranking lowest in terms of human and economic development, people at risk of displacement tend to belong to the poorest strata of society.

The length of displacement can vary considerably from a few days to several years. While most people displaced return home in the aftermath of the fighting, many are unable to do so because their houses and livelihoods have been destroyed or because of continued military presence in or around their villages. With returns often offset by new displacements, tens of thousands of people are seeking emergency shelter at any one time with relatives or in evacuation centres, often public buildings. They have ended up in hastily established, often overcrowded camps, without sufficient access to clean water, sanitation or education opportunities. Many of the civilians who fled the August 2008 fighting in North Cotabato and who had no friends or relatives to go to took refuge in nearby schools or churches. Others simply stayed along the roads waiting for fighting to stop (Mindanews, 12 August 2008). Conditions in many of the 43 evacuation sites were described as inadequate with insufficient food and medicines (AFP, 12 August 2008).

Though intended as temporary shelters, these centres have sometimes become a home for months or years. People's health problems and the psychological effects of the flight and the violence witnessed have gone largely unattended. The economic consequences of displacement have also extended to farmers' and fishermen's lost livelihoods, with curfews imposed on conflict areas often hindering displaced farmers from returning to their fields during the day.

The recurrent fighting and displacement in Mindanao has overstretched the capacities and financial means of regional, provincial and municipal authorities (IRIN, 31 March 2008). International assistance has significantly diminished since 2003, leaving most relief work to the government and national NGOs. The result is that many displaced people have not received the assistance they need (The Inquirer, 31 May 2008). The conflict situation has further limited humanitarian access; a UN travel ban for Sulu and Basilan Provinces has been in place intermittently for several years, limiting the access of humanitarian organisations to displaced populations. Since March 2008, travel for the UN has again been restricted. In 2007, WFP was only allowed to deliver food to Sulu IDPs for a limited time.

Reintegration and development assistance for sustainable return

The return home of displaced people has often not marked the end of displacement. Many of those who managed to return have been unable to recover economically or socially from their displacement and remain in situations akin to displacement with acute assistance and rehabilitation needs. Reintegration remains elusive for many impoverished returnees in Mindanao. Recurring fighting undermines any reintegration and development efforts, and the problem is further exacerbated by great poverty and lack of livelihood opportunities.

As food prices rose in the course of 2007 and 2008, so did the number of people dependent on food aid from WFP, particularly in the ARMM region. In 2007, WFP provided monthly food aid to over one million people in Mindanao alone (AFP, 1 April 2008). In July 2008, WFP decided to expand its food programme to a further 500,000 people (AFP, 18 July 2008). Mindanao, and particularly ARMM, is the area suffering most from high food prices and food shortages (IRIN, 9 June 2008). In July 2008, Cotabato City and other parts of Mindanao Region were also suffering from severe flooding in the aftermath of Typhoon Frank, which hit the Philippines on 22 June 2008.

Literacy and school enrolment rates in the ARMM are significantly lower than the national average, and drop-out rates are high, as children's education has consistently been interrupted by the fighting (WB, July 2006, p.4). For many impoverished IDPs and returnees, education has become unaffordable. Without prospects, some children appear to have voluntarily joined rebel groups. Practically all armed groups involved in the conflict, including government-linked paramilitary groups, have on occasion recruited children (UNSC, 24 April 2008; UN CRC, 6 June 2008). A country-wide task force on monitoring and reporting on child recruitment was set up in 2007, comprising national and international agencies and NGOs, but as of April 2008, it was still in the process of creating a work plan (UNSG, 24 April 2008).

The effectiveness of return and reintegration assistance will clearly depend on improved political stability and security. While the first phase of the multi-donor Mindanao Trust Fund (MTF), a development and reconstruction programme for Mindanao's conflict-affected regions, was launched in 2006, its full implementation and the disbursement of grants to finance development and rehabilitation projects await a formal peace agreement with the MILF.

National response

The attitude of the government towards the problem of internal displacement is two-sided. On the one hand, it is by far the main agent of forced displacement, through military and security operations against rebel groups and their suspected sympathisers, and also through economically-motivated forced evictions. On the other hand, the national authorities do generally acknowledge that, as a consequence of their military activities at least, people are forced from their homes and need protection and assistance. National, provincial and local bodies coordinate humanitarian assistance. There are, however, no consistent long-term reintegration strategy or nationwide institutional structures which could give shape to a coherent IDP strategy and implement IDP policies and laws (PCHR, 2006, p.16).

Attempts to enact IDP legislation remain stalled. Following a 2005 National Multi-Stakeholders Forum on IDPs, the "Internal Displacement Bill" was presented to the Philippines Congress in 2006, and filed before the Senate in August 2007. The Bill comprehensively addresses the needs and rights of IDPs in the different phases of displacement. As of June 2008, it was pending before the Senate Committees on Justice and Human Rights; Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development and Finance.

Lack of coordination and funds has regularly led to response gaps. Much emergency response has traditionally been carried out by local NGOs, volunteers and other civil society representatives, including IDP themselves. With the partial disengagement of the international community after 2003, local coordination processes, both in assistance and human rights advocacy for the displaced, became less effective. However the marked increase in political and military tensions during 2007 reactivated coordination and human rights advocacy efforts among the national and international aid communities (IRIN, 28 January 2008).

International response

Having drastically reduced its presence in the south a couple of years after the 2003 conflict outbreak, the international community appears to be stepping up its activities again. ICRC increased its presence in the Philippines in 2006, to better assist the people displaced by conflict and to facilitate access to Muslim communities in Sulu and Basilan Provinces where recurring displacement is common (ICRC, 13 September 2007). WFP has stepped up its food aid, partially in reaction to rising food prices and is now planning to provide food to 1.5 million people living in

conflict-affected areas in Mindanao, including a large number of IDPs (IRIN, 18 March 2008; AFP, 18 July 2008).

Between 2004 and 2006, an UNDP-EU funded programme aimed at addressing the relief and rehabilitation needs of IDPs was implemented in Mindanao, providing assistance to more than 26,000 families (UNDP, 13 February 2006). As of June 2008, a second phase of the programme was being negotiated between UNDP and the EU, with a focus on strengthening the capacities of local bodies (Local Government Units, Civil Society Organisations, community organisations) to respond effectively to displacement (UNDP, email, 26 June 2008).

Overall, the response of the international community remains largely focused on the development and rehabilitation needs of the displaced as a vulnerable group within a larger target population in Mindanao's conflict-affected areas. In the wake of the 1996 government-MNLF peace agreement, the international community, through the UN, established a multi-donor programme (MDP) to assist with development, peace-building and humanitarian relief for the conflict-affected civilian population. The fourth phase of the MDP, the UN's ACT for Peace (Action for Conflict Transformation for Peace) Programme is being implemented by the government and the ARMM regional government in 20 provinces and 14 cities. With funding from Australia, New Zealand and Spain, ACT for Peace will run to 2010.

Spearheaded by the World Bank, the multi-donor Mindanao Trust Fund (MTF) was established in July 2005, at the request of the government. The MTF funds conflict-affected areas based on inputs from a 2004 needs assessment which estimated the cost of needed reconstruction and development at more than \$400 million (GoP, International Funding Agencies, Mindanao Stakeholders, December 2005, p.xiv). While the first phase of the MTF, focused on building the capacity of the implementing agencies, started in 2006, the full implementation phase will only take place under the condition that a formal peace agreement be reached with the MILF (WB, January 2008).

Working closely with the government, UN agencies, donors and most international NGOs have agreed that the development approach should be prioritised and prefer not to engage the government on sensitive human rights issues (JHA, February 2007, pp.22-24). The "war on terror", waged by the government with the active support of the United States and the political backing of some main donors including Japan and Australia, has also helped shape agendas.

There are indications, however, that this could be changing. Following the July 2007 fighting in Basilan, several donors publicly expressed concern regarding the military offensive, warning the Philippine government that an escalation of violence could curtail ongoing programmes and jeopardise the gains of the peace process (DPA, 26 July 2007). Recent UN reports have shed light on conflict-related human rights violations, including the UN report on extrajudicial killings, the final considerations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the UNSC report on children and armed conflict in the Philippines (UN, 21 February 2007; UNSC, 24 April 2008; UNCRC, 6 June 2008). In his report, the UN rapporteur on extrajudicial killings attributed most of the upsurge in political killings to the army. He urged the government to eliminate extrajudicial killings from its counter-insurgency campaign and establish a mechanism to monitor human rights abuses within the framework of the government-MILF peace process (UNHRC, 16 April 2008, p.25). These reports and their recommendations must be followed by concrete action if the displaced and returnees are to receive assistance and protection.

Hopes raised by the significant progress made during mid-2008 in the peace talks between the government and the MILF, which led to an agreement on the crucial issue of "ancestral domain", were short-lived as frustrations over delays to the deal quickly turned into violence in North Cotabato. With violence now threatening to spread, prospects of an imminent final peace deal are waning. The rapid deterioration of the situation is raising concerns of a possible larger military

confrontation which would throw Mindanao's civilians into yet another cycle of war and displacement. More than ever, the international community must step in and help put an end to the fighting before the gains of the peace process made in recent years are lost.

While priority must be given to the peaceful resolution of conflicts between the government and the various rebel groups, the human rights of all Philippine civilians need to be better safeguarded and the government must become more accountable for past violations of those rights. The “war on terror” must not be an excuse for curtailing fundamental civil and personal liberties, nor serve as a repressive tool against ethnic or religious minorities.

While enabling effective humanitarian interventions, the government and the international aid community must ensure that genuine long-term efforts to tackle widespread under-development and poverty support rather than undermine those rights.

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND

The Mindanao conflict

Background to the Moro struggle in Mindanao

- Spanish control came quite late and remained tenuous in southwestern and western Mindanao.
- Mass migration of Christian settlers during 1950s and 1960s altered the demographic balance to the detriment of the Muslims or 'Moros'.
- During the early 1970s, the secessionist MNLF started waging war against the government in the Sulu archipelago.
- An agreement was reached in Tripoli in 1976, but its contested implementation led to the emergence of other armed groups (MILF).
- The 1996 agreement signed between MNLF and government allowed for the implementation of limited autonomy in the Muslim-populated provinces of Mindanao, but has failed to satisfy popular expectations.
- MILF has drawn on these frustrations and has continued the armed struggle against the government.

East-West Center Washington, 2005, p. 63

"The Philippines traces its unique status as Asia's sole Christian-majority state to more than three centuries of Spanish colonial rule (1565–1898). Ninety percent of the country's 82 million people profess Christianity today, but in the southwestern provinces of the Sulu archipelago and western Mindanao, where Spanish control came late and remained tenuous, indigenous state formation proceeded much further than anywhere else in the country, undergirding a tradition of resistance to alien rule. Muslim sultanates in Sulu (from about 1450), Cotabato (c.1515) and Lanao (c.1600) retained varying degrees of independence well into the nineteenth century, only becoming fully incorporated into the Philippines under the aegis of American colonialism (1898–1946), and giving rise to a transcendent, multi-tribal "Moro" identity. In the final decades of U.S. rule, and accelerating through the 1950s and 1960s, mass migration from the Christian North to the Mindanao frontier fundamentally altered the demographic balance in the South, today leaving Muslim majorities in only five of the region's twenty-five provinces. This shift coincided with a revival of Islamic consciousness beginning in the 1950s.

Intensifying electoral competition in the newly vote-rich South between 1967–71, combined with proliferating land disputes and armed militias, led to a spiral of sectarian polarization. Beginning in Cotabato province, at the forefront of postwar Christian in-migration, in early 1970, militia skirmishes spread rapidly to Lanao in 1971 and Zamboanga in early 1972. President Ferdinand Marcos, facing the end of his final term in office, cited this disorder in imposing martial law on the country in September 1972 and overthrowing the constitutional system. By December, the armed forces were locked in full-scale civil war with the secessionist Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) on the island of Jolo, and by early 1973, mainland Mindanao was also at war. The intercession of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, lead by Libya, helped bring about a cease-fire and autonomy agreement in Tripoli in December 1976, but the subsequent splintering of the MNLF into a number of contending factions, and disputes over Tripoli's implementation, have continued to draw the conflict out. To date, possibly 120,000 have died in the fighting, and millions have been displaced.

A "final" autonomy agreement mediated by Jakarta in 1996 now embraces all five Muslim-majority provinces, but has failed to satisfy popular expectations, or the demands of three main armed factions. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which broke away from the MNLF after Tripoli, commands widespread support among Maguindanao and Maranao Muslims in the Cotabato and Lanao regions, and is engaged in a fragile peace process supported by Malaysia and the United States. An MNLF faction lead by imprisoned founding chairman Nur Misuari is strongest in Sulu. The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), centered on the Sulu and Basilan islands, is far smaller, but highly mobile, and draws on kinship ties with MNLF and MILF members to seek refuge from government forces. At other times ASG and government elements may act in collusion. Further complicating this volatile situation are transnational terrorist networks linked to Jemaah Islamiyah and al-Qaeda, which view the Southern Philippines as a key front in their wider regional and global jihad."

The Muslim National Liberation Front's (MNLF)

- MNLF stronghold is Sulu province.
- Despite a peace agreement which created the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, some MNLF elements become increasingly radicalized, with a danger of the armed struggle picking up again.
- There are relationships between MNLF and the ASG.

ICG, 14 May 2008, pp.6-7:

"The MNLF (Muslim National Liberation Front) is an often forgotten element in the terror-insurgency relationship. A "final" peace agreement signed with the government of President Fidel Ramos in 1996 seemed to end its rebellion. But the so-called Jakarta agreement did not require the disarmament of its armed wing, the Bangsa Moro Army (BMA), and only 7,500 of an estimated 45,000 fighters were integrated into the armed forces and police. While most MNLF veterans on mainland Mindanao melted back into civil society, or realigned themselves with the MILF, those in the Sulu archipelago retained their separate identity as an armed force. On Jolo and Basilan, their ethno-linguistic and kinship ties with the ASG eventually drew them back into the conflict.

On 23 April 2000, the ASG seized a group of tourists in a raid on the Malaysian resort island of Sipadan, just south of Sulu. This was followed a year later by another high-profile abduction of tourists from Dos Palmas beach resort on Palawan. The abductions led to the escalation of the military campaign against the ASG in Sulu and created a dilemma for the MNLF: remain scattered in civilian communities across Sulu, or consolidate forces in clearly demarcated camps. The first would allow fighters to defend kith and kin against military depredations but risk their being caught up in anti-ASG sweeps. The second would create a clear line between ASG and MNLF but leave civilians defenceless. BMA fighters in camps could also be tempting targets for both sides. The ASG could try to pull the MNLF back into combat, and some elements of the military could see any insurgent base as a threat. Resolving that dilemma was further complicated by MNLF chairman Nur Misuari's waning authority, as his first term as regional governor, a position he secured as an informal corollary to the 1996 agreement, came to an end. In February 2001, the Philippines Congress finally passed legislation implementing the second phase of the agreement, involving new elections and an expanded ARMM.

Misuari opposed the terms, and rival candidates for Manila's imprimatur as new ARMM governor began manoeuvring against him. In April 2001 they announced an Executive Council of Fifteen (EC-15) had assumed control of the MNLF – and it was promptly recognised by the government.

To ensure his continued authority over BMA forces in Sulu, Misuari formed the Jabal Uhud Islamic Task Force, circumventing the MNLF chief of staff, Yusop Jikiri – then a member of the EC-15 and Manila's choice to become governor of Sulu. Misuari loyalist Habier Malik became Task Force commander, and the MNLF's de facto headquarters shifted to Malik's camp in Bitanag, Panamao on Jolo. Misuari's message to the MNLF was unmistakable: do not betray your leader's command for the material rewards of political office.

Following the ransoming of most of the Sipadan hostages, the administration of President Joseph Estrada, fresh from its victory over the MILF at Camp Abubakar in July 2000, launched a major offensive, Oplan Sultan, on Jolo on 16 September 2000. Civilians endured the most brutal campaign since Ferdinand Marcos's martial law, as swathes of the municipalities of Patikul, Talipao and Maimbung were virtually depopulated in the search for ASG. The MNLF lodged official complaints through a Joint Monitoring Committee – which deployed Indonesian military observers during phase one of the Jakarta agreement – but for more than a year did not strike back at the AFP. That changed after an assault on a camp under Malik's command in Tiis, Talipao, on 19 October 2001. Seven MNLF men were killed, including several sons of local commanders Ustadz Mahmud and Unding Amang. The latter, brother of MNLF Sulu State Congress chairman Dawud Amang, called for retaliation against the AFP's Camp Bautista. Exactly a month later, Misuari supporters stormed 104th Army Brigade headquarters in Jolo, killing eighteen soldiers, including a colonel. The AFP bombarded the home of Misuari's in-laws the same day, and he fled to Malaysia.

The MNLF on Jolo has inhabited a no-man's-land ever since. Rather than acknowledge the breakdown of the Jakarta agreement, the government maintains the pretence that unintegrated BMA fighters are a fringe "renegade" group and a law-and-order issue. After Malaysia deported him in January 2002, Misuari remained in detention until April 2008. Manila meanwhile deals with co-opted rival leaders who command no significant armed following and are not recognized by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the peace process broker. An OIC representative visited Jolo in May 2006 and called for renewed "tripartite" consultations (government-MNLF-OIC) in Jeddah over the 1996 agreement. Manila repeatedly reneged on the meeting, only carrying through in November 2007 after in effect barring Misuari from taking part.

The Jeddah meeting established five Joint Working Groups (on Sharia law, education, political representation, a regional security force and the economy and natural resources) to review the agreement's implementation. Further meetings were held in Manila and Istanbul in January and February 2008.

Despite his prolonged incarceration, Misuari has urged supporters to cooperate with Balikatan and resist the tendency for ASG and MNLF fighters to close ranks in the face of the Philippines military's pressure and strong kinship ties. MNLF forces, and most of the population, have completely abandoned interior villages of Patikul – the movement's spiritual home – to avoid being identified as ASG in what has essentially become a free-fire zone. Misuari reassigned Tahil Sali – the MNLF vice-chairman on Sulu and so-called legendary commander Usman Sali – from Patikuto Camp Marang in order to distance him from ASG leader Radullan Sahiron, his relative. Yet, informal ceasefire mechanisms in Sulu have proven too weak to withstand the drift toward MNLF-ASG coalescence."

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)

- Following the Jabitah Massacre of 1968 where around 28 Tausug youth were killed, 13 ethnolinguistic Islamized tribes eventually came together into the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in 1969.
- The MNLF began as an armed revolutionary movement of the Moro people espousing the right to self-determination and, in particular, struggling against the Philippine Republic and for the creation of an independent Bangsamoro homeland.
- The MNLF entered into the Tripoli Agreement with the Philippine government in 1976 under the prodding of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC). This sparked a rift in the Moro leadership and led to the formation of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 1984, which built its armed camps and communities in mainland Mindanao.
- The MILF particularly distinguished itself from the secular MNLF, under its chairman Misuari, by pushing the Islamic character of the Moro struggle for a Bangsamoro homeland to the fore.

UNICEF, October 2006, pp. 32-33

"At the turn of the last century, while the nationalist intelligentsia and disaffected peasants and workers in the islands of Luzon and the Visayas fought the struggle for liberation against Spain, Muslim-dominated Mindanao remained independent of colonial rule. Three-and-a-half centuries of Spanish colonialism's "Sword and Cross" strategy had failed to thoroughly colonize the islands, and Muslim resistance particularly in the Sultanates of Maguindanao and Sulu remained strong. Moro warriors and their families successfully frustrated Spanish attempts to subdue them and the colonizers were restricted to limited enclaves of heavily fortified Spanish garrisons in the northern coastlines of Mindanao. The MILF's struggle today claims the legacy of protecting the ancestral domains of the Moro sultanates.

Mindanao was included in the sale of the Philippine islands to the US by Spain in the 1898 Treaty of Paris. But unlike the war of occupation that American troops fought against the Katipunan in the North, the US initiated a Peace Treaty with the Sultanates through the help of the Caliph of Saudi Arabia. Under the treaty the US paid allowances to the Sultans. US colonial rule saw the deepening of encroachments into erstwhile Moro territories: US corporations gained control of vast tracts of land and forests; and there was a purposeful effort to populate Mindanao with Christian settlers as a tactic to quell Moro resistance.

Organized armed Moro resistance had begun at least as early as 1902, with Maranaos attacking a US cavalry detachment near Cotabato. The resistance quickly escalated and the Americans responded with a bloody campaign of repression. This included such incidents as the infamous 1906 Bud Dajo massacre in Jolo where a thousand men, women and children holding their ground against US troops were massacred. The last great Moro defiance was the battle of Bud Bagsak in 1912, where the decisive US victory involved the killing of five hundred men, women and children.

The US succeeded where Spain had failed. It combined brutal "scorched earth" military tactics with divisive policies of Moro elite cooptation – "dollar diplomacy" and courting selected quarters of the Moro leadership with scholarships, foreign trips and domestic privileges – and the pseudo-benevolent building of schools and hospitals.

In 1935, the Commonwealth government's "Quirino-Recto Colonization Act" paved the way for the massive and uncontrolled entry of settlers from Luzon and the Visayas where Mindanao was projected as the new frontier and "the land of promise". All these resulted in the massive displacement of Moro people by corporations and Christian settlers who, through government sponsorship and land acts, obtained land titles even for areas Moros had occupied for generations.

This situation did not change when the US passed on the reigns of governance of the entire country, including Mindanao, to the Filipino elite after the Second World War. In the decades that followed, US transnational corporations (TNCs) and the domestic elite retained their claims on and control of the island's resources. Settlers continued to be encouraged to go to the Mindanao frontier as part of official state policy to contain growing peasant unrest in Luzon and the Visayas. It was only a matter of time and circumstance before the Moros mustered their forces and once more waged armed resistance.

The precipitating incident was the Jabidah Massacre of 1968 where around 28 Tausug youth being trained by the Philippine military for a clandestine commando operation to annex Sabah were killed, for still unclear reasons, when their mission was aborted. The Marcos regime was said to be eyeing the rich resources of Sabah which was part of the Sultanate of Sulu (for which Malaysia continues to pay rent to the Sultan) and still had extensive ties with the southern islands of Sulu. The massacre deeply affected a generation of Moro students studying in the secular universities in Manila and Islamic universities in Cairo, Egypt. Radicalized by the nationalist movements of the 1960s which coincided with Egyptian Pan-Arabic assertions at the time, these young students were to lead the armed Moro resistance in the next decades. The incident galvanized the Moro Independence Movement (MIM) and the eventual coming together of 13 ethnolinguistic Islamized tribes into the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in 1969: the Tausug, Maguindanaon, Maranao, Iranon, Yakan, Samal, Kalagan, Kalibugan, Molbog, Sangil, Palawani, Jama Mapun, and Badjao.

The MNLF and its military arm, the Bangsa Moro Army (BMA), began as an armed revolutionary movement of the Moro people espousing the right to self-determination and, in particular, struggling against the Philippine Republic and for the creation of an independent Bangsamoro homeland. The Moro struggle has ever been an assertion of political and military control over territories in Mindanao based on the premise of a historical Bangsamoro homeland with a strong Islamic tradition.

The MNLF leadership as represented by their two leaders, Nur Misuari and Hashim Salamat, reflected the distinction between secular-nationalist and Islamic revivalist leanings within the MNLF. This distinction would bear on the subsequent development of the Moro struggle in the years to come.

Fighting became fierce in Muslim Mindanao especially after the declaration of Martial Law in 1972 and casualties quickly reached tens of thousands. The MNLF entered into the Tripoli Agreement with the Philippine government in 1976 under the prodding of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC); this agreement would supposedly henceforth be the framework for resolving the basic Moro issues. Fighting still went on sporadically for the next few years, but, more significantly, the agreement sparked a rift in the Moro leadership and hierarchy. Ideological and organizational differences within the MNLF eventually led to the formation of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 1984 headed by then MNLF vice-chairman Salamat. The MILF built its armed camps and communities in mainland Mindanao. The Bangsamoro Islamic Auxiliary Force (BIAF) was also formed. The MILF particularly distinguished itself from the secular MNLF, under its chairman Misuari, by pushing the Islamic character of the Moro struggle for a Bangsamoro homeland to the fore.

The MNLF had meanwhile accepted a Final Peace Agreement with the Philippine government in 1996 which involved political accommodation with the Philippine government. Prof. Misuari became the governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and chairman of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD), while the whole of the MNLF-BMA was integrated in the AFP and the PNP. However mutual accusations of violations and non-implementation of the agreement as well as allegations of corruption soon emerged in the years that followed.

Moreover, the Philippine government declared an “all-out war” against the Moro armed struggle in 2000 that gravely affected the communities of both the MILF and MNLF across Southern Mindanao. The contemporary US-declared global war on terror has also renewed focus on armed Islamic groups as a potential threat not just to the Philippine Republic but to US security as well. This has resulted in renewed military offensives including the major 2003 AFP offensive against the MILF’s Buliok Complex headquarters. Moro communities in Sulu and elsewhere have also been bombarded and attacked under the pretext of military operations against the bandit Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and Pentagon Gang.”

Other causes of conflict and displacement in Mindanao: banditry, clan conflict and the communist insurgency (October 2007)

- In addition to Muslim/Christian communal or Islamic separatist groups, banditry, communist rebels and clan conflict also contribute to violence in Mindanao.
- The Abu Sayyaf group and the Pentagon gang are the most visible kidnap-for-ransom groups active in Mindanao. Military operations against these groups often endanger ceasefires with the MILF.
- Communists NPA rebels are only active in some areas of Mindanao, mostly in areas with little Muslim presence.
- Clan conflicts (‘rido’) threaten truce in the Philippine south
- Clan conflicts (or 'rido') are a constant feature of life in Mindanao. These clashes have the potential of triggering ethnic conflict and even military confrontation.

East-West Washington Center, 2005, pp. 4-7

“The conflict situation in Mindanao is quite complex. To understand the effect of civil society’s efforts to end the long-running separatist war, we need to sketch this situation. It must be remembered that violent conflict in the southern Philippines is not only of the Muslim/Christian communal or Islamic separatist varieties (though they are the focus of this study). There is banditry (focusing on kidnapping), a communist insurgency, and endemic clan conflict. All three impinge on efforts to resolve the long-running separatist insurgency.

Kidnapping, in fact, plagues many places in the Philippines, and the Filipino-Chinese community is the most frequent target. The phenomenon came to international attention with two kidnappings of foreign tourists—first from the Malaysian island of Sipadan and then from a Filipino resort in the province of Palawan. The notoriety, resources, and reaction these exploits brought to the Abu Sayyaf (including the dispatch of American troops to train Filipinos pursuing the kidnappers) overshadowed a history of kidnapping that has occurred regularly in Mindanao, often linked to “lost commands” (military or insurgent units no longer under the control of their nominal superiors). Foremost among these is the “Pentagon Gang,” which operates in localities that are also part of the base of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Operations by the Philippine government’s security forces against this gang often endangered cease-fires with the MILF given their forced entry into communities hosting MILF forces. In May 2002, the government and the MILF signed an overall agreement to handle the pursuit of criminal gangs—an agreement that has yet to be fully operationalized. Still, when the leader of the Pentagon Gang, Tahir Alonto, was killed in military operations in August 2004, the operation had been signaled beforehand to the coordinating committees on the cessation of hostilities—and the MILF had interposed no objection (Mindanews: August 14, 2004; August 19, 2004).

The communist New People’s Army (NPA) is active in Mindanao, as it is in many parts of the Philippines, though its areas of operations are more often in Christian or Lumad (indigenous

peoples) communities than in areas occupied by Muslims. There are some overlaps—Tulunán, in North Cotabato, for instance, is a peace zone formed after an NPA raid that has also persuaded the MILF not to establish a presence (Rodil 2000: 146–47). The Philippine military on occasion asserts that there are joint operations between the MILF and the NPA (Mindanews: February 9, 2004). The NPA itself refers to an operational agreement with the MILF stipulating they do not operate in each other's territory (Sindapan 2003). Though the MILF has repeatedly denied any link to "terrorist organizations" (meaning Jemaah Islamiyah and al-Qaeda), it has been quoted as admitting an understanding with the NPA (Villaviray 2003). Whatever the degree of interaction between the NPA and MILF armed components, the presence of a long-running leftist opposition to the Philippine government has effects on the politics of civil society and conflict management. The National Democratic Front supports the "selfdetermination of the Bangsamoro People" (Muslims) and their direct involvement in all forms of decision making affecting their interests. (It does not support an independent state for Muslims.) Civil society groups in Mindanao sympathetic to "national democratic" analyses of the Philippines tend to use oppression of the Bangsamoro as one bone of contention with the Philippine government. Government policy, along with military operations and alleged human rights violations in Muslim areas, are subjects for political statements and targets for continued mobilization by these groups. The issue of political coloring of civil society activities recurs throughout this study.

Another widespread form of conflict is intracommunity clan conflict. Again not unknown in other parts of the Philippines, this phenomenon remains important as the Philippine government has not been able to enforce laws and maintain order. Thus civilians take disputes into their own hands. Feuds between families often lead to tit-for-tat retaliation organized along family lines.

(...)

To complicate matters, endemic clan conflict sometimes triggers ethnic conflict and even military confrontation. What begins as a dispute between families can end with organized armed forces clashing as parties to the dispute persuade others to become involved—or the Philippine military may mistake a clan clash for a separatist operation and intervene on its own. Consequently, community-level peacemaking must address clan conflict along with ethnic violence. One of the most famous examples of community peacemaking, in the barangay of Maladeg, Sultan Gumander, Lanao del Sur, has expended since the late 1990s at least as much energy on rido (clan conflict) as on Muslim/Christian animosities. Even with these caveats, the fact remains that conflicts due to Muslim separatism form the main challenge to peace and development in Mindanao. There is no evidence, for example, that clan or family conflict was any less prevalent in the past than it is now—yet times of relative peace on the separatist (or communal) front have yielded economic growth in Mindanao. The communist armed threat is not insignificant, but the Muslim threat is geographically concentrated and thus has a greater impact on the areas of central and western Mindanao than does the NPA threat elsewhere in the country."

Reuters Foundation, 24 October 2007

"Long-running clan wars in the south of the Philippines could affect a truce between the government and the country's largest Islamic separatist group, a senior rebel leader said on Wednesday.

Von al Haq, head of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) truce panel, told Reuters most of the fighting between troops and Muslim rebels since a ceasefire agreement was signed in 2003 was caused by decades-old clan feuds in the southern Mindanao region. "In most cases, the government troops and our own forces were only dragged into the conflict because of family ties," al Haq, at one time the MILF intelligence chief, said in an interview during a book launch on clan wars in the south.

Clan wars, known locally as "rido", are still common in communities in the south and the MILF say they pose a threat to a fragile truce. The clans can be either Muslim or Christian, but enmity is usually related to political and business rivalries and land or other disputes but usually not religion. Some feuds are caused by love triangles or even brawls over a basketball game.

Studies funded by the Asia Foundation and the U.S. Agency for International Development found there had been more than 1,200 clan feuds in the south since 1930s, killing nearly 5,000 people and displacing tens of thousands. Al Haq said the MILF was interested in resolving most of the conflicts because it could pose a big security risk even after a peace deal with the government was reached."

Mindanao's conflict is largely concentrated in resource-rich, under-developed, Muslim-populated areas

- Muslim provinces are largely under-developed compared to the rest of the country.
- The moro (Muslim) areas in Maguindanao, Sultan Kudrat, North and South Cotabato, Basilan and the Sulu islands have rich reserves of untapped natural resources, raw materials and, cheap labor.
- Mindanao represents 48 per cent of gold production, 63 per cent nickel and 18 per cent charcoal in the country's total reserves.
-

WB, February 2005, pp. 1-2

"The conflict in Mindanao has been only one of five major conflicts in the Philippines since independence. It has largely been concentrated in the Muslim-majority areas of central and southwestern Mindanao, which consists of three of today's administrative regions (Region IX—Western Mindanao; Region XII—Central Mindanao; and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, or ARMM) and of four provinces in Region XI—Southern Mindanao (Davao del Sur; Sarangani; South Cotabato; and Sultan Kudarat).

Resistance to central control and resentment at the increasing number of Christian settlers, as well as the logging and mining activities, which had become important sources of export earnings, was at first organized under the aegis of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), formed in the late 1960s and until the 1990s largely accepted as representing the interests of Mindanao's Muslim population. Despite the formation of ARMM in 1989 and the formal acceptance of the 1996 peace accord between the Government and the MNLF, the armed conflict continued. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) emerged as the Government's main opponent. The MILF, as the name suggests, is more religion-oriented than the nationalistic-oriented MNLF, but is in no way comparable in attitudes or practices to Islamic fundamentalist organizations elsewhere in East Asia. The Moros have benefited from the support of the Organization of Islamic Conferences, and have maintained close relations with Muslims in Indonesia and Malaysia. However, MILF relations with the small terrorist (and largely criminal) group Abu Sayyaf and the Indonesia-based Jemaah Islamiyah have been sporadic and loose, and in the context of the ongoing peace discussions the MILF has distanced itself completely from those organizations.

Overall, although religious differences have partly shaped the conflict, the roots of the conflict have been the clash of interests in land and other natural resources, and the identity issues emerging from the de facto second-class status of much of the Moro population. Complicating the picture, a number of non-Malay indigenous peoples (collectively referred to as "Lumads") have historically been pushed aside in turn by Spanish and American colonizers, Christian settlers, and the Moros themselves. They were first displaced from the lowlands to the highlands (mainly in the

Cotabato-Sarangani area); then put under pressure from the outsiders' rush to exploit the timber and the gold of the highlands; and today are viewed as inferior (including by the Moros themselves), and lack a role and a voice in the peace negotiations. Yet, loosely paralleling the situation in the Amazon basin, the involvement of indigenous people in the peace process and their active cooperation with its implementation will be important not only in itself and for a lasting political solution, but also for a healthy environmental protection strategy.

As inevitable in a brief summary, the situation on the ground is more complex than indicated here. There are three major complicating factors. The first is the vast difference in economic interests among Christians themselves between the economic and commercial elite and the majority of Christians. The other two are more directly relevant to the violence. Chronic conflict among different "clans" (sometimes erroneously referred to as "tribes") within the Muslim population, generates some part of the violence and sporadic flare-ups—often drawing in military reaction. Also, ordinary but widespread banditry confuses both the origin of violent attacks, extortion and kidnapping and the often indiscriminate response of the Philippine military. To some extent, the internecine conflict among Muslim "clans" have been suppressed or hidden by the nationalist-religious organized rebellion, and the existence of a common "outside" opponent. To that extent, therefore, peace might allow them to bubble up to the surface, and a significant qualifier should be appended to the probability of realization of the dynamic benefits and potential peace dividends listed later in this paper. On the other side of the ledger, however, peace would also contribute to restoring law and order and improving overall security in central and southwestern Mindanao."

February 2003 attacks on MILF camps seen by local groups as part of a strategy to expropriate Moro people from their lands

NCCP & MCPA, 21 February 2005, p. 7

"'Poor people in a rich country' is the sad and ironic reality for both the Filipino and the Bangsamoro people. A serious look at the situation of the Bangsamoro specifically in their traditional homeland will bring one to understand why their communities remain a battlefield between people in resistance and forces who want to subjugate them and expropriate their lands.

To give us a glimpse:

Davao, Cotabato, Basilan, Sulu and Zamboanga are host to a number of rubber, timber, banana and pineapple plantations that bring wealth to a number of big corporations operating in the Philippines. These are the same provinces where one finds Bangsamoro communities who, amidst a backdrop of wealth, still remain in abject poverty;

The Philippines has the capacity to produce 8 barrels of oil and natural gas every day and as much as 500 to 600 barrels of crude oil every day. More than 60% of these resources can be found in Mindanao.

According to the Philippine Contracting Round (PCR) conducted by the Department of Energy (DOE) on August 2003, there are 3 major oil sites in the Philippines namely the Palawan Waters, Sulu Sea Basin where the Reed Bank and Cotabato Basin could be found. Upon U.S. President Bush's State Visit last August 2003, the Arroyo government promised to open more than 46 "oil and exploration contracts" in the South China Sea and Mindanao. Not coincidentally, Liguasan Marsh, which is part of the Reed Bank and Cotabato Basin, was the target of the AFP-led attack in 2003 ostensibly to flush-out the MILF guerillas. Sulu now is under heavy military operations. Palawan is also home to a number of Bangsamoro communities."

"All-out" war in 2000 attributed to the presence of vast natural resources in Mindanao's Moro areas

Oxfam November 2000 pp. 4-5

"Mindanao spreads over 94, 229 sq km/34 percent of country's land area and provides a substantial contribution to the country's economy. The moro areas in Maguindanao, Sultan Kudrat, North and South Cotabato, Basilan and the Sulu islands have rich reserves of untapped natural resources, raw materials and, cheap labor. The GoP's all-out war against the MILF has mainly been because of these resources.

As many observe, Mindanao is the 'Land of Promises' and in fact is the 'Rice Bowl' of the Philippines. The land is characterized by fertile soil suitable to cultivate a variety of crops and has a timberland of nearly 39 per cent of nation's forest cover, despite massive deforestation. These areas, especially those within the MILF camps have potentials for super profits.

Mindanao represents 48 per cent of gold production, 63 per cent nickel and 18 per cent charcoal in the country's total reserves. The Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) is eyeing on a marshland in the said area for natural gas extraction. The Moroland Sugar Corporation is planning to establish a milling facility within a 25,000 hectare land area which will traverse six municipalities. The Consunji concession and a Malaysian corporation are planning to log and to put up a palm oil tree plantation respectively in the town of Buldon. These are but examples of the region's potentials as an investor's haven. The MILF is a deterrent to the government's program of attracting more foreign investors in the region."

Muslim and indigenous populations in the south remain socially, economically and politically marginalized and suffer most from the conflict (March 2008)

- Discrimination against Muslims is grounded in cultural, not religious differences.
- Government efforts to integrate Muslims into political and economic society only have limited success.
- The percentage of the population under the poverty level in the ARMM was almost twice as high as the national average.

USDoS, 11 March 2008:

"The government's campaign against the terrorist groups ASG and the Rajah Solaiman Movement led some human rights NGOs to accuse the police and military of unfairly targeting Muslims for arrest and detention. However, most observers believed that discrimination against Muslims was grounded in cultural differences, not religious beliefs or practices.

Intermittent government efforts to integrate Muslims into political and economic society achieved only limited success. Many Muslims claimed that they continued to be underrepresented in senior civilian and military positions and cited the lack of proportional Muslim representation in national government institutions. Predominantly Muslim provinces in Mindanao lagged far behind the rest of the country in most aspects of socioeconomic development. The percentage of the population under the poverty level in the ARMM was almost twice as high as the national average, with per capita income of \$340 (15,760 pesos) per year."

[...]

Indigenous people lived throughout the country but primarily in the mountainous areas of northern and central Luzon and in Mindanao. They accounted for approximately 14 percent of the national population, with over 60 percent of the total in Mindanao. Although no specific laws discriminate against indigenous people, the remoteness of the areas that many inhabit and cultural bias prevented their full integration into society. Indigenous children suffered from lack of health,

education, and other basic services. NGOs estimated that up to 70 percent of indigenous youth left or never attended school because of the discrimination they experienced.

Indigenous people suffered disproportionately from armed conflict, including displacement from their homes, because they often inhabited mountainous areas favored by guerrillas. Their lands were often the sites of armed encounters, and various parties to the fighting recruited many indigenous people.

A National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP), staffed by tribal members, implements constitutional provisions to protect indigenous people. During the year, NCIP had a budget of \$10.11 million (480 million pesos). At year's end the NCIP had awarded Certificates of Ancestral Land and Ancestral Domain Titles covering over 2.77 million acres of land claimed by indigenous people in the country. It awarded such "ancestral domain lands" on the basis of communal ownership, stopping sale of the lands by tribal leaders. The law requires a process of informed consultation and written consent by the indigenous group to allow mining on tribal lands and assigns indigenous groups the responsibility to preserve their domains from environmentally inappropriate development. The government was slow to implement the legislation, primarily because of opposition from mining and agribusiness interests, but some limited progress was made."

Competing claims over land is one of the root cause and trigger of conflict in Mindanao (January 2007)

- Introduction of the Regalian Doctrine on Property Ownership, led to the widespread displacement of Lumads and Muslims who held their lands on communal ownership basis.
- A great majority of lands in the CAAs are now titled or under some form of private ownership, making it difficult for ancestral land claims or ownership to operate in these areas.
- Rights of IP to hold lands under ancestral claims or ownership are officially recognized by the IPRA, but it is not yet operational in the ARMM region and does not apply to Muslims.
- According to the JNA study, 3 distinct domains will have to be delineated to find a workable solution to competing land claims in the Mindanao CAAs. These are the ancestral domain claims of the Muslims, the ancestral claims of the IPs or Lumads, and the claims of private landowners.
- Land disputes among and between Moro clans are often triggers of conflict today in Mindanao. In January 2007, a land dispute involving many individuals belonging to various Moro clans led to fighting between the MILF and members of a paramilitary group.

Government of the Philippines, International Funding Agencies, Mindanao Stakeholders, December 2005, Integrative Report, p. 41

"Competing claims over land in the CAAs has been one of the root causes and triggers of conflict in these communities. The introduction of the concept that the state has ownership of all natural resources, known as the Regalian Doctrine on Property Ownership, led to the widespread displacement of Lumads and Muslims who held their lands on communal ownership basis. Christian settlers, because of their knowledge of the law, were able to obtain titles to lands previously cultivated by Muslims and Lumads. In some cases, large tracts of Muslim and Lumad lands were fraudulently acquired by people occupying key positions in the government.

There is a geographical pattern to the displacement of the Muslims and IPs. Coastal and low-lying areas, which are the most fertile lands, were occupied by Christian settlers while the Muslims and IPs were pushed to inland and upland areas. Moreover, a great majority of lands in

the CAAs are now titled or under some form of private ownership, making it difficult for ancestral land claims or ownership to operate in these areas.

The government has passed the IPRA as a means of recognizing the right of Indigenous Peoples to hold lands under ancestral claims or ownership. The Muslims, however, refuse to be categorized as IPs. In fact, IPRA is not yet operational in the ARMM region."

Government of the Philippines, International Funding Agencies, Mindanao Stakeholders, December 2005, Rural Development Report, pp. 70-72

"The fundamental point of contention regarding the land problem in Mindanao is that the Regalian doctrine of property ownership imposed by the Christian government in Manila has effectively deprived many Muslims and Indigenous People (IPs) of their land claims due to its non-recognition of ancestral land claim or ownership. Private individuals knowledgeable about the law were able to title lands under their names (in some instances, fraudulently), and some of these lands were traditionally owned by the Muslims.

Because of the conflicting land ownership frameworks, the Muslims are demanding that their traditional lands be returned (particularly, if fraudulently acquired) or that they be compensated adequately. On the other hand, many Christian settlers feel that these properties were acquired through legitimate market transactions between buyers and sellers acting in good faith. Thus, they object to any move that the lands they possess be returned to the Muslims.

Apart from the Regalian doctrine of property ownership, there are more recent legislations enacted that conflict with the land ownership claims of both the Muslims and the Lumads in Mindanao. For instance, PD 705 or the Revised Forestry Code provides that land of the public domain with slopes of 18% or higher cannot be classified as alienable and disposable. However, in most cases, particularly in the CAAs, the Muslims and IPs have occupied and utilized lands with slopes greater than 18% for agricultural production.

Another recent law is the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA). It is an attempt to recognize the IP's claim to their ancestral land and remedy the inadequacies of previous land laws. Unfortunately, IPRA contains inconsistencies highlighted by its stipulation that while recognizing customary tenurial systems, it at the same time guarantees the protection of the bundle of rights associated with landownership under the Regalian doctrine.

In the JNA consultations, key informants have articulated the sentiment that the Bangsamoro people were not recognizing the IPRA. Consistent with this view is the fact that IPRA does not operate within the ARMM. Muslim respondents also emphasized that they do not consider themselves as IPs. Necessarily, IPRA, which is the only legal framework that provides the mechanism for ensuring access to and ownership of ancestral land, is meaningless as far as they are concerned.

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM

Three distinct domains will have to be delineated to find a workable solution to competing land claims in the Mindanao CAAs. These are the ancestral domain claims of the Muslims, the ancestral claims of the IPs or Lumads, and the claims of private landowners. Apparently, there are overlaps among these claims. A resolution of these competing claims will require consideration of the mode of their acquisition, the geographical location of the land, and the extent or prevalence of private land ownership in a particular area.

Fraudulent Land Transactions

The demand for the re-acquisition of the ancestral lands of the Muslims in Mindanao has been dramatized mainly by anecdotal evidences of fraudulent and malicious land transactions. Some

cases reportedly involve highly systematic and elaborate schemes where high government officials, in collaboration with Bureau of Lands officials, would title huge tracts of land under their names without prior knowledge and consent of existing occupants and claimants.

Another technique employed was direct private transactions between indigenous landowners and Christian settlers, which due to asymmetry in market information, would put the former at a disadvantage. In some instances, the heirs to these lands acquired through fraudulent and malicious transactions, have sought legal remedies to recover their ancestral lands.

In a number of occasions, these cases trigger conflicts that go beyond family feuds. It is obvious that for lands acquired maliciously and fraudulently, the government should affirm the right of the Muslims and IPs over these properties.

Displacement and Land Use Rights

Prior to the armed conflict in the late 1960s, Muslims and Christians were living in relative harmony. For example, there was peaceful co-existence between the Muslims and Christians inhabiting the two Lanao provinces then. When the conflict escalated, the religious and cultural divide was highlighted by the geographical separation of the two groups of people. The coastal areas of the provinces became predominantly Christian and the inland areas, Muslim.

Consequently, Muslims had to abandon their lands in the coastal areas while Christians in the inland areas had to transfer to coastal areas. A similar situation prevailed in the other conflict-affected provinces, such as North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Zamboanga del Sur, and Basilan.

While displaced landowners from both sides may have ownership rights over land in their original communities, they may no longer be interested in exercising their usufruct right over their lands because of demographic changes. Further, due to geographical and psychosocial constraints, displaced landowners from both sides are now uncertain as to the legal and factual status of their abandoned lands. For practical reason, it might no longer be feasible to return untitled lands in these areas to their original claimants."

Complex land dispute is the root cause of fighting and displacement incident in Midsayap, Cotabato

Bantay Ceasefire, 29 January 2007

"Everyone agrees that the root cause of the conflict is land dispute, but not everybody knows it is a deep-seated and very complicated problem that involves a lot of individuals, some of them are economically and politically powerful. Except for a 19-hectare parcel of land, the residents do not know exactly how vast all the parcels of disputed land, except by pegging that it could be more than 3,000 hectares.

What complicates the problem are disputes over parcels of land between and among Moro clans that caused some existing ridos (family feuds) among themselves, some of them are even close relatives. And, aside from disputes over parcels of land among the Moros themselves, who are all local inhabitants of the place, are a number other land disputes between Moro families in the area and claimants who are not residents of the village. These other non-Moro claimants are from the town of Carmen, also in Cotabato Province, and the city of Koronadal in South Cotabato province. (Names are available on request basis)

Compounding the complication is a Voluntary Offer to Sell arranged by a non-resident of the village who listed down some Muslim residents of Mudseng as VOS beneficiaries, including some who were actually not working in any of the parcels of the disputed land, while failing to list down some who have actually been working there for quite a time already. (Names are available on request basis)

Some of those not listed VOS beneficiaries, who are relatives of the late Tugal Barangay Chair Tubog Pulalon, reportedly occupied and worked on some parcels of land they have laid claims by "using force." They are known to have powerful firearms. (Names are available on request basis)

These problems was reportedly raised already in a forum held in Rangaban some time ago and Midsayap Mayor Romeo Arana and the local Department of Environment and Natural Resources have reportedly ordered a status quo pending resolution of the conflict in a proper venue, but since the resolution of the problem had taken so long, some claimants have taken the law into their hands. Status quo, according to the understanding of the residents, means the actual occupants of the contested parcels of land would be allowed to till the land while the dispute is still being resolved. This decision was, however, perceived by some claimants as "unfair."

The MILF also claimed it already started a process of resolving this conflict, but the recent armed conflict has stalled it."

Conflict and displacement in Mindanao (1996-2000)

- Nationhood among Islamized ethnic groups in the south is based on specific ethnic identifications unified by Islamic tradition that first influenced the Sulu islands in the 13th century.
- The 1996 peace agreement between the MNLF and the GRP has not prevented the resurgence of armed conflict and the emergence of new representations asserted by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayyaf (Father of the Sword) Group in Mindanao.
- In 1997, an attack by government forces on MILF's Rajamuda camp led to the displacement of 75,000 people.
- In 2000, all-out armed confrontations between government forces and the MILF, as well as the Abu Sayyaf, escalated in 9 municipalities of Maguindanao, 5 in Cotabato, 3 in Lanao del Sur, 1 in South Cotabato and in the cities of Cotabato and General Santos.
- By August 439,000 people had evacuated of whom 340,265 were housed in evacuation centers

Oxfam January 2001, pp. 5-6

"The Philippines has various ethnic minorities within the larger Christian-Filipino society. While the state has appeased most of the more than eighty ethno-linguistic groups nationwide, it has not made peace with the Islamized ethnic groups in the south. Nationhood among Islamized ethnic groups in the south is based on specific ethnic identifications unified by Islamic tradition that first influenced the Sulu islands in the 13th century. In the most recent phase of the Muslim struggle for nationhood, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) made peace with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in 1996.

Despite high expectations, the peace agreement has not prevented the resurgence of armed conflict and the emergence of new representations asserted by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayyaf (Father of the Sword) Group in Mindanao, now renamed as the Al-Harakatul-ul-Islamiya (Islamic Movement).

Barely a month after the signing of the Peace Agreement, the MILF prepared for war and began to reassert its own representation of the demands of the Moro people. In a display of mass strength during the Bangsa Moro People's Assembly in Cotabato City on 3-5 December, 1996, it

declared its rejection of the Peace Agreement and reaffirmed its commitment to Islamic independence.

Four years later, all-out armed confrontations between government forces and the MILF, as well as the Abu Sayyaf, caught domestic and international public attention. Hostilities escalated in 9 municipalities of Maguindanao, 5 in Cotabato, 3 in Lanao del Sur, 1 in South Cotabato and in the cities of Cotabato and General Santos.

Refusing to recognize the MILF as a legitimate representative of the Moro people, the Philippine government engaged in dual tactics: military confrontations and piece-meal negotiations. Initial meetings between the MILF and the GRP in April, May and June of 1997 were bogged down by continued fighting. In June 1987[sic], government forces attempted to seize control of Camp Rajamuda, the MILF's second biggest camp, resulting in the displacement of around 75,000 people.

Intense fighting continued until July after which the GRP and MILF signed an Agreement on the General Cessation of Hostilities (AGCH). This was followed by the signing of the Implementing Administrative Guidelines on the AGCH on September 12, 1997. By November, the two parties had signed a Ceasefire Agreement.

Upon the election of Estrada to the presidency, his government appointed a new negotiating panel to talk peace with the MILF. What followed was a rough process that swung from war to negotiations finally leading to the government's all out offensive in April 2000.

Two days after the government offensive, the MILF unilaterally suspended talks with the government. By May 7, 2000, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) reported that the clashes in Maguindanao, Cotabato and Lanao had already affected 23,031 families (123,758 persons of whom 74,691 were housed in evacuation centers). By August 439,000 people had evacuated of whom 340,265 were housed in evacuation centers."

Nearly one million people displaced by government's war against the MILF (2000)

- During 2000, increased militarization and fighting between the army and the MILF in Mindanao led to the destruction of over 6,000 homes and the internal displacement of nearly one million persons.
- Large-scale military operations have also been undertaken in Basilan and Jolo as part of search and rescue operations for Abu Sayyaf hostages.
- UNDP notes that only 10% of the persons whose homes have been destroyed desired to return to their place of origin as of October 2000, mainly because of the presence of the military around their homes.
- In Mindanao the evacuee camps were in a crisis situation during months with high mortality rates, especially among children.

UNDP 13 November 2000, pp. 4-5

"The militarization of the conflict in the course of the year 2000 has led to deterioration in the peace and development situation. The government has successfully reasserted control over areas previously held by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The break-up of the territorial bases of the MILF has led to the fragmentation of its permanent forces into decentralized and at times independent guerrilla commands. Large-scale military operations have also been undertaken in Basilan and Jolo as part of search and rescue operations for Abu Sayyaf hostages

held for ransom and as human shields. Terrorist tactics have been utilized by insurgents in central Mindanao and by the kidnapping gangs in Basilan and Jolo.

Increased militarization has led to more civilian than military fatalities. In the period of maximum combat in the year 2000 (January-August), there were 218 soldiers and militiamen killed and 354 civilian fatalities, as well as 457 MILF killed. The government also reports that more civilians died in the evacuee centers than in combat. That figure of over 700 civilian deaths in combat or in evacuee centers is greater than the combined soldier, militia, and MILF losses of 677 in the same period. Increased militarization has also led to the destruction of over 6000 homes and the internal displacement of nearly one million persons, 300,000 of whom were in that status in October 2000. The National Peace Forum identified two cases that they consider to constitute intentional destruction of housing by the Army (Nalapoan Pikit, North Cotabato and Matanog, Maguindanao). The same representatives point out that this should not be considered a pattern in that other cases have not been identified. However, the tactics employed did objectively lead to a large number of houses destroyed and a massive displacement of civilian population. The type of displacement produced is also qualitatively different from those seen in recent years. There now exists a tendency toward longer-term displacements for the first time since the 1970's. Only 10% of the persons whose homes have been destroyed desire to return to their place of origin as of October, 2000. In some cases relocation is being undertaken. The displaced persons do not wish to return to the locations of their previous homes due to the presence of the military, not because they fear the soldiers, but rather because stationary or in transit military draw MILF attacks that frequently place civilians in cross-fire situations. The net result is that human security in the areas affected has deteriorated as a result of militarization.

The levels and types of population displacements produced by militarization have the potential to reproduce the armed conflict through the expansion of the pool of potential insurgent combatants. In insurgencies with social and political support, acute or chronic civilian casualties, widespread destruction of property, and massive population displacements increase the pool of potential insurgents. New combatants may enter either established groups or form new ones. Evacuee camps, especially when they become permanent, often become insurgent recruitment centers. The most critical group is quite obviously young unemployed men whose families have been affected by the conflict.

In Mindanao the evacuee camps were in a crisis situation in June as evidenced by high mortality rates, especially among children. The crisis has subsequently subsided but conditions in many camps remain overcrowded and deficient. Some people are being permanently relocated and some of the housing now considered temporary will most probably become permanent. Most all of the people in the camps can be considered poor in that people with more resources generally find other accommodations. All have suffered economic setbacks as a result of their displacement."

Government's military operation against the MILF displaces some 400,000 people in 2003

- During 2003, the government's war against "lawless elements" resulting in a resumption of fighting with the MILF caused the displacement of 400,000 in Mindanao, mainly in the Muslim ARMM region.
- The conflict degenerated when in November 2002, massive deployment of government troops near the Liguasan Marsh and later in December fighting between military and MILF caused residents to flee their homes.

- In January 2003, massive evacuation of civilians started with at least 1,100 B'laan and Maguindanaon (indigenous peoples in Mindanao) families fleeing from seven barangays in Marang, North Cotabato.
- In early February, some 7,000 families or 42,000 persons, more than half of Pikit's population, fled their homes to avoid the clash between the MILF and the military.
- On February 11, a major offensive was launched by the government against the MILF.

TFDP January 2004, p. 2

"In 2003, two years after PGMA said that the task of rebuilding Mindanao, of achieving peace and oneness as a people, as a nation, should begin, renewed fighting broke out. The PGMA government publicly declared a war against "lawless elements" but whose real objective was revealed later as an offensive against Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) forces allegedly massing up in the Buliok complex. The military eventually wrested control of the area from the MILF and even trumpeted the capture of the safe house of the MILF chairperson, Hashim Salamat. But the guerillas responded with ambushes, raids of military detachments and toppling of transmission towers.

This war was launched despite ongoing peace talks with the MILF and while agreements for a ceasefire was tenuously in place.

As a result, 400,000 human beings were displaced; their lives and livelihoods in shatters, and their children forced to abandon their education. As of July 2003, hundreds have yet to return to their homes and farms.

In June 17, it was reported that the refugee death toll has risen to 215, with 43 infants and children below 10 years old who had died of easily treatable diseases like measles, pneumonia, diarrhea and dehydration."

ACT 4 March 2003

"As early as November 2002, massive deployment of government troops has been reported near the Liguasan Marsh. There were also reports of fighting between government troops and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front last December 6, 2002, prompting some 300 residents of Sitio Lagao, Brgy. Langgapan, Sultan sa Barongis to flee their homes. Accounts from residents, say that the village was having a "*kanduli*" (Muslim thanksgiving festival) when around 100 soldiers came and burned at least 11 houses.

On December 7, 2003, Army soldiers picked up a Barangay council member from his house in Brgy Muslim, Talayan Mindanao. His body was later found that afternoon in the nearby village of Balabag. In the evening, more Army soldiers entered the village and clashed with MILF rebels. OV-10 planes also bombed Brgy Katibpuan.

On January 4, 2003, around 300 armed persons were sighted to have entered in the remote communities along the tri-boundary of Carmen, President Roxas and Arakan, all municipalities of North Cotabato, particularly in the municipalities beside the Pulangi River. This prompted the people in the community to move out from their homes and seek refuge to safer places. A few days later, the massive evacuation of civilians started with at least 1,100 B'laan and Maguindanaon (indigenous peoples in Mindanao) families fleeing from seven barangays in Marang, North Cotabato.

On January 25, more than 1,000 members of the 40th IB of the Philippine Army based in Carmen, North Cotabato conducted an operation in the area to check on the reported sightings of

an armed group. A running battle ensued, which resulted to the killing and wounding of at least 17 persons.

On January 27, the Provincial Governor of North Cotabato backed up by a number of military men entered to check on the incident. Not less than 150 families evacuated to safer grounds. The military build-up starting February 7, 2003 prompted more families to move out from their homes. Evacuation of people was remarkable in Pikit, North Cotabato, where at least five tanks and 10 six-by-six trucks of soldiers or 3,000 government troops from the 602nd Brigade along with several Marine and Navy battalions were deployed. This forced the evacuation of at least 7,000 families or 42,000 persons, more than half of the town's population, to avoid the clash.

On February 11, 2003, an all-out-war offensive against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was launched by the Armed Forces of the Philippines. According to the military, the assault was purportedly launched to weed out the Pentagon Gang, a notorious kidnap-for-ransom gang, alleged to be hiding in the said area. However, the military through no less than Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes later claimed that the campaign, which is one of the biggest since government and the MILF began peace negotiations, is directed at the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and not against the Pentagon Gang. Moreover, some legislators claim that the ultimate game plan for the renewed military offensives in Mindanao might be the seizure of untapped resource-rich areas than to counter terrorism. Sen. Aquilino Pimentel and Rep. Gerry Salapudin said in separate interviews that the big natural gas deposits in the marsh might be the target of the military offensives.

It has been two weeks since the intense bombardment, but it seems that there is no respite in sight. Almost everyday, there are reported cases of hostilities. The heavy fighting affected at least 97 barangays in 24 municipalities from the four provinces of North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao and Sulu.

According to the February 20, 2003 Update Report of the government's Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), a total of 34,745 families or 199,283 individuals were affected by the government's all-out-war. The evacuation of families and communities continue as the MILF launched retaliatory attacks."

Tens of thousand displaced due to MILF-government fighting in 2007

- On Jan. 25, 2007, armed raiders backed by insurgents from the MILF attacked Christian-owned farms during rice harvesting.
- Around 6,000 villagers were displaced after military troops moved in.
- While this was considered a relatively small incident, its implications for the GRP-MILF peace process are substantial.
- In July 2007, MILF militants killed 14 marines in Basilan, which prompted heavy army reprisals
- After peace talks stalled in December 2007, fears of increased fighting were expressed.

Christian Science Monitor, 14 March 2007:

"In the parlance of conflict-weary Mindanao, where guns are plentiful and tempers fray easily, what erupted here recently was a "pocket war." It began on Jan. 25, when armed raiders backed by insurgents from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) attacked Christian-owned farms during rice harvesting. Filipino troops were sent in, and around 6,000 villagers were displaced

and six killed in the fighting that followed. Intermittent attacks between the army, Christian vigilantes, and Muslim fighters have continued since.

International monitors downplayed the fighting. "This is a minor hiccup," says Col. Mustapha Omar, the Malaysian commander of a team monitoring the cease-fire. But in Mindanao, hiccups have a history of developing into something more. An exchange of artillery near the village last week left 19 Muslim fighters and a Filipino soldier dead. The MILF threatened to abandon its 10-year-old cease-fire and Philippines President Gloria Arroyo responded by ordering the army to show more restraint.

Though MILF leader Al Haj Murad said over the weekend that a breakthrough could be near, analysts warn that if steps aren't taken to address the grievances of local Muslims, the goals of both the Philippines and the US in the region could be compromised. "

Basilan displacement July-August 2007 **Mindanews, 7 August 2007**

"[...] On the fateful day of July 10, Basilan grabbed the international attention when some 14 Marines of the Philippine military were killed in an encounter with the forces of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), 10 of them were beheaded and mutilated. The MILF admitted the killing of the Marines in what they claimed as "a legitimate encounter" but denied the beheading and mutilation of the slain soldiers. While the government maintained that the Marines who were on patrol in search for the kidnapped Italian missionary Fr. Giancarlo Bossi and his abductors were "ambushed" by the combined forces of MILF and the notorious Abu Sayyaf Group.

[...]

Unfortunately, the nagging question on who were responsible for the beheading and mutilation of the slain soldiers overshadowed an equally important question on who were to be blamed of the July 10 encounter, which has a direct bearing on the stalled peace talks between the government and the MILF. Top leaders of the MILF consistently denied responsibility of the beheading and mutilation of the slain soldiers. Unfortunately, they can't also point a finger as to who really did it.

[...]

After five years of relative peace, the ghost of the past haunted Basilan again. The timing this time is of suspect as it happened five days before the implementation of the highly-controversial Human Security Act of 2007 or Republic Act 9372. Also, it happened at a time when the US Congress is deliberating to increase the proposed \$11 million foreign military aid to the Philippines. A visit to the US Congress website revealed that the proposed aid will be increased to \$30 million "intended to promote U.S. national security by contributing to regional and global stability, strengthening military support for democratically-elected governments and containing transnational threats, including terrorism... ."

The MILF is no longer in the US terror list but the ASG is. Is the government's insistence that the "ambush" was done by the "combined forces of MILF and Abu Sayyaf" not a ploy to paint a climate of terror to warrant greater US military aid?"

Fighting between Armed Forces and MILF displaced more than 250,000 people in 2008 (August 2008)

- Between January and June, an estimated 45,000 people were displaced in Maguindanao province, Mindanao due to armed encounters between AFP and MILF.
- In July-August 2008, fighting between MILF and government forces displaced 160,000 people in North Cotabato province.

- In mid-August, fighting started to spread to Lanao del Norte, where some 200 MILF rebels were reported to have raided two towns.

JANUARY-JUNE

UP TO 45,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED BY ARMY/PARAMILITARY-MILF CONFRONTATIONS IN DATU PIANG, MAGUINDANAO

NDCC Update, 6 June 2008

"Around 554 families / 3,324 persons were internally displaced in Maguindanao due to armed conflict between MILF factions of Commander Adsmei Kasim and Ustadz Abunawas in the Municipality of Datu Piang."

DWDS-DROMIC, 3 April [Internet]

"Seven hundred one (701) families composed of 2,958 individuals were affected and sought refuge at their friends' and relatives' houses in the nearby barangays. No casualty or damaged houses were reported."

DWDS-DROMIC, 3 March [Internet]

"One thousand seven hundred seventy-seven (1,777) families composed of 8,885 persons were affected and sought refuge at their friends' and relatives' houses in the nearby barangays. No casualty or damaged houses were reported."

DSWD-DROMIC, 11 January [Internet]

"Six thousand two (6,002) families composed of 29,320 persons coming from twenty-one (21) barangays were displaced.

Six hundred thirty-eight (638) families composed of 3,190 persons from Datu Piang sought refuge at the Damabalas Elementary School while other displaced families joined at their friends' and relatives' houses in the nearby barangays.

No casualty or damaged houses were reported."

AN ESTIMATED 160,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED IN EARLY AUGUST IN NORTH COTABATO PROVINCE DUE TO FIGHTING BETWEEN MILF AND ARMY

IDMC, 14 August 2008

An estimated 160,000 people have fled their villages in the southern island region of Mindanao over the past three weeks following fighting between government forces and Muslim rebels of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The majority were displaced between 9 and 13 August when the army attacked MILF militants occupying a number of Christian villages and towns in North Cotabato province. While 15,000 people fled to evacuation centres, most displaced opted to stay with friends and families. Many started returning home a few days later following the rebels' departure from the villages, although some displaced are still too afraid to do so.

The government has reported that "massive relief operations" are being conducted to support the displaced and said matters were "under control". The World Food Programme has airlifted one month's food for 96,000 people amid reports of insufficient food and medicines in the overcrowded centres.

The rebel's decision to occupy the villages followed a Supreme Court decision to suspend the signing of a long-awaited agreement between the government and the MILF on "ancestral domain", which provided for the expansion of the autonomous ARMM region comprising six

Muslim-populated provinces in Mindanao. The agreement had raised hopes of an imminent formal peace agreement following decades of conflict and negotiation.

SECURITY SITUATION DETERIORATES IN VARIOUS PROVINCES IN MID-AUGUST FORCING UP TO 60,000 PEOPLE FROM THEIR HOMES

Reuters, 17 August 2008

"Muslim separatists killed at least seven Philippine soldiers and wounded a dozen more in an ambush on Sunday on the troubled southern island of Mindanao, the military said.

The attack came four days after government troops halted a fierce offensive against Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels in another part of Mindanao and is the latest outbreak of violence since a territorial deal with the MILF was halted by the Supreme Court earlier this month.

The military said the soldiers, traveling in a convoy, were on their way to deliver troop salaries to a remote detachment when they were ambushed by around 100 MILF rebels, armed with rocket-propelled grenades and machineguns."

ABC, 18 August 2008

"Muslim separatist rebels have raided two southern Philippine towns, burning houses and taking over local banks and businesses.

Troops and local police are fighting intense gunbattles with more than 200 Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels in the predominantly Christian town of Kolambugan in southern Lanao del Norte province.

The towns Beltran says they have taken over several buildings in the centre of town and many residents are fleeing. Rebels also entered a nearby town, triggering heavy fighting with troops.

The attacks follow a rebel ambush that killed at least seven Philippine soldiers and wounded a dozen in the same region."

NDCC, 19 August 2008

"Series of attacks/explosions believed to be perpetuated by the MILF were reported and validated in various parts in Lanao del Norte in region X, Sarangani and Sultan Kudarat and South Cotabato in Region XII and Lanao del Sur in ARMM

(...)

A total of 12,367 families or 57,397 persons were affected in the Provinces of Lanao del Norte and Misamis Occidental in Region X and the Provinces of Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and South Cotabato in Region XII."

The Mindanao peace processes

Peace negotiations between the government and the Moro rebels (1970-2005)

- The 1976 Tripoli Agreement between MNLF and government provided for a ceasefire and the creation of a Muslim autonomous region, which only started to be implemented 9 years later.
- 1996 peace accord between MNLF and government put an end to the armed struggle of the MNLF and allowed for the implementation of the Tripoli agreement, namely the creation of a Muslim autonomous region. A Southern Philippine Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD), headed by the MNLF leader, was created to oversee the Special Zone for Peace and Development (SZOPAD).
- In April 2000, the government declared an all-out war on the MILF, a breakaway group from the MNLF, which resulted in the displacement of nearly 1 million people.
- New president, Arroyo first showed peaceful intentions with the MILF, but resumed with a militaristic approach when, in February 2003, MILF camps were assaulted in central Mindanao.
- Since the July 2003 ceasefire, MILF and government have held several rounds of exploratory talks and agreed on several confidence-building measures to maintain the ceasefire.

WB, February 2005, pp. 2-3

"Successive Philippine political administrations starting from then President Ferdinand Marcos have attempted to forge a negotiated peace settlement of the conflict with the Moro rebels realizing that a purely military solution to the problem was not feasible. At the height of the MNLF rebellion in the 1970s, the Marcos regime sought the intercession of Libya in the signing of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement with the MNLF. The accord provided for an immediate cessation of armed hostilities between the two parties and established the framework for an autonomous region for the Muslims in Mindanao. However, the provision on autonomy was not implemented by Marcos because it meant carving out 13 provinces from Mindanao to constitute the autonomous region. It was not until President Corazon Aquino came into power in 1986 that this provision was fulfilled, but with the crucial condition that it should follow the Constitutional process of holding a plebiscite to determine which among the provinces specified in the Tripoli Agreement would opt to become part of the autonomous region. Expectedly, only 4 of the 13 provinces, where the Muslims are a majority, decided to join the autonomous region. The MNLF accused the government of violating the Tripoli Agreement and continued its armed struggle, although on a much smaller scale due to its, by then, waning influence.

President Fidel Ramos continued the policy of his predecessor and met success with his peace initiative when the MNLF leadership, under Chairman Nur Misuari, signed a peace accord with the government in September 1996. The Agreement provided for the establishment of an interim institution called the Southern Philippine Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD), to be headed by Chairman Misuari, which would be responsible for supervising and coordinating development projects in an area designated as the Special Zone for Peace and Development (SZOPAD). SZOPAD covered all the provinces specified in the Tripoli Agreement. After three years, a plebiscite would again be conducted asking the provinces in the SZOPAD whether they would like to join the "expanded" autonomous region for the Muslims. However, due in part to the disappointing performance of the SPCPD, only one additional province and one additional city joined the autonomous region—leaving the problem to fester in the other provinces.

By the time of President Joseph Estrada's election in 1998, the threat was no longer emanating from the MNLF as most of its leading officials had joined the government or were elected local government officials with tacit support from the central administration. The new challenge was emanating from the MILF, a breakaway group from the MNLF, headed by Hashim Salamat and operating largely in Central Mindanao. With little understanding of the peace initiatives of his predecessors, and in response to alleged atrocities committed by the MILF, President Estrada declared an "all-out war policy" in April 2000 and mobilized a large military contingent to capture several MILF camps, including its main headquarters in Camp Abubakar. Although the assault

was successful on the surface, it failed to crush the MILF which chose to avoid direct confrontation by splintering into smaller groups and hiding in the remote areas of the region.

In contrast, the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo initially declared an “all-out-peace” policy toward the MILF but was forced to temporarily abandon it when the military launched another assault of MILF-controlled territories in February 2003 in pursuit of “criminal elements” operating there. By the middle of that year, peace was again restored when the new and more pragmatic leadership of the MILF under Chairman Murad Ebrahim, who succeeded the late Hashim Salamat, forged a ceasefire agreement with the government. Exploratory talks between representatives of the government and the MILF were immediately held under the auspices of the Malaysian government. The Government-MILF Joint Ceasefire Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (JCCCH) was tasked to monitor any violation of the ceasefire agreement. It was also agreed during the exploratory talks to welcome an International Monitoring Team, led by Malaysia, to complement the work of the JCCCH and strengthen the peace process at the ground level. The formal peace talks are expected to resume soon. At their center, as in the past, will be the strong desire of the Moros for a geographical area where they can promote their culture, religion and way of life."

For a chronology of peace developments in Mindanao, see Joint Needs Assessment for Reconstruction and Development of Conflict-affected Areas in Mindanao, Annex 1: Chronology of events on the Mindanao conflict,
A. Path to formal peace accord between the GRP and the MNLF [[link](#)] (pp. 60-61)
B. The MILF struggle and the road to peace [[link](#)] (pp. 62-65)

GRP-MILF Peace Process (1997-2007)

- The "Agreement on Peace" signed by the MILF and the government in June 2001 is currently in the process of operationalization.
- The May 2002 agreement stipulates that it will safeguard the observance of international humanitarian law, respect for internationally recognized human rights, and fundamental freedoms for all persons.
- the major pending agenda items between the GRP and the MILF are the questions of ancestral domain and the disposition of arms and forces.
- the GRP agrees to relieve the evacuee situation and allow a return to the places occupied prior to 'All Out War', as well as to pay reparations for properties lost and damages sustained.
- The MILF accepts working with ARMM in its area and other government agencies outside of ARMM (SPDA in effect), through MILF civil society organizations, including the MILF-led Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA).
- From November 2002 to June 2003, resumption of war in Mindanao put the peace process on hold. As of July 19, 2003, government and MILF agreed on a mutual cessation of hostilities.
- During 2004 and 2005, both parties agreed that Malaysia play a facilitating role in the peace process, hosting the successive exploratory talks, but also leading an international team tasked with monitoring the ceasefire.
- Both parties met in September 2005 for the 9th exploratory talks seen as successful. The issue of ancestral domain and the related issue of governance in the Muslim-populated areas of Mindanao remain the main stumbling block.

- A January 2007 armed encounter between MILF and government troops illustrates the importance of coming to a political agreement so as to avoid further radicalization of the Moro population
- The July 2007 conflict outbreak in Basilan, following the killing of 14 marines, seriously endangers the peace talks and points to coordination weaknesses in the current ceasefire mechanism.
- At the end of 2007, negotiations between the Philippine government and Islamic separatists suffered a serious setback over differences relating to ancestral homelands.

UNDP 23 September 2002, pp. 19-21

"The GRP-MILF peace process began in 1997 and reached a breakthrough with the 'Agreement on Peace' of June 22nd, 2001 signed at Tripoli, Libya. That agreement is currently in the process of operationalization. First there was the 'Implementing Guidelines on the Security Aspect of the Tripoli Peace Agreement of 2001' signed August 7th, 2001 at Putrajaya, Malaysia. More recently there was the agreement 'Implementing Guidelines on the Humanitarian, Rehabilitation, and Development Aspects of the GRP-MILF Tripoli Agreement of Peace of 2001' signed May 7th, 2002 at Putrajaya, Malaysia.

The latest agreement on humanitarian, rehabilitation, and development issues stipulates that it will safeguard the observance of international humanitarian law, respect for internationally recognized human rights, and fundamental freedoms for all persons. These are the criteria and standards that should guide the monitoring mechanism of Article VI of the agreement to be undertaken by the joint Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH).

The agreement also assures full access for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) 'in accordance with ICRC's standard operating procedures'. It stipulates that 'in conformity with international humanitarian law, each party shall provide information, through the tracing mechanism of the ICRC, to families of all persons who are unaccounted for.'

They also agree that the 'parties shall pave the way for the immediate return of evacuees to their places of origin and provide all necessary financial/material and technical assistance to those evacuated for them to begin a new life. The GRP shall award reparations for the properties lost or destroyed by reasons of the conflict upon reasonable proof thereon as mutually verified and acknowledged by both parties.' (Article V, Numeral 3).

The only political and institutional issues deal primarily with project implementation and monitoring modalities. The MILF 'will establish a project implementing body, which will have the power and function to receive and disburse private and GRP funds.' (Article V, Numeral 1). The MILF also recognizes established institutions for project management, as per GRP policy:

'Consistent with GRP's resolve to task the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) as its primary implementing agency for development, the ARMM shall enter into contractual relations within its charter, pertaining to rehabilitation and development with the MILF project implementing body. Likewise, with other government development agencies outside ARMM areas.' 19 (Article V, Numeral 2).

In a second agreement known as the 'Joint Communique Between the GRP and the MILF' signed May 6th 2002 at Cyberjaya, Malaysia, the two sides agreed to 'the isolation and interdiction of all criminal syndicates and kidnap-for-ransom gangs, including so called 'lost commands' operating in Mindanao.'

Given these agreements, the major pending agenda items between the GRP and the MILF are the questions of ancestral domain and the disposition of arms and forces. The question of the

ancestral domains of Muslim communities is complex and difficult, especially in light of conflicting interests and claims between indigenous and Muslim small holders, large Muslim landowners, Christian settlers, plantation agriculture corporations, timber and mining interests, and oil and gas exploration groups. The legal rights of indigenous peoples contained in Republic Act 8371 'Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997' have already been guaranteed by law and should not suffer a roll-back in the subsequent negotiation process to guarantee other groups their rights as well. An MNLF policy statement maintains that both the MILF and the MNLF agree that RA8731 on indigenous ancestral domain should also apply to the Bangsamoro people. The government has yet to pronounce on this claim.

If the security, humanitarian, rehabilitation, development, and ancestral domain aspects of the GRP-MILF Tripoli Agreement on Peace of 2001 are successfully concluded, the disposition of MILF arms and forces should not present major difficulties. However, if the policy and institutional arrangements on these issues do not prove effective, and especially if the ancestral domain issue leads to acute conflicts over land, the demobilization of MILF combatant could prove very difficult.

In sum, both the GRP and the MILF have demonstrated political will and flexibility. This has translated into the capacity to rapidly reach 'implementing guideline' agreements. On one side the MILF has restricted its agenda to economic and social issues and demands feasible relief, rehabilitation, and development projects. The institutional arrangements are those necessary to implement the projects. The MILF accepts working with ARMM in its area and other government agencies outside of ARMM (SPDA in effect), through MILF civil society organizations, including a foundation, the recently founded Bangsamoro Development Agency. It has also agreed to collaborate with the government in the persecution of criminal elements that inhabit the same inaccessible areas utilized by the MILF, especially in the Maguindanao marsh areas.

On the other side the GRP agrees to relieve the evacuee situation and allow a return to the places occupied prior to 'All Out War', as well as to pay reparations for properties lost and damages sustained. In sum, a reversal of the effects on the population of the 'All Out War'. Of course, the MILF as an organization would not return to the situation 'antebellum' in that there would be no resurrection of the armed camps, exclusion of the State, and MILF territorial control.

The MILF and GRP are moving into a new relationship based on collaboration in relief, rehabilitation, and development, as well as in the improvement of the law and order situation in Mindanao. The MILF is demonstrating more interest in economic and social development than in political institutions."

In February 2003, talks were suspended when fighting and displacement resumed in Mindanao. The Mutual cessation of hostilities was signed on 19 July 2003. A downgrading of the actions of the military as well as the lifting of the warrants for the capture of MILF officials was ordered by the government. Malaysia was invited to facilitate the peace talks and oversee the monitoring of the ceasefire (Mindanews, 18 July 2003)

In September 2004, the government and MILF agreed to establish a Malaysian-led peacekeeping force (IMT) to oversee the implementation of the ceasefire in Maguindanao (Mindanews, 6 September 2004).The first contingent of the IMT arrived eight months later in October 2004.

In December 2004, during the 6th round of exploratory talks, both sides agreed a a certain number of points:

Government of the Philippines, February 2005

"1. The 6th round of Exploratory Talks held in KL last December 20-21, 2004 reflects the steady momentum of the Government's peace process with the MILF.

2. Among the highlights of the informal talks include the adoption of the interim guidelines to operationalize the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (AHJAG) pursuant to the GRP-MILF Joint Communiqué of May 6, 2002. This Mechanism is tasked in the interdiction and isolation of criminal and lawless elements found within MILF communities.

3. The Panels also adopt Guidelines for Observers in the GRP-MILF Formal Talks outlining the general role and conduct of accredited observers who will participate in the formal peace negotiations.

4. Both sides acknowledge the formal completion of two (2) major confidence building measures for the resumption of the talks, namely: (a) the phased redeployment of AFP troops from the Buliok area, and (b) the dropping of charges filed against several MILF leaders and members implicated in the Davao City bombings of 2003."

In April 2005, MILF and government met on exploratory talks where the issue of ancestral domain was high on the agenda (Mindanews, 20 April 2005). Both sides agreed to meet again to further discuss a negotiated settlement in the coming months.

Postponed in July 2005, exploratory talks between MILF and government held in September 2005 were deemed as highly successful:

Mindanews, 16 September 2005

"The two-day exploratory talks in Kuala Lumpur between the government and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) ended Friday with a "breakthrough" on governance, the last topic on the ancestral domain agenda.

"We scored a breakthrough in governance," MILF peace panel chair Mohagher Iqbal said in response to a query sent by MindaNews through text (SMS). No other details were immediately available.

(...)

Iqbal in an interview in early May this year, said the MILF was considering four governance possibilities in reaching a negotiated political settlement: federal, commonwealth, association of free states and independence.

Iqbal said at the time that they had not presented to the government peace panel their "exact position" on any of the four possibilities but ruled out autonomy as an option. "That's out of the question. We will not discuss autonomy. It's a failure," he said.

(...)

The discussions on ancestral domain, the last of the three major agenda items aside from security and rehabilitation, were earlier divided into four strands – concept, territory, resources and governance. A breakthrough on the first three strands happened in the 7th round of exploratory talks in April.

The Joint Statement said the addition of the ancestral domain agreement to the two previous agreements signed – Security in 2001 and Rehabilitation in 2002 – 'completes the requirement of the Tripoli Agreement on Peace of 2001.' "

MILF and government fail to agree on ancestral land rights

DPA, 8 September 2006

"Peace talks between Muslim rebels and the Philippine government were at an impasse as both sides failed to agree on crucial ancestral land rights, officials said Friday.

Presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye said the government's two-day meeting with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Kuala Lumpur failed to resolve the issue of ancestral domain, or which areas in the southern region of Mindanao would be included in an expanded autonomous Muslim region.

"There is a continuing impasse on territorial issues," he said, adding that government negotiators will still have to consult with senior cabinet members to discuss the matter.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesman, said the government panel offered 600 villages to be added to the existing Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), but his group wanted the inclusion of more than 1,000 additional villages.

The ARMM currently covers five predominantly Muslim provinces and the Islamic city of Marawi."

MILF ready to resume peace talks

AFP, 12 December 2006

"Muslim separatists waging a decades-old armed campaign in the southern Philippines said Tuesday they are ready to resume stalled peace talks with Manila early next year.

The two sides held fresh consultations in Malaysia and agreed in principle to resume formal negotiations, chief Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) negotiator Mohager Iqbal said.

Malaysia hosted the talks that ran into difficulties over the past few months. They had stalled over which areas the Muslims, who make up a large minority in the south of the mainly Roman Catholic nation, could claim as their "ancestral domain".

The concept would entitle them to a share of the proceeds from the economic use of the land. "We are always optimistic and we agreed to resume the peace talks early next year in Kuala Lumpur. We may discuss the issue on ancestral domain," Iqbal told reporters here.

Negotiations stalled in September due to the MILF demand that 1,000 parcels of land on the southern island of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago be set aside as "ancestral domain" under special control of the minority Muslims. Manila has said it can only give 600 parcels and that such a move would be subject to congressional approval."

Talks need to show results if the MILF wants to keep the Moro population's support (March 2007)

The Christian Science Monitor, 14 March 2007:

"Though MILF leader Al Haj Murad said over the weekend that a breakthrough could be near, analysts warn that if steps aren't taken to address the grievances of local Muslims, the goals of both the Philippines and the US in the region could be compromised. The US has supported the peace talks because it believes Moro anger fuels terrorist recruitment. But the MILF, which has wholeheartedly engaged in the talks and mellowed considerably from the years when it called for the creation of an Islamic state, needs to show results to its constituents or lose some of them to

more radical groups, analysts say. The MILF has been quietly supporting US and Filipino offensives against smaller and more militant Muslim groups, but that could change.

"Without a peace agreement that's implemented in an effective way, you could see a deterioration in pockets of Mindanao that can have a ripple effect on the country and the region," says Astrid Tuminez, a researcher for the US Institute for Peace and an expert on the MILF.

The fertile farmland of Midsayap is part of what the MILF considers the "ancestral homeland" of the Bangsamoro, or Moro people, as the region's Muslims were labeled by Spanish colonizers. They have a distinct culture from that of the dominant north.

MILF leaders are pressing for recognition of this homeland and a formula for self-rule. But a wave of Christian migration – much of it sponsored by the central government – since the 1940s has cut the proportion of Muslims in Mindanao. In Midsayap, as on much of the island, the choicest land is in the hands of the Christian settlers and their descendants. "The settlers took advantage of the situation, so many lands are owned by them. We almost became a minority in our homeland," says Eid Kabalu, a spokesman for the MILF.

These grievances have stirred interfaith tensions in Midsayap, which lies close to MILF camps. MILF officials admit some of the recent fighting has been fueled by their members, but say the involvement was unsanctioned. They complain that Christian politicians have refused aid to displaced Muslim villagers. "The mayor wants to drive away the MILF. If this escalates, it could affect the peace talks," warns Jafaar Ghazali, the group's vice chair of political affairs.

The last round of talks broke down over the "ancestral domain" that would be included in an autonomous region. The government offered one-fifth of the MILF's demand. Another strain on negotiations is the existence of an earlier peace accord with a rival insurgent group, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), from which the MILF split in the 1970s. The MNLF has chafed at its treatment under its 1996 accord, and the detention of its leader Nur Misuari for leading an uprising in 2001.

Analysts say that the government needs to bring the MNLF into any new peace plan, or they could take up arms again just as the MILF set theirs down. The two groups have argued for years over who is the "real" voice of the Moros. "The government is a victim of its own success. Now they want to unite the MNLF and MILF, but for many years they just wanted to divide and rule," says Benny Bacani, who runs the Institute for Autonomy and Governance, a public-policy think tank in Cotabato City.

Others say the key to ending the conflict lies not in meeting the piecemeal demands of groups like the MILF, but in providing meaningful political autonomy to the whole region, which would allow it to collect its own taxes, and central government reparations for past injustices.

"What we are trying to solve here is the problem of the Moro people. Not the problem of the MILF or the MNLF," says Abhoud Syed Lingga, executive director of the Institute for Bangsamoro Studies."

Reuters Foundation, 24 August 2007

"Peace talks stalled on all fronts:

Talks to review a 1996 peace agreement between the Philippines and Muslim separatists [MNLF] have been stalled yet again, the second set of discussions this week to be postponed after fierce fighting between troops and rebels.

Earlier this week, Manila postponed until next month talks with the country's largest Muslim rebel group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), amid reports of disagreement within the government over how much territory to cede to the MILF.

The fighting has taken place on Basilan island, where the MILF has several camps, and on nearby Jolo, where the MNLF is heavily present.”

NYTimes, 17 December 2007

“Negotiations between the Philippine government and Islamic separatists suffered a serious setback over the weekend after the insurgents accused the government of unilaterally changing the essence of the draft of an agreement on ancestral homelands. Officials for the rebel group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, said Sunday that the changes regarding the ancestral homelands, a central issue, pushed the decade-old negotiations back to square one.

Officials say the impasse is one of the most serious since talks began in 1997. Ancestral domain had been a delicate issue in the talks with the government, and the failure by the sides to resolve it has dimmed the chances of a peace agreement anytime soon. The rebels and the government had said they were hoping to sign a deal by January, but Mr. Garcia said, “Realistically, given this present situation, it might be difficult to reach the target.”

MILF and government reach agreement on ancestral homeland issue, but deal is put on hold by Supreme Court (August 2008)

- Negotiations ground to a halt in late 2006 over the key issue of Muslim ancestral domain.
- Renewed efforts in October 2007 came to a halt in December 2007.
- Frustrated at the slow pace of the talks, Malaysia, their facilitator since 2001 and leader of an International Monitoring Team (IMT) in Mindanao since 2004, announced in April 2008 that it would begin withdrawing its ceasefire monitors on 10 May.
- Meanwhile, links of MILF leaders with terrorist groups appear to be evident, which provides reason for the government to pursue armed action against MILF strongholds.
- At the end of June 2008, armed clashes between AFP and MILF picked up again in Mindanao, displacing thousands

ICG, 14 May 2008, pp.4-5:

“Negotiations collapsed in 2000 after the Estrada government launched an attack on MILF headquarters; they resumed, with Malaysia facilitating, in 2001, but after five years of slow but incremental progress, they ground to a halt in late 2006 over the key issue of Muslim “ancestral domain”, including the territory to be included in the new autonomous region. Nevertheless, what the sides called “clarificatory” and “technical” meetings took place in December 2006, August, September and October 2007 and January 2008.

On 24 October 2007, both sides announced with great fanfare in a joint statement that the peace process “is firmly back on track toward the holding of the Formal Talks before the end of the year”. However, in mid-December, just before a memorandum of agreement was to be signed in Kuala Lumpur, the MILF decided not to participate, saying the government had introduced “new and extraneous elements” that violated the consensus. From the beginning, there had been an agreement that the government would not raise the Philippines constitution, which in the MILF’s view reflects non-Moro interests, and the MILF would not raise independence. But in the government’s draft agreement, the inclusion of new territories in the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity was to be “subject to constitutional processes” – meaning there would have to be a plebiscite in the communities to be added to the existing ARMM, many of which have mixed Muslim, Christian and indigenous populations.

The MILF argued the constitution is premised on a unitary state that does not permit genuine power sharing, and a plebiscite would be Manila's escape clause, allowing the government to renege on treaty obligations, as it had after the 1996 treaty with the MNLF. Other conflicts around the world, such as Bougainville in Papua New Guinea and southern Sudan, had been settled through extra-constitutional means, they argued. Although at least two proposals, discussed in more detail below, have been floated to get around the stalemate, the talks remain stalled. Despite the impasse, the MILF's moderate head, Al-Haj Murad Ebrahim, who succeeded Salamat Hashim after the latter's death in 2003, reinforced his commitment to the peace process at an "expanded" MILF central committee meeting (8-11 March 2008) in Butig, Lanao del Sur, on the Mindanao mainland.

Frustrated at the slow pace of the talks, Malaysia, their facilitator since 2001 and leader of an International Monitoring Team (IMT) in Mindanao since 2004, announced in April 2008 that it would begin withdrawing its ceasefire monitors on 10 May. The 59-strong IMT has played a key role, supporting the CCCH and civil society Local Monitoring Teams (LMTs) in dampening down recurrent skirmishes between government and MILF forces. Without international support, these mechanisms may not be able to withstand a drift toward renewed conflict.

In the meantime, MILF extremists continue to collude with Jemaah Islamiyah, its freelance jihadi offshoots and ASG, despite attempts by the leadership to curtail such ties. Fighters from South East Asia and the Middle East had been welcome at the MILF's sprawling Camp Abu Bakar in Maguindanao since the early 1990s. The biggest contingent was from Jemaah Islamiyah, which in 1994 began setting up a military academy, Camp Hudaibiyah, to replace its Afghanistan facilities. [...]

The accounts of Istiada and Mohamed Baehaqi, arrested in February 2008, implicate other MILF commanders, including Ameril Umbra, also known as Commander Kato, a powerful warlord whose terror ties are well documented; Ustadz Baguinda Alih of the 105th command in Mamasapano, Maguindanao; and Commander Satar of Pantukan, Compostela Valley province. They also both refer to a man named Zabidi Abdul alias Bedz, a senior MILF commander who is the alleged chief of a group calling itself "al-Khobar" and responsible for a series of bus bombings in 2007 and possibly a string of fourteen transmission tower bombings in Lanao in early 2008. Bedz is also said to be a member of the MILF's Special Operations Group, which in the past has worked with JI on major bombing operations. It is now believed to have some twenty members; its relationship to the MILF leadership is unclear. Despite the evidence, however, MILF leaders consistently deny terrorist ties, saying the movement has repeatedly denounced violence against non-combatants and has no contact with JI, and that the government uses accusations of sheltering terrorists as an excuse to attack it.

Reuters, 27 July 2008

"The Philippines' largest Muslim rebel group and the government agreed on Sunday to ballot areas within 12 months on whether they wanted to join an existing autonomous Muslim homeland in the volatile south.

The compromise came after the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the government resumed stalled talks in Malaysia.

(...)

Under the deal, a referendum will be held in around 700 villages on whether they want to join the existing autonomous Muslim region."

COE-DHMA, 31 July 2008

"Officials in a province that would be included in an expanded Muslim autonomous region in the southern Philippines should the government sign a pending agreement with the country's largest Muslim rebel group demanded Thursday (July 31) that the province be excluded from the proposal. North Cotabato province, located in the central part of Mindanao, the main island in the southern Philippines, has been the site of several clashes between soldiers and rebels from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) this week, even as MILF and the government are set to sign an agreement on the creation of an autonomous homeland for 3 million Muslims and indigenous groups, known as the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity, on Tuesday (August 5). MILF has been fighting for the territory, which would add to the existing Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), for decades and after seven-year-old peace talks hit several stumbling blocks earlier this year, the two sides on Sunday (July 27) agreed to the boundaries, governance and resource-sharing for the proposed homeland. But North Cotabato officials have filed a petition with the high court, asking it to require government negotiators to disclose details of the agreement to the areas that would be affected by it before the document is signed on Tuesday, the Inquirer reported."

Xinhua, 4 August 2008

"The Philippine government Monday canceled a scheduled signing of an agreement with the country's separatist group after the Supreme Court issued a temporary restraining order (TRO).

The Philippine Supreme Court ordered the halt in the signing of the agreement between the government and the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) on Monday, one day before the scheduled signing.

"We submit to the sound discretion of the Supreme Court. The signing set for Tuesday will not take place," Press Secretary Jesus Dureza told Xinhua.

The Philippine government is scheduled to sign the pact on Tuesday in Malaysia's capital of Kuala Lumpur with the MILF on the ancestral domain issue, the last remaining hurdle to a final political settlement that is expected to end the insurgency in the southern Philippines."

See also:

Full text of the ["Implementing Guidelines on the Humanitarian, Rehabilitation and Development Aspects of the GRP-MILF Tripoli Agreement on Peace of 2001"](#)

The communist insurgency

The New People's Army (NPA), armed wing of the Communist Party (CPP)

- The Communist Party of the Philippines was founded in 1968, its armed wing, the NPA, one year later with 60 fighters and 34 firearms.
- The CPP condemns the "semicolonial and semifeudal" character of present-day Philippine society and says it is currently waging a "national democratic revolution" which, upon victory, will proceed to the "socialist revolution".

- The CPP also includes the revolutionary forces constituted by the people, aiming to build relationships with local communities through its land reform, health, education and other “mass campaigns”.
- Expanding rapidly during the 1970s, the armed struggle intensified during 1980 and 1992. It contributed to bringing down the Marcos regime in 1986.
- Due to tactical errors and military adventurism, the NPA gradually lost its influence and capacity and by the start of the 1990s, the Ramos administration declared “strategic victory”.
- From 1992 to 1998, the CPP conducted its “Second Great Rectification Movement”, or an essentially ideological campaign to reaffirm the CPP-NPA-NDFP’s adherence to basic revolutionary principles.
- As a result, the revolutionary armed Left grew steadily and gradually in the latter part of the 1990s.
- In early 2006, the NPA reported “operating in more than 120 guerrilla fronts, which cover 800 municipalities in 70 out of 79 Philippine provinces”.³ Public statements of defense officials and military officers of NPA strength tend to vary and estimates over the period 2001-2005 ranged from some 8,000 to 11,000 troops armed with 6,000 to 8,000 high-powered rifles.

UNICEF, October 2006, pp. 30-32

"Peasant and, later, worker movements have been a long-standing feature of Philippine history. There were hundreds of spontaneous armed uprisings across the country throughout Spanish colonial rule. These culminated in the Katipunan-led Philippine Revolution of 1896. However, efforts to realize an independent Philippine nation were thwarted by the intervention and colonization of an ascendant and expansionist United States (US). Nonetheless, nationalist peasant and worker uprisings continued in the face of determined US attempts to crush all dissent and rebellion. The Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP) was established in 1930 during American colonial rule.

The current armed struggle of the CPP-NPA-NDFP claims continuity with this narrative of struggle. According to Amado Guerrero, founding CPP chairperson, the democratic demand of agrarian reform and the nationalist demand to free the nation from neocolonial rule remain necessary to redress enduring conditions of exploitation and oppression. The CPP was founded in Tarlac province, Central Luzon on December 26, 1968 (the CPP also uses the term “re-establishment” to emphasize its repudiation of the earlier PKP). The NPA in turn was established on March 29, 1969 with less than 60 fighters and only 34 firearms, just nine of which were high-powered rifles.

The CPP condemns the “semicolonial and semifeudal” character of present-day Philippine society in which the Filipino people suffer from “foreign and feudal domination”.¹ It says that it is currently waging a “national democratic revolution” which, upon victory, will proceed to the “socialist revolution”. The class lines of the struggle are clearly drawn. On one side is the “joint class dictatorship of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class subservient to the foreign monopoly bourgeoisie” and on the other the “basic oppressed classes [of] the working class and the peasantry”; there is also the “intermediate social strata [of] the urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle or national bourgeoisie”. The integral components of the “protracted people’s war” are also made explicit: “revolutionary armed struggle, land reform and mass-base building”.

Significantly, the mainstream revolutionary Left does not conceive its struggle as waged merely by the armed forces of the NPA. Rather, it also includes the “motive forces of the revolution” that are organized to overthrow their class enemies: “the working class comprising about 15 percent of the population; the peasantry, at least 75 percent; the urban petty bourgeoisie, about eight

percent; and the middle bourgeoisie, about one percent.”² This is pertinent to the study at hand because this concept of a mass-based struggle goes far in explaining the relationships the CPP-NPA-NDFP aims to build with local communities through its land reform, health, education and other “mass campaigns”.

The 1970s was a decade of laying the foundations of an armed struggle that would prove resilient for decades to come. Despite the declaration of Martial Law in 1972, the revolutionary armed Left continued to expand nationwide. By the mid-1970s it had reached: the Cordilleras, Cagayan Valley, Southern Tagalog and Bicol in Luzon; Negros and Samar islands in the Visayas; and Davao in Mindanao. Consolidated guerrilla zones covering entire municipalities and, in some areas, even stable guerrilla bases started to become more defined. The NDFP was formally established on April 24, 1973.

The period from the 1980s to around 1992 at first saw an intensification of the armed struggle. Fighting in the countryside and the political struggle by progressive and Left forces in the cities combined to bring the Marcos dictatorship down in 1986, by which time the NPA had some 6,100 high-powered rifles. By the late 1980s, however, the NPA began to engage in military adventurism under a framework of “strategic counter-offensive” (SCO) comprised largely of the premature regularization of large military formations which engaged in ever-larger military actions in the countryside at the cost of neglecting organizing work and building mass support.

Also within the SCO framework, the NPA engaged in reckless partisan operations in urban centers even in the National Capital Region (NCR) and Metro Manila itself. These weaknesses were exploited by the Aquino administration’s “Total War” implemented through consecutive military operational plans reaching into the Ramos administration: Oplan Lambat Bitag I, II and III from 1989-1994. Overall, by the start of the 1990s, the revolutionary movement had so diminished in intensity that the Ramos administration declared “strategic victory” and turned over primary responsibility for counter-insurgency from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to the Philippine National Police (PNP).

The CPP, however, repudiated the SCO and other tactical “errors”, and from 1992-1998 conducted its so-called “Second Great Rectification Movement”, or an essentially ideological campaign to reaffirm the CPP-NPA-NDFP’s adherence to basic revolutionary principles. This was apparently successful and the revolutionary armed Left grew steadily and gradually in the latter part of the 1990s. The cumulative growth eventually led to a general acknowledgement that the government’s earlier declaration of “strategic victory” was premature.

It appears that recent years have seen the resurgence of the revolutionary Left. The NPA identifies three strategic phases in its armed struggle: defensive, stalemate and offensive. In early 2006 it reported “approaching and developing the middle phase of the strategic defensive” as well as “operating in more than 120 guerrilla fronts, which cover 800 municipalities in 70 out of 79 Philippine provinces”.³ Public statements of defense officials and military officers of NPA strength tend to vary and estimates over the period 2001-2005 ranged from some 8,000 to 11,000 troops armed with 6,000 to 8,000 high-powered rifles.

In any case, the AFP recognizes that the guerrilla fronts within which the NPA maneuvers have reached beyond forest hinterlands and now cover large portions of the land area of entire provinces and even regions, extending even to more populated areas and town centers.⁴ The CPP-NPA-NDFP also claims to have created clandestine “organs of political power” in the countryside in the build-up to eventual seizure of state power on a nationwide scale. All these have prompted the recent reaffirmation by government officials that the armed revolutionary Left is the country’s greatest national security threat, and calls by the Arroyo administration for “final blows” to it. Primary responsibility for counter-insurgency has been returned to the AFP and

formal mechanisms have even been created for erstwhile civilian social and economic projects to be much more closely coordinated with the military. Meanwhile, peace talks between the Philippine government and the NDFP have remained stalled since 2004 amidst NDFP accusations of government non-compliance with previously agreed upon processes."

Times Online, 25 January 2007:

"Since 1969, the N.P.A., the armed wing of the outlawed Communist Party of the Philippines, has waged what it calls a "protracted people's war" in which a total of some 40,000 guerrillas, soldiers and civilians have so far died.

[...]

Peace talks with the government stalled in 2004. Recent clashes between the N.P.A. and government forces have claimed scores of lives across the archipelago, particularly in the rebel strongholds of Luzon and Mindanao. In a few bloody days last month, the military shot dead three N.P.A. commanders, while an ambush by 30 rebels killed four policemen.

The N.P.A., which both the U.S. and the E.U. have classified as a terrorist organization, is not the only headache in Mindanao for the government of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. This resource-rich but lawless region is home to two other formidable armed groups. While Manila has struck a fragile cease-fire with the 12,000-strong Moro Islamic Liberation Front (M.I.L.F.), the country's largest Muslim rebel army, it has vowed to eradicate Abu Sayyaf, an al-Qaeda-linked outfit accused of a string of terrorist acts, including the 2004 bombing of a ferry near Manila that killed more than 100 people. January brought confirmation that Abu Sayyaf chief Khaddafy Janjalani, as well as many of his top lieutenants, had been killed during an ongoing military campaign aided by U.S. intelligence and hardware. With Abu Sayyaf reeling, Arroyo on Jan. 22 vowed that a massive deployment of troops will now "blunt the tactical edge of the New People's Army." But the N.P.A.'s nationwide reach makes it a tougher foe. "The military has always seen the N.P.A. as a much larger threat because it operates in nearly every province across the archipelago," says Zachary Abuza, a Southeast Asia security analyst who teaches at Simmons College in Boston. "The government will always have to divert resources to deal with it. The N.P.A. won't go away anytime soon."

The N.P.A. boasted 12,000 armed regulars in the mid-1980s, when many saw it as the only force capable of challenging dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

[...]

Like Asia's other communist rebel groups—India's Naxalites and Nepal's Maoists—the Philippine rebels have survived because they are primarily fueled not by foreign ideology but by domestic realities: poverty, corruption, unemployment. Some 40% of Filipinos live on less than \$2 a day, while a tenth of the 87 million population seeks work abroad. Corruption watchdog Transparency International ranks the Philippines near the bottom of its corruption index, alongside Nepal and Rwanda. The N.P.A. promotes communism as the only cure for the Philippines' many ills, but even Filipinos who reject its cause still share its grievances.

Officials in Manila acknowledge that the N.P.A.'s resilience is largely rooted in the country's decades-long inability to improve the lives of the underprivileged. "Remove poverty, and we remove the N.P.A.," says Eduardo Ermita, a former Defense Secretary who is now Arroyo's executive secretary and one of her closest advisers. Ermita says the authorities are serious about providing education for all children, and about tackling other grievances such as corruption. "You cannot win the war through guns alone," he says. "You have to win hearts and minds."

But guns help. [In 2006], Arroyo declared what she called an "all-out war" to destroy the N.P.A., and she has promised her commanders \$200 million for better weapons and pay for their troops.

The rebels, for their part, have stepped up operations against what they call an "illegitimate, rotten and brutal" administration.

[...]

While outright victory is not a possibility for the N.P.A., neither is extinction. Victor asserts that Arroyo's "all-out war" is unwinnable. The Philippine army is thinly dispersed, he argues, capable of engaging only a quarter of the N.P.A.'s 120 "fronts" nationwide while remaining vulnerable to hit-and-run tactics. "We have learned a lot about guerrilla warfare in 37 years," he warns. Felipe Miranda, a political-science professor at the University of the Philippines, agrees: "The military does not have the capability, in terms of both logistics and manpower, to deal with an insurgency that has been around for close to half a century." Officials in Manila admit troops are stretched, but insist they are gaining the upper hand. Cabinet Secretary Ricardo Saludo says there has been a "major reduction" in N.P.A. troop strength, from 12,000 five years ago to 7,000 or so, and that the armed forces are seizing more N.P.A. weapons than ever. "The Filipino people and the government are working together to reduce all threats to the state, including the N.P.A., while spreading the bounty of economic development nationwide," says Saludo.

Military success against the rebels in Mindanao also depends on restarting peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. After all, the Philippine army would be hard-pressed to fight the M.I.L.F. and the N.P.A. simultaneously, especially at a time when more than 6,000 government troops are already involved in a third entanglement—attacking Abu Sayyaf's jungle strongholds on Jolo Island. Adding to all this bloodshed is the other war: in recent years, but especially in 2006, hundreds of antigovernment activists across the Philippines—labor leaders, lawyers, journalists, even priests—have been assassinated.

[...]

Yet even without the N.P.A., Arroyo's administration is under siege. [...] Some see her declaration of war against the N.P.A. as a concession to the military top brass, which she desperately needs to stay in line. "The military, rather than Arroyo, is pushing the political agenda," says Southeast Asia security expert Abuza. "Arroyo wants to keep the military on her good side. She's always concerned that it will at some point withdraw support for her."

[...]

What is beyond dispute is that the government is in seemingly perpetual conflict with a significant portion of its population. The N.P.A. should be a cold war relic, a forgotten insurgency rotting away in the Southeast Asian jungle. Instead—and despite its bloody purges, its "sparrow unit" death squads and its defunct ideology—it remains an enduring symbol of the failure of successive governments to improve the lives of ordinary Filipinos. Deep in the mountains, Comrade Victor has no doubt that his "protracted people's war" will outlast Arroyo's presidency, although in one sense he'll be sad to see her go. Government opponents who now fear for their lives "are being encouraged to take the great leap to join the N.P.A.," he says. "Arroyo is our greatest recruiter." "

Government-NPA confrontations on the increase since 2003 (July 2008)

- According to a UNICEF study, armed confrontations between the CPP-NPA-NDFP and state forces have been increasing since 2003, particularly intensifying in 2005, while those against the MILF-BIAF (and MNL/ASG) have been decreasing since 2003.
- In Surigao del Sur, starting in November 2007, army offensive against the NPA displaced 3,000 indigenous people (Lumad).
- Government-NPA confrontations displace people throughout the Philippines
- As of December 2007, Human Rights group Karapatan claimed that in Quezon province alone, more than 9,000 children have been displaced since the first days of December.

UNICEF, October 2006, pp. 5-39

"The study covers mainly the period 2001-2005. Armed confrontations between the CPP-NPA-NDFP and state forces have been increasing since 2003, particularly intensifying in 2005, while those against the MILF-BIAF (and MNLF/ASG) have been decreasing since 2003. It is relevant that during the period covered the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP)-NDFP peace talks were suspended in 2004 while the GRP-MILF talks continued.

IBON monitored 1,061 armed confrontations between the AFP and the various armed groups in the period 2001-2005, for an average of 0.6 armed confrontations per day. The number of incidents and the armed groups involved were: 730 (NPA), 161 (MILF), 6 (MNLF), 166 (ASG). Though increasing in number over the period covered, the fighting was relatively sporadic and scattered considering the breadth of areas in which these armed groups are present. Less quantifiable, but anecdotally observed, is the intensification of counter-insurgency operations by the AFP.

There were 343 civilian casualties (199 killed, 144 wounded) during armed encounters in the period 2001-2005.¹ The ratio of civilian casualties to armed confrontations was lowest in the case of the NPA (1:8) followed by the MILF (1:5), MNLF (1:2) and ASG (1:1). Likewise, the ratio of civilian to combatant casualties is lowest in the case of the NPA (1:28) followed by the MILF (1:11), MNLF (1:5) and ASG (1:8).

There were 195 armed confrontations in the eight provinces covered by the study, with some 50 civilian direct casualties.

The study found evidence to conclude that a significant factor underlying the differential impact of armed conflict on both the vulnerabilities and capacities of communities is whether guerrilla or positional wars are being waged.

The study team also came across many firsthand accounts of a wide range of non-military activities particularly of the NPA. These included small-scale health, education, cultural and socioeconomic projects, and arbitration in intra-community conflicts."

Reuters Foundation, 3 December 2007

"Nearly 3,000 tribespeople have fled their mountain homes in the southern Philippines as the military stepped up an offensive against insurgents of the communist New People's Army (NPA), officials and church leaders said on Monday.

Modesto Villasanta, a Roman Catholic priest and leader of a local human rights group, said he feared a humanitarian crisis if military operations continue to displace Manobo tribes from 11 communities in a province on Mindanao island. "We're appealing to the military to stop the offensives and allow these people to return to their homes during Christmas," Villasanta told Reuters in a phone interview. "We're also running out of food and supplies to sustain these people."

GMA News, 11 December 2007

"[...] [A]ccording to Karapatan, a total of 30,133 individuals were displaced by heightened military activities in Region 4-A or in Calabarzon. About 50 percent of these displaced people came from Quezon province, 9,000 of them were children."

COE-DHMA, 1 July 2008

"Philippine troops continued to clash with communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels in the south Tuesday (July 1) as separately troops engaged rebels belonging to the country's largest Muslim separatist group. One day after a retaliation offensive killed 15 NPA rebels in Surigao del Norte province, special forces soldiers battled NPA gunmen in the farming village of Camanza in Davao del Norte province in the southern Mindanao region."

Oplan Bantay Laya II failure contributed to stop of peace talks and to bolder insurgency movements (2008)

- With its counter-insurgency operation Oplan Bantay Laya, the government militarised large parts of the south and other parts of the country.
- Oplan Bantay Laya (OBL) is seen by some as a failure, adding new vigour to insurgency groups such as NPA and MILF.
- The peace talks with the MILF are in danger, with the MILF possibly retracting from the talks
- CPP said OBL 2 was a failure and was responsible for repeated human rights violations.
- President Arroyo refused to engage in peace talks with the NPA, instead increasing the military budget significantly.

Government of the Philippines, 7 May 2008 (citing KABIBA human rights group)

"Undeniably, there is an ongoing civil war in the country instigated by chronic socio-economic crisis, bad governance and wanton violations of human rights. However, armed conflict in the countryside is being escalated by the Arroyo government's all-out war policy through the Oplan Bantay Laya 2 and its implementation of Investment Defense Force (IDF) or massive deployment of military and paramilitary troops to clear the way and/or protect the interests of large-scale mining and pesticides-dependent monocrop plantation companies.

Militarization is happening now in Southern Mindanao, particularly in the mineral-rich and alluvial soil-rich Compostela Valley Province, Davao Oriental and Davao del Norte. Indeed, the Arroyo government has declared Southern Mindanao as hub for mining and agribusiness plantations, as well as one of the priority areas for IDF implementation. The massive deployment of troops in rural areas to facilitate development aggression and landgrabbing is now displacing hundreds of families of peasants and indigenous peoples."

UPI Asia, 3 April 2008

"The failure of the Manila government to address the roots of armed conflict in the Philippines through peace negotiations has emboldened two armed political groups to raise the ante of their armed struggle against the seven-year-old presidency of Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

On March 29, the Communist Party of the Philippines, celebrating the 39th year of the New People's Army, put to task all party members and red fighters to increase the number of guerilla fronts in 173 congressional districts. That could double or triple the current guerilla fronts from the present 120-130 to a minimum of 240-260 guerilla fronts, and to a maximum of 360-390 guerilla fronts in the next two to three years. If realized, this political-military condition will send chills down the spines of Arroyo and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Also on the same day, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which is currently holding peace talks with the government, issued another earthshaking political statement, asserting that without

radical change, the Philippines has no chance at greatness where progress, unity, peace and understanding reign all over the archipelago.

[...]

The armed Moro group said instead of addressing the problems besetting the 90 million Philippine population, the government favors the collective interest of the elites. Such a statement could be read as preparation for the withdrawal of the MILF from the current peace talks, and therefore another political headache to the current embattled Arroyo presidency.

The presidential palace did not issue any statement in response to the two armed groups' separate statements [...].

The CPP's statement on the 39th year of the New People's Army entitled "Seize the Initiative, Launch the Offensives to Reap Victories for the 40th NPA Anniversary," said the Washington-backed Arroyo presidency is engaged in wishful thinking by repeatedly announcing its plan to destroy if not reduce the strength of the communist guerillas on or before 2010.

[...]

It said the Manila governments from Marcos to Arroyo have merely succeeded in generating conditions for the growth in strength and advance of the NPA and other revolutionary forces in the Philippines. The party said Arroyo's counter-insurgency programs, Oplan Bantay Laya 1 and 2, were also a complete failure in eliminating the communist movement.

The CPP said: "Oplan Bantay Laya 2 failed miserably in its objective in 2007, as Oplan Bantay Laya 1 has failed in 2001-2006, to concentrate the reactionary armed forces and regional mobile police units in 600 barangays in some 10 to 12 guerrilla fronts in six regions all at the same time in order to clear barangays of the NPA, hold them for an extended period and develop them against the people's army. "The military and police forces could hardly occupy 300 barangays at every given time and have failed to destroy a single guerrilla front of the NPA. The enemy simply does not have enough troops and resources to cover extensive areas of the country. The NPA can freely move in at least 80 percent of Philippine territory." The Philippine military has been churning out press releases from its main headquarters in Manila, saying it has been successful in reducing the strength of the communist guerillas by dismantling the guerilla fronts of the NPA.

But reports from the field say the exact opposite. According to the CPP, the NPA has easily moved in the wide gaps in the deployment of enemy brigades between enemy battalions, between companies and between platoon-size special operation teams. The communist guerillas have been able to maneuver in order to be on the exterior line in concentrating the red fighters for tactical offensives to wipe out enemy units. It has been able to disperse and shift position in order to evade the enemy with superior strength and at the same time secure a position for launching offensives against government troops. On the other hand, government soldiers are regularly withdrawn from guerrilla fronts, either because of the need to be deployed in other guerrilla fronts where the NPA is launching more frequent tactical offensives or in Moro areas whenever the level of armed conflict rises there. Whenever state security forces vacate an area, the NPA disperses its units in order to do mass work and further develop the mass base and mass support, according to the CPP statement.

Instead of winning the war, the Arroyo presidency and the pro-Arroyo chain of command in the AFP have perpetuated human rights violations under Oplan Bantay Laya. The CPP said the Arroyo government has carried out mass intimidation, arbitrary arrests and detention, massacres, assassinations and torture, enforced disappearances, rape, arson, food blockades and forced evacuation of rural and indigenous communities to serve the landgrabbing interests of foreign corporations, mining companies, high bureaucrats and local tyrants. This assertion of massive human rights violations of the Arroyo government is repeatedly echoed by various human rights organizations like the London-based Amnesty International and the Hong Kong-based Asian Human Rights Center. The same observation has been continuously stated by the European Union, and even the United States, which forced the U.S. Senate to cut down military aid to the Philippine government unless President Arroyo improves the human rights situation across the

country. A more comprehensive and objective report on the condition of human rights tied to the current counter-insurgency campaign was done by U.N. Special Rapporteur Philip Alston, who said that the voluminous cases of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances of leftwing activists are part of the counter-insurgency policy of the Arroyo government.

There's no doubt Arroyo is going to face bigger and bolder offensives from the CPP-NPA in the next three years. There's a strong possibility that the MILF will withdraw from the ongoing peace talks and resume war with the Arroyo government because of the administration's persistent moves to give the Moro people only nominal independence, instead of genuine autonomy. Arroyo has no one to blame but herself. She rejected the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' call for the resumption of peace talks, and instead followed the military prescription and poured in an additional 14 billion pesos (US\$336.5 million) for the escalation of the war. Arroyo has defied the public's call for peace talks and instead adopted the games of the generals.”

GRP refuses to resume talks with CCP-NPA and decides to step up armed offensive (June 2008)

- Government is less willing to accept CPP/NPA/NDF as peace negotiating partner
- In February and March 2008, the government declared to step up counter-insurgency military spending and armed action against the NPA, despite calls to re-engage in peace talks.
- In May 2008, the Compostela Valley province governor called on the church to provide mediation to resume the peace talks, while the military said it would continue fighting until further order.
- The NPA has stepped up its activities in Compostela Valley in early 2008, with AFP retaliations as a consequence

Alston Report, 2007, p.7

10. The global context of the “war on terror” has affected the Government’s approach to these security threats. On the one hand, it has shown its willingness to compromise with the MILF in exchange for cooperation against the ASG and foreign terrorists. On the other hand, Government officials have begun referring to the CPP/NPA/NDF as the “Communist Terrorist Movement” (CTM), legitimizing a turn from negotiation to counterinsurgency.

UPI Asia, 7 February 2008

“Last week the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines called on the Manila government and the communist-led National Democratic Front of the Philippines to resume stalled peace talks and advised both parties to refrain from imposing preconditions that would imperil the resumption of the talks.

Peace groups in the Philippines welcomed the bishops' call for the resumption of peace talks. They said it was about time for the government and the Communist Party of the Philippines to go back to the negotiating table and address the roots of armed conflict and civil war in the country. However, the peace initiative was immediately rejected by top security officials, who have imposed an impossible precondition by demanding the CPP and its armed guerillas to first agree to a ceasefire or lay down their arms before the talks resume.

[...]

The resumption of peace talks between the government and communist guerillas was further jeopardized when Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Hermogenes Esperon Jr., whose term was extended for another three months, declared that the next three months would be

bloody because the military plans to escalate its assault against the CPP armed wing, the New People's Army. General Esperon's declaration of all-out war is against the CBCP's call for the resumption of peace talks. While the Roman Catholic Church, sensing that a bloody war is in the offing, has asked for the revival of peace talks to avert full-blown military operations, Esperon is preparing the armed forces for a major blood bath."

UPI Asia, 27 March 2008

"Last week, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo announced her government was allotting 14 billion pesos (US\$334.6 million) to procure weapons and upgrade the salaries of officials and rank-and-file members of the armed forces in order to defeat the communist guerillas on or before the end of her term in May 2010.

[...]

Another 1 billion pesos, she said, would be allotted to finance mass housing projects for government soldiers. Arroyo said the massive funding for the armed forces was in response to the victories gained by the military in the battlefield, like the reduction in the number of armed communist guerillas to 1,500 from 5,700 in Northern Luzon and the dismantling of 13 to 15 guerilla fronts in the first quarter of 2008.

[...]

Critics and political opponents of the president criticized her plan to unleash an all-out military offensive against the communist guerillas in the next two-and-a-half years, asserting that the resumption of peace talks between the government and the communist-led National Democratic Front of the Philippines remains the best option to date, rather than spending Filipino taxpayers' money on useless and senseless state action like all-out war."

The Inquirer, 28 May 2008

"Compostela Valley Governor Arturo Uy asked the leadership of the Catholic Church here to help mediate between the government and the New People's Army (NPA) in a bid to "put an end" to the rising incidents of violence involving the rebels.

In letter sent to Tagum Bishop Wilfredo Manlapaz on Tuesday, Uy appealed to the prelate to "initiate a peace dialogue between the rebels and government forces."

Uy said he wrote Manlapaz because of the "disheartening events affecting the peace and order situation in Compostela Valley in recent weeks." These included, Uy said, "several unwanted killings of civilians and officials, among them a village chieftain in Montevista town."

"We need spiritual guidance and intervention from the bishop in helping us bring them (NPA and the military) to the negotiating table.

[...]

"The clergy in the diocese responded positively with our proposal. We have come to include also the priests in the peace initiative since they know better when it comes to situations in the communities. They have an easy access to the NPAs," Uy said. The military has earlier reiterated its willingness to "talk peace" with the rebels, but Uy acknowledged it would not be easy "as we have to determine first the parameters where we can start talking in the negotiating table."

[...]

Lieutenant Colonel Alan Luga, commander of the Army's 1001st Infantry Brigade, said in an earlier interview that they will only halt offensives against the rebels if the military's top leaders issue such an order.

In the absence of any order for a cessation of hostilities, Luga said they will continue to pounce on the rebels.

The NPA has stepped up attacks against military and civilian targets in Compostela Valley, initiating five encounters against government forces in May alone."

The "war on terror"

The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) (May 2008)

- The ASG is an alliance of smaller groups around individual leaders who compete and cooperate as needed
- The ASG allegedly has links with Al Qaeda.
- The ASG stronghold is Basilan province.
- The ASG has been the principal target of U.S. intervention since Balikatan operations began in early 2002.
- Armed attacks drive the ASG into MILF and MNLF territory where they get support by MILF and MNLF leaders.
- There is a danger of the ASG radicalizing MILF and MNLF.

ICG, 14 May 2008, pp.7-10:

"The ASG is not an insurgency in the same sense as the MILF or MNLF, or even a clearly delineated organisation. It is best understood as a network of networks, an alliance of smaller groups around individual charismatic leaders who compete and cooperate to maximise their reputation for violence. The greater the violence, the bigger the pay-off, in terms of higher ransom payments and foreign funding. Contrary to some assumptions, the ASG was not an Islamist insurgency that "degenerated" into criminality following the death of its founder, Abu-rajak Janjalani, in 1998. Kidnapping and extortion were part of its modus operandi from the outset and its religio-political motivations did not disappear with Janjalani's death.

Janjalani founded ASG in 1991. He was then a charismatic young preacher in the mosques and madrasas of Zamboanga and Basilan. While training in Libya in the mid-1980s, he had opposed Nur Misuari's entry into peace talks and insisted that the sole objective of the Muslim struggle was an Islamic state – not autonomy, not independence, not revolution. ASG's original name, indeed, was Al-Harakat al-Islamiyah, Arabic for "Islamic movement". In 1990 he had met Osama bin Laden's brother-in-law, Muhammad Jamal Khalifa, then heading the Philippines office of the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO). Khalifa began directing funds his way and eventually drew him into an al-Qaeda cell in the Philippines that included Ramzi Yousef, the 1993 World Trade Center bomber, and Yousef's uncle, 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammad. This cell plotted spectacular acts of terrorism from Manila while providing training to Abdurajak's Zamboanga- and Basilan-based followers. Their numbers swelled while Misuari talked peace.

The outside world paid little note as the ASG made Basilan increasingly ungovernable. Its seizure of foreign hostages from Sipadan and Dos Palmas in 2000-2001 came as if from the blue. Joint bombing operations involving JI, ASG, and extremists within MILF began well before the first Bali bombing and could have provided early clues to the regional jihadi nexus but were not taken seriously as instances of international terrorism. From early 2002, the ASG extended its operational reach into the nation's capital, using militant converts to Islam. Organised as the Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM), and trained and commanded by ASG and JI, converts struck at Manila's transport infrastructure in February 2004 and February 2005, taking more than 120 lives. These attacks anticipated parallel developments elsewhere (Madrid, London). Time and again since the early 1990s, terrorists in the Philippines have been ahead of the global curve but have been subjected to little informed analysis.

The ASG has been the principal target of U.S. intervention since Balikatan operations began in early 2002. After those operations drove the group's core leadership from Basilan into MILF territory on the Mindanao mainland, sympathetic MILF commanders protected the leaders and their foreign allies. AHJAG played a key role in getting them expelled, with MILF help, in late 2005 to Jolo, where pursuit by the U.S.-backed Philippines armed forces then shifted in 2006. Top leaders like Kadaffy Janjalani have been killed there, but survivors have been driven into cooperation with the MNLF.

The dangers of this development could be compounded by the emergence of new ASG leadership with the capacity to exploit both local and international alliances. In 2006, following six years' absence in the Middle East, Ustadz Yasir Igasan alias Tuan Ya reportedly returned to Sulu to take up the mantle as ASG's spiritual leader. While media speculation has centred on Igasan's Libyan and Syrian training background, it is his education at the Islamic University of Medina in Saudi Arabia that makes him one of the most qualified religious authority figures in Sulu. He was also among the defenders of Abu Sayyaf's base camp, Al-Medina, in the ASG's first major confrontation with the AFP. When marines assaulted the camp, in Kapayawan village outside Isabela, Basilan province on 3 May 1993, the fledgling group that had begun with just five rifles was able to muster 60 fighting men. It took the marines more than a week to subdue ASG resistance and seize the base.

The battle of Al-Medina was a turning point in ASG's evolution. Its loss drove Abdurajak Janjalani to seal an alliance with MNLF commanders on Jolo disgruntled by the resumption of peace talks with the government. Foremost among these was Radullan Sahiron, zone two commander in Patikul, who spurned Misuari's entreaties to join the peace process in 1992 and pledged to "continue his sacrifices in the jungle". He later married Abdurajak's widow. Many other such marriages have taken place, knitting ASG tightly into the fabric of Sulu society and the MNLF. But Yasir Isagan also rose to prominence at a time when al-Qaeda influence in the Philippines was at its height. In the early 1990s, he reportedly managed IIRO's largest program in the country, Koran-reading classes for children (*Halaqat ul-Koran*), with 6,500 students and a multi-million dollar budget. Igasan's longstanding ties to Saudi sponsors may recharge the flow of foreign funds, while his religious training provides the basis for wider local alliances.

The ASG network continues to work closely with foreign jihadis. Its early partnership in 2001 was with JI, reportedly at the initiative of the then head of JI's regional sub-division (*wakalah*) head in Jabal Quba, but it is the relationship with freelance jihadis that has assumed greater significance over the last three or four years after the *wakalah* structure was disrupted by arrests.

Umar Patek, Dulmatin and a few other other foreign jihadis from KOMPAK and Darul Islam accompanied ASG leaders when they were forced back to Jolo in September 2005; others, including Dulmatin's brother-in-law anüd Malaysian JI member Zulkifli bin Hir alias Marwan, stayed with MILF contacts in Maguindanao but were in regular communication by phone. The arrival of the ASG contingent in Jolo quickly reignited conflict there in November 2005, and a new wave of violence swept through Jolo town, the capital, from February 2006. On the same day a U.S. advance logistics team arrived on Jolo for the 2006 Balikatan "exercises", the local police intelligence chief was shot dead inside Camp Asturias, the provincial police headquarters. A week later, a bar outside Camp Bautista was bombed, killing at least three; a more powerful bomb wrecked a downtown store on 27 March, killing five. And in the six months before the military offensive known as Oplan Ultimatum began in August 2006, about 70 victims fell to motorcycle assassinations and kidnap-murders by the ASG's "Urban Terrorist Group" (UTG), also in Jolo town.

It is unclear whether the foreign jihadi presence has influenced ASG's diversifying tactics. Umar Patek and Dulmatin were on the team that prepared the first Bali bombs and are believed to have imparted their skills in explosives to their ASG colleagues. They and Marwan have been in

occasional communication by telephone and internet with associates in Indonesia. But UTG's kidnapping of Christians remains an established tactic, although recent victims have more often been wealthy townspeople than the villagers (and foreigners) typical in the past. Intended primarily to raise funds, these attacks also increase religious tensions and, if undertaken on a wider scale, might provoke renewed polarisation between Christians (mostly settlers from outside Jolo) and Muslims. Whether the ASG and foreign jihadis acquire the capacity to do this depends on their relationship with the MNLF and MILF."

The Anti-Terrorism Law (ATL) or Human Security Act (HAS) (October 2007)

- The Anti-Terrorism Law took effect on July 15, 2007.
- "Terrorism" has now become a legal ambiguity, the definition can be expanded to any act criticizing the current administration, says the HR organisation Karapatan.
- The definition of "terrorism" is too broad and thus incompatible with Article 15 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), says a high UN representative.
- Civil society groups in Mindanao expressed their concern that the HSA was putting the gains of dialogue and peaceful approach to the conflict in Mindanao at risk.

BBC, 20 February 2007

"An anti-terror bill has been passed in the Philippines aimed at tackling militants in the south. The Human Security Act was approved by the House of Representatives late Monday and now goes to President Gloria Arroyo to be signed into law. Ms Arroyo hailed the bill as a "potent weapon" to shield the country from the "global scourge" of terrorism. Manila has long been urged by the US and other Western countries to bring in anti-terror legislation.

The bill - which was ratified by the Senate two weeks ago - was watered down after opposition from some politicians and rights groups who feared the legislation would endanger human rights.

Crackdown fears

Under the new law, security forces have the power to detain suspects without warrant or charge for up to three days. It also allows authorities to access bank accounts they believe are being used to launder money for terrorist purposes. A conviction for terror offences could result in a 40-year jail sentence.

In a bid to allay fears of rights violations, people who are wrongly detained will be offered compensation. However, even a watered down version has not satisfied the bill's opponents, correspondents say. They fear Mrs Arroyo - already facing criticism over hundreds of extra-judicial killings in the country - will use the law to curb civil liberties and to crack down on her political adversaries. The government said the terror bill is necessary to give it the teeth to fight militants in the south of the country, particularly the Muslim extremist group Abu Sayyaf."

Karapatan 2007 Human Rights Report, 2007, pp.10, 11

"Despite widespread criticism and moves to defer implementation, the new law – Anti-Terrorism Law (ATL) hiding behind the benign sounding Human Security Act or HSA – took effect on July 15, two months after the May mid-term elections. From being a political jargon, "terrorism" has now become a legal ambiguity. Various groups have questioned the law before the Supreme Court, and filed petitions for a temporary restraining order (TRO).

In Congress, progressive party- list groups BM, GWP and AP have also filed a bill seeking to repeal the HSA. Under ATL, common crimes already covered by the Revised Penal Code are defined as "terrorism." ATL adds that a terrorist act seeks "to sow and create conditions of widespread and extraordinary fear and panic among the populace, in order to coerce the government to give in to an unlawful demand." The vague definition may be expanded to other acts that can cover just anybody questioning or criticizing a policy, program or action of the Arroyo administration. ATL took effect even without the required implementing rules and regulations. Its ambiguity gives the government undue advantage over its perceived political dissenters.

Those adjudged guilty will be meted 40 years of imprisonment, the equivalent of a life sentence, without the benefit of parole. Among the dangerous features of the Anti-Terrorism Law are: Surveillance, [...] Warrantless arrest and indefinite detention, [...] House arrest, [...] Looking into and controlling bank deposits, accounts and records. [...]

Martin Scheinin, the UNSR on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, cautioned in a statement issued on March 12: "... I encourage the legislative branch of Government in the Philippines to reconsider this new counter-terrorism law which was approved by Congress in a Special Session of Parliament on 19 February 2007. It is my hope that there will be further debate which may result in the introduction of specific amendments or repeal of the entire Act by the new Congress elected this spring, since implementation of this law could have a negative impact on human rights in the country and undermines the rule of law." He specifically referred to the definition of "terrorism" as "an overly broad definition which is seen to be at variance with the principle of legality and thus incompatible with Article 15 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)." "

Mindanews, 10 October 2007

"The Human Security Act puts at risk the gains of dialogue and peaceful approach to the conflict in Mindanao, civil society representatives told a forum here Monday.

Panel speakers at the forum on the Human Security Act (RA 9372) at the University of the Philippines in Mindanao proposed a two-pronged approach to the situation: at the maximum, call for wider support for its repeal citing constitutionality and at the minimum, localized engagement with the military and the police to ensure protection of the people on the ground.

Five resource speakers from civil society organizations, including representatives from Moro and Lumad civil society organizations, defined the law based on their perspectives and outlined its implications to human rights protection and preservation and also to peace-building efforts and the peace process.

Lawyer Mary Ann Arnado, deputy executive director of the Initiatives for International Dialogue said the law's "full blown operations against suspected enemies of the state the law runs very inconsistent with the advocacy to promote peace and peaceful means to approach the problem of the conflicts in Mindanao".

IID is one of the groups supporting peace-building efforts and ceasefire watch in Mindanao.

Arnado said the Human Security Act is actually promoting the preservation of the power of the government and the state, not the security of individual citizens."

Philippine's 'war on terror' in Sulu creates large-scale displacement (2005-2006)

- A large-scale military operation was launched by the government against Abu Sayyaf and members of a split group of the MNLF in Sulu in February 2005.
- By March 2005, an estimated 58,000 had fled their homes. The municipalities of Indanan and Patikul were the most severely affected.
- During 2006, new offensives by the military created further displacement with at least 3,000 people fleeing their homes between August and September 2006.
- At the end of 2006, an additional 2,000 troops were sent to Sulu to re-inforce the 6,000 strong battalion.

NCCP & MCPA, 21 February 2005, p. 1

"Intense fighting started on February 6, Monday upon the alleged joint offensives of some 500 members of an MNLF Breakaway Group (MBG) together with some Abu Sayyaf elements against an army post in Panamao town in Sulu. On February 8, the AFP ordered the bombardment of alleged Abu Sayyaf lairs in Sulu hinterlands claiming that MBG gunmen have tied up with some 400 elements of the ASG (Quoted from Brig. Gen. Braganza, 17 soldiers killed in Sulu, PDI 2/9/05).

Aimed at pulverizing the MBG and the Abu Sayyaf, the military geared for war. SouthCom Chief Braganza was hence quoted as saying "I have ordered air strikes to punish these renegades... They have asked for it and they will get it (17 soldiers killed in Sulu, PDI 2/9/05)."

AFP troops reached about 3,000 at the earlier stage of fighting aided by howitzers, helicopter gunships, and OV-10s. Like wildfire, the fighting escalated and terror has spread to seven municipalities --- Panamao, the current center of action, Patikul, Panglima Estino, Indanan, Talipao, Luuk and Maimbung."

Mindanao Peaceweavers, April 2005, p. 14

"Reports gathered from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) – Sulu Chapter revealed that as of March 24, 2005, the internally displaced persons (IDPs) affected by the Sulu war was 9,879 families or about 57, 900 persons. This number is slightly reduced from the reported 15% of the total population (536,000) who rushed to safety during the height of the fighting in early February.

The DSWD admitted that at least 10,000 IDPs, who did not go to designated evacuation centers and instead sought refuge with their families and relatives are yet to receive assistance from the government. On this note, comes the impression that the data on the actual number of the IDPs may have been uncertain or inaccurate, in any case understated.

The largest number of the reported IDPs came from the municipality of Indanan, with 2, 963 families or 17, 778 persons; followed by Patikul with 606 families or 5, 611 persons; and then Panglima Estino with 956 families or 4, 577 persons. The biggest evacuation center in Sulu is in the elementary school of Panglima Mamah, which has no water source. The rest of the IDPs are from Panamao, Jolo, Parang, Kalingalan Caluang, Luuk and Maimbung towns."

DPA, 3 August 2006

"Thousands of people fled their homes as fighting between government troops and al-Qaeda-linked Muslim Abu Sayyaf rebels raged for the third day on a southern Philippine island, the military said Thursday.

Colonel Antonio Supnet, chief of staff of the armed forces' Southern Command, said more than 2,000 people have stayed in two evacuation centres since the fighting broke out Tuesday in Indanan town on Jolo Island, 1,000 kilometres south of Manila."

E-Balita, 15 September 2006

"Military offensives against Abu Sayyaf militants and alleged members of the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) terror group hiding in the hinterland of the Philippines province of Sulu have displaced almost 1,000 civilians. Abdulwatan Mohammad, provincial director of the Filipino government's social and development office, told Adnkronos International (AKI) that the evacuees have yet to receive any relief assistance from the state.

"This is one of our big concerns. The people seem to be increasing in number but we have yet to deliver them some meaningful assistance," he said.

Evacuees told AKI about their fear and worries. "Our living depends on our small farm but it is dangerous for us to go back to Patikul [the town in Sulu province]," said Welda Silban, 36, who left her home soon after the military operation began more than a month ago.

Silban said she was very worried about her husband who had decided to stay in Patikul at their farm despite the war. "We had no choice. If he came with us, we would all die of hunger," she said while her 13-year old son, Alsiri, hoped for a quick return to normality.

A similar story was told by Rahma Saptula, 41, from Indanan town, who had to leave her husband behind to take their three children to safety. "It was not possible for all of us to go because our little farm and our livelihood are there," she said.

The residents in Jolo were sympathetic towards the plight of the displaced people.

"The military should consider the civilians because they suffered most in this situation," Edmund Gumbahali of the civil society group known as the Concerned Citizens of Sulu said. "I don't think they can get the Abu Sayyaf just by the use of guns," he added.

The 45-day old military offensive in Sulu has left almost 100 dead, both soldiers and rebels."

Reuters, 4 December 2006

" The Philippines sent an additional 2,000 Marines to the southwestern island of Jolo to bolster an offensive against Muslim rebels Abu Sayyaf sheltering members of regional militant group Jemaah Islamiah.

Since Aug. 1, about 6,000 troops have been fighting several hundred Muslim rebels in the latest bid to flush out Islamic militants on Jolo, a remote Abu Sayyaf stronghold in the south of the mainly Roman Catholic country.

"We need fresh legs in the hunt for our high value targets," Lieutenant-Colonel Ariel Caculitan, a Marine spokesman, told reporters a day after the 2nd Marine Brigade arrived.

"The arrival of fresh Marines on Jolo would boost efforts in cornering and finishing off these terrorists."

The Abu Sayyaf's leader, Khaddafy Janjalani, is believed to be hiding on Jolo with two Indonesians suspected of carrying out the 2002 Bali bombings after they were driven out of nearby Mindanao island by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)."

Sulu clashes between army, MNLF and ASG displace up to 50,000 people in 2007 (December 2007)

- In July and August 2007, fighting between the AFP and MNLF forces led by commander Malik displaced some 42,000 people near Jolo.
- Malik said he was avenging an incursion into an MNLF stronghold by troops hunting fighters from the Abu Sayyaf Muslim rebel group – or he might have tried to get MNLF founder Misuari released from prison.
- Although MILF and MNLF are meant to observe truces, overlapping clan ties are more important than political allegiance.
- Members of both groups have fought alongside the Abu Sayyaf, while the MNLF says it would be willing to cooperate with the military to hunt down the Abu Sayyaf.

Philippine Daily Enquirer, 16 April 2007:

"A Moro National Liberation Front commander declared jihad (holy war) against the government before four Marine battalions overran an MNLF camp in Sulu province. Ustadz Habier Malik, leader of the MNLF Jabal Uhod Command in Barangay Bitan-ag, issued the declaration on Friday night in retaliation for the military attack on the forces of his superior, Khaid Adjibun, chair of the Lupah Sug State Revolutionary Command, on Wednesday. The assault on Malik's camp came after he and his followers used mortars to shell a Marine base near Panamao town late Friday, killing two Marines.

While the Marines had "penetrated" Malik's camp in Bitan-ag, fighting was still going on sporadically as his 400-strong group continued to resist government forces, according to the military.

[...]

Aside from Malik's lair, a camp in Barangay Tiis in Talipao town was seized by soldiers Sunday morning, said Maj. Gen. Reuben Rafael, Task Force Comet chief.

In February, Malik held hostage Marine Maj. Gen. Ben Dolorfino and several government peace negotiators for two days in the capital town of Jolo. He released the officials after securing a pledge from the government that the plight of the jailed Misuari was being closely looked into.

Five years after the government signed an accord with the MNLF, Misuari launched a fresh rebellion after he lost government support over alleged corruption.

Misuari's forces attacked government targets in Jolo and nearby Zamboanga City, killing over 100 people. He fled to Malaysia, but was later captured and deported and is now under house arrest in New Manila, Quezon City. He remains an influential figure in Muslim communities in Mindanao and Malik is a known loyalist of Misuari. The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has been lobbying for his release to attend a meeting in Saudi Arabia in July.

[...]

The conflict has forced residents to leave their homes. Amilbahar Amilasan of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) covering the provinces of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-tawi, said 8,400 families or some 42,000 people were displaced due to the conflict in Talipao and Panamao.

Most of the evacuees are now in Jolo."

BBC News, 16 April 2007

"The secretary-general of the OIC, which is the world's largest grouping of Muslim countries, called for an "immediate cessation of the military operations" on Jolo, [urging] both sides to abide by a peace deal they signed in 1996 and "to resume negotiation in good faith for the full implementation of that agreement". Jesus Dureza, the government's adviser on peace talks with rebels, said he wanted the armed forces to finish their offensive as soon as possible. And he stressed the government was going after Malik, not MNLF. [...]

Some news reports quoted Malik as saying he was avenging an incursion into an MNLF stronghold by troops hunting fighters from the Abu Sayyaf Muslim rebel group last week. Another report suggested he may be pressuring the government to release jailed MNLF founder Nur Misuari."

Mindanews, 17 April 2007

"Dureza also called on the MNLF leadership to "take appropriate steps and accordingly deal with the criminal and violent acts perpetrated by one of its commanders, Ustadz Habier Malik."

"Unless decisively addressed by the MNLF leadership, this latest incident will pose as an additional challenge in our peace engagement with the MNLF with whom we signed a peace agreement in 1996," Dureza said.

"We take positive note of the sobriety shown by most MNLF leaders and members who disagreed with Malik's latest actions," he added.

[...]

He vowed to "jointly strengthen the mechanism that will foster closer coordination between the MNLF and the AFP in the joint effort against terrorism and lawlessness, especially in Sulu," reiterating that the Philippine government "has always adhered firmly to its pronounced policy of seeking peaceful resolution to address armed conflicts."

In a press statement, Suara Bangsamoro party-list supported the OIC's call for an end to hostilities in Sulu. "The Tausugs in Sulu have had it with the military's rehashed excuses that the offensives are about the pursuit of the Abu Sayyaf group, when in truth the MNLF camps are the ones being pounded with mortars and deployed with Filipino and US soldiers." "

The Philippines Enquirer, 17 April 2007

"The government has formally rejected a call by the Organisation of Islamic Conferences (OIC) for a ceasefire in Sulu province, as the military claimed the Al Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf has joined forces with men of a Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) Commander being pursued by troops."

Reuters Foundation, 24 August 2007

"Although the MILF and the MNLF are meant to be observing truces, in the Philippine south overlapping clan ties are more important than political allegiance. Members of both groups have fought alongside the Abu Sayyaf, a hardline group with links to the regional militant network, Jemaah Islamiah.

The government insists it is only fighting the Abu Sayyaf.

"It's becoming useless to talk to the Philippine government when Filipinos keep on killing each other," said Hussin, who served for nearly four years as governor of an autonomous region for Muslims in the south of the largely Catholic country.

"The violence on Jolo could have been prevented if Manila was only talking and listening to us. Our people are losing patience and getting frustrated because the government seemed no longer interested in carrying out its commitment under the peace pact."

[...]

Hussin said he was worried military offensives against the Abu Sayyaf would affect MNLF communities in the south.

He said the MNLF was willing to cooperate with the military to hunt down the Abu Sayyaf, suggesting that the military go on surgical operations rather than an all-out offensive.

"We don't want war but we also have the right to defend our families, our people, our communities." "

Reuters Foundation, 30 November 2007

"Five Philippine soldiers and four Muslim rebels were killed in fresh clashes on the troubled southern island of Jolo on Friday as hundreds of extra troops were rushed to secure Manila after a botched coup attempt.

[...]

Atienza said a platoon of soldiers had initially clashed with a small group of Islamic militants from the al Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf on Friday but a larger group of Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) rebels joined the fray.

The MNLF signed a peace deal with the government in 1996 but its members, which have blood ties with the Abu Sayyaf, frequently clash with soldiers amid resentment over the deal's implementation."

USDoS, 11 March 2008

"Clashes between the AFP and elements of the MILF, the ASG, and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in Mindanao resulted in thousands of IDPs. At year's end according to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the total number of IDPs was 62,728 persons, including newly displaced IDPs in Sulu and Basilan. Other agencies, including UNDP, the Mindanao Emergency Relief Network, and the Red Cross provided food and essential items such as medicine, blankets, mosquito nets, and soap to IDPs.

From April to May, hostilities between government troops and a faction of MNLF rebels led by Habier Malik displaced thousands of persons in Sulu. Following the July 10 killing and beheading of 14 marines in Basilan, government forces launched limited offensive attacks against the ASG in July and August. Thousands of villagers were evacuated from Basilan as a result of the clashes."

'War on terror' in Sulu and Basilan runs the risk of inflaming the conflict (May 2008)

- In Basilan, the military, supposedly only fighting the Abu Sayyaf Group, is also attacking MILF areas, thereby threatening civilians.
- The government argues that the MNLF in Sulu is close to terrorist groups such as Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah.
- Commentators and analysts point to the differences between those groups and the dangers of fighting liberation groups firmly embedded in the local Muslim population the same way as terrorist groups.
- Government and US strategic interests in Sulu may delay a durable peace agreement between GRP and MNLF.

- A broken MNLF-government peace deal would threaten to regionalize what until now was a mainly localized conflict against the ASG
- In its fight against the ASG, the Philippine army has relied on US military and development aid.
- By opening a new front against the MNLF, the Philippine Army risks reversing those strategic gains: Sulu's local population distinctly separates the MNLF's and ASG's agendas, with widespread support for the MNLF's more peaceful quest for a Moro homeland.
- The Philippine Army threatens to lose the goodwill of the local population if it lets the conflict against MNLF get out of hand.
- The Army's interest, some contend, for keeping the conflict alive is that it receives money and arms from the US

Davao Today, 18 October 2007

[One civilian in Basilan said] "They (the military) are supposed to be running after the Abu Sayyaf but when they drop those bombs, they hit the communities" [...] Lidasan said she was also puzzled why government troops who were supposed to be running after the Abu Sayyaf were entering the MILF areas. Baguindan, for instance, has been known as an MILF area, which government had already rid of Abu Sayyaf cells years before."

Asia Times, 18 May 2007

"Just when it seemed the Philippines was getting a handle on its terrorist problem on its southern island of Mindanao, a sudden shift in military strategy threatens to widen drastically the region's grinding conflict against Muslim insurgent groups.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines' operations last year were widely hailed for decapitating the leadership of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), hobbling the insurgent group's estimated 2,000 foot soldiers and bringing a modicum of stability to the violence-prone underdeveloped areas of Sulu province.

The United States has linked the ASG to al-Qaeda's global terror network - though Washington has never produced any hard evidence to substantiate that claim. Since September 11, 2001, Washington has poured hundreds of millions of dollars in military assistance toward the Philippine Army to help combat the ASG, including the use of Predator drones to track the Islamic insurgent group's movements.

The United States' 200 or so troops now stationed in the restive region have on occasion played a role in pursuing and combating the insurgent group, including in operations that killed top leaders, according to on-the-ground conflict monitors.

Now, what has been widely considered one of the few military successes in the United States' "global war on terror" campaign is at risk of going badly awry. With US backing, the Philippine Army has under the guise of combating the ASG started to attack positions held by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which through a 1996 ceasefire agreement is allowed to control territory contiguous to areas where the ASG is active in and around Sulu.

The ceasefire deal included provisions for the 56-member Organization of the Islamic Conference to play a role in tripartite negotiations toward a final autonomy settlement. However, that agreement was never fully implemented and the MNLF has maintained armed control over territories it considers to be the ancestral homeland of the ethnic Moro.

As of early [April 2007], Manila and the MNLF were still officially engaged in that peace process, and the two sides held negotiations on social and economic issues as recently as February. After nearly 11 years of relative calm, since mid-April the Philippine Army has renewed armed hostilities with the MNLF, reasserting old government claims that the MNLF is secretly supporting the ASG.

The government initially denied that it had launched assaults against the MNLF. But at least 10 communities in MNLF-controlled areas have been involved in the recent fighting, which has claimed up to 40 army and MNLF personnel, according to one international organization monitoring the conflict. Most recently, four MNLF soldiers were killed in a firefight with the Philippine Marine Corps near Sulu's Kalingalan Caluang township on May 8.

Significantly, the Philippine Army has openly accused MNLF commander Ustadz Habier Malik of being a "terrorist", and late last month government troops overran his camp in Sulu's Bihtanag area and the rebel leader went underground. The US has in recent weeks reportedly put a P1 million (US\$21,000) bounty out for his capture.

Ustadz, formerly the head of the so-called Regional Reconciliation and Reunification Commission, in an April 30 interview with the local GMA TV refuted the army's allegations, including the charges that the MNLF was in any way in league with the ASG. He also indicated a willingness to abandon the 1996 ceasefire agreement and resume the group's long suspended armed struggle.

"We are abiding by the wishes of the president [Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo], that it is better that there is no ceasefire," said Ustadz. "We are not on the offensive ... we are on the defensive." He later in the interview referred to the ASG as "bandits", "terrorists" and "unprofessional" soldiers.

A broken MNLF-government peace deal would threaten to regionalize what until now was a mainly localized conflict against the ASG. The spike in violence has notably coincided with hotly contested elections for governor of Sulu, which were held this week; hand-counted official results are expected this or early next month. The MNLF's founder and chairman, Nur Misuari, contested the electoral seat from prison, where he is being held on rebellion charges dating back to 2001.

The Philippine Army has relied on a two-pronged strategy to neutralize the ASG, which logistically has relied on the relative peace in areas controlled by the MNLF. First, US-backed military operations provided the Philippine Army with the satellite technology and modern firepower Manila previously lacked in fighting the ASG. Second, millions of dollars' worth of US-financed development projects have to some degree helped win hearts and minds in the war-torn impoverished areas previously controlled by the ASG.

By opening a new front against the MNLF, international monitors contend, the Philippine Army is at serious risk of reversing those strategic gains. They say Sulu's local population distinctly separates the MNLF's and ASG's agendas, with widespread support for the MNLF's more peaceful quest for a Moro homeland, and less so for the smaller ASG's often violent tactics, including grisly beheadings and the burning of their victims' bodies. Already about 63,000 people of Sulu's 600,000 population are internally displaced because of the Philippine Army-ASG violence.

While the Philippine Army and the US are both apparently convinced that the MNLF is in league with the ASG, those government allegations are unlikely to wash with the local population. If, as threatened, full-blown hostilities were to resume, Sulu's conflict would quadruple in size, and the Philippine Army would be opposed by a popular and charismatic leader and would lose the goodwill of the local population, according to the representative of an international organization monitoring the conflict.

So why would the Philippine Army make such a tactical blunder after notching significant military victories in the region? Some Mindanao-based analysts contend that the United States is at least partly to blame.

One explanation goes that the Philippine Army is under constant pressure from both Manila and Washington to show quantifiable results from its counterinsurgency operations, including caches of seized weapons and rebel body counts. With the mopping up of the ASG, those numbers had recently reduced significantly and hence created motivation to open a new military front.

Moreover, a total victory over the ASG and a stable peace deal with the MNLF would in effect eliminate the United States' *raison d'etre* for maintaining a military presence in the Sulu region - a disagreeable prospect for the many Philippine Army military commanders who over the past five years have relied on US assistance for their livelihoods and who, with their substantially improved combat capabilities, apparently no longer view peace as their best option for dealing with the MNLF.

As such, violence replaces peace in yet another sad chapter of the United States' failed global counter-terrorism policy."

Mindanews, 23 April 2007

"In any incendiary situation like that in Sulu, the edgy adversaries will always point to the other the blame for sparking the hostilities. [...]

Take the present hostilities [of April 2007] going into the second week. The military blamed the Moro National Liberation Front under Habier Malik for attacking the Marine camp in Panamao last April 13. But reports from sources other than the military said Malik was provoked when the Marines attacked his camp last April 11 allegedly in pursuit of the Abu Sayyaf.

A *Bulatlat* (April 22-28, 2007) story by Alexander Martin Remollino traced the present clash to a series of massacres of Moro families in Indanan and Patikul towns as told by MNLF State Chairman Khaid Ajibon and Ustadz Zain Jali, chairman of the Bangsamoro People's Congress. Malik is an area commander under Ajibon.

The "blame game" thickens the quagmire. In the battle for minds, the Moros are at the disadvantage since the military has the Manila media awaiting its press releases. As the Moros get the popular blame, their cynicism against the national government and the military – and even against the Christians – deepens and hardens.

Cynicism of the Moros and self-righteous smugness of the government and the military can blur the roots of the problem and block efforts in finding acceptable solutions toward reconciliation. [...]

Which Picture Is?

Manila and the military picture the Sulu campaigns as mainly a war against terrorism – to eradicate the Abu Sayyaf and the Jemaah Islamiyah. They accuse the MNLF of coddling terrorists that government troops have to pursue into their (MNLF) camps. When the MNLF fight back, denying the presence of terrorists among them, the group is labeled "rogue MNLF". The military campaigns are not against the MNLF but against terrorism – lumping together the Abu Sayyaf, the Jemaah Islamiyah and the "rogue MNLF" as terrorists.

Not only Christians but Muslim religious leaders condemn Abu Sayyaf barbarism like the recent beheading of seven hostages in Parang, Sulu. They were as outraged as President Arroyo, who

vowed for the nth time to obliterate the Abu Sayyaf. That outrage, to most Filipinos, justifies the pursuit of Malik and his forces – the rogue MNLF – to the end.

While Muslims condemn the Abu Sayyaf, they distinguish them from the MNLF. Zainudin Malang of the think-tank Bangsamoro Law and Policy made it clear to Agence Press-France that the MNLF, as well as the MILF, “share no substantial common agenda with the JI and ASG” – it shuns terrorism.

So, while the military claims that Malik has been isolated from other MNLF groups that disapprove his defiance of the government, Muslims in Sulu see otherwise: Malik and the other MNLF commanders in Sulu are coordinating their forces. And, he is not on the run.”

ICG, 14 May 2008

“The “Mindanao Model” of using counter-insurgency methods to fight terrorism has partially succeeded in separating the ASG from its support base on Basilan. High-profile visits to Sulu by Ambassador Kenney and U.S. Pacific Commander Admiral Thomas Keating have turned a spotlight on the twin prongs of military and economic aid, credited with the demise of top Abu Sayyaf leaders. But the ASG is not the only source of terrorism. Extremists within the MILF continue to use terror tactics and provide refuge to the same jihadis working with the ASG, while ASG members and their jihadi allies pushed out to Jolo have found support in MNLF strongholds in a way that could reignite conflict there.

[...] Terrorists operating across borders against a global enemy do resemble classic insurgents, except the sea they swim in is not a sympathetic population – it is domestic rebellion. It is these domestic rebels who rely on popular support to manoeuvre; extremist jihadis embed themselves among them. And unlike the foreign jihadis, the ASG and the Moro extremists who harbour them, mainstream MILF and MNLF rebels are amenable to a negotiated political settlement.

Counter-terrorism’s proper goal in the Philippines is to separate jihadis from insurgents – not to separate insurgents *and* jihadis, conflated together, from the population at large. To attempt the latter is to fall into the trap of identifying the counter-terrorist cause with domestic counter-insurgency. This makes enemies of potential allies, reinforces insurgent-jihadi bonds, and may even lend jihadis popular legitimacy otherwise reserved for mainstream insurgents. It makes the international community’s stake in counter-terrorism hostage to domestic civil wars in ways that can make the latter even more intractable.

Properly understood, counter-terrorism and domestic conflict resolution are mutually reinforcing. The MILF model, demonstrated during Oplan Tornado, expelled local and foreign jihadis from the front’s midst, strengthening its moderates and boosting mutual confidence in the peace process at the same time. Because no equivalent mechanisms were built into the relationship between the Philippines government and the MNLF, however, the fugitives found sanctuary in Sulu. As joint U.S.-Philippines security operations continue, there is an urgent need to replace failed informal arrangements in Sulu with robust ceasefire and intelligence-sharing structures.

Such mechanisms cannot stand alone. They depend on a positive negotiating climate and forward momentum toward a substantive peace treaty. Without regular meetings between peace panels, performance cannot be reviewed, nor mandates renewed. Without progress on substance, insurgents have little incentive to cooperate. To the extent governments treat negotiation as a stalling tactic, hoping to weaken and divide insurgents, so too will insurgents use talks as a shield, striking, then retreating behind ceasefire machinery.“

Other causes of displacement

Military operations, displacement, evictions and development projects (March 2008)

- Community respondents to the UNICEF study reported that the motives of some military operations were to clear the way for development projects.
- At the end of 2003, the Philippines was designated by COHRE as one of the top three country violating housing rights.
- According to COHRE, some 145,000 people from Metro Manila and Bulacan province were evicted from their homes between 2005 and 2006 due to the rehabilitation of the Philippine National Railways. A total of 400,000 individuals are to be evicted and displaced by the project – the largest government-initiated displacement of communities in the history of the Philippines.
- According to COHRE, some 145,000 people from Metro Manila and Bulacan province were evicted from their homes between 2005 and 2006 due to the rehabilitation of the Philippine National Railways.
- A total of 400,000 individuals are to be evicted and displaced by the Railways project – the largest government-initiated displacement of communities in the history of the Philippines.
- The last quarter of 2006 marked the entry of government troops in urban centers particularly in communities planned to be demolished by the government, according to the urban poor group Kadamay.
- According to InPeace, a Mindanao-based human right group, the government has intensified military operations that have been causing massive dislocation of people in areas targeted for mining and other forms of business activities.

UNICEF, October 2006, p. 38

"The intensity of AFP military combat operations against the NPA and MILF in the communities visited by the research varied. This was reflective of the differences between AFP responses to guerrilla and positional warfare. AFP military operations are invariably larger and longer in the case of attacks on fixed positions. The residents in the various areas have estimated these to involve anywhere from about a dozen soldiers to some 400-500 soldiers entering on foot, in jeeps and trucks, or with armored personnel carriers. Sometimes these operations were backed by fighter planes, helicopter gunships and artillery fire. The soldiers sometimes encamped in forested areas far from residents, but also stayed in village centers and homes. Their visible presence in the communities lasted anywhere from a few hours during the day to as long as 3-5 months, even as there have been cases of residents monitoring secret military operations in the outskirts of their villages.

But community respondents also shared their perceptions of other motives behind military operations outside of any immediately precipitating incident. The military's entry has for instance been regarded as clearing operations to pave the way for disadvantageous "development projects" in the community. There were respondents in almost all the research areas – Abra, Capiz, Surigao del Sur, Compostela Valley, North Cotabato and Maguindanao, with the exception of Mindoro Oriental and Leyte – who said they noticed the parallel entry of mining explorations and military forces into their communities."

Davao Today, 2 January 2007

"Aside from battling poverty and hunger, the people of Baseco have yet another pressing concern. They might lose their homes as soon as the privatization of the Manila North Harbor gets underway. Residents here said their community along the shore would be turned into a commercial district similar to that of Baywalk along Manila Bay. In fact, construction was underway when Bulatlat visited the place.

Baseco is only one of seven communities affected by the privatization of the Manila North Harbor. The urban poor group Kadamay (Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap or Mutual Help Association of the Poor) estimated that about 849,000 individuals would be affected by the said government project.

Geneva-based Centre on Housing Rights and Eviction (COHRE) this year named the Philippines as one of three recipients of the Housing Rights Violator Award "for their systematic violation of housing rights and continued failure to abide by their international legal obligations." Nigeria and Greece likewise received the dubious distinction.

COHRE said in a statement issued last Dec 5 that 145,000 individuals or 29,000 families from Metro Manila and Bulacan province have been evicted from their homes since early 2005 due to the rehabilitation of the Philippine National Railways, called the North Rail-South Rail Linkage Project. No less than 80,000 families (400,000 individuals) would be evicted and displaced by the project – the largest government-initiated displacement of communities in the history of the Philippines.

Meanwhile, 3,000 people have been left homeless in Metro Cebu since September in preparation for the 12th ASEAN Summit to be hosted by the Philippines in January. Forty two families (210 people) were left homeless when their houses situated in front of the Shangri-la Mactan Island Resort and Spa in Mactan Island, were demolished by the police in preparation for the summit.

COHRE also reported that more than 600 homes were also demolished in Mandaue City and Lapu-lapu City since September 2006, also in preparation for the summit. Of the 600 families (3,000 people) rendered homeless by these demolitions, only 100 families were moved to a temporary relocation site. The temporary relocation site has no basic services such as electricity and water.

Each year, COHRE bestows its Housing Rights Violator Awards on three governments or public institutions guilty of particularly serious housing rights violations in the preceding year. COHRE has issued its Violator Awards since 2002.

Demolitions

The urban poor group Kadamay, meanwhile, estimated that about half a million urban poor dwellers would be affected by the government's privatization and modernization projects in the National Capital Region, Central and Southern Luzon.

In a statement, Kadamay said 80,779 families living along the railways from Central to Southern Luzon would be affected by the North Rail-South Rail Linkage Project. For the port privatization, the homes of 65,000 families near the Manila North Harbor would be demolished, while 65,216 individuals would be affected by the Batangas City Port Expansion.

Thousands of families are also expected to be evicted when the rehabilitation of the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa is implemented while about 100,000 families would be affected by the privatization of the Laguna Lake and the C-6, STAR and CALABARZON projects.

In Kadamay's conservative estimate, the number of dislocated families along the railways of Bulacan, Makati City, parts of Caloocan and Manila has already reached 18,500. Added to this

are the 500 families who were rendered homeless after their houses were violently demolished in Taguig City middle of this year.

This number, Kadamay said, did not include “pocket demolitions” in several urban poor communities in the country’s key cities.

Militarization

The last quarter of 2006 marked the entry of government troops in urban centers particularly in communities planned to be demolished by the government, Kadamay said. In a press conference held last Dec. 23, Kadamay secretary general Ed Legson said their group has monitored at least eight barangays in Metro Manila where soldiers are holed up in barangay halls or in day care centers.

Legson said their local chapters have monitored the presence of soldiers in full battle gear in four barangays in Quezon City (Holy Spirit, Payatas, Batasan, and Commonwealth) and four others in Manila (Pandacan, Baseco, Parola, and Smokey Mountain).

Urban poor dwellers fear that soldiers in the communities would be used to “tame the villagers” and worse, serve as “demolition crews,” Legson said. He added that soldiers may also be used against progressive partylist members who will be campaigning for the 2007 mid-term elections.”

USDoS, 11 March 2008:

“Forced resettlement of urban squatters, who made up at least 30 percent of the urban population, continued during the year. The law provides certain protections for squatters; eviction was often difficult, especially because politicians recognized squatters' voting power. Government relocation efforts were constrained by budget problems, and the issuance of land titles to squatters was limited. Through November the government evicted and resettled 9,900 of the estimated 51,000 families in Manila and southern Luzon expected to relocate for the South Luzon railway project. The project continued at year's end.”

Davao Today, 16 December 2006

“What she experienced, she said, was part of Oplan Bantay Laya (OBL), a military directive reportedly issued by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 2001 to wipe out the revolutionary movement within a span of five years. But instead of going after armed New Peoples Army (NPA) guerillas waging war in the countryside, this directive — now extended beyond its five-year deadline — has been targeting progressive people’s organizations, human-rights activists and professionals deeply involved in the “people’s struggle.”

InPeace, one of the groups Musni is closely identified with, has been active among grassroots groups of Christians, Muslims and indigenous peoples working for a just and lasting peace and opposing the entry of mining and multinational companies in Mindanao.

No wonder, according to Musni, that the killing of political activists in the country remains unchecked because Arroyo government’s approach to development involves “killing people, especially those critical of the administration.”

Massive Dislocation

But a more savage face of OBL has been rearing its head in Mindanao, where intensified military operations have been causing massive dislocation of people in areas targeted for mining and other forms of business activities.

"Human-rights groups see a clear pattern in Oplan Bantay Laya as a military strategy to clear the way for the coming in of foreign monopoly capital," Musni said. "It's not simply bulldozing the area but massively dislocating people in the community as well," she said.

Oplan Bantay Laya, she added, is "not just a simple counter-insurgency measure because majority of the victims are part of the civilian population who are active members of people's organization in the area."

The European Union (EU)-funded Citizens Disaster Response Center (CDRC) reported over 180,503 persons displaced in Mindanao in the last two years alone, when the government intensified its war against the Moro and Communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels in areas known for their rich mining deposits and other business prospects.

Intensified military operations triggered forced evacuations in San Luis, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Sur and Bukidnon, known for rich mining potentials and where big logging and banana plantations operate; and in Santa Cruz town of Davao del Sur, where a big power firm owned by Aboitiz is planning to put up a hydropower plant within the ancestral land of the indigenous Bagobo-Tagabawa tribe.

A fact-finding team that went inside Santa Cruz in September this year was told how peasant families were ordered to buy only one kilo of rice every day at the height of the military operations which also destroyed crops in the area, depriving whole communities of food, water, shelter and medicine."

Natural disasters are the main cause for displacement in the Philippines (July 2008)

- In mid-June 2008, Typhoon Frank hit the Philippines, inflicting severe damage to infrastructure in many regions of the country and affecting a total of 4 million people, many of whom were displaced.
- Flashfloods in Davao del Norte displaced 3,000 people in Davao del Norte in June 2008
- Philippines face an average of 20 typhoons annually. Typhoons trigger landslides, mudslides, floods and are the largest killers in the country.
- In May 2008, tropical storm Halong affected over 400,000 people in Luzon (north Philippines)
- The three typhoons hitting the country between 25 September and 9 December 2006 killed a thousand people, destroyed 180,000 homes and displaced a total of 440,000 people.
- More than half of the displaced returned in the following weeks, but at least 3,000 families remained displaced in February 2007, two months after the disaster struck

NDCC, 31 July 2008

"Typhoon 'Frank' entered the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) as a tropical depression on 18 June 2008. As it made a landfall in Eastern Visayas, it has already intensified into a typhoon. And as it moves into the country, TY 'Frank' had induced the southwest monsoon that caused landslides, flooding and storm surges along the eastern and western seaboard.

Severely affected in terms of damage to infrastructure and the number of directly affected persons were the provinces of Iloilo, Capi, Aklan and Antique in Region VI; and Leyte and Eastern Samar in Region VIII. Also affected by flooding due to moderate and heavy rains brought by the enhanced southwest monsoon, were the provinces of Maguindanao and Shariff Kabunsuan in ARMM; and Cotabato City and North Cotabato in Region XII.

II. EFFECTS

Affected Population/ Areas Affected/ Displaced Population More than nine hundred thousand families or four million persons were directly affected by TY 'Frank' in 6, 377 barangays of 419 municipalities in 58 provinces of 15 regions. Region VI has the most number of affected population- 421,479 families/ 2,159,780 persons. This is 44% and 45% of the total number of families and persons affected by TY 'Frank' and its associated hazards."

NDCC, 20 June 2008

"The prevalence of continuous heavy rains in Manay, Davao Oriental and B, E. Dujali, Davao del Norte which started on June 17, 2008 and the swelling of rivers and tributaries triggered flashflood in three barangays of said municipalities.

2. Summary of Effects

Five (5) persons were reported dead, 1 injured and 2 missing in Manay, Davao Oriental, They are identified as follows:

Dead - Reynan Quibo (9 yrs old); Vangie Sumaliling (9 yrs old); Cherry Tupiasan (9 yrs old); Jef-Jef Quibo (9yrs old) and Jinggoy Quibo (8 yrs old) Injured - German Tupiasan and Jun -Ray Sumaliling

Missing - John March Tupiasan (10 yrs old)

A total of 586 families or 2,930 persons were affected in B. E. Dujali, Davao del Norte with 16 families /77 persons evacuated."

COE-DMHA, 20 May 2008

"The death toll from a tropical storm that cut across the Philippines' northern island of Luzon over the weekend rose to 24 Tuesday (May 20), with the Philippine National Disaster Coordinating Council reporting that nearly 417,000 people had been affected by flooding, storm surge and landslides. Tropical Storm Halong, known locally as Cosme, hit western Luzon on Sunday (May 18), packing sustained winds of 59 mph (95 kph) and gusts of up to 75 mph (120 kph). The storm lost power as it moved over land and appeared to be dying out in the Pacific Tuesday well off the coast of Japan. Halong triggered landslides and flooding in several northern and central provinces, Pangasinan, Zambales and La Union being the worst-affected, Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA) reported. Pangasinan suffered the worst, with 15 dead and an estimated 172,000 affected, many of them displaced, according to DPA. Four deaths were reported in La Union, one in Zambales and four more in other provinces. Some of the victims drowned, while others were buried in collapsed structures or were hit by debris, DPA reported. The Philippine Office of Civil Defense estimates that Halong did US\$4.3 million (180.94 million pesos) in damage to infrastructure and agriculture. At least 18,000 houses were damaged or destroyed. More than 1,300 people were in evacuation centers Tuesday, accounting for only a fraction of the displaced. Agence France-Presse (AFP) attributed officials as saying that Zambales and Pangasinan were under a 'state of calamity.' The Philippines National Red Cross mobilized resources from its headquarters and local chapters to deliver aid to victims in hard-hit areas."

OCHA, 15 December 2006, pp.1-8

"The Philippines was hit by three extreme weather disturbances (typhoons) in a span of 10 weeks from 25 September to 1 December 2006, then another lower order typhoon on 9 December. These events triggered landslides, flash floods, mudslides, widespread flooding and together with the associated high winds, caused destruction and damage to homes, community buildings, communications, infrastructure, roads, bridges, agricultural crops and fishing farms.

Typhoon Reming (also called Durian), which hit on 30 November, was the most destructive, severely affecting the provinces of Albay, Catanduanes, and Camarines Sur in southeastern Luzon Island, although significant damage was also recorded in Mindoro Oriental, Marinduque, Batangas, Laguna, Mindoro Occidental and Romblon provinces. Most of the severely affected areas are coastal and farming municipalities and towns located around the periphery of Mt. Mayon Volcano.

Over a thousand lives are estimated to have been lost, and over 180,000 houses have been totally destroyed by Reming alone. While not scientifically verified, it is clear that the cumulative impact of these events has contributed to the scale of devastation inflicted by Typhoon Reming. As of 12 December, close to eight million people were affected to varying degrees. Cumulative economic losses are estimated at US\$ 300 million¹. Estimated damages arising from earlier disasters before the four deadly typhoons is \$439million.² Overall estimated losses to the country for 2006 amount to \$1,614 million.

On average, the Philippines faces about 20 typhoons annually, with five of them expected to cause major damages to life and property. These very facts warrant special attention of the international humanitarian community and hence this Appeal which addresses the cumulative impact of the four devastating typhoons that hit the country over a period of three months, two of which were category 4 super typhoons with maximum sustained winds of more than 200 km/h.

A total of 62 of the country's 79 provinces were affected by the typhoons' impact. No doubt, the estimated volume of cumulative damages to housing (\$867 million), infrastructure (\$127 million), agriculture (\$119 million) and school buildings (\$62 million) bears a clear testimony to the gravity of impact.³ Total estimated losses from these typhoons amount to \$1,175 million. Recovery from such massive losses will require sustained and collaborative measures. Community-based approaches will be critical to these projects.

Typhoons remain the largest killers in the Philippines⁴, followed by earthquakes, volcanoes and floods. Typhoon deaths alone in the country total 28,812 with \$5,653 million in damages in the 20th century (World Bank and National Disaster Coordination Council (NDCC), 2004).

(...)

As of 12 December, there were 942 reported dead, 2,838 injured and 850 missing. Government estimates of cumulative damages are as follows:

Total population affected by the four typhoons: 7.9 million

Displaced population: 439,429

Houses damaged: 711,382 (\$355 million)

Houses destroyed: 512,184 (\$512 million)

Damage to infrastructure: \$127 million

Damage to agriculture: \$119 million

Damage to school buildings: \$62 million

(...)

It is encouraging to note that the large majority of affected people are leaving evacuation centres, but those remaining need immediate care. The number of internally displaced people remains high with 190,565 people staying in 652 designated evacuation centres."

OCHA, 12 February 2007, p.1

"Two months after the typhoons, which struck the Philippines in late 2006, emergency relief needs have scaled down and early recovery activities have initiated with the strong involvement of the government, local organizations and the international community. While most people have returned to their homes and started restoring their livelihoods, over 3,000 families continue to find refuge in evacuation and transit centers. With displacement estimated to extend for the next six months, sufficient assistance for basic necessities, improvement of living environment conditions, livelihood and psychosocial support must be provided to ensure the right of displaced families to a dignified and humane life."

POPULATION FIGURES AND PROFILE

General

Numerous relatively small-scale displacements add up quickly, while response is insufficient (March 2008)

- Up to 200,000 people are displaced annually and in disparate locations.
- With some 24 evacuations per year on average, national and international humanitarian response is challenged.
- Monitoring displacement remains difficult in areas affected by clan wars.

IRIN, 18 March 2008

"Provincial, regional and municipal disaster response officials are stretched thin. While displacements from each conflict in the region are relatively small-scale – from 1,000 to 2,000 families per incident - the numbers add up quickly. With as many as 24 evacuations per year, up to 200,000 people are being displaced annually and in disparate locations. Government agencies and the humanitarian community alike are challenged to respond quickly with sufficient aid.

[Insufficient means and lacking coordination are two main problems.]

Even tracking existing displacements is a challenge, Elsie C Amil, Maguindanao provincial social welfare and development officer, told IRIN. "We have a very big gap in monitoring displacements. Our main challenge is tracking movements because of the clan wars. We need technical support for improved coordination and monitoring of IDPs and the entire exercise of coordinating response."

In the interim, many IDPs seem to fall through the gap."

The majority of the displaced are Muslim and indigenous people (December 2005)

- According to the JNA study, the largest proportion of IDPs are Muslim -up to 85%, followed by Lumads (IP) and then Christians.
- Oxfam estimates that 85 percent of those affected by conflict were Muslims, 17 percent were Christians and 7 percent were from non-Muslim indigenous populations.
- Most of the fighting between the military and the MILF were in camps that were located in towns that had predominantly Muslim populations.
- The ethnic composition of the displaced population is more or less reflective of the overall ethnic composition of the areas directly affected by the armed conflict.
- 60-70 % of the population in affected barangays is Muslim and they tend to stay longer.

Government of the Philippines, International Funding Agencies, Mindanao Stakeholders, December 2005, p.35

"The IDPs represent various religious and ethno-linguistic groups. The largest proportion of them – some suggest at least 85% – are Muslims, followed by Indigenous Peoples (or "Lumads"), and then Christians. Many of the Muslim IDPs are related by blood or affinity to the combatants, sympathetic to the cause for which they fight and/or widely assumed to be supporting them.

Addressing the needs of the Muslim IDPs is, therefore, one way of reaching out to the combatants, one way of building confidence in the peace process.

Indigenous Peoples (IPs) also constitute a significant proportion of the IDPs. They have often been caught in the “crossfire” between the parties to the conflict. In addition, they are sometimes manipulated or mobilized to serve as a buffer between, or complement to, the combatants. Their needs, as well as distinctiveness of their cultures and the depth of their community resources, are frequently lost in “big picture” analyses. For this reason and others, the IPs are demanding a greater “voice” in the conflict affected areas of Mindanao and, specifically, the peace process.

The displaced also include Christians who are living within or in nearby communities predominantly inhabited by the Muslims or Lumads. They are the IDPs with whom the decision makers in Manila can most easily relate. They provide an attractive entry point for those who could ultimately become more sympathetic to, and supportive of, the broader Mindanao situation."

WB 3 March 2003, pp. 12-13

"Majority of people who were displaced as a result of the conflict in Mindanao that erupted in 2000 were Muslims. Oxfam estimates that 85 percent of those affected by conflict were Muslims, 17 percent were Christians and 7 percent were from non-Muslim indigenous populations. The reason for this pattern is that much of the fighting between the Philippine troops and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) were in camps that were located in towns that had predominantly Muslim populations. The displacement by Philippine military personnel of communities has also created a new kind of tension and is one reason why Muslims find it hard to return to their homes. There are also Christians that stayed in government evacuation centers, but they were able to return to their homes more easily. This is partly because the evacuation centers had to be located further away from Muslim communities and were logically nearer the Christian settlements."

Oxfam January 2001, pp. 19-20

"Of Mindanao's 17 million population, 64 % are Christians, 23 % Muslims and 18 % Lumads. Ethnic preponderance varies in former Moro provinces where Christians have migrated. In Maguindanao, Muslims (60%) predominate over Christians. In Cotabato, Christians (71%) predominate over Muslims (18%) and Lumads. Armed skirmishes, aerial bombing and artillery fires usually occur in interior villages where Muslims and Lumads predominate. The ethnic composition of the displaced population is more or less reflective of the overall ethnic composition of the areas directly affected by the armed conflict.

However, more Muslim evacuees tend to go into and stay longer in evacuation centers than Christians. A social worker from the Pikit MSWDO observes that Muslims preponderate among the evacuees, reflecting the fact that 60-70 % of the population in affected barangays is Muslim and they tend to stay longer. Most Christian evacuees, on the other hand, do not stay very long in the evacuation centers because they usually come from barangays closer to the locations where the hostilities are not so drawn-out. (...)

Lumads are also severely affected by the displacement resulting from the armed conflict. This is exemplified by the case of the evacuees in the Macatactac evacuation center (barangay Liliongan, Carmen municipality) – comprising of around 300 families all belonging to the Aromanon Manobo tribe. These evacuees have been in the said evacuation center for one year already."

General demographics in ARRM and conflict-affected areas (2003)

- As a result of colonial and post-colonial state policy, Muslim population in Mindanao between 1903 and 1999 declined from 76 to only 19 percent.
- Muslim ethnic groups of Mindanao have been largely marginalized by the pace and form of development.
- Tausug and the Maguindanao have been the most politically dominant ethnic groups. Tausug inhabit the volcanic island comprising the Sulu province while the Manguindanaoans live in the often inundated plains of the Cotabato provinces along the Rio Grande of Maguindanao.
- The conflict-affected areas in Mindanao are the poorest among the 77 provinces of the Philippines.
- The highest levels of dissatisfaction with government services are found in Mindanao, especially in the conflict-affected areas.

WB, 3 March 2003, pp. 9-11

"Muslims and the influx of Settlers

From making up 76 percent of the population in 1903, the Muslim population in Mindanao had declined to only 19 percent by 1990. This is a direct result of colonial and post-colonial state policy of opening Mindanao to settlers from the islands of Luzon and the Visayas. There is multi-ethnicity at the regional, provincial and municipal levels but at the village level one will mostly find homogenous ethnic communities. Muslim ethnic groups in Mindanao speak related languages, and practice many customs that are similar. Many Muslim ethnic communities-also collectively called Moros –live in close proximity to Christian and other non-Muslim Filipino groups. However, these Muslim ethnic groups remain separate from the “majority” in the Philippine nation-state not only by religion but also by the presence of political movements animated by the idea of belonging to a “Bangsa Moro”- a separate Moro nation. This distinction is enhanced by an imbalance in economic development. The Muslim ethnic groups of Mindanao have been largely marginalized by the pace and form of development carried out by the colonial governments and during the republic’s post-colonial period.

Muslim Ethnic Affiliations

Of the 13 Moro ethnic groups, the Tausug and the Maguindanao have been the most politically dominant for it is from them that the Mindanao Sultanates emerged. The spheres of influence of their early sultanates extended over the communities of the other Moro groups and the Lumads or non-Muslim indigenous groups. The smaller groups are: the Samal, Yakan, Badjao, and the Jama Mapun, of the Sulu archipelago who were once subject peoples of the (Tausug) Sulu sultanate; the Kalangan, Sangil, Kalibugan and Iranun whose settlements were once under the sphere of influence of the Maguindanao sultans; and the Palawani and Molbog of South Palawan.

The Tausug inhabit the volcanic island comprising the Sulu province while the Manguindanaoans live in the often inundated plains of the Cotabato provinces along the Rio Grande of Maguindanao. The Maranao comprise the largest Moro group in terms of population. They live in the plains around Lake Lanao. The smaller groups occupy more or less distinct territories scattered in Mindanao and the Sulu islands, though in some instances their living spaces are penetrated by families belonging to the larger groups.

Approximately five percent of the total population of the region, the Lumad groups are individually known, as: Ata (or Ata Manobo), Bagobo, Banua-on, Batak, Bla-an, Bukidnon, Dibabawon, Higaunon, Mamanwa, Mandaya, Mangguwangan, Manobo, Mansaka, Matigsalug, Pala’wan, Subanen, Tagagkoalo, Tagbanua, T’boli, Teduray and Ubo.

Poverty in ARRM and the Conflict-Affected Areas

The conflict-affected areas in Mindanao are the poorest among the 77 provinces of the Philippines. These are also the poorest provinces in Mindanao. With the exception of North

Cotabato and Davao del Norte, the incidence of people falling below the poverty line and depth of poverty in these provinces rose dramatically from 1997 to the year 2000. The El Nino phenomenon and the fall in the price of copra and rubber contributed to the worsening of poverty in the region.

Without exception, all the conflict-affected areas fall in average per capita incomes from 1997 to 2000. The fall in averages incomes of both the poor and the non-poor populations was most severe in Basilan and Tawi-Tawi.

The Annual Poverty Indicator Survey conducted in October 1999 shows that social services coverage in the conflict-affected provinces of Mindanao compare unfavorably with the typical or median province in the country. The recently completed Filipino Report Card found the highest levels of dissatisfaction with government services in Mindanao, especially in the conflict-affected areas."

Global figures

Up to 300,000 people could remain displaced in the Philippines (August 2008)

- There is no accurate figure available on the total number of people currently displaced. Besides newly displaced people, many who had fled the 2000 and 2003 wars are as yet unable to return.
- In early 2008, the UN Food agency (WFP) used a planning figure of 300,000 IDPs for its food operation.
- Nearly 300,000 people were reported displaced between January and August 2008.
- It is estimated that roughly 170,000 people were displaced by conflict during 2007, mainly in Mindanao.
- In 2006, an estimated 98,000 people have been newly displaced by armed conflict, mainly on Mindanao island. 178,000 people were estimated to be displaced the previous year (2005), with 115,000 on Mindanao alone.
- While most displacement is only of short duration, there is no return monitoring and it is not known how many people do NOT return.
- According to the government, nearly 2 million people have been displaced by fighting between 2000 and 2007. Displacements in 2000 and 2003 accounted for 70 per cent of all displacements during that period.

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE CURRENTLY DISPLACED?

In the absence of a systematic monitoring of displacement and return movements, and in the context of constant and ongoing displacement movements, there is no accurate figure available on the total number of people currently displaced. Two types of IDP figures can be considered here, "flow" and "stock" numbers.

FLOW NUMBERS:

Flow numbers are obtained by simply adding new displacement figures without factoring in the number of returns. This is then a cumulative figure. The justification for using these numbers is that returns are generally poorly monitored and no figures available. Also, many displaced people are either unable to return and even when they are able to do so, their displacement has caused such a severe impoverishment that they continue to live in situations akin to displacement.

More than two million people displaced since 2000:

The total number of people displaced by armed conflict in the Philippines during the period 2000-2007 is estimated at 2.1 million. It is estimated that a total of 190,000 people were displaced between January and August 2008. The total IDP "flow" since 2000 could then be estimated at around 2.3 million people.

930,000 IDPs -JNA (December 2005):

Using a wide IDP definition*, a Joint Needs Assessment (JNA) conducted during 2004 (and spearheaded by the World Bank), but published only at the end of 2005, estimated the IDP population in Mindanao to stand at 930,000.

*For the purpose of the JNA, IDPs were defined as those in Mindanao who fled their homes at least once since 2000 as a result of armed conflict. The JNA was conducted during 2004 and aimed at providing input for the design of the Mindanao Trust Fund-Reconstruction and Development Program (MTF-RDP), a programme that would address the reconstruction and development needs of the conflict-affected areas of Mindanao.

Government of the Philippines, International Funding Agencies, Mindanao Stakeholders, December 2005, p. 35

"For purposes of the JNA, IDPs were defined as those in Mindanao who fled their homes at least once since 2000 as a result of armed conflict.²⁵ This definition recognizes the recurrent nature of displacement in conflict-affected Mindanao and evolved out of consultations with IDPs and other stakeholders. It narrowed the scope of the assessment to a manageable size but still resulted in an IDP population of at least 930,000 persons – a number most specialists would consider conservative. This study population included:

those persons displaced by the war of 2000;

those displaced by the AFP offensive of 2003 – virtually all of whom were also displaced in 2000; and,

those who were displaced by flooding after first being displaced by armed conflict since 2000.

The precise number of those who remained displaced at the time of the JNA field visits (August/September 2004) could not be determined but was estimated by stakeholders to be roughly 18,000 families (90,000 persons)."

STOCK NUMBERS:

The "stock" number can be seen as representing the "permanent" IDP population. It is naturally much more difficult to estimate. It is a common feature of displacement in the conflict-affected areas of Mindanao that new waves of displacement add new layers of displaced persons to those created by previous clashes. Returns during a year are generally offset by new displacements, creating this permanent IDP caseload.

Between 120,000 and 300,000 IDPs -WFP (July 2006-January 2008):

According to the World Food Programme (WFP), which launched an emergency operation in July 2006 to assist the conflict-affected population in Mindanao, the number of 'vulnerable' IDPs was estimated at 120,000. This figure included people who have been displaced since 2000, mainly in the ARMM region of Mindanao and who had not been able to return since due to persistent security problems or had not been rehabilitated. This was considered as a conservative estimate.

In January 2008, WFP revised its estimate upwards as it planned to provide food assistance to an estimated 300,000 IDPs in Mindanao.

WFP, January 2008, p. 23

"The operation aims to support the Mindanao peace process through assistance to conflict-affected areas, where poverty, nutrition and basic education indicators are far below the national average. In 2008, WFP will provide food assistance to 177,000 primary school children and 300,000 IDPs."

WFP, March 2006, p. 2

"Primarily, this [Emergency] operation would contribute to the resolution of the conflict by assisting the resettlement of 120,000 vulnerable internally displaced people (IDP); 822,000 people living in communities affected by the conflict; 3,000 patients under treatment for tuberculosis (TB); and 4,000 ex-combatants and demobilized soldiers and their family members (24,000 estimated beneficiaries) to facilitate reintegration into their communities."

The total IDP figure should be seen as a rough estimate in the context of a very fluid displacement situation with frequent short-term displacements.

MAIN DISPLACEMENT INCIDENTS IN 2008 (Jan-Aug)

date	municipality/province	nb. displaced	source
17-19 August	L. del N., Sarang., S. Cotab., I. del S.	57,397	NDCC
July-August	Tulunan and other/North Cotabato	165,000	NDCC
13-Jul	Agusan del Sur	200	DPA
30-Jun	Esperanza/Masbate	1,800	DSWD-DROMIC
27-Jun	Sarangani	1,750	DSWD-DROMIC
14-18 June	Davao del Sur	1,400	DSWD-DROMIC
15-Jun	Indanan, Sulu	2,500	MPW
14-Jun	Davao City	640	DSWD-DROMIC
11-Jun	Sultan Kudarat	915	DSWD-DROMIC
May-June	Ungkaya Pukan/Basilan	3,700	NDCC
15-May	Compostela Valley	1,000	Bulatlat
11-May	Bukidnon	632	DSWD-DROMIC
5-May	Cotabato	435	DSWD-DROMIC
29-Apr	Sulu	2,250	DSWD-DROMIC
14-Apr	Occidental Mindoro (Luzon)	830	DSWD-DROMIC
8-Apr	Shariff Kabunsuan	4,175	DSWD-DROMIC
2-Apr	Tulunan, North Cotabato	375	DSWD-DROMIC
19-Feb	San José/Occidental Mindoro	830	DSWD-DROMIC
1-Feb	Cotabato	808	DSWD-DROMIC
January-June	Datu Piang/Maguindanao	44,500	DSWD, NDCC
30-Jan	Zamboanga del Norte	1,640	DSWD-DROMIC
20-Jan	Lanao del Sur	550	DSWD-DROMIC
16-Jan	Masbate	668	DSWD-DROMIC
7-Jan	Davao del Norte	1,000	DSWD-DROMIC
January	Sultan Kudarat	1,100	DSWD-DROMIC
Jan-Aug. 2008		296,095	

Between January and August 2008, conflict and insecurity displaced an estimated 300,000 people from their homes, mainly in Mindanao. The majority were displaced in North Cotabato province following several days of intense fighting between MILF rebels and government forces in early August.

WHERE ARE THE DISPLACED LOCATED?

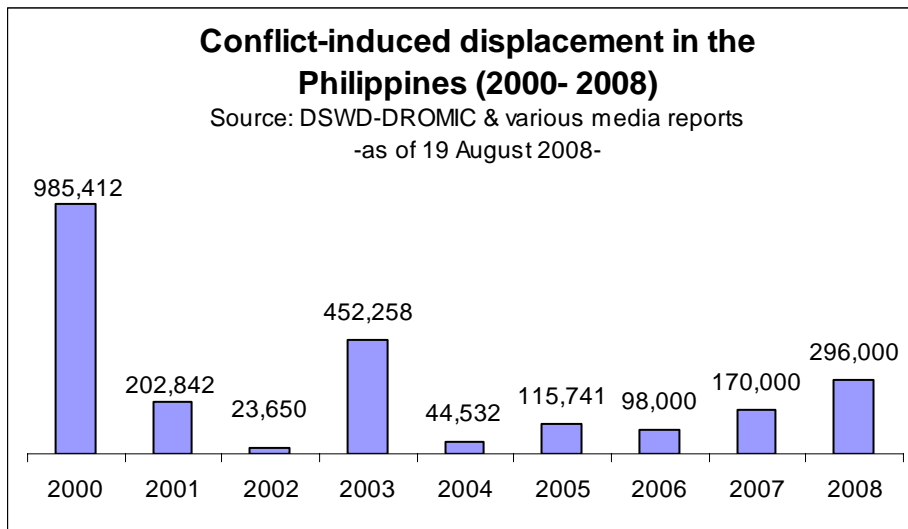
The majority of the displaced (both those displaced in 2008 as well as those displaced in previous years) are located in the Muslim-populated areas of the ARMM region (Mindanao) and in Central Mindanao. Click on the map below to see which provinces of the country are most affected by conflict and displacement.



During 2007-2008, the main displacement incidents took place in the following Mindanao provinces: Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Sulu and Basilan.

For more details on the number and location of 930,000 IDPs identified by the Joint Needs Assessment in Mindanao, see [Annex 9 of the Joint Needs Assessment for Reconstruction and Development of Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao](#), December 2005 (pp. 89-92)

What has been the internal displacement trend in the past years?



Based on figures provided by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and news media (for 2006, 2007 and 2008), it is estimated that nearly 2.3 million people have been displaced by armed conflict in the past 8 years (2000-2008).

Up to 300,000 people displaced by conflict in 2008 (19 August 2008)

Summary of main conflict-induced displacements in 2008

date	municipality/province	nb. displaced	source
17-19 August	L. del N., Sarangani, S. Cotab., I. del S.	57,397	NDCC
July-August	Tulunán and other/North Cotabato	165,000	NDCC
13-Jul	Agusan del Sur	200	DPA
30-Jun	Esperanza/Masbate	1,800	DSWD-DROMIC
27-Jun	Sarangani	1,750	DSWD-DROMIC
14-18 June	Davao del Sur	1,400	DSWD-DROMIC
15-Jun	Indanan, Sulu	2,500	MPW
14-Jun	Davao City	640	DSWD-DROMIC
11-Jun	Sultan Kudarat	915	DSWD-DROMIC
May-June	Ungkaya Pukan/Basilan	3,700	NDCC
15-May	Compostela Valley	1,000	Bulatlat
11-May	Bukidnon	632	DSWD-DROMIC
5-May	Cotabato	435	DSWD-DROMIC
29-Apr	Sulu	2,250	DSWD-DROMIC
14-Apr	Occidental Mindoro (Luzon)	830	DSWD-DROMIC
8-Apr	Shariff Kabunsuan	4,175	DSWD-DROMIC
2-Apr	Tulunán, North Cotabato	375	DSWD-DROMIC
19-Feb	San José/Occidental Mindoro	830	DSWD-DROMIC
1-Feb	Cotabato	808	DSWD-DROMIC
January-June	Datu Piang/Maguindanao	44,500	DSWD, NDCC
30-Jan	Zamboanga del Norte	1,640	DSWD-DROMIC
20-Jan	Lanao del Sur	550	DSWD-DROMIC
16-Jan	Masbate	668	DSWD-DROMIC
7-Jan	Davao del Norte	1,000	DSWD-DROMIC
January	Sultan Kudarat	1,100	DSWD-DROMIC
Jan-Aug. 2008		296,095	

MID-AUGUST

MILF-GOVERNMENT FORCES CLASHES IN LANA O DEL NORTE, SARANGANI, SULTAN KUDARAT AND SOUTH COTABATO AND LANA O DEL SUR PROVINCES DISPLACE AN ESTIMATED 57,000 PEOPLE

NDCC, 19 August 2008

"Series of attacks/explosions believed to be perpetuated by the MILF were reported and validated in various parts in Lanao del Norte in region X, Sarangani and Sultan Kudarat and South Cotabato in Region XII and Lanao del Sur in ARMM

(...)

A total of 12,367 families or 57,397 persons were affected in the Provinces of Lanao del Norte and Misamis Occidental in Region X and the Provinces of Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and South Cotabato in Region XII."

JULY-AUGUST

UP TO 165,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED BY CLASHES BETWEEN ARMY AND MILF IN TULUNAN, PIKIT & ALEOSAN, NORTH COTABATO

NDCC, 16 August 2008

"2.1 Areas and Population Affected /Displaced (Tab A)

· A total of 24,623 families / 164,973 persons coming from 64 barangays of 9 municipalities in 3 provinces of Regions XII and ARMM were displaced / affected · Sixty-five (65) evacuation centers were utilized to temporarily shelter 6,467 families / 32,335 persons while 18,156 families / 132,638 persons are staying outside evacuation centers

2.2 Population Served Inside and Outside Evacuation Centers (Tab A-1)

· The total number served both outside/house-based and inside the 65 evacuation centers were 17,847 families or 90,082 persons · Sultan Kudarat is still hosting 36 families / 180 persons house-based IDPs from Aleosan, Shariff Kabunsuan"

Region/Province/ Municipality	Number of Affected			Inside Evac Centers		No. of Evac Centers Established	Outside Evac Centers	
	Brgys	Families	Persons	Families	Persons		Families	Persons
GRAND TOTAL	64	24,623	164,973	6,467	32,335	65	18,156	132,638
REGION XII	58	22,586	153,941	5,935	29,675	59	16,651	124,266
NORTH COTABATO	58	22,586	153,941	5,935	29,675	59	16,651	124,266
ALEOSAN	6	3,345	16,725	739	3,695	6	2,570	12,850
LIBUNGAN	3	455	2,275	152	960	4	263	1,315
TULUNAN	12	10,819	88,220	402	2,010	3	10,417	86,210
PIGWAWAYAN	5	486	2,430	327	1,635	5	159	795
PIKIT	17	5,366	33,716	2,758	13,790	26	2,608	19,926
MIDSAYAP***	15	2,115	10,575	1,517	7,585	15	1,871	9,355
ARMM	6	2,037	11,032	532	2,660	6	1,541	8,552
SHARIFF KABUNSUAN	5	1,605	8,025	332	1,660	2	1,309	6,545
NORTHERN KABUNTALAN **	5	1,605	8,025	332	1,660	2	1,273	6,365
SULTAN KUDARAT *							36	180
BASILAN	1	432	3,007	200	1,000	4	232	2,007
TIPO-TIPO	1	432	3,007	200	1,000	4	232	2,007

* Of the 1,541 families / 8,552 persons outside evacuation centers in ARMM, 36 families/ 180 persons from Aleosan are staying with host families in Sultan Kudarat

** Of the 1,605 families / 8,025 persons displaced in Northern Kabuntalan that are currently situated in Midsayap, 332 families / 1,660 persons are temporarily housed in 2 evacuation centers, while the rest are staying with their friends/relatives

*** The decrease in the number of evacuees inside EC is due to the disintegration of the previously reported number of evacuees which came from Northern Kabuntalan

COE-DMHA, 13 August 2008

"The UN's World Food Program (WFP) began airlifting food Tuesday (August 12) to the southern Philippine province of North Cotabato, where nearly 160,000 people have been displaced by three days of fighting between the military and Muslim rebels accused of occupying 15 Christian

villages last week. Officials fear the situation could become a humanitarian crisis as the displaced are staying in 43 overcrowded temporary evacuation centers, Agence France-Presse (AFP) attributed the National Disaster Coordinating Council as saying. While the government said Tuesday that 159,123 people had been displaced, some reports say the number is as high as 300,000 and civilians, mostly women and children, continued to flee the fighting late Tuesday, according to AFP and the BBC."

NDCC, 13 August 2008

"A total of 23,648 families composed of 159,251 persons coming from 57 barangays of seven municipalities in 2 provinces of Region XII and ARMM were now displaced.

Forty (40) evacuation centers were utilized to temporarily shelter 3,389 families or 16,945 persons while 14,571 families or 72,855 persons are staying outside evacuation centers. The number of evacuation centers decrease in number from the last NDCC Sitrep because the evacuees opted to stay with their relatives. Hence, increasing the number of IDPs staying outside evacuation centers."

Reuters, 11 August 2008

"Fierce clashes between Muslim separatists and government troops have displaced nearly 130,000 people in the southern Philippines, officials said on Monday, but vowed to press on with a local election.

(...)

Air force planes bombed suspected MILF positions in North Cotabato province on Sunday after hundreds of guerrillas refused to leave Catholic farmlands they have occupied since last month."

13 JULY

200 PEOPLE FLEE FIGHTING IN AGUSAN DEL SUR PROVINCE

DPA, 13 July 2008

"Four communist rebels were killed in two days of fighting with government troops in the southern Philippine town, local officials and a military spokesman said Sunday.

Nearly 200 civilians fled their homes when the fighting erupted Friday in Veruela town in the southern province of Agusan Del Sur, according to Major Armand Rico, a regional military spokesman."

JUNE-JULY

SEVERAL THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE FLEE FIGHTING IN MAGUINDANAO, NORTH COTABATO AND SARANGANI PROVINCE

DPA, 2 July 2008

"Since last week, clashes have erupted between government troops and MILF rebels in Mindanao, leaving at least three dead and thousands of civilians displaced. The fighting broke out after MILF rebels launched separate attacks on military outposts and communities in the provinces of Maguindanao, Sarangani and North Cotabato."

Sarangani Province

DSWD-DROMIC, 27 June 2008 [[Internet](#)]

"One hundred forty-seven (147) families composed of 1,756 persons were displaced and sought refuge at the Municipal Gymnasium.

Two (2) casualties were reported."

30 JUNE

AN ESTIMATED 1,800 PEOPLE DISPLACED IN ESPERANZA AND GUADELUPE, MASBATE PROVINCE

DSWD-DROMIC, 9 July [Internet]

"Three hundred eighty-seven (387) families composed of 1,784 persons coming from eight (8) barangays were affected and sought refuge at their relatives' houses in the nearby area. No casualty or damaged houses were reported."

15 JUNE

2,500 PEOPLE FLEE MILITARY OPERATIONS IN INDANAN, SULU

MPW, 19 June 2008

"In fact, days before the release of the captives, civilian communities in Sitio Tandu Pugut, Syunugan Indanan was indiscriminately hit by artillery shelling at three o'clock in the morning (3am) of June 15, 2008 resulting to the displacement of 532 families, wounding four civilians - two women, a child and an elderly man."

11 JUNE

NEARLY 1,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED IN SULTAN KUDARAT PROVINCE

DWSD-DROMIC, 11 June [Internet]

"One hundred eighty-three (183) families composed of 915 persons were displaced and sought refuge in the nearby Poblacion Hall. No casualty was reported."

JANUARY-JUNE

UP TO 45,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED BY ARMY/PARAMILITARY-MILF CONFRONTATIONS IN DATU PIANG, MAGUINDANAO

NDCC Update, 6 June 2008

"Around 554 families / 3,324 persons were internally displaced in Maguindanao due to armed conflict between MILF factions of Commander Adsmei Kasim and Ustadz Abunawas in the Municipality of Datu Piang."

DWDS-DROMIC, 3 April [Internet]

"Seven hundred one (701) families composed of 2,958 individuals were affected and sought refuge at their friends' and relatives' houses in the nearby barangays. No casualty or damaged houses were reported."

DWDS-DROMIC, 3 March [Internet]

"One thousand seven hundred seventy-seven (1,777) families composed of 8,885 persons were affected and sought refuge at their friends' and relatives' houses in the nearby barangays. No casualty or damaged houses were reported."

DSWD-DROMIC, 11 January [Internet]

"Six thousand two (6,002) families composed of 29,320 persons coming from twenty-one (21) barangays were displaced."

Six hundred thirty-eight (638) families composed of 3,190 persons from Datu Piang sought refuge at the Damabalas Elementary School while other displaced families joined at their friends' and relatives' houses in the nearby barangays.
No casualty or damaged houses were reported."

MAY-JUNE

AN ESTIMATED 1,400 PEOPLE FLEE THEIR HOMES IN DAVAO DEL SUR PROVINCE

Brgys. Lower Bintuin and Fatima, Paquibato, District, Davao City

14 June 2008

"One hundred twenty-eight (128) composed of 640 persons were displaced and sought refuge at their relatives' houses in the nearby Sitio Riverside.

Four (4) unidentified military men died in the incident.

No damage to property has been reported."

DWDS-DROMIC, 18 May, Sitio Balutakay, Brgy. Managa, Bansalan, Davao del Sur

[\[Internet\]](#)

"One hundred fifty (150) families composed of approximately 750 individuals were affected and now taking refuge for temporary shelter with their relatives residing in the nearby areas.

No casualty was reported."

MAY-JUNE

3,700 PEOPLE FLEE MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST THE ASG IN BASILAN PROVINCE

NDCC Update, 6 June 2008

"Around 612 families / 3,764 persons were internally displaced due to continuing AFP operations against Abu Sayyaf Group (ASF) in the municipality of Ungkaya Pukan since 25 May 2008."

MAY

ONE THOUSANDS INDIGENOUS LUMADS DISPLACED BY MILITARY OPERATIONS IN COMPOSTELA VALLEY

DWDS-DROMIC, 26 May: Brgys. Ngan and Mangano of Compostela Valley Province

"Eighty Seven (87) families composed of approximately 153 individuals were affected and now taking temporary shelter in Davao City gymnasium."

Bulatlat, 15 May 2008

"More than a hundred Lumads from Mangayon, Compostela Valley have fled from their homes because of the military operations conducted by the Philippine Army's 67th Infantry Battalion in their ancestral territory last May 13, fearing that this may give rise to human rights violations. The 166 residents who fled are composed of 32 Ata-Matigsalug and four Ata-Manobo families living in Purok 4-B, classified as an indigenous community in this part of the Compostela.

According to PASAKA general secretary, Kerlan Fanagel, there are over 136 Ata-Matigsalug families or 826 individuals who were forcibly displaced from their ancestral territory in Compostela Valley from April 6 to May 13 alone. He adds that the one of the negative effects of militarization on indigenous communities is forcible displacement.

The evacuees are currently staying at the Mangayon town gym. Since their evacuation, Mayor Rey Castillo has given them food assistance. Meanwhile, the victims will continue to lobby at the

Compostela Valley Provincial Capitol to demand the pull-out of the military elements in their communities."

11 MAY

MILITARY OPERATIONS FORCE 632 PEOPLE TO FLEE THEIR HOMES IN PORTULIN, NEW EDEN, PANGANTUCAN, LA ROXAS IN BUKIDNON PROVINCE

[\[Internet\]](#)

DSDW-DROMIC, 11 May

"One hundred twenty-seven (127) families composed of 632 individuals were affected due to the on-going military pursuit operation in the area.

Thirty-two (32) families with 160 persons are temporarily staying at the New Eden Elementary School while others sought refuge at their relatives' houses in the neighboring barangays.

Two (2) casualties were reported with 1 dead and one 1 injured."

29 APRIL

2,250 PEOPLE DISPLACED IN INDANAN, SULU PROVINCE

DSWD-DROMIC, 29 April [\[Internet\]](#)

"A total of 404 families composed of 2,249 persons were displaced and sought refuge at their friends' and relatives' houses in the nearby barangay.

No casualty or damaged houses were reported."

8 APRIL

OVER 4,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED IN DATU BLAH SINSUAT, SHARIFF KABUNSUAN PROVINCE

DSWD-DROMIC, 8 April [\[Internet\]](#)

"Eight hundred thirty-five (835) families composed of 4,175 persons coming from five (5) barangays were affected and sought refuge at their friends' and relatives' houses in the nearby barangays.

No casualty was reported."

2 APRIL

375 PEOPLE DISPLACED IN TULUNAN, NORTH COTABATO PROVINCE

DSWD-DROMIC, 2 May [\[Internet\]](#)

"Seventy-five (75) families composed of 375 persons were displaced and sought refuge at the Dungos Barangay Hall.

No casualty or damaged houses were reported"

19 FEBRUARY

830 PEOPLE FLEE SECURITY INCIDENTS IN SAN JOSE, OCCIDENTAL MINDORO PROVINCE

DSWD-DROMIC, 14 April [\[Internet\]](#)

"One hundred sixty-six (166) families composed of 830 persons were affected and sought refuge at their friends' and relatives' houses including the eighty-one (81) families composed of 581 persons previously sheltered at the Mangyan's Dormitory, Barangay Labagan.

Nine (9) casualties were reported with 1 dead and 8 injured.
All displaced families returned to their respective places of origin after peace and order in the area was restored."

1 FEBRUARY

AN ESTIMATED 808 PEOPLE DISPLACED IN NED, LAKE SEBU IN COTABATO PROVINCE

DSWD-DROMIC, 1 February [[Internet](#)]

"Two hundred two (202) families composed of 808 persons were displaced and transferred to their relatives' houses at Sitios Ned Proper, Tinugas, Bandula and Block 3.

No damage to properties has been reported.

Three (3) unidentified persons were reported injured.

An undetermined cost of 30 bags of rice and 3 boxes of sardines were provided by the local government (LGU) of Lambayong to the displaced families.

Family evacuees returned to their places of origin on February 4, 2008 after peace and order in the area was restored."

30 JANUARY

1,640 PEOPLE DISPLACED IN LAKIKI AND CABUNNAN, SIBUCO IN ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE PROVINCE

DSWD-DROMIC, 30 January [[Internet](#)]

"Three hundred eleven (311) families composed of approximately 1,641 individuals were displaced and sought temporary refuge at the Poblacion Public Market while others stayed with their friends' and relatives' houses.

Four (4) still unidentified persons were reported injured and brought to the WestCom Hospital (WH) in Zamboanga City for medical intervention."

20 JANUARY

550 PEOPLE DISPLACED IN BAYANG, LANA DEL SUR PROVINCE

DSWD-DROMIC, 20 January [[Internet](#)]

"One hundred ten (110) families composed of 550 persons from the municipality of Bayang, Lanao del Sur were affected and sought refuge at their friends' and relatives' houses in the nearby barangays.

No casualty or damage houses were reported."

16 JANUARY

668 PEOPLE DISPLACED BY ARMED CONFLICT IN SAN PASCUAL AND CLAVERIA, MASBATE PROVINCE

DSWD-DROMIC, 16 January [[Internet](#)]

"One hundred-twelve (112) families composed of 668 persons were displaced."

JANUARY

648 INDIGENOUS PEOPLE FLEE MILITARY OPERATIONS IN DAVAO DEL NORTE

Pinoy Press, 23 January 2008

"PASAKA condemns the massive military operations being conducted by 73rd Infantry Battalion commanded by Lt. Colonel Alexander Ambal together with the Army Scout Rangers led by 1st Lt. Betinol, 2nd Lt. Mopal and 1st Lt. Villanueva in the hinterlands of Talaingod town, Davao del Norte which has now caused the enforced evacuation of Ata-Manobo families.

At least 17 villages in Talaingod such as Tibukag, Purok 31, Paiton, Purok 17, Dalingding, Tibugaw, Natampod, Labuo, Duryan, Tambuko, Mahindang, Nalubas, Lasakan, Sasu, Bagang, Pongpong and Nasilaban were gravely affected by the said military operations.

"We demand the immediate pull out of these bloodthirsty military elements from Talaingod. Base on the reports reaching PASAKA, over the last 15 days, the counter-insurgency operations of government troops have sown terror in Talaingod by encamping in the homes and schools in barrio centers in almost all the Ata-Manobo communities in Talaingod," PASAKA chairperson Mel Elio said."

DWDS-DROMIC, 7 January [Internet]

"One hundred twenty (120) indigenous families composed of approximately 648 individuals were affected and now taking refuge for temporary shelter with their relatives residing in the nearby areas.

The DSWD Field Office XI-SWAD Team is assisting the Talaingod Social Welfare and Development staff in the conduct of assessment and validation on the needs of the victims and report, respectively.

The Municipal Peace and Order Council (MPOC) was convened to fully assess the veracity of the reported incident as basis for appropriate actions and interventions.

No casualty was reported."

JANUARY

ONE THOUSAND PEOPLE FLEE THEIR HOMES IN SULTAN KUDARAT

DROMIC, January

"A total of two hundred twenty-one (221) families composed of 1,105 individuals were displaced. Three (3) evacuation centers were utilized and provided temporary shelter to 188 families with 940 individuals while 33 families or 165 individuals sought temporary refuge with their friends' and relatives' houses in the nearby areas. To date, 127 families or 635 individuals are still staying inside the evacuation centers.

There was no casualty or damage to shelter and other infrastructures reported."

Up to 170,000 people displaced by conflict in 2007 (January 2008)

- During 2007, at least 167,000 people were forced to leave their homes due to armed conflict. Most displacements took place in Mindanao province.
- In December, an estimated 6,000 people fled fighting between the army and MNLF militants in Sulu.
- On 11 August, 8,000 people were forced from their homes on Jolo island, Sulu following
- At the end of July-early August, up to 24,000 people fled their homes in Basilan in anticipation of or as a result of military attacks on MILF rebels.
- A large military operation against members of the MNLF in Sulu between April and May triggered the displacement of between 60,000 and 80,000 people. This military operation followed earlier military activities in Sulu, mainly against the Abu Sayaff group, causing limited displacement in February and March 2007.

- An estimated 7,800 people were forced from their homes in Pagalungan, Maguindanao province by armed conflict in mid-April
- An estimated 5,000 families (or 25,000 individuals) were displaced in Midsayap, Cotabato province by various armed incidents between January and March

Summary of main displacement incidents during 2007

date	municipality/province	nb. displaced	source
December	Datu Piang/Maguindanao	1,900	IRIN
7-Dec	Kalinggalang/Sulu	6,000	NDCC
Nov-Dec	Surigao del Sur	2,500	DSWD-DROMIC
27-Oct	Negros Occidental	3,000	DSWD-DROMIC
25-Oct	Lanao del Norte	1,750	DSWD-DROMIC
5-Oct	Catanduanes	1,275	DSWD-DROMIC
11-Aug	Jolo/Sulu	8,000	AFP
July-September	Basilan	24,000	DSWD, AFP, Davao Today
14-Apr	Pagalungan/Maguindanao	8,200	Government
April-May	Sulu	80,000	The Inquirer,
2-Apr	Masbate (Bicol region)	2,600	DSWD-DROMIC
April	Davao del Norte	300	Mindanews
Jan-March	Midsayap, Pikit/North Cotabato	28,000	Bantay Ceasefire, MPW
17-Jan	Leyte	210	DSWD-DROMIC
Jan-Dec 2007		167,735	

DECEMBER 2007

MORE THAN 3,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED BY ARMED CONFLICT IN PIKIT, NORTH COTABATO

DSWD-DROMIC, 18 December 2007

"Six hundred eighty-six (686) families composed of 3,430 persons coming from the six (6) barangays of Pikit, Cotabato were displaced.

Two (2) evacuation centers are opened to shelter 206 families with 1,030 individuals while 480 families or 2,400 individuals sought temporary refuge with their relatives and friends in the nearby areas."

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2007

OVER 2,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED BY ARMED CONFLICT IN LIANGA AND ST AUGUSTIN, SURIGAO DEL SUR

IDMC, 13 December 2007

"Between 2,000 and 3,000 indigenous Lumad people from the towns of Diatagon, Lianga and San Augustin in Surigao del Sur province, Mindanao, have fled their homes in the past three weeks to escape fighting between the army and rebel communists of the New People's Army (NPA)."

DSWD-DROMIC, 6 December 2007

"Four hundred thirty-nine (439) families composed of 2,351 persons coming from seven (7) barangays were displaced.

Eight (8) evacuation centers remained opened to temporarily shelter three hundred forty-two (342) families with 1,726 persons while 89 families or 561 individuals joined at their friends and relatives houses."

**30 NOVEMBER-3 DECEMBER 2007
BETWEEN 3,800 AND 7,500 PEOPLE FLEE FIGHTING IN SULU**

NDCC, 7 December 2007: 6,000 displaced

"PDCC Sulu reported that the number of IDPs in Kalinggalang Caluang, Sulu Province, slightly increased from 1,179 families or 5,923 persons to 1,208 families / 5,998 persons due to the continuing fierce encounter between the Philippine Marines and MNLF Breakaway Group led by Habier Malik in Kalinggalan, Caluang, Sulu."

ABS-CBN, 6 December 2007

"At least 1,500 families have fled their homes as government forces continue to pursue a faction of the Moro National Liberation Front led by rogue commander Habier Malik in Kalinggalan Caluang town in Sulu, a report from ABS-CBN Regional Network Group said Wednesday.

Hadja Jainab Abdulmajid, executive director of the Sulu government's Area Coordinating Center, said residents of four barangays in Kalinggalan Caluang have started leaving their homes after fighting broke out between the MNLF and Armed Forces of the Philippines."

DSDW-DROMIC, 3 December 2007

"Nine hundred fifty (950) families composed of 3,800 persons coming from the three (3) barangays were affected.

Five hundred fifty (550) families or 2,200 individuals took temporary shelter at the Maharaja Tawasil Elementary School while others stayed with their relatives houses in the nearby barangays."

**OCTOBER 2007
3,000 PEOPLE FLEE CLASHES IN NEGROS OCCIDENTAL**

Bulatlat, 27 October 2007

"The recent armed skirmishes between Army troops and NPA units in the mountain villages of Calatrava have displaced anew hundreds of families.

Calatrava Mayor Alfonso Baguio said that around 586 families or a total of 2,931 individuals from three hinterland villages of his municipality have been forced to flee their homes after Army troopers launched massive operations against suspected units of the NPA who ambushed them Monday. The NPA ambush operations resulted in the wounding of two soldiers belonging to the army's Special Operations Teams (SOTs). The displaced families came from the villages of Macasilao, Hilub-ang and Cruz," Baguio said."

DSDW-DROMIC, 26 October 2007

"Five hundred eighty-six (586) families composed of 2,931 individuals were affected.

Three hundred fifty-three (353) families composed of 1,800 persons took temporary shelter with their relatives and friends houses in the nearby areas while others stayed at the evacuation centers.

The adult members of the family continue to do farm work and other activities during daytime but return to the evacuation at night for safety reasons."

OCTOBER 2007

1,700 PEOPLE FLEE ARMED INCIDENT IN LANA DEL NORTE

DSDW-DROMIC, 25 October 2007

"Three hundred fifty (350) families composed of approximately 1,750 persons were displaced and sought temporary refuge at their relatives houses in the nearby barangay."

5 OCTOBER 2007

1,250 PEOPLE DISPLACED BY VIOLENCE IN BARAS, CATANDUANES

DSDW-DROMIC, 30 October 2007

"Two hundred fifty-five (255) families composed of 1,275 persons coming from three (3) barangays were affected."

11 AUGUST 2007

8,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED ON JOLO ISLAND, SULU

AFP, 11 August 2007: 8,000 displaced

"Thousands of people have fled their homes in the southern Philippine island of Jolo as troops pursue Muslim militants blamed for killing more than 20 soldiers, officials said Saturday. Jolo brigade commander Colonel Anthony Supnet said his troops would continue to hunt the gunmen even though they had broken up into smaller groups and scattered into the hinterlands of Jolo.

Supnet said the attackers were members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), a group that had signed a peace accord with the government in 1996, and the Abu Sayyaf, an extremist group not covered by the accord. He accused the MNLF of helping the Abu Sayyaf, saying that a prominent Abu Sayyaf member who was killed in the fighting had an MNLF membership card.

[...]

The [recent] fighting has caused some 8,000 people to flee their homes, the provincial disaster coordinating council said.

JULY-SEPTEMBER

UP TO 24,000 PEOPLE FLEE CLASHES IN BASILAN

AFP, 23 August 2007

"Nearly 24,000 people have fled their homes in the southern Philippines to escape fighting between the armed forces and Islamic militants, relief officials said Thursday.

With President Gloria Arroyo due to fly to the troubled southern region later in the day to meet with commanders, the civil defence office said that 40 hamlets had been evacuated on mainly Muslim Jolo and Basilan islands.

(...)

Relief officials are expecting "massive evacuation" on top of nearly 12,000 people who have sought refuge at government-run centres, it said. A similar number have left their homes in Jolo."

Reuters, 6 August 2007

"Nearly 7,000 people have fled their homes on a southern Philippine island, fearing an army offensive against Muslim rebels in retaliation against the killing of 14 Marines last month, disaster officials said on Monday."

Xinhua News Agency, 5 August 2007

"About 12,000 residents have fled their homes in Basilan province, the southern Philippines to avoid impending violence between government soldiers and rebels, the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) said on Sunday."

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 21 July 2007

"At least 5,000 people in several villages of Albarka, Basilan have moved out of their homes ahead of the the military's deadline, which expires on Saturday, for the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to hand over suspects in the July 10 ambush that killed 14 soldiers, according to a regional official.

Bai Racma Ambolodto, social welfare secretary of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), said residents have decided not to wait for fighting to break out.

She said residents of barangay (villages) Ginanta, Linuan, and Makalang, and the sitios of Bohe Naga, Puh-Puh, Bohe Lessen, Bohe Libi and Bohe Buug in Albarka have sought refuge in the barangay of Manunggul, Magcawa and Pagtawanan since last week when additional troops were deployed in the province."

APRIL-MAY 2007

MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST ABU SAYAFF AND THE MNLF DISPLACE BETWEEN 60,000 AND 80,000 PEOPLE IN SULU

The Inquirer, 6 May 2007

"But since the start of the evacuation on April 10, only organizations like Tabang Mindanaw, World Food Program and the Philippine National Red Cross have been moving around the province to distribute relief goods to at least 80,000 displaced residents."

Tabang Mindanaw, 2 May 2007, p.1

"Late on 11 April 2007, civilians reported series of bombardments in the vicinity surrounding Marang area, Indanan. Task Force Comet MGen Ruben Rafael stated that sightings of the ASG in Talibang and nearby areas prompted the military to act. There was also reported armed exchange between the MNLF and government forces. This again caused displacement of civilian communities, some of which had in fact just returned home from a recent displacement in February and March. Local contacts in Indanan and Jolo had expressed anxieties over the bombings. Two days after, the armed clashes in the MNLF Camp in Bitanag caused more civilians to be displaced from Panamao and its peripheral areas.

Initial IDP data from the Area Coordinating Council of Sulu or ACC reported at least 8,000 families displaced. As of April 29, the ACC reports 11,998 HHs or 61,402 persons more or less to have been affected by the displacement due to armed conflict within 54 barangays in 10 municipalities in mainland Sulu, except for Tongkil."

14 April 2007 - Armed conflict in Pagalungan, Maguindanao displaces 7,800 people

DSWD-DROMIC, 19 April 2007

"One thousand three hundred twenty-one (1,321) families composed of 7,885 persons coming from the four (4) barangays of Pagalungan, Maguindanao were displaced.

Six (6) evacuation centers are now opened to shelter 343 families or 2,030 individuals in Pikit, North Cotabato while 978 families or 5,855 individuals sought temporary refuge with their relatives and friends in the nearby areas."

2 April 2007 - Armed conflict in Aroroy, Baleno & San Fernando, Masbate province displace 2,600 people

DWSD-DROMIC, 19 April 2007

"Five hundred twenty (520) families composed of 2,644 persons coming from six (6) barangays were validated as affected.

Seven (7) evacuation centers were opened to temporarily shelter four hundred fourteen (414) families composed of 2,171 persons. To date, four (4) evacuation centers are still open to temporarily shelter 21 families composed of 113 persons while seventy-seven (77) families composed of 318 persons are still taking refuge at their friends' and relatives' houses.

No casualty was reported."

25 JANUARY-12 MARCH 2007

- UP TO 5,000 FAMILIES DISPLACED BY ARMED INCIDENTS IN MIDSAYAP, COTABATO

Bantay Ceasefire, 4 April 2007, p.1

"The joint ceasefire coordinating committee conducted investigation on the incidents that took place in Midsayap, North Cotabato from January 25- March 12, 2007 that resulted to the displacements of more or less 5000 families. Though findings of the joint investigative mission of the GRP-MILF JCCCH conducted last March 19-23, 2007 is not yet available as this time, the news that had been circulating in the communities of the conduct of the investigative missions have a positive effect to the people. It produced a feeling of security and confidence to the evacuees that encourages them to go home and just in time for the land preparation for another rice cropping season as most if not all of the evacuees are farmers."

>>11 March 2007 - MILF-government forces clashes displace thousands of people in Midsayap, Cotabato

For more details, see:

Bantay Ceasefire, 12 March 2007 [[Internet](#)]

AFP, 11 March 2007 [[Internet](#)]

>>2-13 February 2007 - Offshoot of military pursuit of prison escapees force up to 5,600 people to flee their homes in Maguindanao and Cotabato

For more details, see:

Bantay Ceasefire & Mindanao Peoples Caucus, 20 February 2007 [[Internet](#)]

DSWD-DROMIC, 2-13 February 2007

>>27-29 January 2007 - Land dispute triggers MILF-CVO armed encounter and displace up to 8,550 people in Midsayap, Cotabato

For more details, see:

Bantay Ceasefire, 29 January 2007 [[Internet](#)]

DSWD-DROMIC, 27 January 2007

17 January - Armed conflict in Leyte (Cantawagon II, Barangay Tabgas, Albuera Leyte) displaces 210 people

DSWD-DROMIC, 17 January 2007

"Thirty-five (35) families composed of 210 persons evacuated and sought temporary refuge at the Tabgas Barangay Hall and Day Care Center.

No casualty was reported."

Close to 100,000 people displaced by conflict in 2006

32,000 people displaced by fighting between MILF and paramilitary groups in Mamasapano, Maguindanao province in late January 2006

Bantay Ceasefire, 2 February 2006

"Armed Engagements between BIAF under 105th Base Command and Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) and Civilian Volunteers Organization (CVO)

(...)

The armed clashes have resulted in the evacuation of nearly 32,000 civilians. Bashir Iskak, 9 year old boy was hit by stray bullet in Brgy. Timbangan, Shariff Aguak. There is also unconfirmed reports of a 7 month pregnant woman who died of shock during the first salvo of the fighting in Brgy. Kayakaya, Datu Abdullah Sangki on Jan. 25, 2006.

Displaced Civilians

Several barangays were totally displaced as a result of this weeklong fighting between the 105th Base Command of the MILF and the paramilitary CAFGU's and CVO's. These communities were Koloy, Tapihan, Lepok, Bagongupam, Nabundas, Tina, Bialong, in Mamasapano and Barangay Kayaya in Datu Abdullah Sangki. The evacuation areas are in Poblacion Shariff Aguak , Poblacion Mamasapano, Libutan and Tukanalipao, Mamasapano; Dapyawan and Kitango, Datu Saudi Ampatuan. Humanitarian agencies and NGOs have difficulty in locating evacuees as most prefer to stay in their relatives houses.

DSWD Maguindanao officially recorded a total of 6,395 families or 31, 975 individuals displaced civilians from four municipalities of Mamasapano., Shariff Aguak, Datu Abdullah Sangki and Rajah Buayan. The Mindanao Emergency Relief Network (MERN) is in the process of validating and locating the evacuees at present."

3,000 people displaced by counter-insurgency operations against NPA rebels in Sta. Ignacia, Tarlac province

CDRC, 3 February 2006

"Described as the military's biggest operation in Tarlac, the offensive against the New People's Army (NPA), leading to a 10-hour gun battle and air strikes early this week, caused the immediate evacuation of an unaccounted thousands from three villages in the municipality of Sta. Ignacia.

At least 3,000 residents or approximately 550 families have yet to return home due to what the military say as clearing operations in the areas."

An estimated 3,700 people (or 746 families) displaced by paramilitary groups in Davao
Davao Today, 5 March 2006

"The human-rights group Karapatan blamed the military over the weekend for the displacement of some 746 families from Paquibato as a result of a series of attacks allegedly by Alamara bandits in the hinterland district of the city.

In a statement, Kelly Delgado, Karapatan-Southern Mindanao's acting secretary-general, said three Paquibato residents, one of them a village councilor, were allegedly murdered in February by members of the paramilitary group Alamara.

Following the attacks, which Delgado described as vicious, members of the Alamara wrought more havoc in Paquibato by harassing civilians, leading to the evacuation of the affected families.

"The Alamaras lord it over the helpless civilians," Delgado said. They "sow terror, loot the houses and kill innocent individuals." Some of the residents, he said on Sunday, have since returned to their homes.

Delgado blamed the Task Force Davao and the 73rd Infantry Battalion for the attacks and for the ensuing displacement. He said the military has been continuously supporting and controlling the Alamara, which has been helping in the military's counter-insurgency operations. He accused the armed forces violated domestic and international agreements on human rights and international humanitarian law."

See also "[Army says NPA camp captured](#)", The Inquirer, 8 April 2006

More than 1,500 people displaced by fighting between the MILF and paramilitaries in
Carmen, North Cotabato
DSWD, 14 April 2006

"A total of three hundred eighteen (318) families composed of 1,585 individuals were displaced when the gun battle between Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Civilian Volunteer Officers (CVOs) forces occurred at the abovementioned address. No casualty was reported.

Displaced families took temporary shelter at their friends' and relatives' houses in the nearby Sitios at Barangays."

An estimated 3,500 people displaced by armed incident in Davao del Sur
DSWD, 4 May 2006

"Six hundred seven (607) families composed of 2,932 dependents were displaced and took temporary shelter with their friends' and relatives' houses due to the incident.

No reported casualties.

DSWD Field Office XI and the City Social Services Office are in the area assessing the needs of the affected families.

UPDATE As of May 19, 2006

A total of eight hundred fifty-nine (859) families composed of 3,436 individuals coming from the three (3) barangays were affected."

Up to 40,000 people displaced in by fighting between MILF and paramilitary group in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao (28 June-18 August 2006)

DPA, 8 July 2006

"At least 30,000 people have fled their homes in southern Philippines to escape clashes between pro-government militiamen and Muslim rebels, a social welfare official said Saturday.

Ruby Sahali, a regional chief of the social welfare department, said the evacuation continued amid an uneasy truce between the militiamen and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels in shariff Aguak town in Maguindanao province, 960 kilometres south of Manila.

Sahali said that late Friday suspected MILF rebels from unknown location fired two mortars in the nearby town of Mamasapano, but no one was hurt in the attack.

"The people continue to leave their homes because every now and then both parties are trading gunfire," she said. "There was no truce because they are still fighting in the area." "

DSWD, 18 August 2006

"Seven thousand nine hundred fifty-one (7,951) families composed of 39,934 persons coming from eighteen (18) barangays of the seven (7) municipalities affected in Maguindanao were displaced.

Thirty-one (31) evacuation centers were utilized to shelter 4,867 affected families with 23,836 persons. To date, thirteen (13) evacuation centers still exist and temporarily sheltering 1,008 affected families or 4,412 persons while 588 other families composed of 3,204 persons are being served outside evacuation centers."

Up to 3,000 people displaced in Sulu by military operations against Abu Sayaff Group between August and September 2006

DPA, 3 August 2006

"Thousands of people fled their homes as fighting between government troops and al-Qaeda-linked Muslim Abu Sayyaf rebels raged for the third day on a southern Philippine island, the military said Thursday.

Colonel Antonio Supnet, chief of staff of the armed forces' Southern Command, said more than 2,000 people have stayed in two evacuation centres since the fighting broke out Tuesday in Indanan town on Jolo Island, 1,000 kilometres south of Manila."

E-Balita, 15 September 2006

"Military offensives against Abu Sayyaf militants and alleged members of the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) terror group hiding in the hinterland of the Philippines province of Sulu have displaced almost 1,000 civilians. Abdulwatan Mohammad, provincial director of the Filipino government's social and development office, told Adnkronos International (AKI) that the evacuees have yet to receive any relief assistance from the state."

More than 5,000 people displaced by armed conflict in Calatrava, Negros Occidental

DSWD, 25 October 2006

"One thousand one hundred thirty-three (1,133) families or 5,635 coming from the five barangays were affected and displaced.

Seven (7) evacuation centers were opened to temporarily shelter 236 families or 1,180 persons. Others joined their relatives' and friends' residing in the nearby barangays.

(...)

§ A total of five hundred (500) families composed of 2,497 persons coming from the six (6) barangays were affected and displaced.

§ Two hundred thirty-six (236) families or 1,180 persons sought temporary refuge at the six (6) barangay halls and a Day Care Center while others joined their relatives' and friends' residing in the nearby barangays.

(...)

§ Most of the affected families returned to their respective places of origin as the peace and order situation was restored and ensured by the police authorities. Others, however, are still staying with their relatives' houses for fear of another fire fighting. "

See "[Army troops scored for alleged torture, harassment in Negros](#)", Bulatlat, November 2006

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

General

Up to 80 per cent of North Cotabato's displaced sought refuge outside evacuation centers (August 2008)

- Of the total of 164,000 people displaced, 32,000 were housed in 65 evacuation centers and 132,000 sought refuge with family and friends or settled temporarily under trees or along the highways.

"NDCC, 16 August 2008

"2.1 Areas and Population Affected /Displaced (Tab A)

· A total of 24,623 families / 164,973 persons coming from 64 barangays of 9 municipalities in 3 provinces of Regions XII and ARMM were displaced / affected · Sixty-five (65) evacuation centers were utilized to temporarily shelter 6,467 families / 32,335 persons while 18,156 families / 132,638 persons are staying outside evacuation centers

2.2 Population Served Inside and Outside Evacuation Centers (Tab A-1)

· The total number served both outside/house-based and inside the 65 evacuation centers were 17,847 families or 90,082 persons · Sultan Kudarat is still hosting 36 families / 180 persons house-based IDPs from Aleosan, Shariff Kabunsuan"

Region/Province/ Municipality	Number of Affected			Inside Evac Centers		No. of Evac Centers Established	Outside Evac Centers	
	Brgys	Families	Persons	Families	Persons		Families	Persons
GRAND TOTAL	64	24,623	164,973	6,467	32,335	65	18,156	132,638
REGION XII	58	22,586	153,941	5,935	29,675	59	16,651	124,266
NORTH COTABATO	58	22,586	153,941	5,935	29,675	59	16,651	124,266
ALEOSAN	6	3,345	16,725	739	3,695	6	2,570	12,850
LIBUNGAN	3	455	2,275	192	960	4	263	1,315
TULUNAN	12	10,819	88,220	402	2,010	3	10,417	86,210
PIGKAWAYAN	5	486	2,430	327	1,635	5	159	795
PIKIT	17	5,366	33,716	2,758	13,790	26	2,608	19,926
MIDSAYAP***	15	2,115	10,575	1,517	7,585	15	1,871	9,355
ARMM	6	2,037	11,032	532	2,660	6	1,541	8,552
SHARIFF KABUNSUAN	5	1,605	8,025	332	1,660	2	1,309	6,545
NORTHERN KABUNTALAN **	5	1,605	8,025	332	1,660	2	1,273	6,365
SULTAN KUDARAT *							36	180
BASILAN	1	432	3,007	200	1,000	4	232	2,007
TIPO-TIPO	1	432	3,007	200	1,000	4	232	2,007

* Of the 1,541 families / 8,552 persons outside evacuation centers in ARMM, 36 families/ 180 persons from Aleosan are staying with host families in Sultan Kudarat

** Of the 1,605 families / 8,025 persons displaced in Northern Kabuntalan that are currently situated in Midsayap, 332 families / 1,660 persons are temporarily housed in 2 evacuation centers, while the rest are staying with their friends/relatives

*** The decrease in the number of evacuees inside EC is due to the disintegration of the previously reported number of evacuees which came from Northern Kabuntalan

Mindanews, 12 August 2008

"At least 4,000 families have been forced to leave their homes and farmlands due to renewed hostilities in the towns of Midsayap, Aleosan and Pigcawayan, North Cotabato between government forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

As of Sunday, these towns' social welfare and development offices reported that 2,679 evacuees from barangays of Baliki, Central Bualan, Lagumbingan, Patindeguin, Gayunga, Upper Labas, Central Labas, San Isidro, Bagumba, Nes, Rangaban, Palongoguer, Macasendeg and Olandang have sought refuge in 15 evacuation centers in Midsayap. A few are staying in houses of relatives.

In Aleosan, 1,460 families from barangays Bagolibas, Dualing, Pagangan, san Mateo, Dungan and Tapodoc also vacated their homes. Of this number, 739 went to different evacuation centers in the area.

In Pigcawayan, 317 families have taken refuge in evacuation centers, mostly schools near the highway. They came from barangays Tubon, Cabpangi, Bulucaon, Upper Baguer and Had, and from sitios Marges and Sitio Balogo of barangay Maria-Balogo.

Residents of barangays Taskepan, Nalapaan and Dalingawen, Silik, Bualan, Kulambog, Katilacan, Pagangan, Manaulanan, Lagundi and Kalakakan in Pikit have also started moving out. But the exact number of the evacuees from these areas was not known.

Men and women carrying infants, children, the elderly, and people pulling along their farm animals and braving the rain were a common sight along the roads from the interior villages of Pikit to the evacuation centers, from 6:00 a.m. to around 10:00 p.m. Sunday.

Estimates placed the number of evacuees at 22,000. A few of them were accommodated at the gymnasium of the Immaculate Conception Parish and the Buisan warehouse, while some had taken refuge in relatives' houses. Most of them just stayed along the roads, under the cattle-pulled carts loaded with their belongings."

Most of the estimated 57,000 people displaced in Lanao del Norte, Sarangani and Sultan Kudarat provinces are hosted in evacuation centers (August 2008)

NDCC, 19 August 2008

"Series of attacks/explosions believed to be perpetuated by the MILF were reported and validated in various parts in Lanao del Norte in region X, Sarangani and Sultan Kudarat and South Cotabato in Region XII and Lanao del Sur in ARMM

(...)

A total of 12,367 families or 57,397 persons were affected in the Provinces of Lanao del Norte and Misamis Occidental in Region X and the Provinces of Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and South Cotabato in Region XII."

Region/ Province/ Municipality	Number of Affected			No. of Evac Centers	DISPLACED POPULATION			
					Inside Evacuation Center		Outside Evacuation Centers	
	Brgys	Families	Persons		Families	Persons	Families	Persons
TOTAL	19	12,367	57,397	31	9,710	47,886	4,527	18,861
X	10	9,341	43,367	24	8,354	42,206	1,187	2,161
Lanao del Norte (LDN)	10	9,341	43,367	19	7,124	32,279	2,417	12,088
Linamon	1	140	700	1	140	700	0	0
Napo								
Kauswagan	4	300	1,500		-	-	-	-
Tacub								
Larapan								
Lapayan								
Libertad								
Iligan City*	2	6,109	27,491	14	6,409	28,991		
Kolambugan	1	2,217	11,088	-	-	-	-	-
Kulasihan								
Bacolod	1	385	1,733	3	385	1,733		
Maigo	1	190	855	1	190	855		
Tubod**		-	-	-	-	-	200	1,000
Misamis Occidental (Ozamis City)***				5	1,230	9,927		
XII	9	3,026	14,030	7	1,356	5,680	1,670	8,350
Sarangani	6	656	3,280	3	656	3,280	-	-
Maasin	6	328	1,640	3	328	1,640		
Lumasal								
Kanalo		93	465		93	465		
Daliao		120	600		120	600		
Brgy Nomoh		115	575		115	575		
Kablakan								
Maasin								
Sultan Kudarat	2	1,970	9,850	2	300	1,500	1,670	8,350
Katemansig	2	1,970	9,850	2	300	1,500	1,670	8,350
Sangay								
Pani								
South Cotabato	1	400	900	2	400	900	-	-
Lake Sebu	1	400	900	2	400	900	-	-
Brgy Ned								

Length and circumstances of displacement vary depending mainly on type of armed confrontation causing the displacement (October 2006)

- UNICEF study shows that the length of displacement and pattern of displacement tends to vary considerably depending on the cause of displacement.

UNICEF, October 2006, p. 6

"The experience of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) covered by the study has varied mainly in terms of length of displacement and partly in terms of circumstances. In terms of length of displacement these lasted up to: eleven days (Surigao del Sur), two weeks (Compostela Valley), running up to eight months so far at the time of field research (Leyte), about a year (North Cotabato), and nearly five years (Maguindanao).

The main difference in circumstances is between the Leyte bakwit (or evacuees) and those of the other provinces: the estimated 200-250 Leyte bakwit left their community family-by-family over

the span of six months to escape perceived military attacks against them, and not en masse following a major battle. Interviews indicate that such phenomena of bakwit also occurred at different periods for other provinces affected by armed conflict, although this was not directly monitored by the research team."

'Mobile' evacuees do not take refuge with family and avoid evacuation centers (January 2007)

- While many of the 6,000 people displaced at the end of January 2007 by skirmishes in Midsayap sought refuge in evacuation centers and other with families, many families opted to do neither and they stayed "mobile" under a tree or along a road.
- In July 2006, many of the displaced in Maguindanao stayed "mobile".

Bantay Ceasefire, 29 January 2007

"Around 1235 families, or some 6,000 individuals have abandoned their homes and temporarily took shelter in schools, houses of relatives and other structures like turugan (meeting place). Many families also stayed only under the trees along the highway connecting Midsayap and Datu Piang of Maguindanao. The exact number of evacuees could not be ascertained as many were considered "mobile evacuees" who had their sleds and tractors parked under the trees along the highway that served as their temporary shelters. Despite the fact that January 27, Saturday, was not a working day, a few government officials and employees were monitored visiting the affected villages, but there was no way to gather exact data on the number of evacuees as movements to the evacuations areas were still ongoing until dusk. There was apparently no specific pre-identified evacuation area for emergency cases similar to this. The process of evacuation was obviously disorganized as there were not enough government officials, employees or NGOs ushering the fleeing villagers to where they should go."

Mindanews, 14 July 2007

"A total of 4,456 families were displaced, according to a consolidated report of humanitarian agencies as of July 11. As of July 13, there is no information as yet exactly how many evacuees have remained in the evacuation centers, with their relatives, or have continued to be mobile and how many have returned home. "Mobile evacuees" are those who do not stay in evacuation centers or relatives' houses but carry with them makeshift tents which they pitch under a coconut tree in the villages or by the road in the town's poblacion."

IID, 13 July 2007

"The many mobile evacuees, who stay under the trees with their sleds and hand tractor-driven trailers are also very vulnerable especially that some areas where they sought refuge are flooded. A report reaching Bantay Ceasefire accounted that four children have already died in the evacuation areas."

IID, 2 July 2006

"The estimate of 2,000 evacuee-families, though rough, is based on an average of 200 families in each of the nine barangays where houses have reportedly been abandoned by residents, some of whom do not even feel safe evacuating to the town center.

But the so-called mobile-evacuees, in this case, believe they are in a better situation compared to their relatives and neighbors who have been left trapped between the two warring groups."

Patterns of conflict-induced displacement and coping mechanisms (October 2006)

- Mass evacuations due to military operations tend to be on very short notice, leaving the displaced with little or no time to take anything with them.
- Some displaced communities can rely on strong and effective local networks to assist them during the evacuation, while others prefer to rely on individual family initiatives.
- Depending on the level of trust with the government, some displaced communities would avoid the evacuation centers and seek refuge closer into MILF territory.
- Temporary evacuation centers for IDPs are usually schools, churches, gymnasiums and other public structures large enough to accommodate many people.
- Most displacements caused by the fighting between the rebel MILF and the military follow and rural-urban migration pattern.
- Usual, the displaced make prolonged stops in 2-3 places before reaching their final evacuation center, which consists of schools, public buildings or tent cities, where conditions are generally inadequate. In most cases, the IDPs end up residing permanently in the host communities.
- The type of displacement produced since 2000 is qualitatively different from those seen in recent years. There now exists a tendency toward longer-term displacements for the first time since the 1970's.

UNICEF, October 2006, pp. 118-119

"All the mass evacuations were immediately driven by AFP offensive operations. Judging from respondent accounts, coordination between the military and civilian authorities has been uneven. LGUs down to the barangay level are seldom appraised of impending military operations. Respondents claimed this to be the case as well for such relevant agencies as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and even the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), although the research team could not confirm this. Some respondents surmised, however, that the practice is due to the military's desire to have the the element of surprise on their side.

The worst problems during evacuations occur during the frenzied departures of residents while under fire, and the difficulties of travelling to evacuation sites, when family members are sometimes even separated temporarily. Some residents of conflict areas left their homes with only the clothes on their backs, leaving everything else behind.

The existence of traditional social organizations and POs helps establish a level of capacity to address community crisis situations. These POs usually have direct knowledge of the needs of their communities, are familiar and trusted, and are thus in a better position to mobilize and coordinate internal resources to meet immediate challenges. This was apparent in the case of the Surigao del Sur and Compostela Valley evacuations in which residents themselves systematically worked out the safe evacuation of the community. The North Cotabato and Maguindanao communities presumably would have benefited the most from strong local organizations if only because of the scale of resident displacement. However, they apparently relied more on individual family initiatives – with many resorting to the decades-old practice of independently dispersing and going to other Muslim communities where they have relatives – and on the local government.

(...)

North Cotabato respondents volunteered that their most recent evacuations were to some extent a qualified success because they were given enough advance notice to prepare for it. The Moro areas have already become accustomed to evacuation and have developed ways to fend for themselves such as by going to relatives in nearby provinces. Yet for the first time in 2003, say the displaced residents, the government was able to rapidly provide significant relief assistance

soon after the military offensives started. Some of the former IDPs said they heard about possible AFP offensives first from mass media – which reported the movement of troops, tanks, artillery and war materiel – and then from local government officials, human rights organizations, and peace advocacy groups. To some extent this seems to have helped them prepare psychologically. But it also had a practical side. Some women in the FGD recalled that the first trucks sent by the LGU arrived to fetch them three days before actual hostilities ensued and brought them to evacuation centers in various nearby towns. This prompted a few to favorably comment that, war notwithstanding, the occasion at least saw the first efforts by the government to organize an evacuation they could remember for being better than than past ones. Some respondents were grateful that the government social welfare agency and donor institutions had been on hand to somewhat mitigate the humanitarian costs of the displacement on tens of thousands of civilians.

Yet in both North Cotabato and Maguindanao there were still many Moro civilians trapped in their communities as the shooting, air strikes and artillery bombardments ensued. Some respondents averred that many of them still refused to leave despite warnings of impending danger to their lives because they could not bear to just leave their homes and land. For others it seemed that the decisive factor was their distrust of outsiders and the government. There were families that, instead of proceeding towards the highway and away from where it was announced there would be much fighting, opted to go the other way to seek shelter deeper into acknowledged MILF territory. It is possible that the orderly and timely evacuation of civilians would have been further facilitated if there were trusted and prepared internal community-based organizations already in place instead of families' being left basically on their own to decide when and where to evacuate, relying on information relayed by "outsiders".

The experience of the Surigao del Sur village visited is an IDP situation on a smaller scale but still provided some insight into the benefits of strong community-based organizations. When the sounds of shooting came closer, the community organization acted on the basis of their perception of the military and residents quickly assembled in one area to help ensure their security. The idea was to minimize abuses against those who remained in far-away isolation in their homes. When the military imposed strict controls on their movements and on the amounts of food they could bring in, residents pooled their limited resources and rationed rice gruel and what few viands they had, particularly prioritizing children, pregnant women and nursing mothers as the supplies dwindled. The organization also actively took steps to facilitate the intervention of the LGU and the local church diocese. When they were eventually forced to evacuate, there was a clear physical and social center where the residents of the community could get information, continue coordinating efforts, and negotiate for material and logistical support from the LGU and the diocese.

Temporary evacuation centers for IDPs are usually schools, churches, gymnasiums and other public structures large enough to accommodate many people. When there is insufficient room, temporary tent shelters of plastic are built in public spaces such as the grounds of government offices and even the roadsides. These makeshift structures are invariably made of light and improvised materials that provide insufficient protection from the elements. On the other hand, those who are placed in buildings not intended to be lived in immediately have to cope with confined spaces and inadequate ventilation. Some evacuation centers had been transformed into semi-permanent resettlement areas because the armed conflict in their home communities had been going on for months and even years."

Notre Dame University & Commission on Population, 2004, p. ii

"The rural–urban migration in Cotabato and Maguindanao provinces is generally caused by the conflict between the Moro Fronts and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Families are uprooted from their homes due to armed-conflict in their communities of origin. They left their homes and

property and settled in the poblacion or in the nearest city. Regarding their experiences, most IDPs had to make prolonged stops in two or three places prior to their final encampment. The shortest stop in one place was 60 days and the longest 1,080 days.

Conflicts generally arise when the host communities are not ready or prepared to address the needs of the displaced persons. Most often the IDPs are housed in schools, gymnasiums and temporary tents/shanties, which are usually overcrowded and not well maintained. These conditions usually last from two to three months or even longer. In most cases, the IDPs end up residing permanently in the host communities. Several reasons may be attributed to this permanency of residence by the IDPs. First, the heads of the displaced families have found employment in the host communities and that the families have regular source of livelihood. Second, the displaced families have their children enrolled in schools of host communities. Third, these families have already adjusted to the life in the host communities. They are able to establish good rapport with their new neighbors. The presence of the displaced persons in the host communities is considered a case of migration, particularly for those who opted to stay permanently in the area."

Tendency to long-term displacement

UNDP 13 November 2000, p. 4

"Increased militarization has also led to the destruction of over 6000 homes and the internal displacement of nearly one million persons, 300,000 of whom were in that status in October 2000. The National Peace Forum identified two cases that they consider to constitute intentional destruction of housing by the Army (Nalapoan Pikit, North Cotabato and Matanog, Maguindanao). The same representatives point out that this should not be considered a pattern in that other cases have not been identified. However, the tactics employed did objectively lead to a large number of houses destroyed and a massive displacement of civilian population. The type of displacement produced is also qualitatively different from those seen in recent years. There now exists a tendency toward longer-term displacements for the first time since the 1970's. Only 10% of the persons whose homes have been destroyed desire to return to their place of origin as of October, 2000. In some cases relocation is being undertaken. The displaced persons do not wish to return to the locations of their previous homes due to the presence of the military, not because they fear the soldiers, but rather because stationary or in transit military draw MILF attacks that frequently place civilians in cross-fire situations. The net result is that human security in the areas affected has deteriorated as a result of militarization."

People fleeing political persecution and counter-insurgency tactics are largely invisible (October 2006)

- According to a UNICEF study, counter-insurgency operations are responsible for an "invisible" form of displacement.
- Civilians are forced to move away from their sources of livelihood, relatives and communities to escape political persecution. This type of displacement is reported to have increased between 2001 and 2006.

UNICEF, October 2006, p. 42-43

"Interviews with church and human rights workers indicate that the phenomenon of "invisible" evacuees also occurs at different periods in other provinces affected by armed conflict, although these could not be directly monitored by the research team. This disorganized and dispersed but nonetheless steady stream of civilians forced to move away from their sources of livelihood, relatives and communities to escape political persecution has been occurring since the 1970s but, it seems, has swelled in the last five years.

Counter-insurgency victims

Compared to IDPs, not as many civilians alleged to be supporting or joining the armed groups are affected at any one time in the course of military counter-insurgency operations. The phenomenon nonetheless deserves attention because it seems to be a distinct feature of the military response to the protracted guerrilla war being waged by, in particular, the CPP-NPA-NDFP. Fighting frequently happens in sites relatively distant from the communities although military operations also seek to undermine civilian support for the NPA. The relatively dispersed incidence and low-intensity of these cases make them “invisible” to the media and other observers. It is also difficult to get precise information on these incidents as they tend to occur in remote rural communities and many go unreported and undocumented. However it is important to get an idea of the pervasiveness of the phenomenon and it is still possible to get a sense of the situation with the data at hand.

If we take the number of apparent killings of unarmed civilians tagged as “supporters” or “fronts” of the rebel groups as a rough proxy, there were more civilian deaths outside of armed encounter incidents than are caught in the crossfire during encounters. For the 2001-2005 period, the independent human rights group Karapatan recorded 596 killings of unarmed civilians nationwide that were alleged to be related to the AFP counter-insurgency program; 52 of those killed were under 18 years old, and 63 were women. This is three times the 199 civilians killed in the crossfire during encounters between the AFP and the various armed groups. There is an alarming increase in these figures in the first half of 2006, when Karapatan recorded 113 killings, of which five (5) of those killed were under 18 years old and 12 were women.

The situation is worse in the case of casualties from assassinations among legal Leftist groups. The number of civilian activists, leaders and members of mass organizations tagged as “Communist fronts” who were allegedly killed by state forces during the 2001-2005 period (239 people) is over five times the number of civilians killed in the crossfire during AFP-NPA encounters (42 people). The Leftist political party Bayan Muna alone suffered 81 deaths among its leaders and members in that same period – with the total reaching 113 deaths by mid-2006.

Karapatan also monitored some 35,941 individual victims of violations of the right to life (resulting in deaths or injury) and some 54,952 individual victims of threats, harassment, intimidation, and illegal arrest/detention in the 2001-2005 period. This was out of a reported total of 4,992 cases of human rights violations affecting 283,097 individuals and 34,961 families in 420 communities.

The Children’s Rehabilitation Center (CRC) in turn reported 819 incidents of human rights violations involving children as victims from 2001 to April 2005. These cases included 142 victims of killings, 24 victims of physical assault, 775 victims of threats, harassment and intimidation, and 112 victims of arbitrary arrest and illegal detention. There were 75 children orphaned when their parents were killed. CRC also estimates that 45 percent of the direct victims were 15 years old or younger.”

Politically persecuted ‘invisible’ IDPs are more difficult to assist (October 2006)

- In context of counter-insurgency operations, pockets of families are displaced member-by-member or family-by-family over an extended period of time.
- The plight of these “invisibly” displaced is different from conventional IDPs, with higher degree of trauma from threats, harassment and violence even before displacement.
- They receive less attention from humanitarian donors, as they move as a steady trickle rather than as a massive cataract of evacuees.

- Their return is more difficult and hard to determine since it is not just an end to fighting that they need but also an end to the perceived military threat to them.

UNICEF, October 2006, p. 122

"The phenomenon of pockets of families displaced member-by-member or family-by-family over a relatively extended period of time as a result of threats due to counter-insurgency operations deserves special mention. These are not nearly as visible as the large-scale displacements in the well-publicized war zones of Central Mindanao, but the humanitarian consequences, when added up across the entire country, are arguably comparable. In just one area visited by the research team in Leyte province, it was estimated that some 200-250 individuals had left contiguous barangays to move to the National Capital Region (NCR) over the second semester of 2005. This estimate did not include those who had moved elsewhere in the Visayas or to the nearby Bicol region.

The ordeal of these "invisibly" displaced is somewhat different from the more conventional IDPs. To begin with, they had gone through the harrowing experience of being intentionally targeted by the military – or at least the perception that they were being intentionally targeted – for being supporters of the NPA or for having family members who are with the NPA. They may be leaders of the local POs the military has labeled "Communist fronts", parents or children of NPA fighters, or otherwise reputed to be active NPA supporters. But they may not even be any of these, and have merely been arbitrarily tagged as one or the other. Thus there is already mounting trauma from threats, harassment and violence even before the actual displacement itself.

When beleaguered families finally make the decision to evacuate, their peculiar circumstances may militate against accessing external support from mainstream sources. Their cases can be seen as too "political" for government welfare agencies. Perhaps because they move as a steady trickle rather than as a massive cataract of evacuees, their plight is not dramatic enough for the usual humanitarian donors. Meanwhile human rights groups that may be sympathetic tend not to have the resources or experience for any sort of sustained relief or rehabilitation work. The tendency of such evacuees to be dispersed also makes any organized or centralized effort to assist them a costly affair. There may also be security considerations insofar as close family members may really be associated with or are actually with the NPA, in addition to their being suspected of themselves being NPA "fronts."

These evacuees' return to their communities can also be hard to determine. It is not just an end to fighting that they need but also an end to the perceived military threat to them. Moreover, even if they brave a return to their homes, the threat to their security and welfare may last as long as counter-insurgency operations continue in their area."

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Physical security

Fighting between MILF and army in Lanao del Norte reportedly claims 21 civilian lives (August 2008)

The Inquirer, 18 August 2008

"At least 21 people have been killed and many others were wounded in attacks carried out in Lanao del Norte and Sarangani provinces by the members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front that have since fled and were being pursued by troops, officials said Monday.

The Moro rebels, under the leadership of Commanders Bravo and Pangalian of the 102nd and 103rd brigade commands respectively, held ambushes in several towns in these provinces, a week after the military flushed out their comrades under the command of Umbra Kato in North Cotabato province.

Chief Superintendent Nicanor Bartolome, PNP spokesman, said 21 people -- seven still unidentified farmers of Barangay (village) Tapu, two civilians identified as Ricardo Gil and Ricky Salidad, and four other unidentified civilians were killed. The rest were soldiers and militiamen."

ABC, 18 August 2008

"Muslim separatist rebels have raided two southern Philippine towns, burning houses and taking over local banks and businesses.

Troops and local police are fighting intense gunbattles with more than 200 Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels in the predominantly Christian town of Kolambagan in southern Lanao del Norte province.

The towns Beltran says they have taken over several buildings in the centre of town and many residents are fleeing. Rebels also entered a nearby town, triggering heavy fighting with troops.

The attacks follow a rebel ambush that killed at least seven Philippine soldiers and wounded a dozen in the same region."

Intense fighting between MILF rebel and government forces in North Cotabato leaves six civilians dead and many villages in ruin (August 2008)

- Fighting resulted in widespread destruction in the villages and in the killing of at least 6 civilians.
- Many houses, estimated at 200, were reportedly burnt down and farms animals and equipment looted by retreating MILF rebels.

IRIN, 17 August 2008

"Thousands of villagers displaced by fighting between government troops and Muslim separatist rebels have been trickling back to their devastated communities on Mindanao Island, but tension remains high and the process of rebuilding could take a long time, government and humanitarian officials said.

(...)

Government forces used heavy artillery, ground assaults as well as air bombardments to flush out the rebels, triggering two days of intense fighting that left nearly 30 rebels, six civilians and at least two soldiers dead. But the fighting also left many villages in ruins, with the retreating guerrillas looting and burning homes.

Tens of thousands of villagers were forced to evacuate, and while the fighting has now stopped, many of the evacuees remain fearful of returning home."

AFP, 16 August 2008

"Many villagers who fled their homes in the southern Philippines due to Muslim rebel attacks, said Saturday they were still too scared to return even though the guerrillas have been expelled.

Their fears persisted even as military and local officials tried to persuade them it was safe to go back to their homes in the towns of Aleosan, Pikit and Midsayap following a military operation that sent the rebels fleeing.

"Fear still hounds them," said Manuel Rabara, mayor of nearby Midsayap town where many villagers remain in evacuation centres.

(...)

More than 200 houses were burned and numerous farm animals and equipment stolen when the MILF occupied the area, leaving unexploded bombs behind as they fled, the civil defence office said."

Military accused of disregarding human rights of civilians in Sulu offensive against Abu Sayaff (June 2008)

- In June 2008, the AFP launched an attack on a village using howitzer cannons. The attack resulted in the destruction of many houses and property as well as the wounding of several villagers.
- In February 2008, Seven civilians were killed during a military assault on a village suspected of hosting ASG members in Sulu.
- The western Mindanao's Commission on Human Right held the military responsible for the 'senseless' killing of 8 people in a village in Patikul, Sulu, including a 14-year old boy.
- A fact-findings mission conducted in Sulu in March 2005 by civil society organisations concluded that although no civilian casualties had been reported during evacuation, the military had nonetheless made use of excessive force against the MNLF rebels.
- MNLF accused military of the following "acts of terrorism": poisoning of water sources, taking cover in civilian homes, "hamletting" or hostageing of a community, use of civilians as perimeter defense, and then "kidnapping" of cows, goats and other farm animals.
- Another civil society mission, led by Kalinaw Mindanao, reported the following violations: denial of medical treatment to civilians, indiscriminate aerial bombing and shelling on civilian populations, summary executions, desecration of remains, divestment and destruction of properties, looting, strafing, violation of domicile, grave/threats/intimidation and harassments.

Bulatlat, 28 June 2008

"First, in Ipil, Maimbung, the AFP assaulted sleeping civilians killing eight people, including a woman and children on February 04, 2008. They said that the operation was legitimate, a result of five months of surveillance activities to rescue the kidnapped victim, Rosalinda Lao. But the AFP did not find the ASG.

Second, in Marang, Indanan last April 30, the AFP's bombardment of a place a kilometer away from the Moro National Liberation Front's (MNLF) Camp Marang displaced thousands of civilians. They even pointed to a civilian's house as being a "bomb-making factory" of the ASG. The strike that they conducted did not kill any ASG member. It was only successful in instilling fear among the civilians. It could also be just a mere provocation for MNLF soldiers to fight so that Chairman Nur Misuari would be thrown back to jail.

Lastly, in Sitio Tandu Pukut, Indanan on June 15, 2008, the AFP sent four rocket launcher grenade and 23 howitzer cannons to a civilian community. Their purported aim was to decimate the ASG in nearby Subah Timahu. Sulu Governor Abdulsakur Tan had actually given permission to the AFP to conduct the bombardment. When we went to the area, I realized that it was not the ASG that they intimidated, but the woman and children and other civilians in the area."

MPW, 19 June 2008

"In fact, days before the release of the captives, civilian communities in Sitio Tandu Pugat, Syunugan Indanan was indiscriminately hit by artillery shelling at three o'clock in the morning (3am) of June 15, 2008 resulting to the displacement of 532 families, wounding four civilians - two women, a child and an elderly man."

ICG, 14 May 2008, p.18

"A mechanism like AHJAG with the MNLF might have helped avert an incident like the AFP's reported killing of seven civilians and an off-duty soldier in Ipil village, Maimbung, Jolo on 4 February 2008. Claiming they had intelligence that ASG, led by Abu Pula ("Dr Abu") and foreign jihadis were in the area, a unit of the regional military Task Force Comet stormed the village. Two soldiers were killed. According to the Sulu governor (confirmed to Crisis Group by official sources in Manila who did not wish to be identified), they died from friendly fire between the army's Light Reaction Company and the navy's Special Warfare Group, both of which are part of the task force.

The army's version was that one of the victims, Ibnul Wahid, a former MNLF rebel turned AFP soldier, who was reportedly on leave, was a suspected ASG member and killed the two Task Force members before he died.⁹⁵ Wahid's wife said he was tied up and executed with a shot to the back of the head. Of the seven civilians killed, two were children aged four and nine; one was a pregnant woman, one was a village councilman, and three were local men aged nineteen, 24 and 37.

"It was a legitimate encounter", Maj. Gen. Ruben Rafael was quoted in the Philippines press as saying. "As far as we are concerned, troops clashed with the Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah".⁹⁶ His statement was refuted by the regional director of the national Commission on Human Rights, who also documented attacks and looting of village houses by the government troops and recommended that criminal charges be filed against the attackers. A team of prosecutors from the justice department was sent to investigate on 26 March."

The Inquirer, 22 February 2007

"Malacañang and the military are not the only ones complaining about the preliminary report made by United Nations special rapporteur Philip Alston on the extra-judicial killings and human rights situation in the county.

Human rights advocates in this city and Sulu said they were unhappy that Alston failed to include in his investigation the killings of innocent people in the island-province and the war crimes the military has allegedly been committing in the area.

Claretian missionary priest Angel Calvo, executive director of the Peace Advocates Zamboanga (PAZ), said Sulu was left out of Alston's investigation and documentation.

"The incidents in Sulu were kind of left behind (in the investigation)," Calvo said, adding that the military has been justifying some of the killings as part of the government's anti-terror campaign.

Temojen Tulawie, a human rights activist based in Jolo, said innocent people are dying in the military's hands.

"A large number of people have died, many were left homeless because of the military's abuses," Tulawie said, without providing figures."

The Inquirer, 9 February 2007

"The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) in Western Mindanao has faulted member of the Philippine Marines for the January 18 bloodshed in Patikul, Sulu, which triggered tension between the government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

Jose Manuel Mamauag, CHR Western Mindanao director, said the clash in the village of Timpook was an "utter disregard of human rights that resulted in the senseless killings."

The government rights agency's probe showed the incident was an offshoot of "unprovoked attack perpetrated by troops of the Philippine Marines in the subvillage of Tandu Batoh, Timpook village," Mamauag said.

The military had said it was an encounter between the Marines and members of the Islamic extremist group Abu Sayyaf. At least 10 bandits and three soldiers were killed during the clash.

But based on its investigation, the CHR said only eight people from the village were killed, one of them a 14-year old boy.

Davao Today, 9 September 2006

"A Moro rights group echoes fears that the unabated military operations in Sulu and in other areas of operations of the joint US-RP military will lead to human rights violations against Moro civilians.

(...)

The Moro leader said the media blackout in the operation areas, and the narrowing democratic space for human rights organizations, may heighten the danger of military atrocities against civilians.

"Now monitoring human rights abuses in these 'no-man's lands' have been very difficult. Early this year, the Commission on Human Rights in Region 11 made a public statement that there are six deaths relating to the US-RP Balikatan Exercises and until now we don't know what the Philippine government will do about this case or if it will just keep a blind eye to all these abuses," Ropeta stated.

Ropeta also lambasted the abduction and terror-tagging of Muslim civilians and religious scholars and leaders which has been prevalent based on reports from the Kawagib, a Mindanao-based human rights group."

Bulatlat, 16 June 2006

"Signs that Sulu is now on the way to recovery and development are yet to come, with random bombings and killings devastating this war-torn Southern Mindanao archipelago. "Unless the government begins reviewing its security policies and stop its overblown war against terrorism, Sulu will remain in its current state, ravaged and impoverished," said Jolo Councilor Cocoy Tulawie.

April 14 bombing

At midnight of Prophet Mohammed's birthday, called Maulid en nabi, locals of Indanan town heard explosions in at least four villages. The explosives, believed to have been dropped from a high-flying bomber, pounded the villages of Balimbayan, Masjid Putih, Tambak and Subah Timauh. The bombings capped the celebration, which fell on a Good Friday for Christians.

Nine villagers were immediately killed including five women, three men and an eight-year old boy. The blasts also wrecked houses, recalled a local official.

"There was something unusual about the bombings," said Jolo Councilor Cocoy Tulawie. He said that the four explosive devices bore "unusual" shrapnel. "We suspect the military is pilot-testing these bombs," he said. He further believed that the devices were provided by U.S. troops who have been joining the local military in supposedly conducting "assessments" of the conflict area.

Amirah Lidasan, chair of Suara Bangsamoro Party-list, confirmed that her group received reports that U.S. missiles were fired at Indanan on April 14.

Sowing fear

Atty. Ulka P. Ulama, chair of the Concerned Citizens of Sulu (CCS), said his group submitted the findings of their investigation regarding the April 14 bombing to the regional office of the Commission on Human Rights in Zamboanga."

Landmines pose a comparatively minor threat to the population (June 2008)

Committee on the Rights of the Child, 6 June 2008, para. 31

"31. The Committee, while noting the State party's statement that the issue of landmines does not represent a significant problem in The Philippines, is concerned at the information that non-state armed groups continue to use victim-activated antipersonnel mines and that incidents involving the use, seizure or recovery of mines and other explosive devices continue to occur."

AFP's counter-insurgency approach tends to disregard any distinction between combatants and civilians (June 2008)

- Sulu peace advocate accuses AFP of cynicism because of their disrespect for human lives in their counter-insurgency actions.
- The Philippine Commission on Human Rights calls on both sides of armed encounters to do their utmost to protect civilians.
- The distinction between combatants and civilian noncombatants is not just blurred but explicitly disregarded, as a textual analysis of official AFP documents on military strategy and tactics suggests.
- The official AFP strategy against terrorism also seems to consider everyone suspected of associating with alleged terrorists – even unarmed civilians – as legitimate military targets.

Mindanews, 16 June 2008

“Perennial displacements of Tausug communities in Sulu, particularly in Indanan, Patikul, Maimbung, Talipao and Kalingalan Caluang, have left many civilian families in a countless, endless rebuilding of their lives. Very tragic! Yet, the prevailing irony about the people in Sulu being used to war and displacements bespeaks of resignation and exhaustion aggravated over time. On the side of local mandated emergency responders and civil society, apathy. Paradoxically, this condition has built on the resilience of the Tausug peoples to survive and cope having been subjected to many decades of war and armed conflict, and being forsaken at that.

If this is so, should we then continue to treat our Tausug brothers and sisters as people with no human dignity and right to live in peace? The chronic conflict situation in Sulu will never see its end with endless military bombardments of what the AFP targets as the ASG and/or JI lairs. Peace has remained elusive and the animosity only worsens. The recent statement of Sulu AFP officials on the mortar shelling in Indanan communities that began on Saturday evening as only a “rehearsal and routinary” discloses how truly insignificant civilian families – man, woman and child – have become to them. When it comes to life and death situations, there is NEVER a time for rehearsals. How can one play god on people’s lives as they tremble in fear with mortars flying over their heads? Already ground reports from hapless civilians sending SOS SMS continue to fall on deaf ears. Civilian casualties have been reported. To whom then do we run if our own government has made its own people its convenient sacrificial lambs?”

Mindanews, 15 April 2007

“Extra care should be taken during military operations so as to avoid hurting civilians, a human rights official said amid reports offensives against the New Peoples Army have triggered evacuations of civilians and the furor raised over the death of a 9-year old girl in a recent encounter between soldiers and rebels in Compostela Valley.

But Alberto Sipaco Jr., Commission on Human Rights regional director, said it is hard to avoid hurting civilians during encounters especially when both forces have already fired at each other.[...]

If there is an encounter, he said, the military has the responsibility to ensure that civilians' rights are respected and protected. He said, however, that it's not only the military that is at fault." Even the NPA, especially the NPA, should be made accountable." He said the focus should be on what combatants must do before any encounter to avoid harming civilians."

UNICEF, October 2006, p. 35

"Given the on-going guerrilla war of the NPA and the apparent shift towards guerrilla mode on the part of the MILF – following the attacks on its major camps in 2000 and 2003 (although there is a mutual ceasefire in place since July 2003) – it is important to pay special attention to how the state's counter-insurgency approach against guerrillas treats non-combatant civilians. A textual analysis of official AFP documents on military strategy and tactics tends to indicate that the distinction between combatants and civilian noncombatants is not just blurred but explicitly disregarded. Unless there is a radical change in core AFP doctrines, this disturbingly points to continuing, and, given recent declarations of intensified attacks on the NPA, ever greater numbers of civilian victims of military operations in the near future.

(...)

AFP doctrines clearly understand the CPP politico-military or political infrastructure to be community-based and distinct from the NPA military forces. At the same time, it also seems that despite such a civilian and non-combatant character the AFP entertains the use of lethal military force against them. AFP-PNP operational guidelines for instance regard the "CTM's political infrastructure [as] dismantled as a result of... the identification and neutralization of the leaders and members" of the following formations, all of which are civilian and unarmed: People's Organizing Committee (POC), People's Organizing Group (POG), Party Group, Solid Mass Association (MASSO), Komiteng Balangay/Grupong Balangay and Local Party Branch.¹⁵ It is moreover made explicit that: "The term 'neutralization' means preventing the dissident terrorists from accomplishing their objective of seizing state power through violent means. The process of neutralization can be effected through killing, capture, apprehension, surrender, conviction or exposure."¹⁶

The AFP also acknowledges the civilian character of community support structures elsewhere when it says: "The insurgent gets the majority of his logistical support from the population."¹⁷ An official AFP publication has been even more specific: "In areas where NDF organizations cannot be fully established Bayan Muna, on the pretext of being a political party, successfully established party organizations, which later can be transformed into a Communist Terrorist Movement (CTM) politico-military infrastructure."¹⁸ Among the recommendations is that: "SOT operations should include identification and neutralization of Bayan Muna members in the barangay." Yet Bayan Muna is a duly registered national political party which currently has the maximum three seats possible for any single party-list group in the House of Representatives.

(...)

The official AFP strategy against terrorism likewise seems to consider everyone suspected of associating with alleged terrorists – even unarmed civilians – as legitimate military targets. The AFP Military Strategy for Combating Terrorism identifies the NPA as a terrorist group "[enjoying a wide and deep] range of support from various sectors aside from its mass base, even within the government."²² The same document identifies each NPA support element as a "potential node or critical vulnerability [that after identification] would be the focus of preemption or swift and decisive retaliation since such attacks would hurt the enemy the most. If the latter proves resilient, the attacks would be sustained until the terrorists are neutralized and their support structure dismantled. Whether through a single strike or a succession of blows, the important thing to consider is to hit the critical node or nodes." This approach intentionally "seeks to strike the enemy where, when and how he is most vulnerable, physically and psychologically." "

Local human rights group accuses army of human rights violations in Surigao del Sur (November 2007)

- Armed forces entering Lumad communities in Surigao del Sur, on the search for NPA rebels, set up quarter in the villages, living in peoples' houses and intimidating them.

- Army supposedly used civilians as human shield, occupied schools and enforced food blockades
- The military said it had launched the operation to chase NPA rebels from 10 villages
- Although local leaders have complained by submitting a list of issues, no reaction apparently came from the military side.
- In November 2007, nearly 200 people were held prisoners by the AFP.

Mindanews, 21 November 2007 (reported by Karapatan Surigao del Sur)

More than twelve (12) hinterland and lumad communities in Diatagon, Lianga and San Agustin have been fearing for their safety and lives since the start of November this year. More or less 500 military men, some belonging to the 58th IB PA, have been living in their communities and staying at the houses of civilians and Lumad Literacy Schools since November 1 up to the present.

The military men arrived in the lumad communities of Simowao and Emerald and brought with them two (2) 6x6 military trucks of which one was loaded with rice and foodstuffs; two (2) armored personnel carrier (APC) with the label of SEMIRARA and two (2) 105 howitzer cannons. They mounted makeshift tents in the vicinity of the houses of the residents and converted an unfinished sari-sari store into a military station in Emerald. A certain Major Ental and Captain Oson led the group of, according to the military men, around one hundred soldiers in Simowao alone.

At Manluy-a, around one hundred (100) military men in full battle gear arrived and stayed at the houses of the community folks. Others rested and slept at the houses of local residents, school and surrounding areas. Around 4–10 military personnel stationed themselves at the houses of the residents.

The military elements have put up checkpoints and have been monitoring the activities of local residents. Residents were asked for their names, present their IDs and/or cedula and had their names listed. Celphone numbers of residents and teachers were asked and listed. Bags and belongings were checked by the military. Motor drivers were asked for their names, driver's license and the motor vehicle serial numbers.

In the evening, some military men stayed in their makeshift tents while quite a number stayed and slept in the houses of residents. Some military men even slept beside the local residents. They interrogated Tribal Filipino Community School teachers and students about the school. Military personnel who lived in the houses of residents frequently ask questions to the children on their involvement with the New People's Army. Children were asked if they have elder brothers or sisters that joined the NPA and that they must surrender.

[...]

The military warned the school children, teachers of the Tribal Filipino Program, Inc. and the local residents that if they (military) will be bombed during their military operations, they will harm the civilians.

The military presence violates the residents' sense of security. Residents do not leave their houses at night even for waste disposal afraid of being harmed by military personnel who stationed themselves in their houses. Movements and economic activities of residents were limited and monitored by the military. They were restricted from going to their farmlands. There were families that only ate once a day due to the restrictions set for going to their farmlands. Five (5) families from Panukmoan had sought refuge with the community of Manluy-a for fear of the military operations. On November 17, 2007, more than 40 households from Magkahunao, San Agustin, evacuated to Janipaan Elementary School in fear of the military men who arrived in their community. Three (3) families of Emerald lived only from the foodstuff contribution of other local folks.

Residents at Emerald and Simowao have expressed the need for evacuation because of hunger and fear. The tribal leaders and elders of Emerald, Simowao and other neighboring communities have asked the leaders and officers of the Local Government Units and the Armed Forces of the Philippines:

1. That, the military personnel refrain from staying at the houses of the civilians;
2. That, economic activities would not be restricted;
3. That, the military personnel would not stay and sleep in the community schools;
4. That, the military personnel would protect and respect the projects and services initiated by the Local Government Units and the Non-government organizations in the community/ies;
5. That, foodstuff and other basic commodities would not be restricted and;
6. The lives of the civilians would be secured.

No action has been taken by the LGU and the military.

GMA News, 25 November 2007

"Campos and Karapatan-Caraga Secretary General Anayn Lumawag said 200 more individuals in three villages - Panukmoan, Sudon and Manloya - were allegedly being held by the military.

Karapatan Caraga, a militant human rights group, have documented 13 human rights violations against the 58th IB Philippine Army operating in the area.

These included unjustified arrests, illegal search and seizure, illegal checkpoints, use of civilians in police and/or military operations as guides or shields, violations of children's rights to protection or safety, violation of children's rights for development and education, forcible evacuation/displacement, food and other economic blockade.

[...]

Madarang said the military have launched an operation in the 10 villages to flush out alleged communist rebels there. According to Madarang, members of the 58th IB Philippine Army have met with lumads to explain their operations.

The gathering was confirmed by Campos. He said they requested the military to sign an agreement that soldiers will not use civilians as shields or guides for troop operations. Campos said the military did not sign it. "Now we wanted them out of our homes, villages as they disrupt our normal living. Their presence is a clear violation of our rights and domicile," Campos told reporters."

MILF rebels accuse military of abuse against 4 IDPs (February 2007)

- According to the MILF, 4 IDPs were apprehended by the military when attempting to return to their homes to fetch food and some items to bring back to the evacuation centers. Two of them were reported to have been physically battered.

Sun Star Network Online, 6 February 2007

"In a report posted at its website luwaran.com, the MILF said four civilians were apprehended by the reconnaissance unit of the Philippine Army in Barangay Ulandang of Midsayap. One of the civilians was seriously battered.

"Another physically battered civilian known as Haron from Barangay Kapimpilan, Midsayap was brought to a hospital in Cotabato City by another civilian who saw that Haron could just barely walk. The four civilians were identified as Mira Matelendo, 29; Tho Alim, 24; Bahnarin Alim, 18;

and Endong Alim, 16. They...were uprooted by the recent clashes in Midsayap and seeking refuge at Datu Gumbay Elementary School in Datu Piang, Maguindanao," the report stated.

The MILF said that another civilian, identified only as Omar, was arrested by the elements of the 7th IB of the Philippine Army last February 2 at Barangay Rangeban, Midsayap.

Omar is reportedly being held in detention at the Philippine National Police- Midsayap.

"The MILF-Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities and International Monitoring Team (IMT) was allowed to visit him yesterday at the office of the Chief Police of Midsayap. The MILF-CCCH relayed to luwaran that Omar was being forced to admit that he was an intelligence officer of the MILF. Omar said he is not MILF but an Imam (leader) of the Mosque in Rangeban," luwaran reported."

Luwaran.com, 5 February 2007

"Four civilians were apprehended yesterday by the Reconnaissance Unit of the Philippine Army at Barangay Ulandang of Midsayap, one was seriously battered physically. Late afternoon yesterday, another physically battered civilian known as Haron from barangay Kapimpilan, Midsayap was brought to a Hospital in Cotabato City by another civilian who saw Haron who could just barely walk with his feet. The four civilians were identified as Ms. Mira Matelendo (29 years old), Tho Alim (24), Bahnarin Alim (18), and Endong Alim (16). They are IDPs who were uprooted by the recent clashes in Midsayap and seeking refuge at Datu Gumbay Elementary School in Datu Piang, Maguindanao.

Accordingly, they were on their way to their residence in Barangay Kadingilan, Midsayap to take some materials including food which they badly needed to survive their hardships in the evacuation center (Datu Gumbay Elementary School).

During their ordeal in the hands of the elements of the Reconnaissance Unit, they were being asked questions such as where are the locations of the MILF forces? Also, they were being forced to admit that they are MILF members. The hapless civilians could only reply "we do not know because we are not MILF but evacuees."

Tho Alim even confided to the MILF Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) that his head and body were hammered and that he was physically harmed by the soldiers of the reconnaissance unit.

He also pointed out that they had been hearing a lot of alleged abuses by the military against Muslim civilians who were passing that road. But still, he said, they need to brave their way back home passing that road just to secure some badly needed materials."

MILF-AFP positional war results in larger civilian casualties and displacement than NPA-AFP confrontations (October 2006)

- According to a UNICEF study, a significant factor underlying differences in the impact of armed conflict on the vulnerabilities and capacities of communities is whether guerrilla or positional wars are being waged.
- The MNLF and the MILF have been oriented to a combination of more conventional positional warfare and armed uprising by Moro communities.
- The NPA on the other hand has from the beginning waged mobile guerrilla warfare, even allowing for fine-tuning following early experiments with developing mountain strongholds.

- AFP use of its full logistical superiority in sieges of MILF fixed bases has resulted in civilian casualties and large-scale displacements to evacuation centers at regular intervals.
- Fighting between NPA and AFP has also largely tended towards small-scale ambushes, raids and sniping with much lower incidences of physical displacements and evacuations compared to displacements due to positional fighting in MILF areas.

UNICEF, October 2006, pp. 33-35

"Both the MILF-BIAF and CPP-NPA-NDFP begin from the premise that they are waging revolutionary armed struggles in the interest of their declared constituencies. It is thus integral to their struggles to politically mobilize the Bangsamoro people or the country's oppressed and exploited classes, respectively. Also essential to both is the approach of developing, cultivating and nurturing their respective geographic areas and communities of influence. These territories and the people within them thus become very much exposed not only to the revolutionary movements but also to the political work of the MILF or the NPA. The rebel armed groups have evidently built up much influence through the years and these areas have become areas of contention vis-à-vis the established Philippine state which responds with counter-insurgency operations.

When "war" or "armed conflict" visit these communities it is concretely in the form of fighting – shootings, bombings and the like within or near their boundaries – and the presence of the armed groups involved. A significant factor underlying differences in the impact of armed conflict on the vulnerabilities and capacities of communities is whether guerrilla or positional wars are being waged.

The MNLF and the MILF have been oriented to a combination of more conventional positional warfare and armed uprising by Moro communities. The NPA on the other hand has from the beginning waged mobile guerrilla warfare, even allowing for fine-tuning following early experiments with developing mountain strongholds. The military response by state forces has differed accordingly.

The MILF's positional tactic of setting up sprawling camps is consistent with its secessionist demands and laying claim over territories; its objective is to establish a genuinely autonomous Bangsamoro Republic through decolonization of these areas from the Christian-dominated and Manila-based Philippine government. By the year 2000, the MILF for instance had 13 major fixed camps and 33 secondary ones – although it has since apparently been forced to shift to a more guerrilla mode, albeit still using field base camps that are just more remote or hidden than before.⁶ Camp Abu Bakr alone has been reported to cover some 100 square kilometers straddling six towns in two provinces; it was self-sufficient with small businesses, public markets and agricultural lots as well as a system of government based on Shariah law.⁷ With concealed support from groups in Arab nations, the MILF is well-trained and well-equipped with arms, including artillery and reportedly even surface-to-air missiles, and it has used these to defend what they have openly declared as MILF territories.⁸

Yet these fixed communities-cum-camps are susceptible to conventional battles and, most recently in 2000 and 2003, became the targets of massive AFP military operations including air strikes, bombings and artillery bombardments. The AFP is also predisposed to large-scale conventional warfare against the MILF-BIAF because of its essentially "outsider" status in closely-knit Moro communities and, especially, in clearly circumscribed MILF camps-cum-communities. This means difficulties in free entry and exit as well as in establishing any kind of long-term and sustained presence. As might be expected, AFP use of its full logistical superiority in sieges of MILF fixed bases has resulted in civilian casualties and large-scale displacements to evacuation centers at regular intervals.

This is not the situation with the CPP-NPA-NDFP whose declared guerrilla fronts, zones and bases are amorphous in the way they overlap with established Philippine territories. Their strategy of “protracted people’s war” (PPW) in “guerrilla fronts” has provoked a very different response from the AFP. The armed revolutionary Left generally has no long-term fixed bases as the MILF does and its forces are essentially perpetually mobile, shifting from forest or mountain encampments to the communities that it deems part of its ever-expanding mass base. NPA forces are also spread across the archipelago and its basic military formations are mostly platoon- size formations of around thirty fighters that operate in areas covering two to three (2-3) municipalities depending on the terrain. In addition they are often occupied with organizing work and other relatively invisible non-military activities: health, education, cultural and socioeconomic projects, collective labor arrangements, and arbitrating in intra-community conflicts. NPA officials in the field say that their rule of thumb is “90 percent mass work and 10 percent military work”.

The AFP tactic against the NPA’s people’s war is “low-intensity conflict” (LIC) which combines military means with political, economic and psychological-informational-propaganda warfare in an integrated counter-insurgency (COIN) package. LIC acknowledges that the contending parties to the armed conflict effectively compete in the same territorial and community space, unlike in conventional warfare where battle lines and fronts are more clearly drawn. It also acknowledges that the NPA relies on the voluntary participation of communities for logistical support and for new fighters where its room to maneuver is critically dependent on how much of this is forthcoming.

Nevertheless, LIC remains a fundamentally military tactic and, for all the supposed stress on bringing the struggle to the plane of competing principles and ideologies as well as providing development alternatives, it has proven to easily degenerate into a thin veil for abusive state military and paramilitary forces. This has been the experience with LIC not just in the Philippines but also in other similar localized conflicts across Asia, Latin America and to a lesser degree Africa.

Having no large fixed NPA encampments to target, the AFP and its paramilitaries have taken to continuous combat patrols and maintaining a presence in communities through military detachments or outposts. Actual fighting has also largely tended towards small-scale ambushes, raids and sniping by the NPA which means much lower incidences of physical displacements and evacuations compared to displacements due to positional fighting in MILF areas. However, the current research finds that LIC against the NPA seems to have been accompanied by purposeful and often violent efforts by state forces to undermine or discourage civilian support for the NPA who operate largely unseen."

During 2006, military counter-insurgency operations resulted in high number of abuses in affected communities (February 2007)

- UNICEF study noted an increase in counter-insurgency operations resulting in human rights abuses against alleged supporters of rebel groups.
- The human right NGO Karapatan recorded 596 killings of unarmed civilians nationwide in the 2001-2005 period that are alleged to be related to the AFP counter-insurgency program.
- In February 2007, following the visit of the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings who attributed most of the upsurge in killings to the military, the government was forced under international pressure to release the "Melo" report, which backed the findings of the UN official.

UNICEF, October 2006, p. 6

"The research team also encountered civilians adversely affected in the course of military counter-insurgency operations in their communities for being alleged supporters of or joining the

CPP-NPA-NDFP or MILF-BIAF. Compared to IDPs, not as many civilians were affected as drastically, but the phenomenon is nonetheless pervasive, has been occurring for decades, and is apparently intensifying.

Precise information on these incidents is difficult to come by especially since they tend to occur in remote rural communities and many go unreported and undocumented. The research team itself heard numerous anecdotal accounts. The independent human rights group Karapatan recorded 596 killings of unarmed civilians nationwide in the 2001-2005 period that are alleged to be related to the AFP counter-insurgency program; 52 of the victims were under 18-years-old and 63 were women. That number of deaths is three times the 199 civilians monitored killed in the crossfire during encounters between the AFP and various armed groups.

Karapatan also monitored some 35,941 individual victims of violations of the right to life (resulting in deaths or injury) and some 54,952 individual victims of threats, harassment, intimidation, and illegal arrest/detention in the period 2001-2005. This was out of a reported total of 4,992 cases of human rights violations affecting 283,097 individuals and 34,961 families in 420 communities.

The Children's Rehabilitation Center (CRC) in turn reported 819 incidents of human rights violations involving children as victims from 2001 to April 2005. These cases include 142 victims of killings, 24 victims of physical assault, 775 victims of threats, harassment and intimidation, and 112 victims of arbitrary arrest and illegal detention. There were 75 children orphaned when their parents were killed. CRC also estimates that 45 percent of the direct victims were 15 years old or younger.

Communities are sensitive to how they are spoken to, how their personal homes and properties are treated, how cultural practices and even simple local standards of decorum are respected, and especially about any violence inflicted on them whether recently or happening many years ago. The research team observed that communities distinguish between armed groups and do not have a common adverse reaction to the presence of armed men and women in their villages. Children and women perceive the NPA and the MILF as providing concrete benefits for the communities, as defending their interests and as being respectful of them. On the other hand there is distinct apprehension about the presence of government soldiers. These attitudes have been formed over three decades of dealing with the armed rebel groups and the military's presence in their communities.

Nonetheless there was still some anxiety expressed at the presence of the NPA or MILF out of fear that government soldiers may arrive and fighting might suddenly erupt in the community."

Sun Star Network Online, 22 February 2007

"Malacanang released Thursday the Melo Commission report a day after UN special rapporteur Philip Alston asked the Arroyo government to release the results of the probe on extrajudicial killings in the country.

(...)

Both Malacanañg and the Armed Forces said the UN report is one-sided and unfair.

Alston said Wednesday the military "is in a state of almost total denial of its need to respond effectively and authentically to the significant number of killings, which have been convincingly attributed to them."

(...)

Alston's investigation was backed up by a fact-finding commission headed by former Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo, which was released to the public Thursday under international pressure. It also found the military complicit in the deaths. It said "a small military group" was behind the rash of killings of left-wing activists and that "the 'purge' theory cannot be accorded credence."

The report was submitted to Arroyo last month but the government had initially refused to make it public, saying it was incomplete.

(...)

Local rights group Karapatan says more than 830 people have been murdered for political motives since Mrs. Arroyo came to power in 2001 -- many of them leftists, and some of them accused by the Army of links to the guerrillas.

The military on Thursday shifted blame to the communist insurgency for the spate of political killings in the country after separate investigations by a United Nations envoy and a Malacañang-formed commission blamed it for most of the murders."

IHT, 21 February 2007

"A United Nations human rights expert criticized the Philippine military and government Wednesday for not doing enough to solve a wave of political killings, many of which he said could be linked to government security forces.

"The armed forces remain in a state of almost total denial of its need to respond effectively and authentically to the significant number of killings which have been convincingly attributed to them," Philip Alston, the UN's special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings, said at a news conference at the end of a 10-day fact-finding mission in the Philippines.

The Philippine Army has been battling rebels of the Communist New People's Army for nearly four decades, in addition to a more recent struggle against Muslim separatists, and Alston said that the recent increase in extrajudicial executions can be attributed to the military's intensified counterinsurgency program."

Male youth in Mindanao see the presence of government forces as a threat to their safety (July 2006)

- Young males interviewed in Mindanao identified the withdrawal of AFP soldiers as an important step to improve safety in their communities, since 'no one will feel safe as long as the AFP is present in the region.'

WB, July 2006, p.13

"An overwhelming majority of the male youth in the communities visited was of the opinion that they cannot do much to improve safety and security and it is the task of the national and local governments to ensure their safety. All FGD participants wanted peace to prevail above all and expressed their willingness to volunteer if necessary to help the peace process take roots, and cooperate with barangay leaders and elders in maintaining peace and order. An important step identified by them to improve safety in their communities is withdrawal of the AFP since 'no one will feel safe as long as the AFP is present in the region.' A young man in a barangay of Siocon in Zamboanga del Norte was more specific "the continuous harassment by the AFP is making us all desperate. If the government does not heed our pleas to stop the operation it will lead to the formation of a new group searching for the truth."

Nearly all FGD participants wish to become responsible citizens and contribute to peaceful development of their communities. Cooperative activity and networking with youth and youth organizations was also mentioned as beneficial to peace and security. Many of the youth interviewed said that their faith in God and prayer helped them get over their fears. In some FGD

sites, the participants felt that independence and the establishment of an Islamic republic are the only solutions that can ensure lasting peace and security."

Fighting and insecurity in Mindanao disrupt economic and social life and threatens people's physical security (July 2006)

- In Mindanao, security problems stem from various types of violence—the 'main conflict', rido,¹⁹ political and economic rivalries and inter-ethnic conflicts—fuel security issues.
- Most youth interviewed witnessed the burning of their homes and villages, survived attacks on themselves and their families, and experienced forced displacement and the misery of life in evacuation centers.
- A fact finding mission led by Kalinaw Mindanao in March 2005 observed widespread abuse of human rights by the AFP, including deliberate targeting of civilians during periods of intense military operations. Indiscriminate aerial bombing and shelling of civilian population, summary executions, desecration of remains, destruction of property, looting, violation of domiciles, threats, intimidation and harassment were reported as routinely employed by the AFP as part of their strategy to contain the conflict.

WB, July 2006, pp. 10-11

"In Mindanao, various types of violence—the 'main conflict', rido,¹⁹ political and economic rivalries and inter-ethnic conflicts—fuel security issues. The presence of a large number of armed groups and the easy availability of arms and ammunition are two major factors that have a bearing on security issues. These conditions create a very unsafe environment that discourages normal economic activity and the delivery of services such as health and education. As in most other conflict-affected areas, it is the poorest that are most severely affected. Many have had to leave their homes or even migrate in search of work, while others join one of the several armed groups in the region or get recruited as drug peddlers and eventually adopt a life of crime.

(..)

Fear in various forms dominates both public and private spheres among the youth surveyed. A majority of them has witnessed the burning of their homes and villages, survived attacks (Box 4) on themselves and their families, and experienced forced displacement and the misery of life in evacuation centers. Describing what he called "hell on earth," one FGD participant stated, "We were at the municipal hall until some relief organization distributed plastic tents for us to transfer to the municipal grounds. It soon started raining, and rained heavily, and all our tents were submerged in water. We moved once again to higher ground near the highway. We were hungry most of the time. There was never enough food in the evacuation center. We felt like beggars living on alms." In the absence of a peace agreement, young people continue to live with fears of outbreaks of violence that could shatter the present calm.

Abuse of Human Rights

A fact finding mission led by Kalinaw Mindanao in March 2005 observed widespread abuse of human rights by the AFP. The mission also noted that civilian communities were deliberately targeted during periods of intense military operations. Indiscriminate aerial bombing and shelling of civilian population, summary executions, desecration of remains, destruction of property, looting, violation of domiciles, threats, intimidation and harassment were reported as routinely employed by the AFP as part of their strategy to contain the conflict.

While most FGD groups agreed that they felt "safer" now, they also identified the following threats to their physical security:

The presence of the AFP in the region.

Arbitrary arrests especially of young Muslim males who are all viewed as rebels and terrorists by the government and the AFP. All FGD groups expressed complete lack of trust in the local law enforcement agencies many of which, according to them, are in league with the criminal gangs. Increasing militarization and easy availability of firearms. Besides the armed conflict, the region is plagued by clan violence, political and economic rivalry, and a deep-rooted belief in revenge. Since all groups resort to violence to settle their scores the need for self-protection is paramount and hence the availability of cheap firearms. For many young males possessing a gun signifies an easy means to redress their vulnerability and at the same time an opportunity to gain power, status and respect.²⁰

Rising lawlessness. The local governments and their law enforcement systems and agencies have little or no credibility among the groups surveyed who consider them part of the problem. Easy access to drugs and rising use of drugs among male youth was highlighted by every FGD group as a major problem (Box 5).

Unexploded ordnance especially in farms is yet another major threat to security in the region. Communities most affected are those that were the scenes of heavy shelling such as Pikit in North Cotabato. News reports of casualties are fairly common and add to the level of insecurity of the population (Box 6)."

Freedom of movement

Military restrict movements of IDPs out of evacuation centers (October 2006)

- IDPs in Surigao del Sur complained that soldiers were stationed around the camp and discouraged their entry and exit.
- In June 2006, IDPs in an evacuation center in barangay Zamboanguita were imposed a curfew by the soldiers who issued "safe conducts" to IDPs for "their safety".

UNICEF, October 2006, p. 121

"A hovering military presence can also add to the tensions of already stressful conditions. The Surigao del Sur evacuees reported that soldiers were stationed around the center they were staying in and discouraged their entry and exit. They also complained that the military took videos of them despite their protests."

Mindanews, 26 June 2006

"Although continued fighting took place in only a few villages in Barangay Zamboanguita, residents from other villages and even in the barangay center were also affected, according to Barangay Councilor Denia Tajones. She said many residents have farms and relatives in those areas.

Tajones said the military has issued "safe conduct" passes to residents, especially those who move from one village to another. She said this was for the safety of the residents to avoid being mistaken for rebels.

Movement of people was being restricted though residents could still go back to their farms with caution, she said. The military has imposed a curfew beginning at 3 p.m everyday so farmers have to move fast and return to the evacuation center early.

Tajones said the restrictions posed economic difficulties for residents. Most of the evacuees depended on what they could gather from their small farms planted to root crops, fruits and vegetables."

Displaced people forced to return to their homes (August 2005)

- During a fact-finding mission conducted in March 2005 in Sulu, it was reported that displaced civilians had been pressurized by government officials to return to their homes although they estimated conditions were still insecure.
- As of August 2003, there is a feeling of fear and insecurity among evacuees who returned to their barangays in Pikit, mainly because of the presence of soldiers and MILF near their homes.
- Many residents claimed in interviews that they were forced by the Pikit local government to return to their communities.
- Some 18,475 evacuees have left Pikit's evacuation centers since April, but many have returned to the camps due to continued fighting.
- Military is constructing "community-based convertible structures" for the remaining 22,000 evacuees.
- Government has denied forcing the evacuees to return as was claimed by a group of evacuees that said that many evacuees were told to leave ahead of President's visit to Mindanao.

IDPs in Sulu reportedly pressured to return Mindanao Peaceweavers, April 2005, p. 15

"The government through the military has started to build houses in Panamao. However, IDPs continue to stay in the evacuation centers or with their relatives. They expressed fear that the lack of hostilities in Sulu is temporary and the situation is still volatile. Evacuees are one in saying that their province is very small and the probability of an encounter between the military and the MNLF is very high. They stated that unless their villages are safe and secure enough for them to resume their daily life, they are not about to go back to their places of origin.

DSWD and PNRC officials conveyed the problem of dwindling resources in the current evacuation centers, thus pressuring the return of the IDPs to their villages. Already, there were reports about "the government forcing the people to leave the evacuation centers," the reason given is the peaceful situation in the areas of conflict and the emergent inability of the government to support their needs."

Residents claimed they were forced by the Pikit local government to return to their communities

Bantay Ceasefire Investigative Mission 1 August 2003

"There is a general feeling of fear and insecurity among evacuees who returned to their barangays in Pikit since June 9. Residents claimed in interviews that they were forced by the Pikit local government to return to their communities even if there was no bilateral ceasefire yet at the time. The return was imposed upon the evacuees combining promises, persuasion and threats such as stopping relief supply in the evacuation centers, bulldozing the centers, non-provision of core shelters and even physical harm. The DSWD and the local government assured returnees that weekly relief supplies will be provided to them in the next three months. As of July 15, 2003, around 80% of the evacuees in Pikit have already returned.

Back in their communities, the civilians face a bigger problem—living side by side with military troops whose camps were put up within the barangays. The mission members saw that Marine camps are approximately located from 50 to 100 meters from the core shelters built by government. Given this proximity, it is very likely that civilians will be caught in crossfire in the event of armed clashes with the MILF.

The relationship between returnees and the Marines in Pikit and Pagalungan is generally good. Residents said that the Marines are disciplined and respectful to them and so far, no abuse has been reported. The Marines meanwhile said they initiated confidence-building measures towards the civilians, among them assisting civilians in transporting their harvest to the poblacion and buying fish and vegetables from civilians at prices higher than the market rates.

But even with this good relations, civilians say they still prefer these troops to immediately reposition away from their communities so that they could go back to normal lives. War trauma is still present among the returnees. Families cannot sleep well at night. Children are hesitant to return to school because they want to be with their mothers in case bombings and fighting return and they need to evacuate again."

Government denies forcing people to return

The Inquirer 12 June 2003

" 'There is no truth to the issue that thousands of evacuees in Pikit, North Cotabato were told to pack up...and were forced to return to their villages with no assurance of security because President Macapagal-Arroyo was going to be in the area,' Soliman said in a letter to the Inquirer.

A total of 18,475 evacuees have left the refugee camp and returned to their communities since April, she said. Some of them, however, had gone back to evacuation centers due to sporadic fighting between military and Muslim rebels, she added.

There are still 26,730 people in evacuation centers and the military is currently building "community-based convertible structures" for them, according to Soliman.

Each of the structures will have an area of 154 sq.m., enough to augment the number of school buildings currently housing the evacuees, she said.

'If our intention was to force them to return to their own communities, then why are we building these CBCS which are semi-permanent in nature?' she asked in the letter.

Displaced residents had accused the government of forcing them back to their war-torn communities to "sanitize" Pikit in time for the presidential visit."

Displaced persons accuse government of forcing them to return ahead of President's visit

The Inquirer 9 June 2003

"Ahead of the President's visit, however, thousands of evacuees in Pikit town in North Cotabato province -- site of recent fighting between government forces and the MILF -- were told to pack up their belongings Monday and return to their villages.

Not all of them are going home. An evacuee, Soraida, said talk was rife they were being forced out of the evacuation centers in an attempt by the government to "sanitize" Pikit. She said this was being done because President Macapagal and members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which groups Muslim-governed countries -- were coming this week.

A nongovernmental organization worker said the evacuees were being forced to return to their homes even if they were not psychologically ready. 'Are they prepared? Psychologically, they're not,' said the worker, who requested anonymity. 'We would be happy if they could finally go home. But what's happening is different. I think the process is wrong.' He said some of the evacuees who were forced to load their belongings on government trucks were crying "because they were really afraid."

The transfer of the evacuees from Pikit to neighboring Pagalungan town will create a humanitarian crisis because the Pagalungan evacuation camps are not being supplied with regular relief assistance, the NGO worker said. There are at least 14 evacuation centers in Pagalungan currently sheltering 19,104 individuals, he said. The problem of food will be aggravated with the addition of the evacuees from Pikit, he added.

The Buisan warehouse in Pikit, the biggest evacuation camp in the area, which housed 3,000 refugees, was cleared of evacuees Monday. An evacuee said they had to leave the warehouse or 'suffer the consequences.' "We were told that if our houses were still up tomorrow, these would be bulldozed," she said.

She said the local government gave the evacuees until Tuesday to pack up their things and leave the warehouse. Another evacuee at the Pikit parish gymnasium said they were told they were being given two options by the local government: Leave or get hurt. 'Many of us are already old. We don't want to be hurt. We also don't want to hurt anybody,' he said. Many of the evacuees did not return to their villages. At least 200 families transferred to other evacuation camps in Pagalungan.

Soraida, a resident of Bulol town, said it was hard to believe the government when it said it was safe for them to go home. The presence of military troops in their villages is a clear indication that they will be in great danger once they return to their homes, she said."

SUBSISTENCE NEEDS

General

Important humanitarian needs following the displacement of nearly 160,000 people in North Cotabato (August 2008)

- According to ICRC, the displaced in evacuation centers mainly need basic shelter items, water containers and mosquito nets.
- Following the displacement of more than 160,000 fleeing fighting in North Cotabato, WFP airlifted 400 tonnes of rice to the affected areas.
- According to local officials, evacuation centres were already overcrowded and becoming health hazards for IDPs. Urgent supplies of food and medicines were needed.

The Inquirer, 18 August 2008

"The Batulawan evacuation center is considered the most miserable of all evacuation centers in Pikit with many of the evacuees still without tarpaulin for their tents, access to clean drinking water and enough food assistance. The recent clashes have forced at least 28,757 people into the evacuation sites, according to the regional office of the Department of Social Welfare and Development."

Mindanews, 14 August 2008

"Asmiya Ison, 16, sleeps with her family on the cement floor using only a tarpaulin as a mat. At nighttime when it rains, water would seep through the floor, leaving them wet. "I am sad why this is happening to us," she said while hanging newly washed clothes in a corner where her family has taken quarters.

It has been four days now that Asmiya evacuated with her family to the Buisan warehouse here on Sunday, joining the mass exodus of people fleeing their homes to escape the fighting between government troops and Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels starting late last week. Mutalik Mukalan, a member of the disaster management team of the Bangsamoro Development Agency that had been coordinating assistance for evacuees, appealed for mats, food and medical supplies.

(...)

"Many families sleep on the floor only using trapal (tarpaulin), some even beside their goats," he said.

The lack of potable water is also another problem as evacuees still have to walk all the way to the Pikit plaza.

Evacuees also complained of cough, colds, diarrhea and sore eyes, said Mina Mamalompong, a midwife from Pikit's rural health unit. They have been conducting lectures on sanitation and hygiene among evacuees and administered measles immunization."

ICRC, 14 August 2008

"Many displaced people have found shelter in evacuation centres near their homes. They mainly need food and basic shelter items such as tarpaulins, water containers and mosquito nets," said Felipe Donoso, the ICRC's head of delegation in the Philippines. In response to those needs, the ICRC and the Philippine Red Cross have provided emergency equipment to boost the capacity of evacuation centres to provide adequate help for the displaced.

The ICRC and the Philippine Red Cross are loading trucks in Cotabato City to distribute food rations, beginning 15 August, for up to 80,000 displaced people.

Water and sanitation kits, which contain an assortment of water bladder tanks, pumps and pipes that can serve 15,000 people, are due to arrive in Cotabato City today. The ICRC and the Philippine Red Cross also stand ready to deploy a mobile water-treatment unit to provide safe and clean water for the displaced as well as the resident population."

AFP, 12 August 2008

"Fighting continued Tuesday as soldiers used artillery and helicopter gunships to pound rebel positions around towns and villages in North Cotabato, a poor farming region on the southern island of Mindanao.

The UN's World Food Programme has begun airlifting 400 tonnes of rice to communities affected by the conflict, with 160,000 people having fled their homes.

At the same time the Commission on Human Rights and politicians have called for a halt to the fighting to avert a humanitarian crisis.

According to the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) 43 evacuation centres have been set up for the refugees but they are now overcrowded and fast becoming health hazards.

"This is turning into a humanitarian mess," congresswoman Risa Hontiveros said Tuesday.
(...)

Commission on Human Rights chairwoman Leila de Lima described the situation in North Cotabato as "serious" and called for an immediate ceasefire.

She told local television that evacuation centres needed urgent supplies of food and medicines for the refugees."

Humanitarian needs for the displaced in Mindanao's remote rural areas not always covered (March 2008)

- The civilians in areas where clashes are likely are exposed to direct consequences of the armed conflict.
- Many displaced families already live either below or at the brink of the poverty threshold, and thus the loss of their means to earn income makes them extremely vulnerable.
- The humanitarian response is often slow and inadequate

ICRC, 13 September 2007

"The civilians in areas where clashes are likely are exposed to direct consequences of the armed conflict. They might be wounded and their property can suffer damage, depriving them of their means of subsistence. Most often they abandon their homes and their livelihoods out of fear for long periods. Many of these displaced families already live either below or at the brink of the

poverty threshold, and thus the loss of their means to earn income makes them extremely vulnerable.

Living conditions in the first stages of displacement and without adequate access to water and sanitation expose them to illnesses such as diarrhoea. The children cannot attend school and the economic consequences of the displacement set the families back several years in terms of development and recovery capacity.

[...]

At the IDP camps, food and safe water supply, as well as sanitation concerns are among the top priorities. In addition, hospitals are not always sufficiently equipped to cope with the increased influx of war wounded. The PNRC has received training and materials from ICRC to respond to the above-mentioned needs in terms of water and habitat. The ICRC has also conducted an evaluation of the means to treat the wounded at the hospitals receiving the injured fighters and civilians. It has set aside medical supplies that will serve to support the treatment of the wounded from all sides."

IRIN, 18 March 2008

[People are being displaced in many separate incidents and in disparate locations. Government agencies and the humanitarian community alike are challenged to respond quickly with sufficient aid.

"Our resources for frontline ministries such as health and social services are not that big," Oscar Sanpulna, of the office of the ARMM regional governor, told IRIN. "In practically all areas, finances for medicines and foodstuffs are not enough."

Bai Soraida M Biruar, director of the regional office of social welfare and development, echoed his concern: "Government resources are insufficient, there is always a lack." Her office has only two million pesos (US\$48,000) annually for regional emergencies. During the December Datu Piang [Maguindanao] crisis alone, 500,000 pesos (\$12,000) was spent.

Datukan S Mokammad, a social worker for the municipality of Datu Piang, told IRIN that local government gave food assistance but it was insufficient. "It was the same basic problem we have experienced in other evacuations. There are delays and insufficiencies in the response of the NGOs and the international community."

Basilan: No immediate assistance for displaced from Ungkaya Pukan town due to bureaucratic hurdles and financial limits (August 2007)

Inquirer, 7 August 2007

"Maturan said the situation in Songkayot remains tense. He said the local government could not do anything about the evacuation because it simply did not have the funds to provide relief assistance.

"I cannot provide them assistance as we don't have internal revenue allotment or calamity funds yet," Maturan said. Ungkaya Pukan is a new town. Jumora Alsree, Basilan social welfare officer, said they could provide assistance if they receive a report on the displaced residents from the local government.

"But we still don't have reports from Unkaya Pukan about the evacuees," Alsree said. "

Conflict and displacement in Mindanao have increased threat to human security: JNA study (December 2005)

- The JNA found the following to be the most pressing needs of people living in the conflict-affected areas of Mindanao: many people are still displaced, prevalent food insecurity leading to malnutrition, limited access to potable water and sanitary facilities, limited number of health facilities, workers, medicines and supplies.
- Other threats include: houses damaged by conflict, limited access to education, youth vulnerable to recruitment in armed groups.

Government of the Philippines, International Funding Agencies, Mindanao Stakeholders, December 2005, pp.0-34

"The Philippine government, optimistic about signing a peace accord with the MILF, requested the World Bank for assistance in the establishment of the multi-donor Mindanao Trust Fund for the reconstruction and development of the CAAs in the island. The conduct of the JNA to determine the needs and priorities of the CAAs was seen as an important step in establishing the MTF.

The JNA Team found that the recent armed conflict and displacement of people have increased the threats to human security – specifically, the survival, well-being, and dignity – of the already highly disadvantaged population in the CAAs.

Some of the survival threats are as follows: Significant numbers of people are still displaced, with many concerned about security and the presence of the military in their communities. Food insecurity is a prevailing condition in many areas, with risks of malnutrition and childhood-related developmental delays. Access to potable water and proper sanitary facilities is severely limited, thus increasing the risks of disease and death. Infectious diseases are prevalent and not quickly contained due to the limited number of health facilities, workers, medicines and supplies compounded with logistical challenges.

Other threats to the well-being of the people are the following: Many homes, school buildings, and other facilities damaged by the armed conflict are still awaiting repair work. Children and youth do not have access to basic education due to displacement, poverty, the distance between home and school, the need to work, and the insufficient number of classrooms, teachers and school supplies. Young people, particularly males, with little education and few marketable skills, are vulnerable to recruitment by armed elements and drug dealers.

Among the threats to dignity that were noted are the following. Human service providers are not often sensitive to vulnerability for displacement or socio-cultural and gender differences. Gender biases remain hurdles for women, and many adults are not literate and have few marketable skills. Livelihood opportunities are limited making it difficult to break out of grinding poverty especially to those who belong to different ethno-linguistic groups, such as the indigenous people, that have long experienced discrimination and marginalization.
(...)

Government of the Philippines, International Funding Agencies, Mindanao Stakeholders, December 2005, Human Development Report, pp.16-24

"Protect the rights and address the humanitarian needs of IDPs still living in the evacuation sites and/or the homes of relatives and friends.
Negotiate the removal of the AFP from the residential areas of the CAAs, thus allowing the IDPs to return home in safety and with dignity.

Ensure access to culturally sensitive and appropriate psychosocial services that build on traditional coping capacities.

Prevent and address sexual and gender-based violence.

Provide assistance for the reconstruction of houses and public infrastructure, but allow the affected populations to build these facilities in their home communities in accordance with their own needs and standards.

Ensure basic services potable water, food security, education, and health care are accessible to all, particularly the poorest and most marginalized.

Provide start-up livelihood assistance and/or farm animals.

Devote greater attention to the needs and aspirations of unskilled and unemployed youth.

Recognize the roles played by women during, and after, conflict.

Provide both opportunity and resources for collective activities undertaken by women.

Increase access to information.

Appreciate the diversity of the populations living within the CAAs and ensure interventions are programmed accordingly.

(...)

1. Protect human rights
2. Provide basic assistance for those currently displaced (e.g., food/non-food relief items; shelter, livelihood, psychosocial services, and protection/assistance for the youngest children)
3. Negotiate the withdrawal of the military from the residential areas of communities of origin
4. Provide culturally sensitive psychosocial services that build on the traditional coping capacities of the people
5. Improve and institutionalize local disaster response, management, and mitigation capacities, both immediately and over the medium-term.
6. Prevent and address sexual and gender-based violence
7. Provide resources for the rebuilding of homes and public infrastructure.
8. Ensure basic services – potable water, food security, education, and health care – are easily accessible, particularly for the most vulnerable.
9. Provide start-up livelihood assistance.
10. Provide farm animals.
11. Focus on the situation of unskilled and unemployed youth.
12. Recognize, and build on, the roles played by women, during and after conflict.
13. Provide opportunity and resources for activities undertaken collectively by women.
14. Increase IDP access to information.
15. Plan interventions with an appreciation for the diversity of the populations living within the conflict-affected area.
16. Promote a “a culture of peace” and local conflict-mediation capacity building."

Displaced women see basic needs and access to livelihood opportunities as most pressing (October 2006)

- The most pressing problems articulated by women generally related to immediate basic needs rather than to matters related to armed conflict.
- Most linked their poverty to the on-going armed conflict and blamed their displacement for their losses in economic capital, difficulties in finding livelihoods, and problems with their children's schooling and health.
- The IDPs all said they needed to secure livelihoods somehow either through finding jobs or getting the capital for small businesses.

UNICEF, October 2006, pp. 105-106

"The women were very clear in expressing their hopes, dreams and aspirations. Despite the qualitative data-gathering being in areas of armed conflict, the most pressing problems articulated generally related to immediate basic needs rather than to matters related to armed conflict (which reflected the difference in the types of internal armed conflicts in the Philippines as already discussed in an earlier chapter). Although armed conflict situations were in their consciousness, the women seemed most focused on addressing the daily poverty they faced.

It was the women of Central Mindanao who most systematically linked their poverty to the ongoing armed conflict. They blamed their displacement for their losses in economic capital, difficulties in finding livelihoods, and problems with their children's schooling and health. This was similarly the case with the evacuees from Leyte. The women of Abra, Mindoro Oriental, Capiz, Surigao del Sur and Compostela Valley – and especially the direct victims themselves – in turn decried the disruption of their lives due to military operations even as the poverty-related problems they faced became more pronounced daily.

A notable recurring hope of the mothers in all the research areas relates to their children's education – that if only their children could finish even just elementary school, their children would not have to experience the poverty of their parents. Related to this was their demand for schools in their community, good quality teachers, scholarships for their children and day care centers.

However, also persistently mentioned as needs were those pertaining to their economic life. The women cited a range of economic needs: farm tools (shovels, plows, sprayers, threshers, etc.), work animals, tractors and irrigation; poultry and livestock; higher prices and wider markets for their products; lower prices of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides; jobs and livelihood opportunities (including credit, capital, sewing machines); and even soil analysis to understand why their yields are so low. Reflecting the gross inadequacies in their communities, the women also expressed needs for health centers, doctors, nurses and other health personnel; pre-natal and family planning; medicines and vitamins; more accessible clean water; electricity; better transport systems and roads.

(...)

The current and recent IDPs also expressed particular needs related to their displacement. All said they needed to secure livelihoods somehow, be this through finding jobs or getting the capital for small businesses. Those who have been able to return to their villages – the Central Mindanao evacuees – still expressed needs for food support while they still do not have sources of livelihood, and for help in recovering basic household items they lost as a result of their displacement (clothing, kitchen items, pails, wash basins and the like). Despite acknowledging housing "rehab" projects, the women still said they needed homes, housing materials and carpentry tools. Scabies apparently continues to be a scourge and they have also asked for more knowledge about it as well as cures.

The primary need expressed by the still-displaced Leyte evacuees was straightforward: to be able to safely return to their homes and farms; to be reunited with their families and relatives. In the meantime, having become aware that there are so many of them in similar circumstances, they have also expressed their desire to set up an organization of IDPs from their province.

The women also poignantly articulated other visions: an end to war and fighting for more peaceful communities, peace for the lumad, and a change in the social system; Bangsamoro communities for themselves and according to the Q'uran."

Food

Insufficient food rations for tens of thousands of IDPs in evacuation centers (August 2008)

Sun Star, 13 August 2008

"Two cups of rice or around half a kilo is what a family shares for one day at the evacuation center, which is home to 500 evacuees in a school in Midsayap, North Cotabato.

This is the sorry state evacuees staying at the Patindeguen Elementary School experienced for the past six days.

Wadtod Kadete, 55, and a father of five, said the two cups of rice given to them on Monday, could barely feed his family. He said that when they first arrived at the evacuation center, they were given five kilos of rice by the local government. Six days passed and Kadete said they received nothing else. On the seventh day they received the two cups provision with two cans of sardines.

Ernesto Jugos, barangay captain of Patindeguen, said the two-cup provision was decided upon by the barangay council after the social welfare and development office of Midsayap provided them with only two sacks of rice for that day. He said with the swelling number of evacuees in the center, now numbering to 177 families, they have no other course but to equally distribute the 100-kilo rice to all 177 families that average to about four members each. Jugos said the initial five-kilo rice per family was given when there were still few evacuees at the center. He said the local government unit was the one that personally distributed the five-kilo rice provision last week. This time around, the task is given to the barangay officials, he added.

Teachers at the Patindeguen Elementary School said that aside from the lack of food, evacuees have also started contracting diseases like measles and flu. They also have to live inside a small hut where four families are cramped like sardines."

Rising food prices cause increased malnutrition in ARMM (June 2008)

- Mindanao is hardest hit by the high food prices
- Malnutrition in ARMM has increased significantly
- Government stop-gap measures do not get to the cause of the problem: the lack of domestic support for agricultural development

IRIN, 9 June 2008

"Valerie Guarneri, World Food Programme (WFP) director for the Philippines, told IRIN that Mindanao was expected to be hardest hit by higher food prices, particularly in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and its outlying provinces. Before the food crisis, the poverty level there had barely dipped from 50 percent of the population to 45 percent. "This is nowhere near the target of 25 percent by 2015."

"Even more disturbing," Guarneri said, "is the fact that the proportion of the population that fails to meet daily food needs has increased from 62 percent to 64 percent." Prevalence of malnutrition (defined in this case as being dangerously thin or too short - stunting - for one's age and or being deficient in vitamins and minerals) among children in the ARMM had also increased - from 31 percent in 1990 to 38 percent in 2005, based on a survey by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute that was only released in 2007. The figure of 38 percent malnourished would have to drop to 15.65 percent by 2015 to meet the MDG1 goal – an all but impossible task.

The government has responded with stop-gap measures to mitigate the effects of the rice

crisis, such as issuing food coupons in exchange for rice, but Glipo said the problem was the lack of domestic support for agriculture and agricultural development.”

Brookings, 23 April 2008:

“The dimensions and dynamics of the food crisis have been widely reported: rice prices have increased in the Philippines by 70 percent in one year.”

Basilan: Unassisted IDPs go hungry as Military won't allow them to go back home yet (May 2008)

- About 500 unassisted families in Ungkaya Pukan have received no food relief aid
- The armed forces did not allow them to return home, saying MILF rebels were still in the area

The Inquirer, 31 May 2008

About 500 families displaced by the latest clash between soldiers and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels in Ungkaya Pukan in Basilan have ran out of provisions and were forced to forage for food, Mayor Joel Maturan said. “Not a single social welfare personnel went up here to deliver food assistance or relief,” Maturan said.

Because of lack of food, the displaced residents have to content themselves with cassava and bananas for three straight days now, he added. “My people are suffering. Although there are cassava and bananas, these are not enough,” he said.

Maturan said what compounded the problem was the scarcity of funds. “Much as I want to help, I don't have funds for emergency. I don't even have money to buy medicines or used clothing,” he said by phone.

A television report quoted some villagers as saying they were waiting for the military's go-signal so they could go back to their homes. But Maturan said the military might not allow civilians back to their villages yet because of reports MILF rebels were regrouping in Silangcom village. Aside from the lack of food, Maturan said he was also worried that classes would not be held in the affected villages.

Marine Commandant Maj. Gen. Ben Dolorfino said they were trying to avoid a direct confrontation with the MILF, which is engaged in peace talks with the government.

“The troops were directed to stay away from schools and populated areas,” he said.

Over one million people on Mindanao receive daily WFP and NGO food rations in a fight of alarmingly high malnutrition due to conflict (April 2008)

- WFP provides monthly rations to over one million people in Mindanao
- The conflict disrupts agricultural activities in the “breadbasket” of the Philippines
- Clan conflicts take over when no major fighting between armed forces and rebel groups is ongoing, thus perpetuating the state of insecurity
- Food prices have risen worldwide in 2008, affecting the Philippines with a 70 per cent rise between April 2007 and April 2008

- National NGOs provide an important contribution to nutrition, for example through school feedings
- WFP distributes food upon an official request from the government.
- In February 2008, WFP decided to increase food assistance to conflict IDPs in Mindanao from 10kg to 25kg of rice, for it to feed large families.

AFP, 1 April 2008:

"More than one million people rely daily on food from the WFP in Mindanao, the southern Philippine island which has been ravaged for more than 30 years by a Muslim separatist rebellion and interclan feuding. "Hunger is a nagging concern for the people in Mindanao," WFP country chief Valerie Guarnieri told AFP.

Despite a five-year ceasefire between the government and the MILF, clashes erupt randomly and deadly feuding between rival families and militant Muslim groups remain a problem. It also disrupts farming and other jobs, and prevents children attending school, Guarnieri said. The conflict has led to malnutrition levels that are "quite alarming in a country of the economic status of the Philippines," she said.

"Nothing in Mindanao can be divorced from the conflict because there's an area that should be the breadbasket of the Philippines, that should be the economic lifebuoy for the country and yet because of the conflict, it doesn't get the sort of investment, either public or private that would allow it to fulfill its potential," Guarnieri said.

"They are living day to day and they are trying to supplement their farming. These activities are clearly disrupted when they are forced to move to another area. It makes what's already quite a difficult life all the harder," she said.

Various efforts have been made by government and UN agencies to document the exact number of displaced, but because the camps are often temporary and villagers often return to their homes to retrieve belongings no actual figure has been established.

For sure, Guarnieri says, the figure runs in the hundreds of thousands, with her agency alone delivering between 2,000 and 3,000 tonnes of food every month last year to 1.1 million of Mindanao's 16 million residents.

In December 2007 alone, more than 3,000 villagers from this town [Pikit] were displaced by days of fighting before ceasefire monitors stepped in, according to local officials.

These refugees would continue to depend on foreign aid to fend off starvation, Guarnieri said. Guarnieri said millions of dollars are now pouring into Mindanao to support the peace process, "but very little of that assistance goes directly to conflict-affected households".

Jesus Saccalan, the local governor, says large-scale fighting has stopped, although armed conflict among local political warlords and Muslim clans persists.

"It has become relatively peaceful. And our children are slowly returning to schools and normal life," he said. "We have local problems though about clan fighting."

Clan wars are more pertinent in daily life here, with a recent study by the Asia Foundation recording more than 3,800 deaths in recent years related to what are known here as "rido".

But this number is also likely to fall if the government signs a peace deal with the MILF and subsequently curbs unlicensed gun ownership, Saccalan said.

"It's critical that the government and the MILF conclude a peace agreement as soon as possible," Guarnieri said.

IRIN, 18 March 2008

"Datukan S Mokammad, a social worker for the municipality of Datu Piang, told IRIN that local government gave food assistance but it was insufficient

WFP deputy country director Alghassim Wurie, operations manager in Cotabato City, Maguindanao Province, told IRIN: "We have a warehouse with food; it depends when we hear about the problem and when we get an official request from the government." He conceded, however, that sometimes the quantity distributed was insufficient for large Filipino families. "At a February 2008 meeting, WFP made a decision to increase food assistance to conflict IDPs in Mindanao from 10kg to 25kg of rice." "

Right to food violated in conflict areas (October 2007)**IDMC, October 2007**

The right to food – the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger (Article 11.2)

"The Committee's General Comment No. 12 on the right to adequate food provides in paragraph 14 that everyone is to be ensured the minimum essential food and that "whenever an individual or group is unable, for reasons beyond their control, to enjoy the right to adequate food by the means at their disposal, States have the obligation to fulfill (provide) that right directly."

People who live off the land become extremely vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition when they are displaced. While at home, agricultural activities allow them to secure basic nutrition needs; when displaced and especially when in evacuation centres, they have no access to their fields and crops and available assistance services are often limited or inaccessible. The access to and availability of food is sometimes so limited that food-related deaths have been reported. For example, the Asian Human Rights Commission reported in September 2005 at least three cases of displaced children dying from malnutrition-related illnesses such as diarrhea, caused by inadequate food and unsanitary water in evacuation centres.

The insecurity of access to food in evacuation centres is so serious that people sometimes choose not to seek refuge and safety there but risk their lives in order to stay close to their farms. For instance, hundreds of farmers in Barangay Ahan, Guindulungan, and Maguindanao reportedly preferred to stay near their homes to ensure that they could harvest their crops and feed their families. In view of ongoing fighting and random air strikes they were given the option to move to designated evacuation centres, but many refused to move because of the meager relief assistance and poor conditions in the centres.

Humanitarian access for aid groups is not always secure and safe, and delivering aid to the displaced is at times difficult and dangerous for aid workers. For example, in November 2006 two women NGO workers assisting IDPs were reported to have been abducted, interrogated and sexually abused by Philippine army soldiers in North Cotabato. As most international NGOs in Mindanao work closely with the government in providing humanitarian assistance, there is the risk of discrimination against those IDPs who are seen as close to the rebels of the MILF. It has been reported, for example, that during the displacement incident in Shariff Aguak in June and July 2006, thousands of reportedly pro-MILF IDPs were not recognised and enrolled as beneficiaries in the early phase of humanitarian response. On top of that, much of the aid was reportedly distributed to non-IDP civilians close to paramilitary groups linked to the government and the provincial governor of Maguindanao."

The 2007 outbreak of violence in Sulu province makes tens of thousands of people depend on food aid (April 2007)

- WFP distributes food aid to 42,000 people in April 2007.
- Tabang Mindanaw provides emergency nutritional feeding for children, particularly in Batu Batu and Indanan.

The Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC), 25 May 2007

"With the continuing armed conflict in Sulu, the Disaster Response Team (DRT) of the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) Sulu Chapter has distributed relief goods to the different barangays: Pang, Tubig Putih, and Tankuan, in the Municipality of Luuk. Aside from the mentioned barangays, affected people from Barangay Tando-bato, Niyog-niyog, and Lingah received relief goods from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on May 19. The beneficiaries reached a total of 692 families. Additional relief will be given on May 24 to the residents of the aforementioned barangays. The families in the affected locale are still apprehensive about the ongoing skirmishes between the military and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) even though the atmosphere is generally calm and peaceful.

At this time, a total of 10, 975 families have been handed assistance. This number covers a total of nine municipalities or 34, 489 individuals. The PNRC National Headquarters and the local Chapter will be observing further developments in the area."

WFP, 19 April 2007

"The United Nations World Food Programme said today it will provide 85 metric tons of rice (1700 bags) to assist more than 42,000 people displaced by recent conflict on the troubled island of Jolo in Sulu Province in the Philippines. Three days of clashes in the past week between Philippine troops and the Moro National Liberation Front on Jolo resulted in 12 deaths and drove some 8,500 families from their homes in seven municipalities of Sulu. [...] WFP is providing the food aid in response to a request from the Provincial Governor of Sulu and in cooperation with the Office of the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process and the Department of Social Welfare and Development."

Tabang Mindanaw, Email, 2 May 2007

"Just sharing some updates on the humanitarian assistance Tabang Mindanaw is doing for displaced children of war here in Sulu. We do it on a ten day cycle then we assess for continuity. Just yesterday, we added another evacuation area in Batu Batu, Indanan as we found out children are becoming malnourished and sickly. We expect to feed about 50-100 more. There is yet no system established by local coordinating agencies on camp management. Food relief is ongoing through Red Cross and now by some government agencies (after they were able to finally clarify that humanitarian assistance cannot be subject to election ban). Nonetheless, the humanitarian space is still very wide and the coordination systems and technical capacities need to be enhanced.

Tabang Mindanaw is able to do its modest humanitarian intervention primarily in areas where it has been able to establish itself and worked directly with IDP mothers and host communities in implementing the nutritional feeding program. The situation remains volatile and we make necessary adjustments."

Tabang Mindanaw, April 2007

"About 66% of the evacuee-families have been provided with at least one food ration typically composed of five kilos of rice, three cans of sardines and three packs of instant noodles. Most of the food assistance are from local ARMM and provincial officials, DSWD, PNRC and the World Food Programme (WFP)."

Tabang Mindanaw, April 2007

Tabang Mindanaw Emergency Assistance:

After having concluded its twice a day (for an average of 23-day) emergency nutritional feeding program for at least 800 children and other vulnerable individuals (pregnant and nursing mothers, elderly, disabled, the sick) in three evacuation areas in Indanan for a total of at least 26,000 hot meals (Batu Batu Elementary School, Kasambuhan Elementary School and Talatak) in February and March, TM decided to provide its emergency humanitarian intervention to the recently displaced children 12 years old and below, and other groups at risk in evacuation areas in Indanan and Panglima Estino."

Health

Children and elderly's physical health at risk in the overcrowded evacuation centers (March 2008)

- In February 2007, a sick 60-year-old displaced women died in an evacuation center in Midsayap, North Cotabato
- Displaced children interviewed described very difficult conditions in the overcrowded camps including lack of food, poor water & sanitation conditions, poor shelter exposing them to rain and wind. These poor conditions caused many children to fall sick.
- At the end of August 2005, 3 children reportedly died of diarrhea while in displacement near Pikit, North Cotabato
- Lack of nutritious food and adequate diet make the most vulnerable, the children and elderly, subject to infectious diseases.
- A few days after the start of the 2003 February war, some 25 per cent of the IDP children in evacuation centers were affected by upper respiratory tract infections.
- As of May 2003, 80% of the deaths reported in evacuation camps were children aging 2 to 6. Diarrhea was the main cause of death.

Inside Mindanao, 26 March 2008

"Umbai Maliganan lives in a small village Saranay, located in Takepan, Pikit and is one kilometer away from the national highway. She lives in a shanty and humble home where her source of income is just few meters away. When asked about her experiences in evacuation centre, she exclaimed, "sobrang paghihirap, sobra pa sa nararanasan ng mahirap (too much suffering, more than what people in poverty experienced)."

(...)

"Mainit masyado sa loob ng evacuation centre, maraming batang nagkakasakit at kulang na kulang kami sa pagkain ..., (It is very hot inside the evacuation centre, there are many children suffering of illnesses, and there is insufficient food...)" Umbai describes their situation whilst sheltering inside an evacuation centre because of conflict. They suffered from water shortage. Children, women, and men are suffering from diarrhea, cholera, and skin diseases because of

unsafe water and unclean environment. There are times that they only rely on salt because there was insufficient food from the government agencies. The evacuation centre is too small for the families staying there. Most of the times, they have sleepless nights fearing that they have to jump from one evacuation to another."

The Inquirer, 6 February 2007

"A sick 60-year-old woman died in one of eight evacuation centers here as displaced families continued to refuse to return home for fear of more clashes between Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) guerrillas and government forces.

The residents, according to the authorities, want an assurance they will be safe in their homes. Councilor Vivencio Deomampo, a physician who is also chairman of the town council's health committee, could not say when exactly the woman died, only that she was already ill when her family fled the fighting two weeks ago.

At least six persons -- three of them rebels -- have died in clashes in at least three villages here since January 25.

The fighting sent about 6,000 people fleeing to cramped evacuation centers where they remain despite a localized truce reached last week.

Deomampo said they fear more evacuees could get sick because of the conditions in the evacuation centers. "They need safe water, clothing and food. They are in a very deplorable situation," Deomampo said."

UNICEF, October 2006, pp. 63-64

"The research team did not come across any accounts of health infrastructure (i.e. health centers, clinics or hospitals) being destroyed or damaged during fighting or otherwise. Nor did any community respondents attribute problems in health service delivery to armed confrontations. The general lament was insufficient health services and how difficult it is to find medical help, or how expensive it can be, whenever a family member gets sick. Similarly, none of the local government officials spoken to pointed to the armed conflict as causing problems in their delivery of health services.

As with education, health problems were greater for IDPs in evacuation centers than for those who remained in their communities. Whether coming from respondents in Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Compostela Valley or Surigao del Sur, the respondents described conditions in evacuation in vivid, harrowing detail.

The displaced remembered the meager rations and lost family livelihoods and incomes. Too often there never seemed to be enough clean water to drink or bathe with. Unhealthy conditions seemed the norm. The centers were overcrowded, the water was dirty, sanitation poor, and the evacuees were exposed to the evening chill, winds and rain. Many families lacked even sleeping mats and slept on cardboard boxes or bare floors. Thirteen-year-old Ramon of Surigao del Sur said that he will never forget how he and his family never ate properly the entire length of their stay.

Rachma, 15, of Maguindanao remembered missing meals and sometimes not even having any rice to eat. Fifteen-year-old Nawal also recalled sleeping without mats on a cement floor that was hot during the day and cold at night, living just a wall away from a dumpsite, getting a ration of

five kilos of rice for five days from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and ten kilos a month from OXFAM, going into debt, no longer playing outside, and drinking dirty water. She says: "I got sick then with fever and colds. My siblings also got sick because it was so crowded. (Nagkasakit ako noon, ubo at sipon. Mga kapatid ko nagkasakit din dahil masikip ang lugar.)"

The thick suffocating smell of heat and perspiration mingling with the stench of human and animal waste was also a recurring tale. Children inevitably came down sick and were often afflicted with scabies, chicken pox, measles, diarrhea, coughs, colds, and fever. The members of Moro communities in particular recalled how so many of them were afflicted with severe cases of scabies, with its parasite-driven rashes and infections painfully spreading throughout their bodies. A mother in North Cotabato mentioned the case of a nine-month-old baby, one of twins, dying because of scabies-related infections. Yet families were unable to afford medical treatment and were forced to rely on often inadequate or over-burdened health services provided by local governments and NGOs.

Elsewhere, affected families have had to deal with problems feeding their children which will ultimately have detrimental effects on their health. Evacuees from Leyte recalled being unable to afford anything else but rice. Teresita, a struggling mother, shared how her children foraged from garbage for food to go with rice and how they sometimes settled for rice gruel, "because it's easy to swallow even without anything to go with it... just add salt." (Minsan naglulugaw dahil madaling lunukin kahit walang ulam. Lagyan lang ng asin.) Another mother, Tarits, sadly added: "My children would ask for bread but I would have none to give. I would just cry." (Nanghihingi ng tinapay ang anak ko, wala naman ibigay. Iiyak na lang ako.) She said her children were having a difficult time but that they risked being killed if they returned home."

Mindanews, 14 July 2006

"At least two civilians and a still undetermined number of combatants were killed between June 28 and July 5. On July 12, Father Roberto Layson of the Mindanao Peoples' Caucus told MindaNews he received reports four evacuees died – two infants, one seven-year old boy and an adult – from diarrhea and dehydration – at an evacuation center. The names of the four were not immediately available.

Jean-Luc Joliat of the International Committee of the Red Cross told MindaNews they were told of a similar report although he clarified the evacuees died not in the evacuation centers but in their relatives' houses."

Janet M. Arnado & Mary Ann M. Arnado, 15 November 2004, pp. 61-64

"The vicious cycle of social displacement and life reconstruction take its hard toll on the well-being of men, women and children. Children's health is mostly endangered in the evacuation centers, while women, the caregivers, are silently coping with the mental stress of war. In this section, we examine the health impact of wars in the intertwining lives of women and children.

In the course of their displacement, the IDPs' health is a risk. Due to lack of nutritious and adequate diet, their immune system is compromised. As a result, infectious and sanitation-related diseases spread in the evacuation camps, such as upper respiratory tract infections, diarrhea and scabies.

A few days after the war broke out on February 11, 2003, 25% of the 6,000 children evacuees as of February 16 were diagnosed with upper respiratory tract infection.

(...)

Unsanitary condition in the evacuation camps often results in diarrhea among infants and children. It is not uncommon for children with diarrhea to die. Focus group participant, Jalika, reported that her grandchild died in the evacuation camp due to diarrhea. In fact, diarrhea was the main cause of death among children. As of May 2003, 80% of the deaths reported in evacuation camps were children aging 2 to 6.

(...)

The crowded condition in evacuation camps is conducive to the spread of scabies. The focus group participants in Pikit all claimed to being infected with scabies whenever they were in the evacuation centers. Because this skin condition normally occurs during military encounters, the women believe that the bullets coming from the military firearms cause it.

(...)

The socio-economic effects of social displacement compound the mental anguish of these IDPs. Women's mental health is greatly affected by their dislocation, yet women ignore the symptoms of mental illness. For instance, when we asked them a general question regarding the effects of war, their narratives focused on economic, not psychological, aspect. Zoraya from Pikit tells about the effects of war, "Effect? It's really about livelihood. When you are an evacuee, how can you look for means of livelihood, when all you do is avoid the bullet?"

(...)

Women's mental health is intertwined with their children's health. Many women show resilience in highly stressful situation such as war and displacement. However, when their children's health or safety is endangered, their resilience is challenged and their mental well-being is at risk."

Notre Dame University & Commission on Population Regions XII, pp. 34-35

"A big number of respondents (52% from Parang and 46% from Pikit) claimed that some of their household members got sick during displacement. Around 122 or 12% of 1,197 household members became ill at the EC. Most of them (25%) were children. The common ailments suffered by the IDPs and the number of persons affected were fever/flu (37), skin disease (20), cough (17), measles (16), diarrhea (9), typhoid fever (5), and tuberculosis (2).

The sick members of the displaced families were brought to hospitals (39) and Rural Health Units (45), while 31 administered their own treatment. Seven (7) did not receive any treatment at all for their illness.

The respondents (18 from Parang and 4 from Pikit) said that they have HH members who died during displacement. The group reported 28 deaths – 24 from Parang and 4 from Pikit. The causes of deaths in Parang were attributed to measles (2), heart attack/stroke (4), typhoid fever (3), tuberculosis (2), and birth delivery (1).

A large number of those who died belonged to age groups 1 year and below (7 children); 2 to 4 years old (6 children); 12 to 17 years old (4 persons); 30 to 42 years old (5 persons); and 50 to 72 years old (6 persons). (Table 18)

"

General health care is already stretched, with very restricted access to health in poor and rural areas (November 2007)

- The Philippines rank very low in terms of public medical spending.
- Hundreds of hospitals have closed down or downsized in recent years, due to lack of finances and personnel.

COHRE, November 2007, para. 75, 76

75. "The World Health Organization (WHO), in its World Health Statistics in 2007, gave the Philippines dismal rankings in various health provision indicators. Among 192 countries, the Philippines ranked 153rd in terms of government spending on health as a share of a country's total health spending. Filipinos have increasingly relied on out-of-pocket expenses on health, as against government allocation. The country also ranked 156th in terms of the share of the government budget going to health". (IBON, Media Release, October 3, 2007)

[...]

76. It is not only the devolved set-up of the health system that poses obstacles to meeting the health targets and ensuring better health outcomes, it is also the steadily increasing number of out-migration cases among health workers that further damages the country's health system and pushes it to an impending 'collapse'.

An estimated 163,756 Filipino nurses or 85 percent of all employed Filipino nurses are working outside the Philippines in 46 countries. [...] Simultaneous with the steadily high demand of skilled health professionals abroad is the Philippine government's lack of manpower needed to run its own health-care services. Around 200 hospitals have closed down in recent years, 800 hospitals have partially closed one to two wards (Philippine Hospital Association, November 2005)."

Health facilities are scarce in the rural areas of the Philippines, especially in the poor south. Families find it difficult to access health care, especially those living in evacuation centres (see further below).

Surigao del Sur evacuees face disease outbreak as government does not provide aid (November 2007)

- Government aid is not reaching over 1,500 Lumad displaced in different evacuation centres as military sources deny the plight of the evacuees.
- The evacuees thus remain "invisible" to official aid.

GMA News, 25 November 2007

"Diseases and hunger are now threatening 1,548 evacuees of mostly indigenous people and minors from 10 villages in two municipalities of Surigao del Sur, leaders of the affected villages said. The residents reportedly left their homes due to heightened armed conflict between the military and the New People's Army that started on November 20 [2007].

[...]

Campos said that since some 1,548 lumads composed mostly of Manobo tribesmen and minors are already at different evacuation centers for days, the "government should help them provide foods, other relief goods and medicines as diseases threaten the evacuees, especially the children."

At least 53 children at the different evacuation centers are already suffering from severe cough, runny nose, fever, diarrhea and eyesores, Campos said.

The Surigao del Sur Provincial DSWD Office in Tandag City confirmed the presence of evacuees in the areas. Campos blasted the government for remaining silent on their plight.

A military source, however, said the evacuation woes claimed by Campos are untrue and appeared to be a communist propaganda against the Armed Forces. Karapatan shot back, saying that if the evacuees were rebels or supporters, they would have not evacuated in the first place and fight it out with government forces."

The right to health in conflict-affected areas (October 2007)

IDMC, October 2007

The right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health

"The major concerns related to the right to the highest attainable standard of health are connected to the availability, accessibility and affordability of health care on the one hand, and to the underlying determinants of health related to the inadequate standard of living referred to above.

An insufficiency of health care centres makes it difficult for the displaced to find medical help when needed. There is a need for more qualified health workers and more medicines, which are either insufficient or too expensive. Limited accessibility and availability of health services in conflict affected areas, especially rural areas, add to high mortality and low life expectancy.

Health problems seem to be greater for IDPs living in overcrowded evacuation centres than for those who remained in their communities. The 2006 UNICEF report describes that:

"Evacuees describe [evacuation centres] as unsanitary and unhygienic, extremely overcrowded, exposed to the elements, and grossly lacking in food, potable water and toilet facilities. Health services are also far from adequate in meeting the needs of so many people in such unhealthy conditions. The North Cotabato and Maguindanao IDPs recalled the presence of government health workers in their evacuation centers, but also said that they were just too few, too overworked and too lacking in medical supplies to service the needs of so many. All these resulted in malnourishment, sickness and even death especially among the very young and the very old. Diarrhea and fevers were common, with the crowded conditions also encouraging the spread of scabies, coughs, colds and other illnesses. The longer the evacuees stayed, the more the conditions deteriorated."

It is also important to note the psychosocial impact of conflict and displacement, especially on children, youth and women. War and displacement expose children to violence and abnormal environments, which can affect various aspects of children's life and cause psychosocial trauma, which can manifest itself in a variety of ways, including insomnia and depression, leading to withdrawal and possible self-harm. Repeated displacements, destruction of homes and villages and exposure to violence also have a huge impact on the life choices of children as they grow up.

The main stress factors on women are actual fighting and the presence of soldiers. In central Mindanao, for example, mothers had to evacuate with children under fire, saw their homes destroyed and people being wounded and killed. The adverse impact of forced displacement on women's physical and mental health and livelihoods affects their diet, which is of special significance when accompanying pregnancies and motherhood. Also, women's mental health is intertwined with their children's health, when their children's health and safety is challenged, women's mental well-being is at risk, and vice-versa."

Displaced and conflict-affected children both affected by psychosocial problems (March 2007)

- War and displacement expose children to violence – to themselves, their family and friends – and the disruption of normal routines also creates abnormal environments to grow up in.
- Children in Moro communities have been exposed to much higher levels of fighting, more frequently, and have witnessed the destruction of their homes and villages. Displacement distances them from the immediate violence but also makes their struggle for economic survival more intense.
- Children in NPA guerrilla tend to be spared the displacement, but have to deal with the pervasive effects of state forces' entering their communities while on counter-insurgency operations.
- Particularly notable among the Moro IDP child is a lingering sense of loss and hopelessness.

UNICEF, October 2006, pp. 8-66

"Outside of direct or indirect physical harm to children, armed conflict situations have implications on their socio-psychological well-being. War exposes them to violence – to themselves, their family and friends – and the disruption of normal routines also creates abnormal environments to grow up in. These difficult circumstances can have effects on the children, on their relationships and on the myriad aspects of their daily lives. The study documented various manifestations of psychosocial trauma: nervousness, sleeplessness, lack of appetite, staring blankly into space, silence, absent-mindedness, recurring nightmares, depression, mood swings, impatience, irritability, withdrawal and attempted suicide. Children also complained about what in many cases may well have been stress-related illnesses especially insofar as there were precipitating abnormal events: headaches, muscle pains, cramps, chest pains, nausea and fever.

There are various levels of impact. The most severe effects are on those whose family lives have undergone drastic transformations – because of dislocation or the loss of close family members – or who have themselves been direct victims of serious and deliberate violence. There are also those who have been affected by the stressful nature of armed conflict situations such as fighting in or near their villages and of the presence of unfriendly military forces in their communities.

The distinction between the effects of war in MILF areas and in NPA guerrilla fronts is again marked. Children in Moro communities have been exposed to much higher levels of fighting, more frequently, and have witnessed the destruction of their homes and villages. Displacement distances them from the immediate violence but also makes their struggle for economic survival more intense. Children in NPA guerrilla fronts, on the other hand, are exposed to less intense fighting and generally remain in their communities. However, they have to deal with the pervasive effects of state forces' entering their communities while on counter-insurgency operations.

The child IDPs of Central Mindanao went through particularly traumatic events including evacuating their villages amidst artillery fire, air strikes, and soldiers shooting in the air and burning their homes. In many cases they managed to bring only a few articles of clothing with them, as they sought shelter along riverbanks and under the trees. And even when they were able to make their way to crowded evacuation centers, they had to deal with hunger, unsanitary conditions, sickness and death.

The Moro communities including the children have even developed a vocabulary to capture the myriad effects of such traumatic experiences: "stress". Likely learned from their experience with medical personnel and other service providers in evacuation centers, the term was often used to describe various sicknesses resulting from war situations. During the FGD of children in North Cotabato, for instance, respondents used the term to refer to mental health problems that could

not seem to be resolved. They told of friends and family members who “weren’t crazy but just stared blankly into space” (*laging tulala pero hindi naman baliw*). They became unresponsive and stopped talking, or cowered in fear when they see men in fatigues or hear helicopters and planes flying overhead. Ishak, 12, was thrown in the air by an explosion while his family was fleeing their village in 2003. When he reached the evacuation center he apparently developed a high fever and had convulsions. Since then he occasionally has what seem like epileptic seizures (including once during the research team’s field visit). Friends say Ishak has become aloof and slow to react, although he has yet to be checked by qualified doctors because his family cannot afford it.

Particularly notable among the North Cotabato and Maguindano child IDPs is a lingering sense of loss, with many fond of reminiscing about how their homes, play time, studies and communities were before fighting broke out. Many lamented, even years later, the loss of personal belongings like pencils, notebooks and bags. Fifteen-year-old Asria of Maguindanao recalled: “I felt sad for our home which soldiers burned down – they wore bonnets and all you could see were their eyes.” (*Naawa ako sa bahay namin, sinunog ng mg sundalo – naka-bonet ang mga sundalo, mata lang ang nakikita.*) Zaida, 14, recalled soldiers burning their home, their belongings, her birth certificate and “even the Q’uran” (*Sinunog rin maging ang Koran*). Musrifa, 9, of North Cotabato said that she will never forget their home burning down and the loss of her shoes, bag and toys: “It hurt, I cried and cried. I also saw *Nanay* (mother) and *Tatay* (father) cry.” (*Masakit, umiiyak ng umiiyak. Nakita si nanay at si tatay nang umiiyak.*) Manna, 11, remembered being carried by her mother and running and running. Her father tried to bring as much of their belongings and food as he could but “*Tatay* (father) had to leave them behind because he was getting too tired to carry them” (*Lahat noon ay naiwan sa mga paligid kasi hindi kaya ng tatay ko kasi napapagod din*). There was also a strong sense of invasion and intentional destruction of their family or home space and many children repeatedly decried the looting and burning of their homes, the slaughter of their animals, and the destruction of their trees and crops.

There also seemed to be a discernible sense of hopelessness among the Moro children, with many skeptical about their future. This deep sense of lack of control over events, even despair, reflects what was more openly articulated by Moro adults. A later chapter discusses the discouraging and demoralizing effect of the perceived cycle of destruction and reconstruction of Moro communities since the 1970s.”

(...)

The following emotional and psychological effects on children were observed (both for those who were displaced and those who remained in their communities):

Various manifestations of trauma: nervousness, sleeplessness, lack of appetite, staring blankly into space, silence, absent-mindedness, recurring nightmares, depression, mood swings, impatience, irritability, withdrawal, drug addiction and attempted suicide

Anxiousness triggered by sudden loud noises or seeing fatigue uniforms

Anxiety, sadness, anger and vengefulness after seeing abuses on family, friends and neighbors by government soldiers

Anxiety over the presence of government soldiers and what they might do to perceived supporters of their enemy

Stress-related illnesses: headaches, muscle pains, cramps, chest pains, nausea, fever

Constriction of personal space due to parental restrictions on mobility

Lingering sense of loss of homes, personal belongings, farm animals, crops (especially for Central Mindanao IDPs)

Confusion, deep sense of lack of control over events, despair, skepticism about the future (especially for Central Mindanao IDPs)”

"Adolescence is a stage in life when individuals undergo significant physical and emotional development. It is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood marked by vulnerability as young people struggle to create their own identity. In conflict-affected areas, this individual vulnerability is aggravated by the insecurity created by the hazardous environment. As observed in several other conflict-affected areas, in Mindanao, too, protracted armed conflict has had far reaching effects on the psychosocial development of its youth. Thus some youth join an armed group to feel safer and satisfy their quest for identity while others take to a life of crime or to drugs. Many others struggle with their changed circumstances and try to cope with their new responsibilities to the best of their ability.

Young people in Mindanao are growing up in an environment shaped by guns, bombs, killings, and the constant fear of war. No aspect of their young lives has been left untouched by the conflict that has broken down traditional community structures, weakened authority figures, disintegrated cultural norms and coping mechanisms and destroyed community networks that used to provide support in times of crisis. Young people report being constantly worried about losing their homes, their families, and uncertain over their future. The only coping mechanism repeatedly mentioned was faith in Islam and God, and the support of peer groups.

(...)

Young males report feelings of hopelessness, isolation, and a diminished sense of self worth that they attribute to a variety of causes as detailed below:

Trauma caused by loss of family members, especially parents or a relative.

Destruction of homes and in some cases wholesale destruction of their village.

Repeated displacement and being forced to live in the evacuation centers for several months.

Disruption of their education and dreams of a secure future.

Loss of control over their lives and frustrations over having to start all over 'from zero.'

Loss of self esteem and, therefore, of self worth, especially among older youth, and

Not having 'anything to do.'

The participants in the FGDs offered the following suggestions to improve the situation:

Peace, access to education and livelihood opportunities, and livelihood-skills training programs were identified as the first steps in resuming control of their lives.

A frequently expressed need across all FGD locations was 'a basketball court and/or other venues for recreational activities, because if youth have something to do then they do not engage in illegal activities like selling or using drugs.'

They also wished to establish contact with youth in other barangays in the region and network.

FGD participants in the communities visited were eager to take part in any activity that would improve their lives or enable them to contribute to their communities. Nearly all the FGD groups were willing to volunteer time and effort if required to do so.

All FGD groups accorded great importance to religion in their lives and expressed a need for spiritual development activities."

Frederico et.al, March 2007, p.179:

"The psychosocial component addressed the trauma suffered by individuals and communities, recognizing that 'the impact of a particular event will partly depend on the cumulative effect of disruption' (Strang and Ager, 2002) and that internal armed conflict has a complex and cumulative impact. CFSI partnered the Philippines government to provide psychosocial training to potential caregivers in the communities to build community capacity to deal with trauma. Thirty percent of respondents in CFSI's initial profiling reported feeling depressed and over 20 percent reported being angry. More than 78 percent of children had witnessed armed conflict and over 61 percent of respondent parents had noted changes in the behaviour of children that they believed was directly related to armed conflict. Play centres were established for young children to meet

the community-identified need to promote educational development. Likewise, activities for youth were also promoted, including a youth sports festival. The establishment of a community school was an important outcome."

Forced evacuations bears considerably on women's health (October 2006)

- Women's health is affected because they have less food to eat; they are exposed to acutely stressful events; and they live in unhealthy evacuation centers.
- The main stress factors on women were fighting and the presence of soldiers. IDP families in Central Mindanao experienced evacuating with children under fire, seeing their homes damaged and destroyed, and seeing people wounded and killed.

UNICEF, October 2006, pp. 96-97

"The women approached by the research team were already in precarious social and economic conditions to begin with. The adverse effects of armed conflict can in the worst cases compound their difficulties many times over with immediate impacts on their health and emotional well-being. In the research areas the effect on women's health include reduced livelihoods and hence food intake; exposure to acutely stressful events; and being in the unhealthy conditions of evacuation centers.

At the very least the mothers have to take care of their children under more difficult conditions, which is more difficult the younger and more dependent these children are. It is extremely significant that the mothers are also their children's primary caregivers and play vital roles in their growth, survival and development. Poor health on the mother's part inevitably affects not only the birthing process, in the case of pregnant women, but also in the kind of caregiving that they can give their children most especially during the stages of early childhood. And women are the caregivers not just of their children but of the entire family including husbands, the elderly and the sick. The burdens on women in times of turmoil are multiple and compounded. The strain and pressure on women is visible and manifested in various physical and psychosomatic illnesses.

Mothers' malnutrition can be a significant contributing factor in complications in the periods before, during and after pregnancies. The fetus in the womb directly suffers. However, so too do infants in their critical first months of life if the mother's lactation is affected or if the militarized situation in any way affects her ability to breastfeed. The research team also came across some incidents where the extent of distress due to armed conflict had adversely affected pregnant women.

The main stress factors on women were actual fighting and the presence of soldiers. The most jarring situations were those that IDP families of Central Mindanao faced: of evacuating with children under fire, seeing their homes damaged and destroyed, and seeing people wounded and killed. For instance Suhayda, 42, of Maguindanao recalled how their group of 15 women scampered for safety under coconut trees during the shelling of their village in 2000. With explosions everywhere and nowhere to go, "We just fell to the ground and closed our eyes. I thought we were going to die because I didn't know where the bombs would fall. One exploded at my feet. I thought I was dead... I cried and cried in fear. Up to now I still feel like crying when I think about it." (*Nahiga na lang kami sa lupa at pumikit, inisip ko na mamatay na kami kasi di ko alam kung saan tatama ang bomba. Bumagsak ang bomba sa paanan ko. Akala ko patay na ako.... Umiyak ako nang umiyak sa takot. Hanggang sa ngayon pag naaalala ko naiiyak pa rin ako sa takot.*)

The process of evacuation and relocating to centers bears considerably on the health of women and their families. In Maguindanao, 35-year-old Najiba said she prematurely gave birth to her first

child, at just eight months, due to the assorted stresses of displacement, only to subsequently lose her child to diarrhea. She got pregnant again while displaced and while her second child was born full-term, the baby still died a day after being born. Sauda came down with a bad case of scabies on her hands and body for two months: "It was revolting, and I could not even wash my hands or cook because of it." (*Halos mandiri ako, ni hindi ako makapaghugas ng kamay at hindi makapagluto dahil dito.*) Her situation was made even worse by her distress at her children being so badly infected with scabies that their toenails and fingernails fell off. All the women in the FGD recalled how difficult it was to take care of their children who could not get enough to eat and were getting sick, with at least two of their children reported dying."

Water and sanitation

Water and sanitary conditions in evacuations centers grossly inadequate (October 2006)

- The situation in the overcrowded evacuation centers is described as singularly unhealthy, lacking in particular potable water and toilet facilities.

UNICEF, October 2006, p. 121

"The situation in these temporary evacuation centers is singularly unhealthy. Evacuees describe them as unsanitary and unhygienic, extremely overcrowded, exposed to the elements, and grossly lacking in food, potable water and toilet facilities. Health services are also far from adequate in meeting the needs of so many people in such unhealthy conditions. The North Cotabato and Maguindanao IDPs recalled the presence of government health workers in their evacuation centers, but also said that they were just too few, too overworked and too lacking in medical supplies to service the needs of so many. All these resulted in malnourishment, sickness and even death especially among the very young and the very old. Diarrhea and fevers were common, with the crowded conditions also encouraging the spread of scabies, coughs, colds and other illnesses. The longer the evacuees stayed, the more the conditions deteriorated."

Hygiene problems and poor sanitation cited as most common health problems linked to displacement (June 2004)

- ACH survey shows that the health problems most often cited during displacement were hygiene problems relating to overcrowding and poor sanitation.
- Clean and safe water in the area was hard to find, with 91% of all water points currently in use tested positive for bacterial contamination, and 94% of the tested water containers tested positive for bacterial contamination.

ACH, June 2004, p. 22

"Movement is clearly an important factor contributing to increased vulnerability to food insecurity, sickness, and death. In the survey we have looked at the history of displacement. It seems that generally the larger portion of families were displaced 2 times reflecting those who were displaced during Estrada's all out war in 2000.

Looking at the number of displacements, those who are displaced 1 time are families outside the marsh area who are currently IDP families within Batulawan. Those displaced 2, 3, and 4 times are those families who were once or twice displaced during Estrada's 'all out war' and those who were displaced again during the recent unrest in February 2003.

The length of displacement has been anywhere between 3 -10 months with the average of 7 months. To get a look at living conditions of families during displacement we asked families to comment on sickness they suffered during their displacement. Hygiene problems relating to overcrowding and poor sanitation are the most often mentioned. It was also a perception of families that an increase of skin disease increased as a result of the war.

(...)

All areas surveyed severely affected by inadequate access to clean water

Clean and safe water is hard to find in the marsh. For those families within the marsh area 91% of all water points currently in use tested positive for bacterial contamination, and 94% of the tested water containers tested positive for bacterial contamination. The dominant water source is the hand dug open well with minimal protection. Families in the areas less isolated have a greater number of hand pumps and therefore less general contamination. Access is further affected in the rainy season when families are forced to drink from the marsh directly as many open wells are flooded. The differences in level of available sources between the communities sees the higher rank of Batualwan and Linandangan as they have access to closed hand pumps. The lower end is Buliok and Barongis who are more often drinking directly from the marsh. Still those who are drinking from open wells appear to be in no better condition considering the water contamination results. Thus on the whole, excluding Batulawan and Linandangan, the 8 barangay within the Marsh area are severely affected by inadequate access to clean and healthy water.

Key points

71% of all water points tested during HH survey showed positive for bacterial contamination
89% of all water containers tested showed positive for bacterial contamination
55% of 217 families interviewed take drinkable water is taken from open wells throughout the year
29% of families interviewed are taking water from pumps, primarily from barangays, Batulawan, Linandangan
25% of families drink water from the marsh
Taste of the water is a significant factor in determining the choice of family water source"

Shelter & non-food items

IDPs in and outside evacuation centers live in unsatisfactory makeshift structures with little protection from the elements (August 2008)

- The Batulawan evacuation center in Pikit, North Cotabato, is considered one of the most miserable with many evacuees lacking food, water and shelter.
- Up to 20 individuals are cramped in tents measuring 4 meters by 6 meters which can hardly protect them from the rain.
- Some IDPs chose to set up a temporary shelter along the roads waiting for fighting to stop before heading home.
- In Sulu, weeks after the displacement, local agencies have still not set up any camp management structures.
- Generally, the coordination system and technical capacities need to be enhanced
- Where temporary shelter is needed, the structures are insufficient to protect people from the elements

- Some such evacuation centres, although intended to be temporary, turned into semi-permanent resettlement areas without the living conditions to improve substantially.

The Inquirer, 18 August 2008

"The Batulawan evacuation center is considered the most miserable of all evacuation centers in Pikit with many of the evacuees still without tarpaulin for their tents, access to clean drinking water and enough food assistance. The recent clashes have forced at least 28,757 people into the evacuation sites, according to the regional office of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Totin left her home in Barangay Pagangan on July 30 after government soldiers densed up in their village, asking around about the presence of MILF rebels. And because the soldiers did not show any hint that they would leave their village, Totin left with the other villagers. She said the four-hour walk was hell.

Totin's tent—measuring about 4 meters by 6 meters—houses 20 individuals, including her 7-month pregnant daughter-in-law Kubai and her 2-year-old daughter and two other children. "When it rains, we sit up when sleeping because of the wet ground. We carry the children to sleep," Totin said.

Inside another tent, Kawa Mamalang looked over her four children sound asleep on the ground covered by a thin sheet of plastic. As the rain was looming outside, the mother, who herself had fever and coughs, was worried her children would also get sick. Mamalang's tent was better compared to the cramped-up makeshift house—measuring only about 3 meters by 5 meters—which accommodates 15 individuals, one of whom was a sick old woman. Or their other neighbors who were still putting together sticks to become their temporary shelter.

The evacuees who sought shelter at the Pikit Elementary School were better off as they had desks and tables to sleep on. But classes will resume Tuesday, and they will have to stay at the school grounds during the day. The evacuees, most of them from the village of Dalengaoen, have started to build their makeshift houses outside the classrooms.

Fr. Eduardo "Pon-Pon" Vasquez Jr. OMI, priest of Pikit's Catholic Church, said there was no indication that the evacuees were safe to go home, despite government statements that they could start living normally back again after the Moro rebels have been forced out of the affected villages.

The evacuees were expected to stay in the evacuation centers to depend only on relief assistance in the next three months, the priest said."

The Inquirer, 13 August 2008

"Bartolome said some of the evacuees had started to check their properties, but were not staying for fear the rebels would return.

"We need food, we need clean water, we can't bear the hardship of being evicted from our homes. We need to live normal lives again," said 49-year-old farmer Edilberto Semera, a refugee from Aleosan town.

Abdulwahid Adil, a 39-year-old Muslim farmer, said he could hardly sleep in the makeshift tent his family erected on a roadside.

"Me, my wife and four young children stay there waiting for food assistance but we cannot be in this situation for long," he said. "It was so cold at night and so hot at daytime, this is how miserable our life has become because of the fighting." "

Mindanews, 12 August 2008

"Estimates placed the number of evacuees at 22,000. A few of them were accommodated at the gymnasium of the Immaculate Conception Parish and the Buisan warehouse, while some had taken refuge in relatives' houses. Most of them just stayed along the roads, under the cattle-pulled carts loaded with their belongings."

Tabang Mindanaw, Email, 2 May 2007

"Just sharing some updates on the humanitarian assistance Tabang Mindanaw is doing for displaced children of war here in Sulu. [...] There is yet no system established by local coordinating agencies on camp management. Food relief is ongoing through Red Cross and now by some government agencies (after they were able to finally clarify that humanitarian assistance cannot be subject to election ban). Nonetheless, the humanitarian space is still very wide and the coordination systems and technical capacities need to be enhanced."

UNICEF, October 2006, p. 121

"Temporary evacuation centers for IDPs are usually schools, churches, gymnasiums and other public structures large enough to accommodate many people. When there is insufficient room, temporary tent shelters of plastic are built in public spaces such as the grounds of government offices and even the roadsides. These makeshift structures are invariably made of light and improvised materials that provide insufficient protection from the elements. On the other hand, those who are placed in buildings not intended to be lived in immediately have to cope with confined spaces and inadequate ventilation. Some evacuation centers had been transformed into semi-permanent resettlement areas because the armed conflict in their home communities had been going on for months and even years."

IDPs request to be consulted prior to the implementation of shelter projects to maximise chances of success (December 2005)

- Most IDPs live either in informal resettlement areas, with relatives or in government buildings. Most of them live in squalid conditions with no basic amenities.
- Core shelters were built for the displaced, but many remained empty because the displaced refused to resettle in these structures built far away from their original places of residence and therefore away from their sources of livelihood. In addition, some were built near military detachments which they consider as security risks to them.
- The displaced wished to be associated closely to any upcoming shelter program so as to avoid these problems.

Government of the Philippines, International Funding Agencies, Mindanao Stakeholders, December 2005, p. 55

"Internal mass displacement of residents brought about by a series of armed conflict in majority of the towns visited is common. This is particularly true in the towns inhabited by Muslims and ethnic

groups in the provinces of Sultan Kudarat, North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte.

Conflicts in these areas are often due to armed confrontation between government forces and rebel groups, family feud (rido) and simple criminal acts like cattle rustling. This internal displacement has compounded the problems of the local government concerned. Some LGUs had become unwilling hosts to these IDPs as they witness their already scarce and limited resources drained. On the other hand, other LGUs experienced a sudden reduction in their population. IDPs in most areas live either in informal resettlement areas, with relatives or in government buildings. Most of them live in squalid conditions with no basic amenities.

Several government line agencies and NGOs have introduced core-shelter housing projects to these IDPs. Among these line agencies and NGOs are the DSWD (both National and ARMM), Tabang Mindanao, I Sincerely Love All Muslims (ISLAM), and several others.

It is notable, however, that some of these core-shelter housing projects in other areas or towns are uninhabited. Some beneficiaries refused to resettle in these structures due to various reasons. One reason is that some core shelters were built far away from their original places of residence and therefore away from their sources of livelihood. In addition, some were built near military detachments which they consider as security risks to them.

Residents in areas visited expressed the common view that they do not know, as of the moment, if the government has programmed projects to address the housing needs of the IDPs. If ever the government or NGOs wish to address this need, the affected residents are one in saying that they should be consulted first in determining the best location for the housing projects."

Vulnerable groups

Child recruitment into armed forces and rebel groups (June 2008)

- The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) considers that progress has been made in terms of child protection but that children continue to fight with rebel groups.
- Existing laws and regulations prohibiting the recruitment of child soldiers are not sufficiently implemented, says the CRC.
- Both the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and rebel groups recruit children, at times forcefully

Committee on the Rights of the Child, 6 June 2008

"17. The Committee notes that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment is 18 years, except for training purposes. However, the Committee remains concerned that because of the difficulties in ensuring adequate birth registration in remote areas and among certain minority groups, including indigenous groups, children might be recruited under the age of 18.

[...]

20. The Committee notes that non-state armed groups have in different terms expressed their commitment to protect children and that, in general, there seems to be awareness about the minimum age requirement in the communities among adults, youth and even children. However, it notes with concern that children continue to join armed groups, both government linked paramilitary groups and other non-state opposition armed groups, mainly due to poverty, indoctrination, manipulation, neglect or absence of opportunities.

[...]

25. The Committee notes that under several laws recruitment and use of children in hostilities is prohibited and punished with sanctions of up to 20 years of imprisonment. However, in spite of this important legislative framework, the Committee is concerned at the lack of its effective implementation, especially in conflict areas as well as at the fact that so far there has been no prosecution for recruitment or use of children in armed conflict. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that The Philippines have not ratified Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

[...]

29. The Committee notes with appreciation the Memorandum of Agreement on the Treatment and Handling of Children Involved in Armed Conflict, which provides for rehabilitation and reintegration of these children, rather than their prosecution. However, it is concerned that Republic Act 7610, in its article 10, provides for the arrest and prosecution of children for reasons related to the armed conflict, though the sentence would be suspended in case of conviction. The Committee is further concerned at reports of ill-treatment of children occurring at the moment of their apprehension and/or during their deprivation of liberty.

[...]

33. The Committee welcomes the various measures that the State party has put into place to control the sale, possession and export of small arms and munitions. However, the Committee is unclear whether these measures would be adequate to prevent small arms from coming into the possession of children or being sold to children or entities where the end user may recruit children.

UN GA, 21 December 2007, para.121 to 125

121. [...] Despite these conflicts, the ability to document child rights violations remains weak.

122. During the reporting period, the Government recorded the recruitment of 11 children, allegedly by NPA: 1 from Leyte, 7 from Samar and 3 from Agusan del Sur. Three of the children are girls and remain in the custody of the Department of Social Welfare and Development awaiting reintegration. The remaining children have been released to their families. The children were allegedly captured by Government forces in the course of their military operations. However, United Nations partners claim that the children were innocent civilians who happened to be in the areas where the military conducted their patrols or armed encounters took place. The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) reiterates its policy not to recruit children under age 18 as armed combatants, although it does not deny using children for non-combatant functions in violation of international legal standards. CPP claims disciplinary action is taken against violators of this policy, although monitoring of such compliance remains limited.

123. There are indications that children may be present in the ranks of MILF and ASG, however, owing to access limitations, no new reports of the recruitment and use of children were obtained in the reporting period.

124. United Nations partners reported that four children were killed, three in Mindanao and one in the Bicol region, and seven children were maimed in the Provinces of Cagayan, Davao del Norte and Sulu. Three of the children were girls between the ages of 9 and 14 years. Those incidents occurred during military operations or armed encounters against insurgents, and the victims and survivors have been branded as “rebels” or collateral damage. The most notable case was that of a 9-year-old girl who was killed when Government soldiers opened fire near her home in the Province of Compostela Valley on 31 March 2007, allegedly in pursuit of NPA guerrillas. The military had initially declared her an NPA child soldier but later recanted its accusation, and the Philippine Commission on Human Rights officially declared that she was “caught in the crossfire”. In another incident on 23 January 2007, in Baggao, Cagayan Valley, two girls aged 14 and 15

years were seriously injured by the 17th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army when they opened fire without warning in the area.

125. The Philippine country-level task force on monitoring and reporting was convened on 26 March 2007, comprising of United Nations system agencies and local human rights organizations. On 19 July 2007, the Government of the Philippines, through its Permanent Mission to the United Nations, has affirmed its concurrence with the implementation of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005). In addition, the Government is carefully studying the Paris Principles, which could pave the way towards improving programme interventions for children and armed conflict by the Government.”

Child rights group is alarmed by the high number of children affected by war (May 2008)

- Thousands of children are directly affected by the fighting.
- Physical consequences are particularly high for children

Government of the Philippines, 7 May 2008

“The KABIBA Alliance for Children’s Concerns is alarmed on the increasing number of children affected by armed conflict and development aggression in the countryside of Southern Mindanao Region.

Based on KABIBA’s monitoring, as of the period of January-May 2008, an estimated total of 2,380 children are affected by militarization and development aggression in Talaingod, Davao del Norte; Baganga and Cateel, Davao Oriental; New Bataan, Compostela and Monkayo, Compostela Valley Province; and Brgy. Manuel Guianga, Tugbok District, Davao City.

Among the children-victims, 2 were physically assault and harassed by military elements in Brgy. Mangayon, Compostela, ComVal Province on May 2, 2008; 2 children were wounded due to crossfire in San Isidro, Monkayo, ComVal Province; 2 children were also wounded in a massacre in Manuel Guianga, Tugbok District, Davao City; while 4 children died in the course of displacement aggravated by illness and hunger in Talaingod, Davao del Norte and New Bataan, ComVal Province.

[...]

The unpeace and unjust situations in the countryside are making the children vulnerable and at high risk. Rural children are burdened by poverty and lack of social services. Indeed, they are more vulnerable because they are physically weaker than adults, are still in the process of developing their own competencies, and are usually dependent on adults. Hence, they are greatly affected by the ongoing armed conflict not only in terms of the dire consequences of shooting wars and combat operations, but also in terms of rights abuses.

Child-focused groups under KABIBA are calling the parties of armed conflict to strictly observe Geneva Protocols on War, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

We are also demanding the cancellation of all large-scale mining applications, stoppage of expansion of monocrop plantations and other pseudo-development projects. Likewise, we are also demanding the pull-out of all military and paramilitary troops who are being used by mining and plantation companies and influential people to displace the peasants and indigenous peoples in the rural areas.”

UN Secretary-General's report on Children and Armed Conflict in the Philippines (April 2008)

- The UN Secretary-General's report on the impact of the conflict on children is an important tool to raise international awareness of the drawn-out conflict, particularly in Mindanao.
- The report says that all armed groups occasionally recruit children.
- Incidents of child recruitment or violations of children's rights is reported more often as committed by government forces than by rebel groups.
- This fact may be due to the limited access to rebel groups or to the reluctance of civil society monitoring teams to report such incidents.
- The MILF has children among its fighters, many of whom say to join voluntarily
- The MILF policy is that they would take children orphaned by the war under their custody and would recruit children who have reached the age of 13, to fight the holy jihad
- The NPA is reported to have recruited children as young as 15 as trainees and apprentices.
- Children support the NPA in non-combat functions.
- No concrete evidence exists of child recruitment by ASG/JI, but it is probable that they do recruit minors for combat.
- The government paramilitary forces may be recruiting minors.
- Minors are at risk of being mistreated by government forces or paramilitary groups because they were accused of being associated with rebel groups.
- Despite numerous laws, policies and coordination mechanisms, there is no official dialogue between Government and non-state actors on the release and reintegration of children in armed groups.
- There is no action plan to halt the recruitment or use of children by armed groups.

Many children join the MILF, NPA and Abu Sayyaf Group, some reportedly voluntarily (March 2008)

- While recruitment of minors is denied by the MILF, it is reported that minors are recruited to undertake a variety of roles for the rebels.
- Many children also volunteer to join the MILF, often with the support and encouragement of their families, community elders and relatives.

WB, July 2006, p. 12

"In some of the barangays visited, male youth were of the firm conviction that that there are only two ways of becoming influential in their communities: one is through arms and the other is through education. "Adolescents in these war-stricken areas submit themselves to warfare. They learn how to carry guns and how to use them. They are exposed to the danger of being injured and even being killed in battle. For them, this is the only way to survive." Some of the combatants interviewed reported joining the MILF because of 'what the government was doing' to their people, while others said they had 'to fight the enemies of Islam (Box 7).' A young man from Buldon, Maguindanao, who is currently a combatant, was encouraged by his parents to join the MILF. He was assigned several tasks including guarding the camp. Despite his convictions he did not wish to encourage others to follow his example, because it is not easy "to sacrifice your future."

While recruitment of minors is denied by the MILF, several sources emphasize that minors are recruited to undertake a variety of roles for the rebels. The MILF reportedly uses high school students from Cotabato City and Maguindanao to "purchase and transport medicines intended for Muslim rebels who were wounded in the armed hostilities with the government forces. These children used as couriers are mostly third and fourth year high school students, whose parents are regular MILF members." Schools and colleges were important recruiting grounds for the MILF in the past. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable, especially those who have relatives in the MILF. Many volunteer to take up arms for their homeland or against enemies of Islam, often with the support and encouragement of their families, community elders and relatives who believe that it is sanctioned by their faith. Some parents also feel that besides serving the cause of Islam, their young people will keep occupied and escape the drug trap that is seen as a major problem by all communities visited. The death or arrest of a parent or a close relative by the AFP is also a strong motivating factor."

USDoS, 11 March 2008:

During the year the NPA and the ASG targeted children for recruitment as combatants and noncombatants. The NPA claimed that it assigned persons 15 to 18 years of age to self-defense and noncombatant duties; however, there were reports that the NPA continued to use minors in combat. During the year the Philippine Interagency Committee on Children Involved in Armed Conflict reported nine child soldiers rescued by or surrendered to the government. On March 1, seven NPA rebels surrendered to the military in Davao City; at least two were minors. One child claimed she and 13 other child soldiers in the NPA camp carried firearms. On August 9, a 16-year-old boy, who claimed to be a member of the NPA's propaganda arm, surrendered to police authorities in Davao del Sur.

The ASG also recruited teenagers to fight and participate in its activities. There were reports that a significant number of ASG members staffing the groups' camps were teenagers. The AFP stated that some Islamic schools in Mindanao served as fronts to indoctrinate children and that the ASG used children as couriers and spies.

Children victims of the armed conflict (December 2007)

UNGA, 21 December 2007, pp. 27-28

"121. Armed clashes in the Philippines intensified during the reporting period as the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) stepped up its military campaigns against non-State armed groups, particularly in Mindanao. Government forces have reiterated their declaration of an all-out war and engaged the rebel New People's Army (NPA) in skirmishes. Although the Moro National Liberation Front signed a final peace agreement with the Government in 1996, some of its factions based in the Province of Sulu, southern Philippines, have fought AFP in several large-scale confrontations. AFP and its paramilitary allies have also battled elements of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the Provinces of Basilan, Shariff Kabunsuan and Maguindanao despite an existing agreement on cessation of hostilities. Military campaigns against the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Basilan and Sulu also continue. Despite these conflicts, the ability to document child rights violations remains weak.

122. During the reporting period, the Government recorded the recruitment of 11 children, allegedly by NPA: 1 from Leyte, 7 from Samar and 3 from Agusan del Sur. Three of the children are girls and remain in the custody of the Department of Social Welfare and Development awaiting reintegration. The remaining children have been released to their families. The children were allegedly captured by Government forces in the course of their military operations. However,

United Nations partners claim that the children were innocent civilians who happened to be in the areas where the military conducted their patrols or armed encounters took place. The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) reiterates its policy not to recruit children under age 18 as armed combatants, although it does not deny using children for noncombatant functions in violation of international legal standards. CPP claims disciplinary action is taken against violators of this policy, although monitoring of such compliance remains limited.

123. There are indications that children may be present in the ranks of MILF and ASG, however, owing to access limitations, no new reports of the recruitment and use of children were obtained in the reporting period.

124. United Nations partners reported that four children were killed, three in Mindanao and one in the Bicol region, and seven children were maimed in the Provinces of Cagayan, Davao del Norte and Sulu. Three of the children were girls between the ages of 9 and 14 years. Those incidents occurred during military operations or armed encounters against insurgents, and the victims and survivors have been branded as "rebels" or collateral damage. The most notable case was that of a 9-year-old girl who was killed when Government soldiers opened fire near her home in the Province of Compostela Valley on 31 March 2007, allegedly in pursuit of NPA guerrillas. The military had initially declared her an NPA child soldier but later recanted its accusation, and the Philippine Commission on Human Rights officially declared that she was "caught in the crossfire". In another incident on 23 January 2007, in Baggao, Cagayan Valley, two girls aged 14 and 15 years were seriously injured by the 17th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army when they opened fire without warning in the area."

Needs of male youth are often forgotten (July 2006)

- Male youth in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao are in dire need of assistance in the sector of education, health and agriculture. However, they tend to be seen as combatant and are seldom seen as a target group.
- More efforts should focus on this group to show them that they have not been forgotten.

WB, July 2006, p. 17

"The FGDs and other interviews conducted as part of this study show that despite growing up in an environment shaped by violence, young males in Mindanao continue to hope for change for a better life. The harrowing experiences they have been through, such as destruction of their homes and communities, loss of a parent or sibling, repeated displacement, life as a refugee in their own country and the associated loss of self esteem, have not stopped them from hoping for lasting peace in Mindanao. Most of them have managed to stay out of the cycle of violence and revenge and display considerable courage and resilience in the face of grave threats to their lives and aspirations. They yearn for opportunities to equip themselves with the education and skills that their peer in other parts of the country have access to. They are very receptive to new ideas and approaches, and constitute an important resource group impatiently waiting to participate in rebuilding their communities.

As discussed above there are a number of interventions in the education, health, and agriculture sectors but only a few of them are youth focused. In an attempt to be gender sensitive many of these interventions are women-oriented and tend to ignore male youth. Further, until very recently, male youth were viewed as combatants and therefore part of the problem. The unique situation of young males in the context of armed conflict still remains to be addressed by most programs. While the Peace Agreement between the GRP and the MILF will no doubt be the first step in any effort to address the problems of the conflict-affected population of Mindanao, including its male youth, it is important that immediate efforts, along the following lines, are

undertaken to demonstrate to the young people, especially young men, in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao that they have not been forgotten."

Displaced women are specifically and adversely affected by armed conflicts (October 2006)

UNICEF, October 2006, pp. 93-96

"The communities have all been areas of armed conflict since the 1970s or 1980s and while the actual fighting has ebbed and flowed through the decades it has reached a point where "war" is already an indelible part of the villages' collective accumulated experience. It is within this overall context that specific incidents of fighting and military operations compound and disrupt their already many and difficult responsibilities in caring for their children and providing for their families. At the minimum, normal routines in reproductive and productive work are disturbed: women either have to exert extra effort to do the same thing or are unable to perform their usual tasks. Women's health has suffered, sometimes seriously. They have been subjected to persistent sexual harassment. They have also been victims of physical, emotional and psychological violence that often appears deliberate.

These disturbances are worse the longer there are military operations in their areas and, especially, if their families are dislocated by the outbreak of battles. Women's burdens become much more difficult in the conditions of evacuation centers: pseudo-home environments, dismal living conditions, scant livelihood opportunities for husbands and other family members. They have also had to deal with the destruction of homes and livelihoods: fields, crops, property, tools, work animals and livestock. Some families have been fragmented in the course of displacement. The worst affected in this regard have been the displaced Moro women in North Cotabato and Maguindanao.

At the same time, women and their communities have devised ways to maintain stability and meet basic needs. They have continued working in the fields and at home, to heal or stem the worsening of illnesses, to overcome mounting fears and anxieties, and to protect themselves, their children and menfolk from violence. Successes may have been mixed but the mere fact of determined efforts to mitigate the worst effects remains notable.

To summarize, armed conflicts specifically and adversely affect women in the following ways with the effects being most severe for displaced women and families: disruption of domestic tasks and livelihoods; hunger, disease, miscarriages and premature birthing; sexual violence; and mental and emotional traumas. This study also highlights the phenomenon – parallel to what was observed with children – of verbal, mental and physical threats against women either as part of a community tagged as supporting the armed groups, or as individuals with close family members suspected of being part of these armed groups.

Women have also time and again proven that they have considerable internal resources and capacities for dealing with the adversities that they and their families face. Indeed there are also women for whom the circumstances of armed conflict have prompted rethinking of conventional definitions of what women, mothers and wives are. All told, women have faced their difficulties and like their children still manage to hope, dream and aspire for better lives.

(...)

The greatest disturbance to normal routines happens to families who find themselves in evacuation centers or otherwise away from their homes. The problems are many and cut across all aspects of home life: the lack of food, clean water, clothes, beddings and other personal belongings; more time needed to do basic tasks because of poor kitchen, washing, toilet and

bathing facilities in evacuation centers; and caregiving burdens made heavier by more frequent and unrelieved sicknesses of children.

Sauda, 38, of Maguindanao lamented the difficult life in evacuation centers and how she has had to deal with all her children and even her mother getting sick, with looking for enough food for all of them, and with finding clothes to replace all they had left behind – while having no money for any of this. She also cried: "From the time that I was a child, to an adolescent, when I got married and now that I am a grandmother, my life has been of war and evacuations." (*Mula pagkamusmos, pagdalaga, nagka-asawa na ako at nagka-apo, gera at bakwet pa rin ang buhay ko.*)"

Children, women and elderly hardest-hit by displacement (December 2005)

- According to the findings of a workshop held in evacuation sites in Pagagawan and Pagalungan (Maguindanao) in May 2004, the war negatively impacted on the children's capacity to envisage the future positively.
- Interviews of members of war-affected community show "crisis of the children" was identified as one of the most significant consequences of war.
- Negative impact of the war on children include: interrupted studies, trauma, poor health, and the need for child labour.
- Women were also among the most affected by the war. Loss of family members due to the war and additional responsibility to care for the family has had a deep impact on them.
- Weakened by advancing age and illness, the elders have had difficulty coping with the displacement as many had to find work to support themselves and their immediate relatives.

Government of the Philippines, International Funding Agencies, Mindanao Stakeholders, December 2005, p. 36

"Based on consultations between IDPs, local government officials, humanitarian assistance organizations, and the JNA Team, the IDPs at highest risk at present are those who have experienced secondary displacement owing to natural disaster, specifically flooding. Others at high risk include orphaned children, widows, female-headed households, the elderly and the differently-abled. Their plight and that of the IDPs in general, deserve special attention as displacement is concrete evidence of violence and fear, a reminder of past hurts, and a basis for continued mistrust and skepticism. Thus, the success of any assistance program will, in the final analysis, be judged on the basis of whether the needs of the IDPs were addressed and their situation improved."

Kalinaw Mindanao mission concludes February 2005 military offensive in Sulu led to high level of trauma among children

Kalinaw Mindanao, April 2005, p. 7

"5. The military operations have aggravated the already deplorable economic condition of the people. Sickness and diseases have reached untenable levels, especially in areas of the military operations. The women and children bear the brunt of the all-out war policy. Children directly affected by the armed conflict have been traumatized by aerial bombings, the presence of government soldiers and high-powered firearms. This has affected their psychosocial wellbeing such as the erosion of self-esteem and self-confidence. Their development is adversely affected by the inculcation of a culture of war and violence at their early age."

Save the Children, 2004, p. 105

"Children are the most vulnerable among all the sectors, yet their needs are also the least attended to in current aid programmes. Most of those who were affected by both 2000 and 2003 wars no longer have a fair chance of full childhood development before transcending to adulthood. Superficially, children seem to have coped with stressors before, during and after conflict periods. However, the long-term effects of war on their lives are still unknown. There is also no long-term study on the children who failed to adjust to the war and its aftermath. Moreover, many of the children who seem to have coped have already suffered from irreparable losses in their childhood development."

Workshop shows war negatively impacted on the children's capacity to envisage the future positively

The Manila Times 19 June 2004

"Physical displacement from their communities may be traumatic, but it is not the worst of experience of children in conflict areas in Mindanao.

The most painful thing is that the children are losing hope for a real peace and sustainable development, according to findings of a workshop conducted by the Community Resource Development Center in partnership with the United Nations Multi-Donor Program.

The workshop was held in evacuation sites in Pagagawan and Pagalungan in Maguindanao province. It sought to gauge how the young feel about their situation and determine what they want to achieve in the near future.

The workshop was dubbed Culture of Peace: Enchanting the Role of Internally Displaced Youth and Children in Conflict-Affected Areas through Psychosocial and Peace Education.

In the workshop, which was held last month, affected children were urged to express their peace visions, concerns and how they cope with the trauma of being in the center of an armed-conflict area. Specifically, the three-phase workshop was held in the Sitio Tinga emergency evacuation center, then in the Layog mosque in Pagalungan, and in the Layog rehabilitation center in Pagagawan.

Maguindanao was among Mindanao provinces severely affected by massive evacuations sparked by sporadic clashes between the government forces and the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The first workshop focused on tracing back prior-to-conflict situations; the second delved on their present condition; while the third established peace visions. The children in attendance expressed their sentiments in the workshops through drawings, songs and dances, and verbal expressions.

"The workshop produced substantive understanding of the children's situation and clear relevant visions," Rashid Manahan, CRDC executive director, said in a summary report. While the workshop ferreted out hidden pains among the children, their trauma blurred their visions of the future.

"The war not only displaced them physically from their communities, but also displaced their hope to have a real peace and sustainable development," said Manahan. Manahan said results of the workshop showed the need for similar process of continuing advocacy with different institutions working in conflict-affected areas. "

Study on the effects of armed conflict on children show that 94% suffered from trauma symptoms

WB, January 2005, p. 6

"A study of the effects of armed conflict on children was conducted by Balik Kalipay, a Project of the University of the Philippines in Pikit, North Cotabato in the third quarter of 2002. This was part of Balik Kalipay's psychosocial needs, assessment, and community mapping of Pikit, aimed at gathering baseline data for the Project Team's psychosocial services in the area.

A total of 1,200 children who were attending the Balik Kalipay play therapy were studied through individual interviews with their respective parents. Using the combination of a modified version of the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire and a self-reporting (in this case, parent-reporting) health questionnaire designed for the purpose, eight trained local community interviewers interviewed parents in Pikit's 12 barangays, using a randomized household survey sampling method.

Basically, the interviews focused on calamity and war-related experiences of the children that included loss, torture, death, and displacement; symptoms of trauma; and self-report on the daily social functioning and health status of the children. At least four trauma related experiences with corresponding trauma symptoms were deemed indicative of trauma among the children.

Preliminary results indicate that over 94% (1,128) of the children manifest trauma symptoms. Of this number, 12% (150) children were found to be severely traumatized including the 2.8% (34) who were found to be torture survivors. Balik Kalipay is planning a rehabilitation program for these children."

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

General

Draft proposal to Department of Education aims at improving school situation for displaced children (June 2008)

Email correspondence with staff of Filipino Senator, 18 June 2008

"[There is now] a project proposal supposedly for submission to the Department of Education which would help displaced children continue their schooling even at the evacuation centers. It is entitled "A Proposed Special Education Program for Internally Displaced Children", aimed at tapping graduating students from teacher trainings institutions to do their practice teaching at the evacuation centers. In the Philippines, we lack teachers thus the possibility of asking the teachers to conduct classes at the evacuation centers is not possible. Also, it could be a trigger to create a group of volunteer educators for these children."

Displaced children's education is disrupted for a longer time than for children who remain in their community (October 2006)

- UNICEF study found that IDP children are the worst affected by armed conflict, as they often stop schooling for at least the length of their displacement because schools are too far or unaffordable.
- Displaced children have reported stopping schooling from anywhere from a year or two years to stopping entirely.
- Because many IDPs seek refuge in public buildings, including schools, classes are often suspended.
- Some parents did not allow their children to resume school because they wanted them to study only in their place of origin; only 9% of the parents said they needed the children to help them with livelihood activities

UNICEF, October 2006, p. 7

"There were evident impacts on the education, physical and mental health, and general well-being of conflict-affected children. The study also noted distinct differences in the impact of armed conflict on children who remained in their communities and were affected by on-going military operations compared to those who were displaced along with their families.

The following were the effects on children's schooling:

1. For those who remained in their communities

They temporarily stopped going to school from a few days to as long as over a month because they were:

Afraid of leaving their homes or being away from families while fighting was going on

Afraid of encountering government soldiers on the way to school and being accused of going to help the NPA (ex. of bringing food, of passing information)

Afraid of encountering soldiers and being asked or obliged to guide them

Rendered incapable by stress/trauma-related symptoms

Displaced when their schools were used as temporary camps by government soldiers

Forced to change schools because of perceived threats to them or their families from government soldiers

While at school, they are distracted by:

Noise from shooting, explosions, helicopters and planes in nearby fighting

Worries about the lives of family and even of the NPA

The intimidating or otherwise disruptive presence of AFP soldiers

Inconvenienced by being forced to take longer routes to school or to find a place to stay nearer school (i.e. relatives, friends, rented) to avoid encountering AFP soldiers

Having to balance schooling with paid work to support family incomes disrupted by armed conflict and/or military operations

Classes suspended for up to a month because of teachers' fear of returning

2. For those displaced

Stopped going to school during the period of displacement because of:

Insufficient funds following lost incomes and livelihoods

Need of children to find work to help support the family

Distance of evacuation center from school

General uncertainty of situation particularly for how long the displacement will last

Schools destroyed in the fighting

In the child patient survey conducted during the area medical missions it was found that only 6.4 percent of 3-5 year-olds were enrolled in day care.

(...)

In terms of schooling, IDP children are generally the worst affected by armed conflict. The tendency for children to stop schooling for at least the length of their displacement is great for any combination of reasons: because of the uncertainty of their situation, because schools are too far away, because their families can no longer afford it, or because they have had to find work to help support the family. The displacements in the areas covered by the study lasted anywhere from a week to well over a year. Children have reported stopping schooling from anywhere from a year or two years to stopping entirely.

The most recurring reason appears to be displacement undermining families' economic means. Evacuation sites are notoriously far from regular and sufficient livelihood sources. Children's studies are among the first to be sacrificed when families try to reduce expenses. Laga, 14, of Maguindanao said that she and her siblings all stopped going to school during their year-long stay in an evacuation center because their parents could no longer afford it. This was essentially the situation faced by many others such as 12-year-old Musrifa of North Cotabato and her family.

Dire economic straits have also pushed children not only to stop school but to enter paid work to help their families. The FGD of child self-evacuees from Leyte, for instance, found that all the participants had stopped studying and that most of them were working. Mike, 14, foraged through the infamous garbage mountains of Payatas; Jerick, 16, sold fishballs off a street cart; Joyet, 17, worked in a factory cleaning bottles; Cesar, who just turned 18, worked in a bakery seven days a week from early morning until midnight. Also from Leyte, a mother lamented how her 10-year-old son had gone from attending school in their rural village to scavenging for nails and other scrap metal in Manila.

There are also added factors compromising the education of displaced Moro children – some big, some small, but all disruptive. Some children said they had a hard time enrolling simply for lack of documentation. In Maguindanao, Nahla, 11, said that she and her eight-year-old sister had not been able to re-enroll because their school report cards and birth certificates were among the many things they lost when soldiers burned down their home. Unable to finish even the second grade, she is angry for this: "I'm upset with the soldiers because I can't continue with my studies.

If I could get even with them I would have done so already.” (*Naiinis ako sa mga sundalo dahil hindi ko na mapagpatuloy ang pag-aaral ko. Kung pwede nga lang na gumanti, ginantihan ko na ang mga sundalong iyon.*)

There is also apparent demoralization from having to repeat grade levels over and over again. The fighting that broke out in North Cotabato in February 2003 was a month shy of the end of classes, so even those who were able to return to school while in evacuation centers the following June had to repeat the entire school year, expenses and all.

Ramlah, 15, bewailed being prevented from graduating from the elementary grades at the very last minute: “As children, our experience of war is having to stop school. The reason we’re still at low grade levels despite our ages is that we keep stopping. I want an end to war so that we children can continue studying.” (*Ang matinding karanasan naming mga bata sa gera ay paghinto ng aming pag-aaral... Kaya ho ngayon ay malaki na kami mababa parin ang grade dahil pahinto-hinto. Gusto ko pong hindi na maulit ang gera para tuluy-tuloy ang pag-aaral naming mga kabataan.*) Mahade, 16, also remembered how she and her friends were so happy and looking forward to finally graduating, even already preparing their things for the ceremony. But then, “It turned out I was mistaken because I never felt what it was like to graduate from elementary school. I told myself that I got the opposite of happiness. I remember how sad I felt. I cried...” (*Nagkamali pala ako ng akala dahil hindi ko man naramdaman ang pagtatapos ng elementarya. Ang nasabi ko sa aking sarili ay ang kasiyahan pala ay kabaliktaran. Tandang tanda ko pa ang lahat malungkot. Umiiyak ako...*)

Eleven-year-old Racma, the middle of five children, recalled even the colors of the flames that engulfed their home when soldiers torched it. But it is the effect of war on her studies that has made the greatest impression on her. “The experience I will never forget is about my schooling which is always interrupted. Since I was in the first grade, war has always interrupted my schooling. One time we were already so close to the end of the year but when war came we had to stop again.” (*Ang karanasang di ko malilimutan ay tungkol sa pag-aaral dahil sa pag-aral ko ay palaging natitigil. Noon grade one pa ako palaging natitigil nandahil sa gera. Mayroon pang isang pasukan na malapit na talaga kami mag-klusing pero nang dumating ang gera natigil na naman.*)

The lament among many Moro children over the perpetual interruptions in their studies is also an appeal for a return to daily routines and some kind of stability in their lives. Yet the physical damage to the educational infrastructure in their communities reminds them how elusive this goal is. Children from North Cotabato poignantly recalled bullet holes in the Philippine flag in their school as well as the damage to their classrooms which made them unusable. The evacuees of Maguindanao returned home, but the school in their community was still so damaged that elementary students had to walk for over an hour every day just to get to the nearest alternative school. (There were no equivalent accounts of schools being damaged or destroyed in the NPA areas.)

Rohamie, 15, was clearly pained: “Why did this have to happen to us? What did our village do that we were attacked even if they had nothing to gain from it? This is what made us stop studying, because we were in evacuation [centers]...” (*Bakit pa kasi nangyari ito sa amin ang ganito? Ano ba ang kasalanan ng aming lugar dahil iyon pa ang kanilang lumusob subalit ay wala naman silang makukuha doon? Kayo ito ang dahilan ng aming pagtigil sa pag-aaral dahil nasa evacuation na kami...*)

When evacuations take place not only the schooling of children from affected communities is interrupted. So is the schooling of children of the community whose schools are temporarily used as evacuation shelters. In Compostela Valley, some 100 evacuating families moved into a nearby school, stopping its operations from two weeks to around a month. "

The Inquirer, 31 January 2007

"Classes in at least three villages here -- where pocket skirmishes between soldiers and Moro rebels erupted last week -- have been suspended for the past three days after parents refused to send their children back to school.

(...)

Efren Mantawil, schools district supervisor, said aside from the villages of Rangaban, Mudsing and Sambolawan, classes were also suspended in nearby areas because school buildings were being used as shelters for the more than 6,000 people displaced by the three days of fighting.

At least three rebels and three militiamen were killed while two soldiers were injured in the skirmishes. "Once the situation returns to normal, we will resume classes," Mantawil said."

Notre Dame University & Commission on Population Region XII, 2004

"Prior to their displacement, 78% of respondents from Parang and 67% from Pikit asserted that their school-age children were in school. The total was 358 children. Those in the primary accounted 11%; elementary 53%; and secondary 32%.

During displacement, about 82% of 358 in-school children were able to transfer to other schools near their EC. But 15% stopped their schooling, many of whom came from Pikit. Another 3% dropped out from school.

Displaced families of those who quit from their studies had varied plans for them. About 42% or 55 families would allow their children to resume schooling upon cessation of armed conflict in their area. Forty-seven percent (47%) wanted their children to study only in their place of origin, while 9% (all from Pikit) wanted their children to help in livelihood activities for the subsistence of the family."

More than 4,400 additional classrooms needed in conflict-affected areas (December 2005)

- JNA study estimated needs for 4,400 additional classrooms in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao

Government of the Philippines, International Funding Agencies, Mindanao Stakeholders, December 2005, p. 55

"Inadequacy and lack of school building in areas visited are very common. In areas where there are school buildings, most of them are up to primary level only. However, most of these structures either need immediate repair to make them conducive to learning or need additional classrooms to address the perennial issue on multi-grade accommodation in a single classroom.

In most cases, classrooms are without decent furniture such as desks, chairs and even blackboards. Most barangays, especially those in far-flung areas, do not have school buildings at all. Students from far-flung sitios have to travel by foot along mountainous trails just to reach the nearest schools, which are commonly located in barangay centers or poblacion.

In some cases, school buildings in CAAs are abandoned, burned or occupied by IDPs. Those abandoned can be rehabilitated and made operational while those burned during the conflict need to be re-constructed. Based on DepEd's Basic Education Information System's (BEIS)

recent count, there is an estimated need for 4,408 additional classrooms (combined elementary and secondary schools) in the identified conflict affected municipalities.

As of end August 2004, the total enrolment for all CAAs is 419,340 (combined ES and SS), with only 5,054 existing classrooms or an average of 83 students per classroom which is way above the desired 45:1 student-classroom ratio."

Obstacles to education

In November 2007, the military occupies schools in Surigao del Sur (February 2008)

- In November 2007, military occupied schools of Lumad children
- Most parents subsequently pulled their children out of school
- The Kabiba Children's Alliance said the military thus violated the children's right to safety and education, as children are socially, emotionally and psychologically vulnerable to this kind of situation.

PCHR, 4 February 2008

"Sometime on November 2007, an armed conflict between the military and the New People's Army erupted in Lianga, Surigao del Sur resulting in the internal displacement of the residents.

On January 22, 2008 the Commission on Human Rights and the Balay Rehabilitation Center, Inc. visited the place to monitor the human rights situation of the people. The visiting team was able to go to Simowao Tribal Filipino School, an elementary school accredited by the Department of Education and being operated by the Tribal Filipino Program of Surigao del Sur (TRIFPSS). The school is located at Kilometer 9, Diatagon, Lianga, Surigao del Sur.
(...)

Section 22 paragraphs c and e of Republic Act No. 7610 provides that the delivery of basic social services such as education shall be kept unhampered, and public infrastructure such as schools shall not be utilized for military purposes. The disruption of the education of the students of Lianga, Surigao del Sur due to armed conflict, and the use of the school by the military are, therefore, gross violations on the rights of children."

Mindanews, 11 December 2007

"Classes in an alternative learning school in Diatagon town, Surigao del Sur have stopped after it has become a virtual camp of the 58th Infantry Battalion, Mae Fe Templa, of InPeace Women and Children Concerns Program, said in a press conference here Saturday. The presence of soldiers in barangay Manluy-a in Diatagon and their alleged menacing behavior also forced residents to evacuate starting November 21.

"It was November 21 when parents decided to evacuate the place and refused to send their children to school anymore," Jona Merza, a 16 year-old student at the Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural Development (ALCADEV) High School, recounted. She said that on that day their parents rushed to the school, pulled out their children from their classes and evacuated the area immediately.

"The alternative learning schools are known internationally. This institution provides a big help especially to our indigenous peoples since it will teach them to 'learn by doing and earn at the

same time'. This model was adapted by DepEd (Department of Education) but was destroyed in the military intervention," Templa said.

[...]

Prado, a volunteer teacher at the Tribal Filipino Program of Surigao Sur (TRIFPSS Inc.) assigned in Manluy-a, lamented that her students could no longer concentrate because of the presence of the military in their classrooms and in their campus.

"The army used our school without permission. They even sleep in our classrooms. On November 14, our class didn't start immediately because when we got into our room it was full of dirt from the soil and mud on their boots. We asked one army official to tell his constituents to help keep our rooms clean. But he only told us to be patient to them since they do not come often," she said. She added that after two weeks the parents would no longer allow their children to come to school out of fear. "I have 24 students in my class, but within one week, only six or seven of them attended my class. My students could not concentrate with the military walking here and there every now and then. Sometimes, they even paraded their guns in front of my pupils," she said.

Honey Mae Suazo of Kabiba Children's Alliance had interviewed victims of military operations in Surigao del Sur. She said children are socially, emotionally and psychologically vulnerable to this kind of situation. "The children were very traumatized by the intensified militarization in the area. How could children not be traumatized when even a 6 year-old child was told to hold a gun while the military were fetching water?" Suazo said.

She said that even until now, the military is still in a state of denial that they did these things. She accused the 58th IB of committing all sorts of human rights violation against these children. "They (the 58th IB) violated the rights of these children because they made the school as their area for encampment. They have violated the children's rights to protection and development by disrupting their classes and causing them unrest," she said.

The Indigenous Peoples Human Rights (IPHR) Watch meanwhile said it has documented other cases of human rights violations. Karen Muñasque of IPHR told reporters that they have documented 11 cases of human rights violation which include dismantling of armaments in front of children and putting these under the houses of some residents without asking permission.

In a solidarity program held on December 7 in Diatagon Gym, Surigao del Sur children were asked to make a Christmas card containing their wishes for the Yuletide season. Some of those cards will be sent to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo so that she may hear the children's plea. Most of the children dreamt of returning to their homes, farms, and schools. The residents also demanded that the President pull out the military in their area to enable them to continue living normally."

Youth in Mindanao identify education as their top priority and conflict & poverty as the main barriers to schooling (July 2006)

- The youth surveyed viewed education as a top priority and one of the only solution to a better future.
- The main barriers to education were the following: insecurity and violence discourage the parents to send their children to school, poverty makes the financial burden of education unaffordable, schools are too far away, teachers are absent and material is lacking and difficulty in going back to school after several years of interruption.

World Bank, July 2006, p.6

"The youth surveyed placed education at the very top of their list of priorities. They consider it the main solution to their problems and the passport to a better future. They view education as the only means of securing the skills and qualifications necessary to achieve gainful employment and a better quality of life for themselves and their families. Education, according to them, will also help them earn respect and prestige in their communities, will give them better opportunities to participate in community organizations and aspire to leadership positions, increase their self esteem and self confidence, and act as a catalyst for change and promote peace. Many FGD participants expressed an interest in resuming their studies and sought help from the government and NGOs. Older youth were keen on non-formal education and skills training that would help them get remunerative employment.

The chief barriers to schooling identified by the FGD participants are:

Threats of violence posed by the continuing low intensity conflict in various locations in the region discourage parents from sending their wards to school. Parents also fear that schools may serve as popular recruiting grounds for the MILF or the other armed groups.

Impoverishment caused by the long drawn out conflict is a major deterrent. The financial burden imposed by schooling in the form of books, uniforms, transport costs, etc. are unaffordable. Further, youth, especially male youth, are required to contribute to the family income in whatever manner they can. Some youth who have lost both parents have become de facto heads of their families and would prefer to concentrate on making a living.

Schools are too far from home and transportation is often not available, or unaffordable. The other structural obstacles highlighted include inadequate and overcrowded classrooms with as many as four classes taught in the same classroom, irregular attendance by teachers and poor quality of teaching, and irrelevant curriculum (Box 1).

Teachers are often absent and the quality of teaching has deteriorated. The perceived marginal return of education is an important deterrent.

Many of the older youth who have missed out on several years of schooling are uncomfortable about attending school with classmates who are far younger.

The FGD groups offered the following suggestions to improve enrolment and attendance in schools:

Complete cessation of hostilities;

Financial incentives such as scholarships, subsidized school lunches, uniforms, textbooks and supplies, and transportation allowances;

Construction of additional school buildings and classrooms, provision of improved facilities, and improved training of teachers;

Adoption of flexible timings and schedules so that students have the option to work and study; and

Revisions of the curriculum so that it is relevant to their cultural and religious values and will help them get remunerative employment after graduation."

Mindanews, 26 June 2006

"The armed skirmishes were taking their toll on children, who had just returned to school after the summer vacation.

Virginia Flores, of Malaybalay City's social welfare office, said the experience was traumatic to the elders but it was worse to the children who shivered at the sight of soldiers and the sound of gunfire.

Children comprise more than half, or 191, of the 360 evacuees in the Zamboanguita evacuation center, the Malaybalay City's social welfare office reported. The report also estimated the same ratio in the St. Peter site.

The problem is not only limited to children evacuees. Tajones said that around 400 pupils of Zamboanguita Elementary School were also displaced. Since June 19, the Department of Education had suspended classes in Zamboanguita to accommodate the evacuees in the classrooms.

By then, the pupils were just on their fifth day in school since classes opened only on June 13.

Tajones' niece, 11-year old Andrea Mae Demegillo, a Grade 6 pupil, was initially happy when classes were suspended. But she was afraid when she saw the evacuees. Then, she began to worry if they could still hold classes and if ever the evacuees would return to their villages. She saw one of her teachers attending to the evacuees.

On June 24, George Madroñal, Department of Education supervisor for Malaybalay East district, told MindaNews over the phone that the "small war" in the area has disrupted the children's learning but there is nothing they can do about it.

"We plan to resume classes on June 26. But we are not yet sure about that. We have to listen to the advice of the military and the local school managers," he said.

If classes resumed and the fighting continued, Tajones said, the plan might be to move the evacuees out of the classrooms at daytime and return them there at night for sleep."

War and poverty are the main obstacle to education (July 2006)

- Poverty exacerbated by conflict and displacement is the main factor affecting education.
- Literacy rates and school enrollment rates were significantly lower in the Muslim-populated areas of Mindanao as compared to the rest of the country.
- The February 2003 war and subsequent displacement has caused a decrease in the enrollment in Pikit.
- Reasons for not attending are: relocation of families, child labour to raise the family income, trauma and uncertainty of school during war.
- In Pikit, there is a shortage of class rooms, school buildings, teachers and schoolbooks and other school material.
- In Pagalungan, where many have not yet returned as of October 2003, schools have not opened or are still destroyed.
- Provinces of Central Mindanao, due to severe poverty, were reported to be among the most education-deprived areas in the country, creating a situation of uncertain access to education for many internally displaced children.

World Bank, July 2006, pp. 4-5

"Studies on education in Mindanao have repeatedly asserted that poverty exacerbated by recurrent armed conflict is the single most important factor affecting education in the region. While the country as a whole boasts a literacy rate of 93.7 percent for males and 94 percent for females, Mindanao presents a very different picture. In 2003 the literacy rates for Central Mindanao were 85.9 percent for males and 88.8 percent for females, while in ARMM it dropped to 71 percent for males and 69.4 percent for females⁹ (Table 3).

The elementary net enrollment rate in 2001 was 82 percent as compared with the national average of 96 percent, while the completion rate of 40 percent is just above half that of the rest of the country. The secondary school enrollment rate was the lowest in the country at 39 percent as compared with the 12 percent, compared to 6.1 percent and 7.3 percent respectively for Luzon and Visayas. Conflict affected parts of Mindanao and ARMM have dropout rates of 23 percent. A study on education in Mindanao conducted by the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP)¹¹ observes that in any given year, only three to four out of ten children enrolled will finish high school. In ARMM only one out of ten children is likely to complete high school on time. Most of them will probably manage to complete only Grades 1 and 2. Out-of-school youth as a percentage of the 6-24 year old population (23.1 percent) is also the highest in Mindanao¹³ (Table 4).

ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Self-reliance

Environmental hazards make re-building a livelihood additionally difficult (March 2008)

- Even in relatively secure post-conflict situations, returnees often face environmental challenges standing in the way of re-building a livelihood.

Frederico et.al, March 2007, p.179:

The livelihood component assisted families in immediate crisis and provided capital to establish a sustainable income-generating activity Start-Up Capital Assistance (SUCA). This was provided to women in evacuation centres for set-up costs to gain an income for their families by engaging in such activities as hairdressing, fish selling and poultry vending. The Livelihood Assistance on Return (LAUR) was made available to groups in each community to encourage community cooperative efforts. Members of the community formed business cooperatives and received training on effective methods to conduct a successful business enterprise. Preparation for LAUR was undertaken prior to return to the lands and the monies were provided immediately upon return to the community of origin. The money was deposited in banks for people to establish accounts for saving 5 and for many this was their first experience of using a bank. Groups used the funds to establish farming and fishing businesses. The provision of LAUR, however, did not necessarily lead to success and an adequate income. Floods destroyed seeds planted by one group of farmers. The natural disaster highlighted the extreme difficulties faced by these communities independently of the armed conflict.

Very low development level in conflict-affected areas suffering from accumulated effects of conflict and displacement (October 2006)

- Most IDPs were already extremely poor and in debt prior to their displacement. Upon return, many return to nothing with their houses and livestock destroyed and most are in dire need of assistance.
- Sporadic and protracted nature of the conflict means that IDPs are returning to situations of ongoing uncertainty and insecurity and are hesitant to make investments with long gestation periods .
- Intermittent return are important because communities need to re-establish claims over their homes and farms that can be taken over by other people.
- Before the war, 67,7 percent of the families in the Muslim-dominated areas had availed of credit. After the conflict, this figure dramatically went down to 49,3 percent.
- After the conflict, there was an obvious decline in farm equipment access for the IDPs.
- Support coming from government agencies is generally very limited and families sought other ways of coping –distant relatives provided living space, women and children sought odd jobs.
- There was an increase in the number of IDPs who earned incomes from farming after the conflict, but the average household income has decreased.

UNICEF, October 2006, p. 107

"The accumulated effects of armed conflict are most conventionally seen in terms of the tallying the number of individual victims and extrapolating the sum of the adverse effects on them. This is the case for instance when counting over a million IDPS, some 43,000 victims of conflict-related human rights violations, and 343 civilian casualties of armed encounters over the period 2001-2005 – and then giving more depth to these numbers through qualitative accounts. Aside from the effects on children and women already discussed earlier, there are four points particularly regarding economic effects and social capital worth emphasizing:

The people reached by the research were mainly engaged in subsistence low-input agricultural production with extremely low productivity. Their families were perpetually on the knife-edge of subsistence: earning just enough to survive and meet their most basic needs and not generating any surplus. They were in a delicate equilibrium easily upset by theft, health emergencies, adverse weather and the manifold disruptions to lives by armed conflict.

Accumulated losses in personal economic capital can be considerable for those directly affected. Respondents were particularly burdened by the costs of rebuilding homes, replacing livestock, and restoring crops and farmland. IDPs were most adversely affected. Also, the communities covered by the study already suffered from bad roads, and water, power, telecommunication, education and health infrastructure problems to begin with. There have been anecdotal accounts of significant and sustained damage to these due to fighting in MILF camps, but with no such accounts emerging in NPA-influenced areas.

Aside from evident economic losses, victims of armed conflict also suffer losses in social capital that has been painstakingly built up. These include disruptions not only in the usual family support networks but also in community-based organizations. Armed conflict situations have rendered these untenable for various reasons and in varying degrees.

The momentum of recovery begins after fighting and when the disruptive presence of abusive soldiers recedes. This is relatively quick for those who remain in their communities and much more difficult for IDPs who are unable to quickly regain or rebuild the accumulated economic capital they have lost due to armed conflict. The problem is most severe in the Moro areas which have seen cycles of war since the 1970s. This has resulted in a situation of perpetually arrested development.

Shooting battles and military operations thus have interrelated consequences on the safety, security, health, education and economy of civilian communities. All have negative effects on children and women as part of the civilian, non-combatant population."

ACH, June 2004, p. 60

"The impact of armed conflict has long term consequences. The short term impact of the armed conflict has been detailed within the report as seen in significant destruction and loss of houses, property, income, life, security, and well-being. All these are further compounded while families are in displacement, as sickness, food insecurity, and loss of income increase the longer the displacement continues. As the majority of returnees will have been back a year this July 2004 the recovery of some of these short term losses has taken place. However, it is the long term impact of the effects of conflict which are less easily quantified and harder to offset. The repeated displacements and repeated loss from armed conflict suppress' economic, educational, and general initiative to advance as families find it increasingly hard to replace or regain what was lost. Even if many families have regained some of what they lost in the recent conflict, they had little to regain. The presence and potential threat of repeated conflict will continue to inhibit growth. Expanding production is hampered by the perceived level of risk felt by local communities. Many farmers ask 'Why bear the cost of fertilizer and thus bear greater risk of higher loss, if the potential of renewed conflict exists?'"

WB 3 March 2003, pp. 15-19

"In general, the difficult return to normalcy will be indicated by the hesitation of populations to make investments with long gestation periods. Hence, it may happen that poverty can rise significantly where the decision to return remains tentative for extended periods. Public interventions in these areas will probably have to be a mix of continuing relief, confidence building and development initiatives. Intermittent return will, however, be important because communities need to re-establish claims over their homes and farms as soon as possible. It has happened in the past, that local governments officials, military men or other ethnic groups have squatted, and subsequently, established a claim on land that was not theirs.

The sporadic and protracted nature of the conflict in Mindanao means that refugees and displaced people are returning to situations of ongoing uncertainty and insecurity, the longer it will take for private investment to resume. Joblessness, especially in Mindanao, where light weapons proliferate, feeds continuing violence, social dislocation, family breakdown, and insecurity.

Some of the young people in the Buluan cluster interviewed for the Social Assessment think that the construction of permanent structures of houses will change the attitude of people. The prospect of losing an investment could strengthen the wavering commitment of some elders to peaceful solutions to conflict.

(...)

The Social Assessment results show various dimensions of the poverty among the displaced communities. The population's employable skill set is limited; public services are unavailable; limited education and isolation from important urban labor markets virtually remove temporary migration from the set of risk mitigation mechanisms that people affected by an income shock can normally tap; inputs markets are monopolized by a few traders who also happen to be the main source of credit for rice and corn production; farm implements are rudimentary; and non-farm income comes mainly in the form of raising ducks, swine (in Lumad areas), chicken, goats and carabaos in the yard to augment farm incomes. Within communities indebtedness is also very high with farms and home lost being mortgaged to creditors.

Displacement overloaded informal systems of mutual support

There is a weakening of mutual support systems as communities are dispersed. Significant numbers of individuals report being separated from their families for months. (...)

The immediate economic trauma of the war is felt as an income shock, in terms of incomes lost when unharvested crops were abandoned and when planting seasons passed by with workers unable to work their farms. One direct consequence of this war-induced crop failure is that loans advanced by traders could not be paid. The extent to which this might cause the flow of credit to be disrupted is not clear. What is clear is that both the manner and amounts of loans from outsiders given for farm production purposes have been reduced.

Even where communities are intact, the mutual support systems will have been exhausted at some point, because the need for support arose nearly concurrently for all families that had to give up their livelihoods all at the same time. In peaceful times, misfortunes like sickness or loss of income seldom happens to everyone at the same time. Neighbours or families belonging to the same clan have occasion for borrowing funds from each other to buy food or medicine. The impact of the war on systems of mutual support within communities is seen in the fact that of 1,526 people surveyed, the number of people who borrow funds for food went down from 733 before the conflict to only 538 after the conflict (table 5).

Before the war, 67,7 percent of the families in the Muslim-dominated areas had availed of credit. After the conflict, this figure dramatically went down to 49,3 percent. Average amounts borrowed

by IDPs clustered around Baranguays Peditad, Molao, Natutungan, Ilian and North Cotabato and Maguindanao before the conflict was P2,394. This figure went down significantly to P1,571 after the conflict.

Productive assets were destroyed because of the war

(...)

A Nutrition and Household Economy Survey among IDPs in Central Mindanao conducted by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in June 2001, reveals that the loss of livestock continued to happen even when the displaced families were already staying in evacuation centers. In the ICRC's survey, the number of households owning carabaos was 20.7 percent right after the conflict in October 2000. However, this number fell to 12.1 percent by June 2001.

The extent of the loss of farm implements is seen by comparing Figure 2a and 2b, Before the conflict, there was basic parity between IDPs and non-IDPs; after the conflict, there was an obvious decline in farm equipment access for the IDPs. The information above is the result of a survey of 400 IDPs and 400 non-IDP households in Maguindanao and North Cotabato.

Key informants revealed that the support coming from government agencies is generally very limited and families sought other ways of coping –distant relatives provided living space, women and children sought odd jobs. In many instances, assets that were not destroyed by the war also had to be sold. There is some evidence that depletion of productive assets also took place because men-folk decided to exchange their assets for weapons “to protect their women and their property”. Thus, in conflict areas and in areas of potential conflict, the civilian population also used up resources to arm itself. The cost of one firearm is an amount equivalent to several months of a poor family's income.

For populations that will return to the war-affected areas, the loss of productive assets makes it unlikely that they will hit the ground running in a manner that allows them to resume the pace of their lives and livelihoods before the eruption of conflict. Second-round economic effects will also be felt in terms of the disruption of the flow of informal credit for production due both to conflict-related loan defaults and possible perceptions by creditors, that some households may need to divert such loans intended for the purchase of production inputs in favor of more immediate needs, like attending to the needs of the sick, paying-off other loans or repairing houses. The creditors themselves will probably be in distress, with their funds loaned out to families who may be too deep under the surface to be able to offer any prospect of helping improve the creditors' cash position.

Communities played host to people unwilling to return home

Displaced persons unable to return home were forced to call on resources of inter-community systems of support. The Social Assessment revealed the presence of safety nets among groups connected through kin or ethnic affinity. Many communities played host to displaced persons who are unable or unwilling to return to their places of origin. The surveys managed to reveal mostly the immediate economic effects of the crisis. But much less is known about the adequacy of the safety net provided by host communities, about the effects of the new entrants on the well-being of the receiving communities, and about the nature of the reciprocal obligations that the resettled populations will have to bear in acknowledgment of the generosity of their hosts.

The datu-landowners as a class in Maguindanao provided employment to the IDPs as farm workers in a very substantial scale. The datu and IDPs informants observe that people who stayed for prolonged periods in evacuation centers have suffered relatively greater economic displacement because of a complete loss of their livelihood.

The household survey data shows that there was an increase in the number of people who earned incomes from farming after the conflict, but the average household income has

decreased. This is consistent with accounts about datu-landlords who hired IDPs who resettled in their lands. At the same time, it is also consistent with the intuition that when households are in desperate straits, their members must take whatever work is available to them and even mobilize secondary income earners, including women who used to be fully occupied with care-giving tasks and children who used to be in school. Some landowners say that they expect assistance from the government in order to continue absorbing farm labor workers for the IDPs."

Conflict and displacement has increased poverty and reduced livelihood opportunities (July 2006)

- In ARMM alone poverty has increased from 50.7 percent in 1991 to 66 percent in 2000.
- Agriculture and fishing, the two main sources of livelihood in the region have been seriously affected by the repeated conflicts

WB, July 2006, p. 8

"Mindanao has the dubious distinction of having four of the five poorest regions and six of the ten poorest provinces in the Philippines. All the ARMM provinces fall in the latter category. In ARMM alone poverty has increased from 50.7 percent in 1991 to 66 percent in 2000. Disruption of agricultural production, and destruction of infrastructure, both social and economic, have deterred economic activity at all levels and thereby impoverished an already poor region. Agriculture, which is the main source of livelihood in the study area, has been seriously affected by repeated conflict and the uncertain peace and order situation. For instance, nearly half the farm animals and agricultural implements were destroyed or lost in the conflict affected barangays¹⁷. In the coastal barangays, and those located around the Ligawasan marsh, where fishing is the most important activity, most communities have reported loss or destruction of the tools of their trade.

(...)

All youth, whether in school or out-of-school, are working to supplement the income of their families. (According to the Department of Agriculture statistics more than a third of the household members aged 10 – 24 are engaged in agriculture in Western Mindanao, 44.6% in Central Mindanao and 15% in ARMM.) Most of them are engaged in agriculture, either in their own family farms or as agricultural labor. They also try to supplement the household income by working at nearby rice mills, as skylab¹⁸ or tricycle drivers, as sidewalk vendors, or as contractual labor.

(...)

Recurrent armed conflict has adversely affected livelihood and earning capacity as described in Box 2 and detailed below:

Losses of farm animals in the conflicts of 2000 and 2003 have significantly affected livelihoods. Those who do not own water buffaloes, for example, are forced to rent them at high costs, or resort to planting late and risk losing their crop due to seasonal flooding.

Similarly, in barangays where fishing is the main source of livelihood, bancas (small boats without outriggers), fishing gear (fishhooks and fish lines), and fishnets were destroyed during the conflict. Many FGD participants reported that they had to enter into disadvantageous rental arrangements with fish traders by promising them a portion of the catch.

Inputs such as fertilizer, pesticides and good quality seeds are beyond their reach.

They do not have access to post harvest facilities such as corn shellers, solar dryers or warehousing.

The absence of link roads denies them access to nearby markets.

Water for irrigation was frequently mentioned as a problem in the upland barangays.

In some barangays unexploded ordnance lying buried in the fields makes farming a very risky activity.

The only credit available to them is from local moneylenders who charge usurious rates of interest. Several FGD participants narrated their experiences in this regard and consider access to credit facilities as the single most important requirement to improve their livelihoods (Box 3).

(...)

The FGD groups offered the following suggestions to increase and improve livelihood options: Access to credit and resources was identified as the single most important factor that would help expand livelihood options.

All FGD groups expressed keen interest in opportunities for livelihood skills training. The skills identified as required are tailoring, soap-making, slipper/sandal-making, printing, signboard-making, carpentry, driving (to work abroad), radio and television repair, jeepney, bicycle and tricycle repair, cell phone repair, poultry farming, computer skills, native products making, sari-sari stores, seaweed farming and marketing, and better farming techniques.

Construction of farm to market roads and irrigation facilities were suggested by a number of groups, particularly those in remote areas and in the uplands where availability of water for irrigation and other purposes posed serious challenges.

Several FGD groups asked for both technical and financial assistance for creating farmer cooperatives in their communities."

Displaced women and men forced to engage in irregular, low-paid work to make ends meet (October 2006)

- In the difficult conditions of war, militarization and displacement, the already multiple burdens of women have been compounded and have become heavier.
- Women in evacuation centers reported having to take on several irregular, low-paid work such as laundrywoman or househelp to make ends meet.
- Dependent on external aid, the displaced find it difficult to find alternative means of livelihood. Because they have no land, they cannot farm, because they have no fishing equipment they cannot fish.
- A number of displaced nevertheless manage to find livelihood activities, including gardening, fishing, farming, harvesting, collecting firewood and metal to sell, and working in a construction firm.
- IDPs, especially women become sources of extremely cheap labour and the money they make is often far below the minimum necessary to survive.
- 96% of the displaced interviewed in Pikit and Parang managed to secure some form of livelihood, but most emphasize the inadequacy of their earnings

UNICEF, October 2006, pp. 101-102

"But the field data gathered also established the capacities and efforts of women in dealing with the adverse effects of armed conflict as well as in trying to increase their control over the situation. Women have tried their best to continue performing their daily household tasks and family responsibilities. Women have also taken on much of the burden of maintaining some normalcy despite disruptions, and of keeping the family together. In the difficult conditions of war, militarization and displacement, their already multiple burdens have been compounded and have become heavier.

Mothers in Abra and Capiz recounted having to bring their children to and fetch them from far-away schools whenever they hear reports of military presence in the area because they fear that their children may be accosted and harassed. And then they face a dilemma – soldiers have been known to enter and ransack unattended houses.

The women have had to bear even heavier economic burdens. Hasna, 38, of Maguindanao said that her family's life was so difficult in the evacuation center that many times they ate only twice a day, sometimes only managing one meal. She was forced to work as a laundrywoman, leaving home responsibilities behind, just to try and get by and to feed her six children. Out of 15 women in the FGD, three had left to find work as househelp and four as laundrywomen – for as little as P500-P800 a month. They say that even their young daughters had left to find work in nearby town centers. Yet even when they were able to return, they found their farmland overgrown with weeds and their coconut trees and homes burned down: "It's like we were starting over again." (*Para kaming nagsisimula uli.*)

Asima, a mother in the North Cotabato FGD, recounted her ordeal in going back to her store to try and retrieve goods for her family. Not only did she find that looters had emptied her store, fighting also suddenly erupted while she was in their village and she scrambled frantically to safety and made her way back to the evacuation center. On the way back she says she was able to catch a live chicken to bring to her family. When she got back to the center she realized that she was so scared that she had crushed the chicken to death with her bare hands and that her fingers had bored into it.

Leyte women evacuees and Capiz residents have had to venture into the same sorts of uncertain, irregular and lowly-paid work: washing clothes, working as househelp, repacking detergent materials, manicuring, preparing smoked fish, vending street foods like fishballs, ice scramble and cassava cakes, and others. But at least one displaced woman from Leyte had given up hope: "Didn't we leave so that we wouldn't get killed? Here we'll die from poverty. So we've decided to go back home. So that if we die, at least it'll be there [at home]." (*Di ba umalis kami para di mapatay? Dito mamatay kami sa hirap. Kaya ang desisyon namin ay umuwi na. Para kahit mamatay kami, doon na.*) Another was angry and vengeful: "I won't say how hard it is because we all know that. What I want is to get even with those responsible. Our livelihoods were destroyed." (*Hindi ko na sabihin ang hirap alam na natin yon. Gusto ko magganti sa taong may gawa. Nasira ang kabuhayan namin.*)"

Public participation

National and international organisations intend to boost awareness of IDP rights (January 2008)

- International organizations, notably ICRC, put considerable effort into peace and Human Rights education of government armed forces and rebel groups.
- Balay, a national NGO, has helped raise awareness among IDPs of their contribution towards maintaining or promoting peace
- In Pikit town, the education drive had prompted local leaders and residents to establish the Bantay Ceasefire (monitoring group).
- UNDP and UNICEF both have their specific programmes empowering IDPs towards taking on an active role in maintaining peace

IRIN, 28 January 2008

"International humanitarian agencies and Filipino non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are stepping up education and information campaigns to raise awareness among rival military forces about the human rights entitlements of internally displaced people (IDPs). They want to minimise, if not totally prevent, the abuse and displacement of communities affected by armed conflict.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the Philippines, for instance, is allocating US\$1.5 million in 2008 to educate and train both the armed forces and rebel groups to ensure they understand human rights protocols governing conduct towards IDPs.

“It is part of the long-term perspective,” ICRC head of delegation in the Philippines Felipe Donoso told IRIN. “Displacement is the consequence of armed conflict... We want to target the end of the chain.” ICRC’s mandate in the Philippines in the past 25 years has grown from extending emergency assistance to IDPs, to opening communication lines between government forces and rebels, and informing them of human rights principles.

Currently it is training and educating government armed forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) on human rights principles in a conflict situation. The MILF has been waging a secessionist war for some years, and concern about the rights of IDPs and compliance with international humanitarian law has been a concern of local humanitarian groups and UN agencies for some time.

Donoso lamented that over the past four decades there had been “little change in the mindset among combatants regarding respect for the human rights of IDPs”.

Over the years, millions of civilians have been uprooted from their homes and/or caught up in fighting between government forces and the MILF, the Moro National Liberation Front and the New People’s Army. Government data showed that from 2001-2005, over one million people had been identified as IDPs, most on Mindanao island. Nearly 500 were killed and another 500 wounded.

Efforts by local NGO

Analisa Ugay, of the local NGO Balay Rehabilitation Centre, said education and information efforts had empowered IDPs to play an active role in maintaining peace in their areas.

She cited the case of Pikit town in North Cotabato Province on Mindanao island, where residents underwent peace education with the assistance of Balay. “We taught them that it was their right to live in peace... that for peace to hold, they should be active players in preserving it.”

Before the education drive, Ugay said Pikit experienced periodic conflict. The education drive had prompted local leaders and residents to establish the Bantay Ceasefire (monitoring group). “We have proven that if civilians are aware of their rights, it is possible to maintain peace. Pikit has demonstrated that.”

UN agencies

The UN Development Programme-Philippines is also working on capacity-building for IDPs -“to capacitate them to stand on their own in terms of maintaining peace”, Serge Villena, a crisis prevention and protection recovery unit programme associate, told IRIN. “We want to inculcate the culture of peace and the promotion of it to the IDPs. We want to teach them backdoor channelling to avoid hostilities from erupting.”

Other agencies, including the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), are catering for the needs of IDP children. Last year, UNICEF launched a Day of Peace campaign where some 200,000 IDP children in 600 villages were treated for intestinal worms and immunised. UNICEF child protection officer Leon Dominador Fajardo told IRIN the project was such a huge success that the MILF

agreed to a second Day of Peace this year. "The children are most vulnerable to diseases... it helped that the MILF recognises this fact."

Some agencies are also responding to the psycho-social needs of the children. Balay, for instance, conducts psycho-social intervention like "play therapies" for child IDPs to help them cope with trauma.

IDPs in Mindanao form effective advocacy groups to prevent fighting and displacement (November 2007)

- Three-year cycle of war was broken during 2006, largely thanks to the efforts of the joint ceasefire committees of both warring parties, but also thanks to the involvement of IDPs themselves who prevented incidents from deteriorating further.
- In July 2006, local NGOs created the Task Force Tabang Maguindanao to promote an end to hostilities and assistance to the displaced
- In 2003, thousands of IDPs in Central Mindanao demonstrated for peace and convinced the government to agree on a ceasefire. The Mindanao Peoples Caucus became an important advocacy tool for the displaced.
- IDPs also established the Bantay Ceasefire Movement, a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the ceasefire agreement. In addition to preventing small armed incidents to degenerate into wider confrontation and mass evacuations, Bantay Ceasefire also assisted with the return of IDPs.
- A coalition of peace groups -the Mindanao Peaceweavers- has proposed to the government and the MILF to involve representatives of the displaced communities and indigenous groups in the peace process as observers.
- The coalition suggested to develop a feedback mechanism that would ensure the dissemination of information down to the community level.

Nonviolent Peaceforce, October-November 2007

"NP team participated in "Sulu IDPs Community Leaders Meeting" organized by CBCS and Jaga Lupa Sug – Civilian Local Peacekeeping Force. The idea is to address the IDPs situation and to organize IDPs in Sulu. There was a request for NP to be actively involved and support implementation of the project. Later the NP Team arranged detailed elaborative discussions with local community IDP leaders in NP office in Sulu. The local IDPs leaders came from three seriously conflict affected municipalities i.e. Indanan, Patikul and Parang."

Mindanews, 31 December 2006

"Although several times on the brink of war, government and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) forces managed to stand down and pre-election year 2006 is ending with the three-year cycle of war in Pikit, North Cotabato and neighboring areas, finally broken. Father Roberto Layson, former Pikit parish priest, now head of the Oblates of Mary Immaculates' Inter-religious Dialogue and vice-chair of the Mindanao PeaceWeavers, noted the three-year cycle of war in the area since 1997, the year he was assigned to Pikit.

(...)

Layson attributes the breaking of the cycle to the efforts of the "joint ceasefire committees of the government and MILF peace panels, the Malaysian-led International Monitoring Team, the grassroots-led Bantay Ceasefire and other civil society organizations."

(...)

Mary Ann Arnado, secretary-general of the Mindanao Peoples' Caucus, said "part of the credit goes to the vigilance and efforts of grassroots leaders who stood their ground to prevent war from

happening in their communities, dared to hold Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the MILF accountable to the ceasefire and peace talks. Ordinary people who were otherwise perceived as collateral damage, took charge of the peace that they rightly deserve." "

Mindanews, 7 July 2006

"Non-government organizations working for peace in Mindanao announced the creation of the Task Force Tabang Maguindanao Thursday morning as thousands of evacuees have not yet accessed humanitarian aid nine days since the hostilities broke in four Maguindanao towns on June 28. The task force, created on July 4, was formed to continue calls to stop the hostilities and to bring together people with resources so that humanitarian assistance could be brought to around 4,138 displaced families, said Guiamel Alim of the Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society, a member organization of the Mindanao Peaceweavers (MPW) network.

(...)

Datu Quiambao Ayag, from the Agong Peace Network, supported the MPW calls and expressed worry that if the hostilities will not be averted, it might reach and affect the indigenous peoples' ancestral domain in some parts of Central Mindanao proximate to the conflict areas.

The MPW called for the immediate cessation of hostilities and "allow a more rational conflict settlement to take place."

The MPW urged the creation of a joint government-NGO massive relief, medical and rehabilitation missions in areas affected by the war.

They have called for the installation of a peace-keeping force between the forces of Ampatuan and the MILF, to be composed of Army personnel, the Joint Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (JCCC), and the Bantay Ceasefire with representatives from non-government organizations working for peace in Mindanao.

The peace network also sought for the conduct of a fact-finding probe by the ceasefire mechanism of the government and the MILF to look into the June 23 bombing that triggered the clashes so the perpetrators could be brought to the "bar of justice." "

PCHR, 2006, p. 11

"The amalgamation of these sad stories and experiences by the IDPs provided the impetus for the people of Mindanao to organize. The Mindanao Peoples Caucus is one such organization. The mettle of the Caucus was tested in 2003 when after the Bulyok bombing of an Islamic Center in Pagalungan, Mindanao, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) unilaterally declared a ceasefire to all armed conflicts, an initiative not reciprocated by the government forces. Dismayed by the government's stubborn pugilism, thousands of IDPs in Central Mindanao marched to the national highway demonstrating before the government their collective appeal for a ceasefire. This activism resulted in the bilateral agreement between the government and the MILF. Bolstered by this victory, the IDPs organized audiences with the President of the Philippines, the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines and the Department of National Defense to bring to the fore the issues and concerns of the IDPs. They also appeared before seventeen European diplomats and the OIC Commission of the Eight presenting their demands.

The most significant response of the IDPs was the creation of the "Bantay Ceasefire Movement". The Ceasefire Watch is a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the agreement between the government and the MILF. A concrete intervention of Bantay Ceasefire was its verification of reports that there were Jemah Islamiyah training activities in a known MILF camp. Their efforts in going up one of the mountains of Lanao del Sur risking their own lives and eventually debunking

these intelligence reports undoubtedly diffused a potentially volatile military strike. Indubitably, this pro-active contribution protected the valued ceasefire agreement and prevented needless mass evacuation.

Another contribution of the Bantay Ceasefire Movement is its 'indirect arrangement' with the kidnap for ransom group known as the Pentagon with the latter acceding to the request of the IDPs to cease illegal activities especially if the kidnapping would lead to a military intervention and necessarily result in displacement.

The speaker named another effort of the Movement in Dingalongan, Maguindanao where three municipalities were evacuated due to military activities against the Abu Sayaf Group (ASG). The Bantay Ceasefire, using the institutional mechanisms of the ceasefire agreement between the government and MILF and in coordination with the international monitoring team, assisted in the return of these IDPs. The mobilization of the returnees was such that the combative action between the ASG and the military was pushed back decisively allowing the successful return of the IDPs to their residence."

Mindanews 19 February 2004

"A coalition of peace groups in Mindanao has asked the peace panels of the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front to allow lumad and refugee representatives as observers in the duration of the peace negotiations.

In a letter sent Wednesday to Silvestre Afable, Jr. and Mohagher Iqbal, government and the MILF peace panel chairmen, respectively, the Mindanao Peaceweavers strongly urged the inclusion of observers from the two sectors.

The Mindanao Peaceweavers is composed of the Mindanao Peoples' Caucus, Agong Network, Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society, Mindanao Solidarity Network, Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement, Mindanao Peace Advocates Conference, Peace Advocates Zambonga and Initiatives for International Dialogue.

'We propose that at least eight representatives of our network be accredited as observers, subject to the standard requirements of accountability and responsibility in the handling and dissemination of information,' the group wrote Afable and Iqbal.

'Our observers will be process observers who will represent indigenous peoples (lumads), Bangsamoro civil society, displaced communities, women and peace and human rights advocates in Mindanao,' it added. If granted, the Mindanao Peaceweavers said it would bring information on the peace process to the grassroots level.

The group also said it will develop a feedback mechanism that will ensure the dissemination of information down to the community level. It said information through public consultation and the radio networks will increase public awareness and support for the peace negotiations."

Providing information to IDPs is key to their empowerment (March 2007)

- People who are displaced due to armed conflict are frequently unable to obtain information about matters that affect their lives.
- Where IDPs can themselves identify their needs, their situation has a better chance of succeeding.

Frederico et.al, March 2007, p.179, 181:

"Information has a key role in empowerment and the ability to make informed decisions. People who are displaced due to armed conflict are frequently unable to obtain information about matters that affect their lives. The Pulungan centres were an element of the information and security component strategy to facilitate community discussion. Likewise the training of IDP volunteer information specialists, who had the role of ensuring that relevant and critical information (including information about security) was conveyed to IDPs, was part of a strategy to empower IDPs. CFSI also initiated an 'Information Caravan', involving government agencies and NGOs travelling together to a specific community and setting up in a Pulungan centre for a full day for the purpose of sharing information about resources and services as well as providing training. A key activity was the establishment of a regular radio programme, Ting ng IDPs (Voices of IDPs), which featured interviews with IDPs in the community and broadcast over a local radio station which reached all central Mindanao. Through this programme IDPs were able to contribute to public policy debates.

[...]

Sustainability:

A key element to promote the sustainability of positive change is participation (Chambers, 1995). IDPs were actively involved in all aspects of the project. Traditional leaders and decision making structures were included in the planning and implementation of the project. Partnerships were formed with local and international NGOs and this facilitated a holistic, grounded and integrated approach. IDPs were encouraged and assisted to take part in policy debates and to develop capability in their communities to advocate to local and national governments for their needs and to seek resources. As part of an exit strategy communities were encouraged to engage in the Philippines government's Minimum Basic Needs Survey (MBNS) aimed at prioritizing needs in affected communities. Then the leaders of the IDPs communities were assisted to take on advocacy roles for their communities, utilizing the local government's MBNS data. Engagement in the MBNS resulted in the affected communities learning more about themselves and identifying their own priorities of need at local community levels. Thus the communities had control over identifying their own priorities for public resources and an officially sanctioned mechanism for informing the government of these needs. An example of a community identified need was access to education for children. This issue was also identified by the community organizers and the strength of the need validated by the research partners (Daguino et al., 2003). Even prior to the displacement, many children of the affected communities had to walk an hour to school, the schools had poor resources and the majority of young people dropped out of school. CFSI worked with the community to initiate plans for the development of a community school.⁶ Parents and community volunteers were provided with training to assist in running the school and training as psychosocial caregivers and tutors. Transport for children living some distance from the school was arranged."

Sulu gubernatorial election procedure flawed because thousands of IDPs were not able to vote, says MNLF (May 2007)

Philippine Daily Enquirer, 18 May 2007

"The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) has called on the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to declare a failure of election in the entire province of Sulu. Habib Zain Jali, chair of the Bangsamoro People's Congress [said] that massive election cheating had already been monitored even before the actual voting took place.

[...]

Jali also said thousands of registered voters were disenfranchised as "they are still displaced and languishing in different evacuation centers."

There are 251,218 registered voters in Sulu's 18 towns. Those who failed to vote on Monday included MNLF commander Ustadz Habier Malik and his men, whom government forces have been pursuing for more than a month now.

[...]

The MNLF said at least 2,000 of its fighters were not able to cast their votes last Monday. Most of those displaced and who are still in evacuation centers are also known Misuari supporters. Pinky Suarez, Sulu coordinator of the Philippine National Red Cross, said thousands of families from Panamao, Kalingalang Caluang, Panglima Estino, Tongkil and Indanan towns are still in evacuation centers. [...]"

IDPs help each other where no humanitarian aid reaches them (March 2007)

- In Sulu, IDPs help each other in the absence of outside help.
- Despite this important initiative, lack of food and shelter persist and need to be addressed.

Tabang Mindanaw, March 2007:

"The IDP mothers of Kasambuhan [Sulu] are taking charge of the feeding program for their children. Since February 25, an average of 220 children is fed twice a day with nutritious porridge. On March 12 began the feeding for at least 300 more children in Bato Bato and on March 13 for another 150 children in Talatak. It can be shown that if properly organized, the IDPs can manage to fend for themselves with some quality humanitarian assistance that promotes transparency, discipline and participation. They take rightful pride in this even as their political and religious leaders, mandated relief agencies, and local CSOs have left a big gap in raising a humanitarian appeal on their behalf and helping appease their plight. The IDP women of Kasambuhan, Tagbak, have shown, in very modest but sincere ways, how much they care for their fellow IDPs from Kagay and other areas surrounding Marang. IDPs feel for each other's pain and there emanates an unspoken collective misery. This same anguish could be the beginning of community self-help in Sulu especially as one can only forecast further displacements due to continuing military operations. Military officials say that at least 10,000 military personnel are in Sulu not counting armed groups of political clans. One can only surmise that these armed groups are not there for mere peacekeeping, in its true sense.

Amazingly, the IDP women and men, if given the opportunity to organize can do much better in caring for one another than any relief agency could. For the Kasambuhan, Kagay and Maaligay, and Laum Saging communities, they have begun to organize themselves for a twice a day feeding program for their children and other vulnerable groups.

Cognizant that there is nothing much to be expected from local leaders and even fellow citizens, the IDPs realize they can only depend on themselves to help themselves. This is a proud work they must rightfully claim. With some modest food and feeding materials, they are able to cook porridge in the morning and afternoon to feed their hungry children. This reduces the parents' mental and emotional agony of having to worry about their children's well being. Whatever is left over is set aside for pregnant women and lactating mothers and senior citizens. With scarce resources, the weak or the most vulnerable have to be attended first.

Over time, with no nutritious food and exposure to sun and rain, increased morbidity can be anticipated even as there are already indications of ailments and malnourishment among the young and the weak. With further exposure to harsh elements and unsanitary conditions, it can be expected that ill health and even death will stalk these innocent victims sooner than anyone can anticipate."

Access to land

Presence of armed groups or military limits IDPs' access to their lands (August 2005)

- During 2005, IDPs forced from their homes by military operations in Maguindanao province were not given enough time to go back to their homes and work on their lands.
- Because of this and the risk of not having enough food for their family upon return from displacement, some farmers accept the risk of staying overnight in their villages.

Mindanews, 19 August 2005

"Since July 1, the Philippine Army has been trying to find and attack a band of the Abu Sayyaf Group or ASG who are reportedly in Maguindanao. Under harassment by continuing AFP operations, the ASG has split into small groups.

(...)

In Barangay Timar, we see a destroyed school, a mosque without spiritual life, military checkpoints. The village is dead. At the school we meet a group of women and children evacuees, all with serious faces. They don't expect help from us, but our inability to change their situation makes us sad.

Our attempt to laugh seems to be out of place here. What can you say to people who have fled their houses and their livestock and will be far from their fields when harvest time comes?

Some of the evacuees have been allowed to enter the area of search operations on the west side of the Ahan river. But they are only allowed in the area from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., a mechanism agreed on between the MILF and GRP. Eight hours. But it already takes the farmers some six hours just to reach their farms! Six hours from the allowed eight! To harvest, two hours is simply not enough. And with our new experiences with the Philippine kitchen, it is also clear that giving each family five kilos of rice is not enough government support to the evacuees.

(...)

It is evening and we are at the Notre Dame Peace Center in Cotabato City with some 40 Bantay Ceasefire members. We are discussing the situation of the farmer evacuees of Barangay Timar. Some farmers return to their farms and stay there overnight, accepting the risk to remain in an area that has not been declared "cleared" of terrorist elements. We talk about the security question for the evacuees— how will their security be ensured? It is a difficult question: Have you ever chosen between your personal security and the necessity to be able to feed your family in the coming months?"

Bantay Ceasefire, 28 July 2005

"As of July 28, 2005, despite the military operation in the area, some of the residents numbering to 137 individuals went home to harvest their farm products. The residents are allowed to enter and harvest their farm produce from 7:00 o'clock in the morning until 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Each individual will log their names to the outpost located in Sitio Project, Barangay Tamar, Talayan.

IDPs are poised to danger themselves just to harvest their products in order to survive. According to one of the barangay captain, their farm products are due for harvest this months and if ever the military operation still pursuing their mission and hampering them to go into their farms, he is afraid that their crops will be putrid and will result to hunger among themselves."

Most IDPs surveyed access agricultural land through tenant or sharecropping situations (June 2004)

- ACH survey shows that most IDPs living near Ligusan Marsh tend to access land through tenant or sharecropping.

ACH, June 2004, pp. 24-25

"Access to agriculture land and fishing water is widespread though the means of increasing production in both farming and fishing activities is affected by level of access to equipment and inputs. There are indications that the growing population has reduced the average size of the family plot.

In the table below we see that of the 217 families 183 are accessing land. Of those not (34 family) 19 are IDP families originally from Baguinged and now at Inug-ug. The land owners represent those families who access what they say is their own land and thus rent fee. These families are not sharecropping, nor are they using other means to access land. The '50/50' families are those who are sharecropping, with owner and partner sharing the cost of inputs and profit. The 30/70 is a rental arrangement wherein the cost of access to the land is 30% of the profit from the crop. Though all families may not hold title they are recognized as owner within the community. It is noticeable that the IDPs are accessing land through tenant or sharecropping situations.

Of the 217 respondents 183 said they had access to land.

Table 14. Land tenure situations

The average land accessed for farming is 1.04 hectare. Families in the poorer class are more likely to access .5 hectare or less. The families who have the greater risk are those with land that is at the lowest elevation and closest to the marsh, thus when the rising of the water they are the first to be inundated and the last to get dry.

Table 15. Land access

Land Access; Classification	Avg. size of land area, ha.
unaffected	1.05
IDP	0.80
Returnee	1.3
average	1.04

source: HH survey

In regards to fishing areas:

The marsh fishing area is freely accessed by all families. The area apparently is sufficiently large so as not to warrant control of the area. Reportedly net fishermen can go wherever they want within the barangay area of the marsh to fish. However many fishermen coordinate there positioning of the nets within the marsh."

ISSUES OF FAMILY UNITY, IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Identity and culture

Military offensive disrupts Ramadan (October 2007)

- Military offensive and “fire testing” in Basilan continued during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.
- Muslim communities feel that this shows disrespect for their faith and culture.

Davao Today, 18 October 2007

"Also, Suara called the “fire and test mission” that government troops were doing in some Muslim communities in Basilan as a sign of “disrespect” for the Muslim religious exercise. Reports reaching Lidasan’s group said Scout Rangers and the Special Forces were doing fire testing in Muslim communities in TipoTipo town’s barangay Ungkaya Pukan, displacing whole communities as a result.

“The incessant fighting makes it impossible for the communities to celebrate Ramadan,” said Lidasan, who always relate the Ramadan of her childhood as a time not only of prayer but also of experiencing “oneness” with the entire Muslim community.

“When entire communities get displaced by war, how are you going to celebrate Ramadan?” she asked. “Ramadan completely loses its meaning. Foremost in your mind, when you’re in an evacuation center, is how to survive, where to look for food, or to keep yourself from being harassed, or get hit by a bomb,” she said.

[...]

Instead, communities with increased military presence were worried that a bomb could fall any time and hit them, Lidasan said. There used to be a sort of “undeclared truce” between the government troops and the MILF rebels during the Ramadan in the past but it’s not happening anymore, she said.

She described the continued operations against the Abu Sayyaf in MILF territories as signs of “Islamophobia” among the military leadership and seemed to be designed to harass and alienate Muslims from the rest of the people. “As if, they want to tell the world, it’s completely natural to conduct an all-out war against Muslims during Ramadan,” she said. “Isn’t that a subtle way of demonizing the Muslim faith?”

Peace and reconciliation education are important factors to re-create functioning communities after displacement (March 2007)

Frederico et.al, March 2007, p.180:

The fourth project component was peace education and reconciliation. This component was conducted in cooperation with a local NGO (Kadtuntaya Foundation), which undertook training for community people. The curriculum included the history of the land and conflict, and analysed the causes of ongoing conflict. Those trained included Barangay (local government) officials who were essential for identifying opportunities in local government units to promote peace and to assist the IDPs gain resources and to engage in decision making. The focus of peace education facilitated rebuilding social capital by building capability for alternative conflict resolution strategies in communities and in families. In a survey undertaken following return to their place of origin, the number of IDPs who thought peace was possible in Mindanao increased from 12

percent (prior to return) to 64 percent. Peace promotion committees formed in local communities continued to meet once a month to deal with conflicts in the community.

Moro people surveyed describe AFP soldiers as showing little respect for their culture and religion (October 2006)

- Displaced Moro children surveyed depict AF soldiers as external aggressors who place the community's belief, livelihood and safety at risk.
- Men see AFP soldiers as showing extreme disrespect for the culture and religious belief of the Moro community.
- Large majority of the 440 Madrasah concentrate on Islamic and religious teachings, are not accredited by the catholic-dominated government and doesn't prepare well for integration into the Filipino employment market.
- The government public school system is seen as tools to propagate the dominant Christian and western values.

UNICEF, October 2006, p. 55

"Another unique implication which is particularly important given the centrality of Islam to the MILF and their communities is that these villages are also the site of mosques and madrasah (Arabic schools). When Moro children were asked to map their communities before, during and after war visited them, their respective mosques were prominently placed at the center of their drawings. AFP soldiers were drawn attacking these, with MILF mujahideen engaging them in battle in apparent defense of the mosques. These drawings depict the ideological dispositions of the Moro conflict as seen from the eyes of children, women and members of the Moro communities: government forces are regarded as external aggressors who place their community's beliefs, livelihood and safety at risk.

The frequent references to the effects of war on community mosques in the accounts of FGD respondents reflects the importance of Islam in their lives. Buka, 52, a farmer from Maguindano recalled that "The soldiers also ransacked our mosque and madrasah. They got the roof and wood, and used them to build their camp." (Sinira din ng military ang aming moske at madrasah. Kinuha ang atip at mga kahoy at ginamit nila sa paggawa ng kampo nila.)

For the Moro men respondents, the military clearly not only stole their properties and carelessly left unexploded ordnance and mines in their communities; they also showed extreme disrespect to the culture and beliefs of the community by destroying mosques. A great insult was apparently added to an already serious social injury when the military, according to the respondents, even forced them to work on building a military outpost using the materials of their revered and holy structure. This particular structure was also especially significant for being the mosque of Hashim Salamat's youth, where he first learned of the teachings of Allah.

Mosques and the madrasah have a special relevance for the communities: they symbolize and materially manifest the culture, beliefs, and struggles of the Moro people. Like the adults of their communities, the children also accord special meaning to their mosques and likewise speak about their destruction during the war. Ahmed, 11 years old, regarded the destruction as one of his unforgettable experiences: "When fighting took place here, we evacuated. Our house was burned and we were sad that the chickens were lost and that our house was riddled with bullets. We went back here in 2003. We were not able to forget our mosque." (Nong nag ka-gyera dito, nagbakwet kami. Nasunog ang bahay namin, malungkot kami na nawala ang manok pero tinamaan ng bala ang bahay. Nagbalik kami dito noong 2003. Hindi namin makalimutan ang moske.)"

WB, July 2006, p. 7

"An important aspect of education in Mindanao is the Madrasah that offers religious and cultural teaching with Arabic as the medium of instruction. There are 440 such schools in Mindanao with a pupil population of 90,000. A small proportion of these schools (44) are accredited by the government and offer the national basic education curriculum along with traditional religious education. The large majority, however, concentrate only on Islamic and religious teachings. Graduates of these schools typically find it difficult to find employment because they are weak in Filipino, English and numeracy¹⁴. The majority of the FGD participants highlighted the importance of Madrasah education and indicated that they consider it essential to ensure the preservation of their religious and cultural values. The common perception among most of the communities visited is that the curriculum followed by the public school system will, over time, submerge their distinctive culture and values beneath the dominant Christian and Western values¹⁵. An FGD participant from Bangco, Matungao, Lanao del Norte commented, "The DepEd (Department of Education) model of education is actually a trap designed to westernize our young people and wean them away from their culture and traditions. It is a government program to entice Muslim youth away from the teachings of Islam." "

Displacement undermines social ties within a community (October 2006)

- Cycle of war and displacement has a very negative effect on the community's social ties.
- Sudden and large infusions of humanitarian aid can have the unintended consequence of stoking differences within the community and creating frictions between families and individuals.

UNICEF, October 2006, p. 122

"The research team also found that one of the most crucial periods for intervention is during the post-evacuation stage when displaced communities are beginning to rebuild. This is most difficult in prolonged cases of displacement where the community is damaged both physically and psychologically. The cycle of wars in the Central Mindanao areas has not just destroyed much of the economic infrastructure in the areas of conflict, it is also straining to the breaking point the social ties that bind people together as members of a community. Indeed, some accounts indicate that among the unintended consequences of sudden and large infusions of well-meaning humanitarian and rehabilitation aid are the stoking of differences within the community, the fostering of individualism and, in effect, the undermining of existing community structures while exacerbating existing frictions between families and individuals.

The usual opportunists preying on the desperation of a people who had lost almost everything were also in evidence. Maguindanao FGD participants, for instance, mentioned the various pyramiding scams targetting the already desperate poor, which falsely promised quick pay-offs in exchange for "membership fees".

Family unity

Displaced children face the risk of family-fragmentation during displacement (October 2006)

- During the sudden evacuations, parents and children can be momentarily separated.

- Fragmentation of families also occur when displacement follows individually perceived threats in the context of counter-insurgency operations against the NPA.

UNICEF, October 2006, p. 59; p. 96

"The situation of IDPs is extremely difficult. Fighting engulfs people in their own villages and forces them to evacuate. Residents are driven out and flee for their lives amidst automatic gunfire, air strikes, artillery bombardments and deafening explosions. They scamper for cover even as they leave behind homes, fields, crops, animals and many other things essential for their economic survival – with little guarantee that these will be recovered when and if they are able to return. Parents and children are even momentarily separated. Yet while the refuge they find in far-off evacuation centers may be free from fighting, they face new struggles against unsanitary conditions and disease, and indeed for their very survival.

In these cases, family and kinship structures have to some extent shown some resilience. Displaced residents have in some instances been able to move and re-settle together, although there are also families which have been fragmented in the course of displacements. Displaced people have also found themselves alone in unfamiliar locales and away from social and economic networks of support. These are most often the situations when families rely even more on children entering into paid work. Unfortunately, even those who are eventually able to return to their homes and farms may find these destroyed or overgrown, and they face the difficult task of rebuilding the economic and social capital that their families had painstakingly built up but lost in the turmoil.

(...)

The research team also heard accounts of mothers separated from husbands and sons fleeing to avoid perceived threats against them. In Mindoro Oriental, the young teenager Sam regularly helped the NPA whenever they were in or near their barrio. As a result, according to his 50-year-old mother, Lita, the military started asking around for him so they made him move elsewhere. Lita said that she has not seen him for over a year since he left their village and that she has mixed feelings about this: "I want my son to come home, but I [also] don't want him to because I'm still scared... I want to be with him again..." (*Gusto ko sanang pauwiin ang anak ko, ay ayaw ko, takot pa rin ako e... Gusto ko na siya makasama...*)

There are also mothers among the evacuees from Leyte who have become separated from their children. Buding, 39, and her husband left hurriedly when they were warned that soldiers were coming for them. In Manila she wept: "I feel sad that I haven't seen my baby who was only seven months old when I left." (*Nalulungkot ako sa hindi ko pa nakikitang anak kong nawalay sa akin. Seven months lang noon.*) Rose, 49, is in the same situation and said that she and her husband left so hastily that they did not even get a chance to see their three children. She recounted how she spoke to them over the cellphone and, crying, they likened the atmosphere in their home to that of a wake for the dead. "

PROPERTY ISSUES

General

Destruction of crops, homes and property is recurrent during fighting and displacement (August 2008)

- In August 2008, North Cotabato villagers returning homes after days of fighting between MILF rebels and the army found many of their houses destroyed and animals and equipment looted.
- Rural assets such as land, livestock and plants are often threatened by armed conflicts and prolonged displacement. Damage can be a collateral effect or come in the form of intentional looting and destruction.
- The destruction of homes, generally accompanied by the looting of property by government forces, is a common feature in conflict-affected provinces such as Cotabato and Maguindanao.
- Temporary disruption of agricultural production cycles due to displacement can compromise entire harvests.
- Close to 200 houses were burnt during the fighting that took place in Maguindanao province in July 2007.
- Many farmer-evacuees also lost their farm implements and animals

IRIN, 17 August 2008

"Thousands of villagers displaced by fighting between government troops and Muslim separatist rebels have been trickling back to their devastated communities on Mindanao Island, but tension remains high and the process of rebuilding could take a long time, government and humanitarian officials said.

(...)

Government forces used heavy artillery, ground assaults as well as air bombardments to flush out the rebels, triggering two days of intense fighting that left nearly 30 rebels, six civilians and at least two soldiers dead. But the fighting also left many villages in ruins, with the retreating guerrillas looting and burning homes."

AFP, 16 August 2008

"Fear still hounds them," said Manuel Rabara, mayor of nearby Midsayap town where many villagers remain in evacuation centres.

(...)

More than 200 houses were burned and numerous farm animals and equipment stolen when the MILF occupied the area, leaving unexploded bombs behind as they fled, the civil defence office said."

Pinoy Press, 24 December 2007

"When the Arroyo government declared a stop of military operations (SOMO), a feeling of relief and hope swept over the residents of 12 villages in Surigao del Sur who evacuated their homes and farms last month due to massive military operations.

"Dili ko katuo nga makauli nami karon, nakahilak ko tungod sa kalipay nga akong gibati apan nabalaka gihapon kay sa among pagbalik didto wala pay kasiguroan ang tanan. (I can't believe we are going to go home. I am crying because I am so happy, yet I am worried because we still lack security in our return)," an elderly woman disclosed to Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Watch (IPHR Watch) when asked her about her feelings that she and her family can now go home.

However, the residents of Han-ayan, Manluy-a, and Simuwao as well as other communities felt a deep pain and frustration again as they saw how their homes and farms had been destroyed so ruthlessly. All houses were forcibly entered and searched, the door locks were destroyed, their belongings were searched, their animals were gone, and garbage was scattered everywhere.

No respect was shown to their humanity as Lumads and settler farmers, and no respect or protection of their properties was demonstrated. Ironically, residents of Han-ayan had even asked the military to look after their homes and belongings, as well as the schools, before they left for the evacuation centers."

UNICEF, October 2006, p. 108

"Rural assets such as land, livestock and plants are products of months and even years of agricultural labor by a rural family and the community. Months of unrelenting labor in clearing, cleaning and irrigation is invested for land to start being productive. Significant efforts are also needed to maintain the land's productivity with, for instance, a sudden overgrowth of weeds sufficient to ruin a harvest many months of toil in the making. The same is true of farm animals and livestock and it takes months or even years of feeding and looking after chickens, goats, pigs and carabaos before they are economically useful.

Destructive armed conflict threatens to wipe out this hard-earned capital and to divest poor rural families of critical sources of livelihood not just in the immediate period but also far into the future. This may come in the form of collateral damage. Coconut trees are felled by bombs, carabaos are shot, and crops abandoned as residents flee communities that have become war zones. Unfortunately, the damage also comes in the form of widespread looting or even intentional destruction of crops, livestock, agricultural machinery and homes. Almost all the research sites visited lamented the military's reckless trampling on their crops (in the countryside, relatively open fields are the easiest paths to take instead of having to navigate roundabout narrow paths or thick foliage).

Mindanews, 14 July 2006

"A total of 4,456 families were displaced, according to a consolidated report of humanitarian agencies as of July 11. As of July 13, there is no information as yet exactly how many evacuees have remained in the evacuation centers, with their relatives, or have continued to be mobile and how many have returned home. "Mobile evacuees" are those who do not stay in evacuation centers or relatives' houses but carry with them makeshift tents which they pitch under a coconut tree in the villages or by the road in the town's poblacion.

Those who returned to their villages to find their houses still standing are lucky. A total of 192 houses were burned, including a ceasefire monitoring post in Barangay Tapihan, Shariff Aguak.

Owners of burned houses are still awaiting."

IID, 13 July 2006

"Now that peace, albeit fragile, is in place in the 13 conflict affected villages in four towns of Maguindanao, the MPC and the Bantay Ceasefire once more appeal to President Arroyo to immediately order government line agencies, particularly the Social Welfare, Health, Education, Interior and Local Government, and Public Works and Highways, to immediately and collectively address the relief, medical, rehabilitation and other needs of over 22,000 individuals (4,000 families) displaced by the nine-day fighting.

(...)

There also are some 200 houses burned and many farmer-evacuees have lost their farm implements and animals to the armed men who have either carted their farm machineries and equipment away or butchered their farm animals.

At least four rice mills were burned by armed men who allegedly took the rice mills' engines before setting the buildings on fire. There were reports of hand tractors owned by civilians that have also been stolen by these armed men. We can only surmise who these armed elements are."

Low-intensity fighting in NPA guerrilla fronts leads to smaller-scale destruction, although property and livestock of IDPs is often looted (October 2006)

- Confrontations between the AFP and the NPA tends to be of a low-intensity nature with fighting taking place away from populated centers. As result, recovery from attacks and displacement is relatively easier if compared to AFP-MILF positional fighting.
- Shorter periods of displacement make the return and recovery easier and a greater degree of normalcy can more quickly be restored in the NPA guerrilla front areas in the absence of intrusive military operations
- The exception is Leyte evacuees, who chose to semi-permanently displace themselves because they felt threatened for being identified as supporters of the NPA and who move into urban areas with little perspective for return.
- In October 2006, Karapatan, a human right NGO, reported that AFP soldiers in hunt for NPA rebels had turned five villages in Calatrava into no-man's land and committed widespread looting of the displaced property and livestock

UNICEF, October 2006, pp.110-111

"The impact on civilians in areas of guerrilla warfare is qualitatively different even if sharing some essential similarities with the situation in areas of positional conflicts. "Recovery" in the sense of rebuilding economic capital generally seems relatively easier because the scale of destruction due to fighting or of deterioration due to forced abandonment tends to be less. The much lower intensity of fighting away from populated centers – compared to prolonged massive attacks on MILF fixed camps-cum-communities – also means less damage to personal properties and village infrastructure.

Shorter periods of displacements mean shorter periods of abandonment of farms and, assuming that a return to regular work routines is possible, mean less work to get these back into working order. At the same time, however, short-term IDPs have also complained about returning to their

communities to find livestock stolen and produce consumed; stores ransacked and personal belongings stolen. Indeed there were those who said that government forces brazenly did these before their very eyes even before they had started evacuating (Surigao del Sur).

None of the non-Moro areas have yet been visited by hostilities on the scale and regularity seen in Central Mindanao so there does not yet seem to be the demoralizing feeling of perpetually arrested development. However the particularity to the areas in NPA guerrilla fronts is the pervasiveness of military counter-insurgency operations. As already noted elsewhere in this study, state forces are unable to enter, stay in and exit MILF camps in the way that they can do so, more or less, in NPA guerrilla fronts. Hence notwithstanding the “lesser” impact in terms of the consequences of direct fighting, there are instead the pervasive and lingering effects and insecurities associated with long-drawn-out military operations.

While there is more space for recovery insofar as the effect of relatively “low impact” armed conflict is mitigated, this has to be qualified by whether or not there are military counter-insurgency operations in the area and whether these are still at the “clearing” and “holding” stages which seem to correspond to harsher treatment of civilians suspected of supporting the NPA. In any case, it does seem that a greater degree of normalcy can more quickly be restored in the NPA guerrilla front areas in the absence of intrusive military operations.

The exception to this is in the case of the Leyte evacuees who felt threatened for being identified as supporters of the CPP-NPA-NDFP and so packed up and left. These were families that did not face severe shooting battles in their communities, but who nonetheless chose to semi-permanently displace themselves, some leaving as hurriedly and frantically as if there was on-going fighting in their midst. Whatever the specific details, the common result is a drastic change in these families’ futures where they have left behind or even sold their homes, productive farm land, and other income-earning property to take their chances in urban centers in the Visayas region or as far away as in the National Capital Region (NCR)."

Bulatlat, November 2006

"Karapatan, which conducted a three-day fact finding mission in the affected villages, reported that troops of the Philippine Army's 11th Infantry Battalion, Scout Rangers, and suspected members of the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB) bombed, scoured, and emptied the five hinterland villages of Calatrava in the “hunt for NPA rebels” from Oct. 11 to 13.

Citing local testimonies, Karapatan said that an oversized platoon of army troopers arrived in Barangay (village) Telim, Calatrava at dawn on Oct. 11. Disguised as NPA guerrillas, they asked local folks where their NPA comrades were. Made to believe that they were NPA guerrillas, some local folks pointed to a nearby hill. After a while, the local folks overheard successive bursts of gunfire.

At around 8-11 a.m., two Huey helicopters hovered over the place and started strafing suspected rebel lairs. This was followed by a Tora-Tora fighter plane which bombed the place.

From Oct. 11 to 13, the army troopers scoured the villages of Telim, Cruz, Malanog, Mansaka and Malatas, and forced village folks to leave their houses and farms and evacuate to village centers to avoid being caught in the crossfire.

‘No man’s land’

Army troopers practically turned the five villages into a “no man’s land,” said Cana.

Gaspar Villamor, a 55-year-old farmer of Sitio (sub-village) Pagtaguan, Telim who stayed in his house and farm said that "my house and that of my brother-in-law Alfredo Ilegar were turned by the military (into) their post while operating against alleged NPA rebels in surrounding areas."

Villamor said a platoon army troopers and RPA elements occupied their houses during the operations, and prevented them from going around and attending to their farms.

He further alleged that 15 fighting cocks he's been breeding for sale, a kaldero (cooking pot) and shoes worth P500 sent by his daughter working in Bacolod were also stolen by the troopers.

Cana also denounced the military operations, which he said have resulted in mass dislocations and evacuations of innocent civilians, and disrupted the farming and other economic activities in the villages of Telim, Malanog, Cruz, Mansaka and Malatas, all in Calatrava."

Government agrees to award reparations for the properties lost or destroyed by reasons of the conflict (September 2002)

- The agreement on humanitarian, rehabilitation, and development issues stipulates that the government shall award reparations for the properties lost or destroyed by reasons of the conflict upon reasonable proof thereon as mutually verified and acknowledged by both parties.

UNDP 23 September 2002, p. 19

"The latest agreement on humanitarian, rehabilitation, and development issues stipulates that it will safeguard the observance of international humanitarian law, respect for internationally recognized human rights, and fundamental freedoms for all persons. These are the criteria and standards that should guide the monitoring mechanism of Article VI of the agreement to be undertaken by the joint Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH).

The agreement also assures full access for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) 'in accordance with ICRC's standard operating procedures'. It stipulates that 'in conformity with international humanitarian law, each party shall provide information, through the tracing mechanism of the ICRC, to families of all persons who are unaccounted for.'

They also agree that the 'parties shall pave the way for the immediate return of evacuees to their places of origin and provide all necessary financial/material and technical assistance to those evacuated for them to begin a new life. The GRP shall award reparations for the properties lost or destroyed by reasons of the conflict upon reasonable proof thereon as mutually verified and acknowledged by both parties.' (Article V, Numeral 3)."

PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

General

Return and recovery in Moro areas compounded by widespread sense of uncertainty and helplessness (October 2006)

- Climate of fear due to military presence discourage return and prolong the recovery process.
- Moro areas have seen cycles of destructive large-scale shooting wars since the 1970s that have resulted in a situation of perpetually arrested development making it more difficult for returnees to recover from their displacement, in particular after long-term displacements.
- Significant number of IDPs will not return to their places of origin after leaving the evacuation centers but will instead seek accommodation in other communities. Others intend to return but will wait until the chances to regain a livelihood increase.
- Further depletion of their livelihoods will have to be avoided by hard work and inclusion of women, children, and even the elderly in the labor markets.
- Unfinished character of the conflict means that the uncertainty of life in areas in and around former MILF camps will continue to shape people's decisions even after the displaced families have returned to their homes and farms.
- Planning horizons of people in these communities will tend to be short and long-term investments in farms and communal facilities will be limited.

UNICEF, October 2006, pp. 109-110

"Recovery can only begin when the community's situation is more or less stable – certainly not before actual fighting ends and in many cases only after the deeply disruptive presence of military operations. This disruptive presence is most brazenly manifest in active and outright violations of human rights. These need not even be violent although deadly physical attacks in any case apparently do happen. They can include such military control measures as a community "census" where soldiers go house-to-house listing family members and probing for indications of being NPA supporters (Mindoro Oriental); having farmers sign the barangay logbook so that the military can keep track of their movements (Leyte); and remote households being forced to move into a common area near the village center for closer monitoring (Capiz). The general climate of fear also discourages an immediate return to more normal work and social habits and patterns, thus prolonging the recovery process.

The return to some level of normalcy is most difficult in the case of long-term IDPs who are unable to quickly regain or rebuild the economic capital they had previously accumulated but had lost due to the outbreak of fighting in their villages.

Arrested development

The problem is most severe in the Moro areas which have seen cycles of destructive large-scale shooting wars since the 1970s that have resulted in a situation of perpetually arrested development. The damage to farms and property is severe, which means that much greater effort is needed to rebuild them. However, the effort to rebuild itself often becomes half-hearted because of the fear (or expectation) that the inevitable outbreak of fighting again will just destroy any hard-earned gains anyway.

Indeed, the cycle of war for the past three decades seems to have set a new low and lasting level of “war-time normalcy” compared to the pre-1970s situation. Economic and social recovery in MILF camps seems not so much a return to some pre-war peace but rather to a situation more akin to a momentary lull in fighting. Community members have lamented that they feel like repeaters in school perpetually stuck in “grade one” and unable to move forward; the collapse in morale is palpable. Already long-suffering from conditions of poverty which breed these conflicts in the first place, they are pushed by large-scale fighting even further into a state of destitution. And when the fighting ends all they have to return to is at best the low-level equilibrium far beneath anything that might be realizable during a genuine extended peace.

A parent in North Cotabato articulated their predicament: “Because of the conflict here in Mindanao, we always begin with nothing. We are attacked, we lose our properties; our homes, mosque and madrasah are burned. When we return, then we start over with nothing. People will say, how will these people govern when all they have to show for themselves is the single piece of cloth that they wear. Yes, but only because our situation here year in and year out is that we are in the midst of war.”

(...)

The sense of uncertainty and helplessness that sometimes emerged in the war-torn Moro communities visited is stark and had no comparable equivalent in the less war-afflicted non-Moro areas. Respondents told of the loss of family members, the burning of homes, uprooting from communities, damage to crops and fields, destruction of roads and agricultural infrastructure, absence of basic social services, and a persistent marginalization from “mainstream” political, economic and national life. They also spoke of outright violent attacks against them precisely because of the most deeply felt center of their identities – being Muslim. The sense of despair has not spared even children and 15-year-old Nasriah of North Cotabato said with resignation: “I really don’t know who’s at fault because it’s a difficult question. Even if I ask my parents, they don’t know either. They just keep quiet because they can’t do anything about it. Yes, I accept that when there’s fighting again we’re going to evacuate, and we’re going to accept everything that happens. There’s really nothing we can do.”(...)

WB 3 March 2003, pp. 33-34

"An important feature of the major GRP-MILF confrontation is that it was in the nature of an attempt by the Philippine military to displace the MILF from its camps and strongholds. But these camps also happened to be nested in Muslim communities. The displacement of armed MILF combatants, thus, also led to the displacement of civilian populations. At the end of 2001, close to one million people were displaced by the GRP-MILF war. It is now necessary, however, to help the civilian population return to these places of former conflict and rebuild their communities and livelihoods.

Findings from surveys in Central Mindanao reveal that a significant number of IDPs will not return to their places of origin. After leaving evacuation centers, these people will seek to be accommodated in other communities. Others will return only once they see that the chances of restoring their livelihoods have increased. The first welcome step that the Government has done in this respect is to rebuild homes that have been destroyed. Bridges, road madrasahs, public schools, health centers, potable water systems and farm implements, however, were also destroyed. Carabaos and harvests have been lost or else sold or depleted during the interim when people had to flee their homes. Until normalcy returns to rural economies, people will need to work very hard just to prevent the further depletion of their livelihoods in a setting where rural credit flows have been disrupted by failures in harvests, and as a result of the knowledge of creditors that many have sunk too far below the surface to make the repayment of past and new loans a priority. The Social Assessment reveal that women, children, and even the elderly have had to join the labor markets in response to the disaster brought about by the disruption of their livelihoods and communities.

A second important aspect of the recent conflict is its largely unfinished character. Many displaced people worry about their security and about the possibility of a repeat of the armed conflict in their communities of origin. This must be particularly so for those whose communities are within marching distance of the dispersed MILF bands or of troops of the Philippine military stationed in the former rebel camps. Communities in and around former MILF camps remain precarious because, being strategic locations, these will continue to invite contest between the warring parties. Meanwhile, the uncertainty of life in these areas will continue to shape people's decisions even after the displaced families have returned to their homes and farms. Planning horizons of people in these communities will tend to be short and long-term investments in farms and communal facilities that would otherwise be worthwhile may be forgone. Yet, it is also probably true that communities that have been assisted in investing in their livelihoods and communities will be more hesitant than others to engage in activities that would increase the risks of another disruption –e.g., participating in aggressive pre-emptive moves against groups and forces that are perceived to be hostile. This is an idea that comes from young people encountered by the Social Assessment teams."

Return

End of fighting allows the gradual return of North Cotabato's IDPs (August 2008)

- As of 19 August, NDCC reported 104,000 people remaining displaced out of a total of 164,000.
- End of fighting between MILF and government forces has allowed the return of thousands of displaced families to their homes in North Cotabato.
- According to the governor of North Cotabato province, some 20,000 families returned home, although many went back to the evacuation centers because their homes were destroyed.
- Many IDPs are reported to be still too afraid to return.

NDCC, 19 August 2008

"From the 20,821 families/104,105 persons totally affected in Aleosan, Midsayap, Pikit, Lubungan, Tulunan and Pigcawayan in North Cotabato, 5,139 families/25,895 persons are still in 61 evacuation centers. There are now 14,580 families/72,900 persons who are either housebased and or staying with relatives. The decrease in number of persons staying inside and outside evacuation center is due to the return of IDPs to their places of origin. DSWD reported that 20,821 families/104,105 persons had been served."

IRIN, 17 August 2008

"Thousands of villagers displaced by fighting between government troops and Muslim separatist rebels have been trickling back to their devastated communities on Mindanao Island, but tension remains high and the process of rebuilding could take a long time, government and humanitarian officials said.

Brig-Gen Jorge Segovia, deputy chief of the armed forces' command centre, said more than 15 of the 22 villages illegally occupied by separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels have now been cleared of unexploded munitions, booby traps, and land mines planted by fleeing gunmen.

(...)

WFP country director Stephen Anderson said field staff had reported that many of the evacuees were too afraid to go home after the military reported having recovered two improvised explosive devices in two separate public areas in North Cotabato.

"It is putting a strain on them to remain in this type of situation. But at the same time, people fear for their lives," Anderson said.

(...)

Loreta Cabaya, mayor of Aleosan town, where most of the burned houses were, said he personally had led some 3,000 civilians back to their homes. He added that many others wanted assurances from the government that troops would be allowed to stay behind and help pro-government militiamen in street patrols, before they return."

Reuters, 15 August 2008

"Displaced farmers in the southern Philippines returned home to rubble and ash on Friday after fierce fighting between government troops and Muslim separatists destroyed their villages.

"It's been like this as far as I can remember, we build houses then fighting occurs, we leave and return home and build our houses again." said Rogelio, whose house in Midsayap town, around 900 km (560 miles) south of Manila in North Cotabato province, was burned down.

"Being alive after all the troubles just makes me thankful despite the difficulties," said the 45-year old farmer, who declined to give his last name.

(...)

Displaced families have started to go home but many, discovering their houses in ruins, have headed back to evacuation centers or the homes of relatives and friends.

Jesus Sacdalan, governor of North Cotabato said almost half of some 20,000 families had gone home but some were returning to evacuation centres "because there's nothing to go back to".

Most of the displaced live off subsistence farming and their homes were made from light materials such as bamboo and coconut leaves."

Reuters, 14 August 2008

"Families displaced by fighting between government troops and Muslim separatists in the southern Philippines slowly returned to their bombed-out villages on Thursday but many remained in shelters, too frightened to leave.

About 160,000 people had fled their farmlands in North Cotabato province and adjoining areas since last weekend to escape military airstrikes and mortar fire aimed at Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels holed up in the area.

Military operations ended on Wednesday and the army is trying to coax families back, escorted by armoured vehicles and troops.

"We expect a considerable number of people to return home today. Since late Wednesday they were slowly going back, we are assuring them of their safety," said Lieutenant-Colonel Julieta Ando, an army spokesman.

The local government said about 20,000 people had made their way back but there were conflicting reports on numbers and some aid agencies said many refugees were still too frightened to leave.

Only about 10 percent of the displaced are in evacuation centres with most people staying with relatives or friends.

"The security situation has improved but it will probably take a bit of time before people feel secure enough to return home en masse," Stephen Anderson, country director for the World Food Programme (WFP), told Reuters."

Lumad families in Surigao del Sur, displaced in November 2007, return towards the end of the year (December 2007)

- Lumad families return to ransacked homes, with food and animals gone and the tribal schools desecrated.

Pinoy Press, 24 December 2007

"Nearly 2,500 Manobo and some Visayan settlers returned to their homes in twelve communities of Surigao Sur on Wednesday after living for a month in overcrowded evacuation centers.

"We are so happy to be able to celebrate Christmas in our homes and not in the incomprehensible situation of the evacuation centers," declared a community representative during a short program in Diatagon Gym before they rode dump trucks back to their respective villages in Lianga, Tago, San Augustin, and San Miguel.

However, upon return, the lumads found their homes had been forcibly entered and ransacked, their belongings scattered anywhere like a storm had passed through, and garbage left behind. Their rice and animals were gone, their cooperative stores had been looted, and their tribal schools desecrated."

Slow return of IDPs in Sulu (May 2006)

- In May 2006, some 4,000 IDPs originally displaced in 2000 were reported to be have been unable to return due to military restrictions.
- Following the conflict that displaced some 85,000 in Sulu between February and April 2005, there are contradictory reports as the number of people who remain displaced.
- A Moro women group reported in September 2005 that thousands of families remained displaced.
- ICRC's visit in June reported that the vast majority had returned to their home, although it didn't give any numbers.

4,000 people still displaced in Sulu 6 years later

The Inquirer, 2 May 2006

"More than 4,000 people have failed to return to their homes in four villages in Patikul town, five years after they were displaced by military offensives against the Abu Sayyaf.

In September 2000, Maj. Gen. Romeo Tolentino, chief of the 7th Infantry Division, ordered the offensives against the Abu Sayyaf bandits involved in the kidnapping of 20 mostly foreign tourists from a beach resort in Sipadan, Malaysia.

More than 117,000 people were displaced by the military operations in the towns of Patikul, Indanan, Parang, Panglima Estino, Talipao, Maimbung and Panamao.

No man's land

But Maydelyn Bahjin, social welfare and development provincial director, said a number of villages continued to be isolated or considered "no man's land" at night.

Bahjin said at least 4,000 people had not returned to their homes in Barangays Kabuntakas, Kandabal, Maligay and Darayan in Patikul. "Some of them are still residing in Danag, Kantipat and Jolo towns and until now we are still working for the (military) clearance so the residents could already return to their places," she said."

Policy

Tripoli Peace Agreement of June 2001 provides for the return of evacuees and their rehabilitation (September 2002)

- In May 2002, the GRP and MILF signed the "Implementing guidelines on the humanitarian, rehabilitation and development aspects of the GRP—MILF Tripoli Agreement on Peace of 2001" and committed to ensure the return of IDPs to their homes with all necessary financial/material and technical assistance to make the return sustainable.
- The GRP also agreed to award reparations for the properties lost or destroyed by reasons of the conflict upon reasonable proof thereon as mutually verified and acknowledged by both parties.
- Return of evacuees and reparations were not the original product of the Implementing Guidelines of May, 2002 but rather stemmed from the Tripoli Peace Agreement of June 2001.
- In June 2001, both parties signed the Tripoli Peace Agreement where explicit reference was made to the need to assist IDPs return and recover.

UNDP 23 September 2002, p. 20

"The latest agreement on humanitarian, rehabilitation, and development issues stipulates that it will safeguard the observance of international humanitarian law, respect for internationally recognized human rights, and fundamental freedoms for all persons. These are the criteria and standards that should guide the monitoring mechanism of Article VI of the agreement to be undertaken by the joint Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH).

The agreement also assures full access for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) 'in accordance with ICRC's standard operating procedures'. It stipulates that 'in conformity with international humanitarian law, each party shall provide information, through the tracing mechanism of the ICRC, to families of all persons who are unaccounted for.'

They also agree that the 'parties shall pave the way for the immediate return of evacuees to their places of origin and provide all necessary financial/material and technical assistance to those evacuated for them to begin a new life. The GRP shall award reparations for the properties lost or destroyed by reasons of the conflict upon reasonable proof thereon as mutually verified and acknowledged by both parties.' (Article V, Numeral 3).

(...)

On the other side the GRP agrees to relieve the evacuee situation and allow a return to the places occupied prior to 'All Out War', as well as to pay reparations for properties lost and damages sustained. In sum, a reversal of the effects on the population of the 'All Out War'. Of

course, the MILF as an organization would not return to the situation 'antebellum' in that there would be no resurrection of the armed camps, exclusion of the State, and MILF territorial control. (...)

On the other side, some national and local officials, broad sectors of the AFP and ex-President Estrada, all protested the return of the evacuees to their places of origin and the payment of reparations. A role for an MILF entity in rehabilitation and development was also questioned. It was argued that these measures would make in vain the sacrifices of AFP comrades in arms who fell on the field of battle to take the MILF camps as part of the All Out War policy. It was also seen as rewarding the MILF despite their defeat in the All Out War. The return of evacuees and reparations were not the original product of the Implementing Guidelines of May, 2002 but rather stemmed from the Tripoli Peace Agreement of June 2001 (Literal B 'Rehabilitation Aspect, Section 3').

See also:

§ Full text of the "[Implementing Guidelines on the Humanitarian, Rehabilitation and Development Aspects of the GRP-MILF Tripoli Agreement on Peace of 2001](#)" (May 2002)

§ Full text of the [Tripoli Peace Agreement](#) (June 2001)

Obstacles to return

Absence of peace and security is often the main reason for not returning (March 2007)

- According to the media sources, less than half of the 6,000 people displaced by rebel-military fighting in Midsayap, Cotabato province have returned to their homes 5 weeks after being displaced. Main obstacle to return is continuous insecurity.
- In July 2003, 5 months after the start of fighting, the municipalities of Pikit and Pagalungan remained highly militarized with MILF and AFP troops.
- The repositioning of troops further away of the barangays, as suggested by residents, would ease the return of the displaced as it would diminish the risk of them being caught in the crossfire.
- According to a World Bank assessment, the main reason for not wanting to return home among IDPs displaced around North Cotabato was the lack of peace and security

ABS-CBN, 5 March 2007

"Less than half of the almost 6,000 Muslim and Christian evacuees displaced by rebel-military encounters here have returned to their villages.

Ramil Timan, chairman of Barangay Mudseng where soldiers and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels figured in running gunbattles last Jan. 25 to 27, said Mudseng has since remained a "ghost town," because evacuees were reluctant to return to their homes due to marauding Moro gunmen reportedly bent on grabbing their lands.

Timan said he has told Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza during a dialogue Thursday that they want the joint ceasefire committee, the police and the military to establish a "peace-keeping contingent" in the area to ensure the safety of villagers.

"My constituents are so afraid of returning to their homes because they don't feel secure from armed groups," Timan told reporters Saturday.

Officials of Barangay Nes here, among them Muslim village leaders, said tension in their villages and in Mudseng escalated anew last Wednesday after gunmen straffed houses at the boundary of the two areas, seriously wounding a mother and her nine-year-old child."

Notre Dame University & Commission on Population, p. 31

"An overwhelming number of respondents (85%) in Parang expressed intention to stay permanently in their present site but only 29% in Pikit declared the same intention. Among the reasons mentioned were the destruction of their houses and means of livelihood at the site of origin; livelihood and education of children at the host communities; and fear of recurring armed conflicts at their sites of origin.

Lack of security was a major reason for not wanting to return. This was an obstacle pointed by Balay Inc. as it cited the presence of landmines, the activities of the para-military units and the recruitment of CAFGUs, the burning of houses and government buildings by the rebels and the "anti-terrorist" operations of the military (IIAHR)."

Bantay Ceasefire, 1 August 2003

"The mission notes that at the time of the mission on July 13-15, five months after the February assault in Buliok, the municipalities of Pikit, Pagalungan and even the adjacent municipality of Pagalungan remain highly militarized. There are three Marine brigades in Mindanao; two Marine brigades (the First and Second Brigades) were deployed to Pikit and Pagalungan (the Third Marine Brigade is in Sulu). Even if the Marine officers claim the deployed brigades are undersized, the mission was not able to get exact deployment figures.

The army's 40th Infantry Battalion also maintains headquarters in Pikit poblacion.

Pikit, Pagalungan and Pagagawan are also under the operational area of the MILF's 105th Base Command which claims to have 20,000 armed regulars. However, the 105th Base Command's area also extends to North Cotabato (Tulunán, Matalam, Carmen, Kidapawan, Banisilan and Alamada); Sultan Kudarat (Columbio) and Maguindanao (Sultan sa Barongis, SK Pendatun).

Aside from these armed groups, the local government units are also recruiting and training CVOs in Pikit, with the first batch of 150 CVOs completing their training last June 26. CAFGUs are also being trained under the army's 40 IB.

In contrast, Pikit, Pagalungan and Pagagawan have an estimated combined population of about 140,000 or roughly 15,000 families.

Confronted with this militarization, many residents proposed to the mission that the military eventually withdraws or at least reposition away from civilian communities. Kagawad Ismael Usman of Brgy. Kudal said: 'Now that there is a ceasefire, the military and MILF should go back to their camps so that the civilians can also go back to their own barangays.'

The presence of troops render meaningless the March 4, 2003 declaration by the Cabinet of 15 barangays in Pikit as 'zones of peace', and the well-publicized June 13, 2003 declaration by the President of Brgy. Inug-og, Pagalungan, as a 'sanctuary of peace'."

Many of the North Cotabato displaced are still too afraid to return homes despite the end of fighting (August 2008)

AFP, 16 August 2008

"Many villagers who fled their homes in the southern Philippines due to Muslim rebel attacks, said Saturday they were still too scared to return even though the guerrillas have been expelled.

Their fears persisted even as military and local officials tried to persuade them it was safe to go back to their homes in the towns of Aleosan, Pikit and Midsayap following a military operation that sent the rebels fleeing.

"Fear still hounds them," said Manuel Rabara, mayor of nearby Midsayap town where many villagers remain in evacuation centres.

"When people are displaced due to armed conflict, they feel they are still not safe in their homes so as expected they would rather stay in evacuation sites," he said.

The National Disaster Coordinating Centre said there were still 164,973 people displaced by the fighting that broke out earlier this month after guerrillas of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) occupied several villages in this southern province of North Cotabato.

These displaced villagers are still staying in the 65 evacuation centres or with relatives despite assurances that it is safe to go home.

North Cotabato governor Jesus Saccalan said that there had been no fighting in the past few days even as he led civic groups in distributing aid to the displaced villagers."

Poverty and lack of livelihood opportunities seen as the main obstacle to sustained returns (October 2006)

- When returnees manage to go back, most face harsh economic conditions, diminished community support and the assets left are soon depleted.
- Those lucky to have obtained rehab shelters describe them as inadequate (too small) .
- The main problems identified by the displaced themselves in Pagalungan and Pagagawan are: lack of job and livelihood opportunities, lack of housing, lack of health and sanitation facilities and access to these, lack of education and lack of roads from their villages to markets.

UNICEF, October 2006, p. 121

"If life in evacuation centers is difficult, so is returning to their communities. Most returning evacuees are haunted by feelings of uncertainty regarding their security because of continuing military presence. But even when back in their communities, the evacuees still must face the harsh consequences of military confrontations. Especially in the Central Mindanao areas, the returning IDPs confront badly depleted economic resources with the usual community support networks also undermined inasmuch as all are in the same precarious situation. In the Muslim areas where the most severe fighting has taken place, entire communities are barely able to make any headway in recovering from their losses in crops, farm implements, farm tools, farm animals and store inventories. They frequently face mounting debts and are hampered by debilitating sicknesses. It is common for former IDPs to spend less on everything including such essentials as food and schooling. What remaining assets they have are soon depleted as they are gradually sold for much-needed cash.

Some respondents complained about the aid-constructed shelters (“*rehab*”) replacing their homes as too small and uncomfortable. Others said they were among those who did not get even that. The physical aftermath of war and abandonment is immediately jarring, said respondents: the ruins of their homes, the burned stumps of once-productive coconut trees, and the overgrowth of weeds and plants in their farm lands. There was even one account of a farmer seriously injured in September 2005 when he accidentally detonated a leftover military landmine while clearing a grassy area by the mosque.”

CFSI October 2003, p. 14

“Although the IDPs [in Pagalungan and Pagagawan] were able to return to their sites of origin (SOOs), the returnees face formidable barriers to rebuilding their lives, and a number of immediate problems and needs have been identified for their return. These problems and needs are related to the following, among other concerns:

- Sources of livelihood
- Lack of jobs and working places (for women, men and children)
- Housing facilities
- Child labour (as a response to poverty, and the lack of educational facilities)
- Health and sanitation
- Potable water systems
- High percentage of illnesses, especially in children, women, and the elderly
- Inability to sustain medical treatment (due to expensive medications)
- No access to health centers
- No access to education, inability to pay for children's education
- Inability to provide recreation to children
- Problems created by lack of farm to market roads and transportation systems

Generally, the male respondents in the sites of origin (SOOs) regard the problem of livelihood and the lack of jobs as very essential. The women similarly consider the lack of livelihood as their main problem, aside from concerns related to their primary responsibilities within their homes, including rearing their children. As previously noted, education is seen as the first and foremost need.

The SOOs are highly dependent on farming and fishing as the main sources of livelihood. However, farm productivity is hampered by such problems as the lack of capital, farm roads, means of transportation, and the lack of technical knowledge about farm production. On the other hand, the lack of fishing gear (e.g., fishnets and bancas) and the use of illegal fishing practices by others, have been limiting their fishing activities. Child labour is also a problem in the community for the children have no choice but to help their parents earn a living.”

Landmines and UXOs impede return of displaced (2006)

- ICBL observed a sharp increase in landmine casualties in 2005. Landmines are seen as a serious threat to civilians and IDPs in areas of conflict.
- Peace advocates and groups working for the rehabilitation of areas torn by the war against the MILF in February 2003 have warned about the danger posed by unexploded bombs near villages where people are returning.

ICBL, 2006

"The Philippines has consistently denied in its Article 7 reports that any area is mine-affected, asserting that wherever landmines and IEDs are found, they are immediately removed. However, the sharp escalation in casualties in 2005 showed that the use of landmines and IEDs in areas of conflict between government and a variety of non-state armed groups poses a threat to civilians as well as the military.

There are still landmines planted in the mountains of Misamis Oriental, Surigao and Agusan, according to a peasant leader in the area communicating with Landmine Monitor on the basis of anonymity. He said it was very difficult to get details because of NPA operations in these areas. The Philippine Red Cross also reported facing difficulty reaching evacuees in eastern Sulu in February 2005 because of landmines reportedly planted by rebels."

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

General

Monitoring of human rights violations is difficult in some inaccessible rebel-held parts of the Philippines (December 2007)

- Certain rebel-held areas on Mindanao are inaccessible to monitoring of human rights violations

UNSC, 21 December 2007

"In situations not on the agenda of the Council, such as Chad, Colombia and the Philippines, overriding factors such as insecurity, restriction or denial of access to certain areas of the country and insufficient resources pose a significant challenge to the establishment of a rigorous monitoring and reporting mechanism. For example, precarious and unpredictable security situations in [...] certain areas of operation of illegal armed groups in the Philippines [...] make it difficult to obtain accurate and up-to-date information on child rights violations."

PRWeb 9 March 2004

"It is not also easy to penetrate many areas where evacuees are without danger of losing life and limb. In Datu Piang, Maguindanao, for instance, Raymundo Tabudlong, Core Facilitator of Kids for Peace, a MERN member said 'much as we would like to go and bring humanitarian goods, it is difficult for NGOs to penetrate because anyone can be caught in a crossfire and that there is always the possibility of being mistaken by any of the opposing forces'."

Lacking humanitarian aid for Sulu population due to fighting and politics (March 2007)

- During the first half of 2007, military has cordoned off entire areas where fighting was occurring, limiting humanitarian aid to the affected population.
- Continued violence keeps the Sulu population from improving their living conditions.

Mindanews, 25 April 2007

"Help for thousands of displaced persons in Sulu has been delayed as politicians, banned from taking a direct role in the distribution of goods during this election period, are allegedly hindering the process. Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza told a media forum on 'Environment as a Peace Issue' that it took time for relief groups to firm up operations because local officials who are candidates for the May 14 elections may take advantage of the situation."

UNICEF, 20 April 2007

"Fighting is still reportedly raging around Panamao and many areas remain inaccessible to humanitarian organizations. The military has cordoned-off most of the affected areas. Less than 15 percent of the displaced families have received some form of assistance from the government or humanitarian organizations. Sulu has been under Security Phase 3 for the past four years and is therefore off-limits to international UN staff."

Tabang Mindanaw, March 2007:

"Leaders are preoccupied with "high impact, high funded projects" that have not truly impacted on the lives of the people that matter. Both government and non-government development agencies have accepted the fact that over many years of technical and financial assistance in Sulu has neither significantly improved the lives of the people nor has it brought peace. Yet, no other conflict-torn people in this country aspire for true peace and human dignity than the people of Sulu, especially those that have been most deprived of even the most basic development rights to education, water, health and sanitation, and livelihood.

This deliberate scheme of continued disempowerment of people has kept Sulu at the bottom of the pit. In this day and age, how can we allow this to happen? How can our hearts not beat with the people of Sulu that have a very rich cultural heritage and history that gave birth to ours? How can our hearts not be pierced by the wounds of a people that remain unhealed? This, I believe, is the true humanitarian crisis.

Acceptance by action or inaction the injustice that beset our Muslim brothers and sisters in Sulu bespeaks of a nation's soul in distress. No one deserves it most to be left alone in peace. No one can claim to have the utmost desire for peace than the people that have lost a beloved son, mother or father, or a spouse due to armed conflict, and a future that is continually being stolen by violent interludes spiraling to deeper conflicts. Yet, amazingly, one can find the most forgiving hearts right in the place that have suffered the most. For this reason alone, there is hope in Sulu and this lies in the hearts of people at the grassroots."

INGO's tendency to rely on mainstream implementing partners runs risk of biased aid distribution (February 2007)

- Most international NGOs in Mindanao work closely with the government in providing humanitarian assistance. This close partnership runs the risk of discrimination against IDPs seen as close to the MILF.
- It is reported that during the displacement incident in Shariff Aguak in June-July 2006, thousands of reputedly pro-MILF IDPs were not recognized and enrolled as beneficiaries in the early phase of the humanitarian response
- Much of the aid was reportedly distributed to non-IDP civilians close to paramilitary groups linked to the government and the provincial governor of Maguindanao.
- At the height of the fighting, civil society groups tried to form a 'Joint force' to halt the fighting and displacement and provide assistance to trapped civilians. This also included a petition, which most IO and INGOs reportedly refused to sign invoking risks of losing their neutrality.

JHA, February 2007, pp. 15-16

"INGOs in Mindanao are not as constricted in having to stick to government and its agencies as partners, but in practice, most of them imitate the IOs on this matter because the state holds the keys to distribution of many donors' finances and has the ability to make continuation of INGO programmes difficult. Mindanao Emergency Response Network's (MERN) role in proffering humanitarian relief in the initial days of the mini-war in Shariff Aguak and surrounding municipalities in June-July 2006 was controversial and violence-fuelling due to its partnering with the GRP's Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The "evacuation centres" (IDP camps) that housed civilians considered loyal to the CAFGU and CVOs (paramilitary units fighting on behalf of the Provincial Governor of Maguindanao) were neatly planned and organised by DSWD employees to distribute emergency supplies from MERN. However, thousands of reputedly 'pro-MILF' IDPs in madrassas and makeshift shelters were not even recognised or

enrolled as beneficiaries in the distribution until the discrimination was pointed out by local civil society.⁵¹

When I visited Mattaa evacuation centre during the Shariff Aguak crisis, most of the aid beneficiaries did not look like IDPs who travelled great distances to flee mortar shelling by the CAFGU-CVOs on one side and the MILF on the other. Away from the supervisory gaze of the DSWD bureaucrats, one civilian in tears confided to an activist accompanying me the following story: "This is a very sad day for me. My wife works for the DSWD and she told me that almost the entire aid was being distributed to family members of the CAFGU and the CVOs who are coming from totally unaffected and safe villages to Mattaa to impersonate as IDPs. The CAFGU and CVOs who initiated heavy shelling of MILF positions are being encouraged to continue the bombardment because the fight is proving very beneficial economically, thanks to the humanitarian aid which is brazenly partial. The more houses of civilians they burn, the longer it will take for the genuine IDPs to return to their homes and the greater will be the opportunity to stock more food aid for the killing machines of CAFGU and CVOs."⁵²

As the crisis unfolded, proactive local civil society members formulated a new movement- 'Tyakap Maguindanao' (Save Maguindanao)- and composed a petition appealing to the warring parties for an immediate halt to fighting, humane treatment of civilians caught up in the violence and for allowing access to areas that were cut off due to heavy artillery fire. None of the IOs or INGOs signed it despite requests from the locals that the weight of international organizations would make the appeal for peace and respect of human rights formidable. OXFAM's name was initially on the list of signatories, but it was later removed upon the protest of the organisation's higher-ups. CFSI, Save the Children and CRS- the core members of MERN- did not support this initiative either on the grounds that "organisational rules did not permit them to indulge in advocacy." There was no second thought on the part of MERN members on this matter. It was a routine decision based on organisational rules and precedents- symptoms of Barnett and Finnemore's "bureaucratic culture" thesis.⁵³ The hidden hand of government partnerships was of course the main external cause.

At one brainstorming meeting of local activists and representatives of IOs and INGOs during the crisis, Bantay Ceasefire- a proactive local monitoring organisation- proposed forming a 'Joint Force' to interposition between the two warring parties and halt the fighting and forced displacement. The plan was to "use humanitarian aid as an entry point and assert the stand of local civil society to disengage the CAFGU-CVOs and the MILF and ensure the safety of civilians trapped in the buffer zones."⁵⁴ The reaction of the entire IO-INGO family was lukewarm because they felt such an action would compromise their "neutrality."⁵⁵

Mindanews, 7 July 2006

"Non-government organizations working for peace in Mindanao announced the creation of the Task Force Tabang Maguindanao Thursday morning as thousands of evacuees have not yet accessed humanitarian aid nine days since the hostilities broke in four Maguindanao towns on June 28. The task force, created on July 4, was formed to continue calls to stop the hostilities and to bring together people with resources so that humanitarian assistance could be brought to around 4,138 displaced families, said Guiamel Alim of the Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society, a member organization of the Mindanao Peaceweavers (MPW) network. Heavy fighting in the last six days, Alim said, limited the access of humanitarian action groups to the evacuation sites. He said they have also enjoined in the task force the cooperation of the GRP and MILF Coordinating Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH), the International Monitoring Team and representatives from Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan, so they could penetrate all areas where relief goods are needed."

DPA, 5 July 2006

"At least 780 families have been trapped in fighting between pro-government militiamen and Muslim separatist rebels in the southern Philippines, a social welfare official said Wednesday.

Ruby Sahali, a regional social welfare department official, said the families were unable to flee their homes in the remote village of Tapikan in Shariff Aguak town, Maguindanao province, 960 kilometres south of Manila, amid the fighting.

"They are at risk," she said. "Our social workers cannot penetrate the area because the fighting is still ongoing. We fear that they (social workers) might be hit by stray bullets."

"Right now, we don't have any idea regarding their (trapped families) situation because we have no workers there," she added."

Personal safety of humanitarian workers in Mindanao is at risk (December 2006)

- In November 2006, two women NGO workers assisting IDPs were reported to have been abducted, interrogated and sexually abused by Philippine military in North Cotabato
- NGOs say that delivering aid to the displaced has at times been difficult and dangerous for aid workers.
- This was the case in Basilan where the aid workers were accused by MNLF commanders of giving the food and non-food items only to Christians.
- There is often a risk of being mistaken by any of the opposing forces.
- MERN NGOs engaged in humanitarian are now required to pass the standardized training on personal security, health and safety.

Davao Today, 16 December 2006

"But while programs like the AUPP help uprooted people take roots in their communities again, CDRC network groups in the provinces are fast becoming targets of military harassments, illegal arrests and killings.

Federico Anor, a community leader in barangay Tulatulahan in Kapatagan, Lanao del Norte, who was involved with the project, was killed on June 4 this year while Jovito Pinakilid, a former BREAD project area staff in Buenavista, Agusan del Norte, was shot in September this year.

On April 22 last year, Ramil Gomomit, who has been involved with the CDRC project in Lanao del Norte through his organization Halad, was held for questioning by the a unit of the Philippine Marines out of suspicion that he was a member of the Communist New People's Army (NPA). Gomomit has denied the charge.

The most recent case was the Nov. 4 abduction of Lourilie Naiz and Mary Bernadette Solitario, area field staff and community teachers of the nongovernment relief group Direct, who were held for a night of questioning and were sexually harassed by members of the 39th IB of the Philippine Army who tried to force them to admit that they were members of the NPA.

In August, two people belonging to the indigenous Matigsalog tribe in a village of Naboc, in Compostela Valley's town of Montevista, were arrested by 40 combined forces of military and paramilitary forces in Monkayo after they attended a health training as part of an EU-funded project. Rey Gimboloy, chairman of a local people's organization in Naboc, said the soldiers tried as well to force him to admit that he was a member of the NPA.

Both Gimboloy and Rossie Mantiquinon, 25, were part of the indigenous Matigsalog tribes frequently uprooted by war in the area, struggling to take roots in their communities again but in doing so, they were harassed by the military, said Daday Sanchez, executive director of the Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation Inc. (Misfi), one of the groups carrying out the CDRC project in the area."

Davao Today, 13 November 2006

"The two women NGO workers allegedly abducted and interrogated by the Philippine military in Tulunan, North Cotabato, last week were also sexually abused by soldiers, the women's group Gabriela said Monday.

In a statement, Gabriela said:

The militant women's group GABRIELA revealed that the two young women-workers of a non-government organization in North Cotabato were also sexually molested by their military abductors.

According to reports submitted to GABRIELA, on November 4, 2006, Lourilie Naiz, 22, and Mary Bernadette Solitario, 21, both staff of Disaster Response Center (DIRECT) were abducted by plainclothes men armed with .45 caliber pistols. DIRECT is a community-based disaster management institution where Naiz is its field officer in charge of its socio-economic programs for internally displaced peasant families, while Solitario is one of the DIRECT's literacy-numeracy teachers.

The reports stated that the armed men were not only in civilian clothes but they rode motorcycle without a plate number. Naiz and Solitario were forced to get inside a pick-up truck, which also did not have a plate number, and were brought to Camp Sumabat of the 39th Infantry Battalion in Makilala, North Cotabato Province. The motorcycle followed the pick-up truck but turned left and entered the 27th IB Camp at Brgy. New Panay, Tulunan Town of the same province.

The two were blindfolded and detained in separate rooms. Both were interrogated without the presence of a lawyer with interrogators insisting they were members of the NPA. Bernadette, accused by her interrogators of having a hand grenade in her bag and of having participated in the Makilala bombings of October 10 this year, experienced minor physical assault as she was beaten. She was commanded to take off her clothes.

Lourilie, on the other hand, was threatened to be buried alive if she will not admit to her membership with the NPA and her participation in a detachment attack in Brgy. Bituan on November 1. Their interrogation continued overnight.

On the following day, they were forced to take off their clothes while blindfolded. After an hour, Lourilie was transferred to another place about 15 minutes travel from the camp and again, she was interrogated. Bernadette was informed that Lourilie was already buried and was threatened to be the next if she will not admit to being an NPA member. The two met again in the afternoon, and were brought to a physician for a medical check-up, and then they were turned over to the Tulunan Police at around 8 p.m. A certain George Reyes of the ISAFP signed the PNP logbook.

The families of Naiz and Solitario reported to the police about their missing daughters in the morning of November 5. And with their town mayor, they went to the 27th IB camp in Brgy. Kablon, Tupi, South Cotabato, however, the commanding officer of the military unit denied having the two women inside their camp.

Still according to the reports, Lourilie suffered trauma and is still in a state of shock. She is frightened whenever she sees men in uniform, and tinted cars, pick-up trucks and motorcycles. She still trembles every time she recalls her interrogation, her hand being pulled, her transfer to an unrecognized place and how she was made to undress while blindfolded and the hands of her abductors touching her body. Lourilie was also psychologically harmed by the incident especially that the military took a photo of her holding a small placard with "CAPTURED" and as "FSMR LIAISON OFFICER OF THE NPA" on it."

PRWeb 9 March 2004

"One of the pressing concerns of MERN member organizations is to ensure IDPs' access to food, water and non-food commodities. But this is easier said than done. Fairudz (Rose) Ebus, Project Coordinator of Mindanao Tulong Bakwet, said 'At times, our personal safety and security were at stake even though it was made clear that our efforts are purely humanitarian'.

'In Basilan, for instance, we were threatened that we can never leave the place alive if we do not give our load of food and non-food items to the alleged local MNLF militia leader who blamed us of giving only to Christians', she narrated. 'I told them I am a Muslim and our program calls that we give to Muslims and Christians alike. That in this war, there are no Muslims nor Christians but only people in need', she recounted. The statement made the local militia leader release her and her staff.

[...]

It is not also easy to penetrate many areas where evacuees are without danger of losing life and limb. In Datu Piang, Maguindanao, for instance, Raymundo Tabudlong, Core Facilitator of Kids for Peace, a MERN member said 'much as we would like to go and bring humanitarian goods, it is difficult for NGOs to penetrate because anyone can be caught in a crossfire and that there is always the possibility of being mistaken by any of the opposing forces'.

As such, SC advocates for a "Safety First" approach for its workers and NGO partners. (SC Safety First Handbook) SC aims to help NGOs working in areas of armed conflict to protect their staff more effectively, by following the:

- 1) Basic principles, such as the concept of 'risk management' and the importance of non-partisanship.
- 2) Safety conscious' management practices.
- 3) Practical security measures relating to:
 - staying healthy
 - radio and satellite communication
 - using vehicles and aircraft
 - dealing with munitions and the military
 - the threat of landmines
 - self-defense against armed attack

For MERN, it has considered strategies that Integrate workers' security and welfare in humanitarian work to ensure their security and safety. Each personnel of member of a MERN NGO engaged in humanitarian is required to pass the standardized training on personal security, health and safety.

NGO workers' hardships sometimes also go to naught. Tabudlong said there were instances when supplies went to the wrong hands. 'In some cases, food supplies have not gone to the evacuees for their needs but to people who were not the intended beneficiaries. Some non-food commodities intended for war victims have been seen being sold in local markets', he said."

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

National response

National response

The attitude of the government towards the problem of internal displacement is two-sided. On the one hand, it is by far the main agent of forced displacement, through military and security operations against rebel groups and their suspected sympathisers, and also through economically-motivated forced evictions. On the other hand, the national authorities do generally acknowledge that, as a consequence of their military activities at least, people are forced from their homes and need protection and assistance. The acceptance of this responsibility has, however, mainly translated into the provision of immediate humanitarian assistance to the displaced with generally insufficient attention paid to the long-term reintegration needs.

The main national coordination body is the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), which coordinates the actions of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Office of Civil Defence, the National red Cross and local governments. At the provincial level, relief efforts are being coordinated by the provincial office of the Dept of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and at the local level by the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO). The Local Government Units (LGUs) generally facilitate and coordinate the response to IDPs and formulate Disaster Management Plans with the active participation of the Municipal Disaster Coordinating Council (MDCC), composed of the different agencies and NGOs responding to the needs of the displaced.

Lack of coordination and insufficient funds has regularly led to response gaps. Lack of information sharing between government agencies and other partners, including international agencies, has been reported as another obstacles to quick and efficient humanitarian response (IRIN, 18 March 2008). Much emergency response has traditionally been carried out by local NGOs, volunteers and other civil society representatives, including IDP themselves. With the partial disengagement of the international community after 2003, local coordination processes, both in assistance and human rights advocacy for the displaced, became less effective. However the marked increase in political and military tensions during 2007 reactivated coordination and human rights advocacy efforts among the national and international aid communities (IRIN, 28 January 2008).

There are at present no consistent long-term reintegration strategy or nationwide institutional structures which could give shape to a coherent IDP strategy and implement IDP policies and laws (PCHR, 2006, p.16). Attempts to enact IDP legislation remain stalled. Following a 2005 National Multi-Stakeholders Forum on IDPs, the "Internal Displacement Bill" was presented to the Philippines Congress in 2006, and filed before the Senate in August 2007. The Bill comprehensively addresses the needs and rights of IDPs in the different phases of displacement. As of June 2008, it was pending before the Senate Committees on Justice and Human Rights; Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development and Finance.

The GOP-UNDP Programme on Rehabilitating IDPs and Communities in Southern Philippines (2004-2006)

Between October 2004 and January 2006, the government and the United Nations, through the EC-UNDP Trust Fund, implemented a resettlement and rehabilitation programme that benefited

some 15 provinces among the most affected the 2003 fighting and population displacements. Out of the target of 10,000 IDP families, the IDP programme was able to provide relief and assistance to 25,726 families, of which 16,798 families were assisted to return home or resettled elsewhere (UNDP, 13 February 2006). The government's Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo) was the overall implementing agency. (More details in the "International Response" section)

Civil society organisations fill the assistance gap and actively advocate for the rights of IDPs

Local non-governmental organisations, volunteers and other representatives from civil society, including IDP themselves, have traditionally played a critical role in assisting the internally displaced and in advocating for their rights in Mindanao, and elsewhere in the country (Gov. of the Philippines, 21 June 2008; IRIN, 28 January 2008).

Complementing the efforts of the government, many civil society bodies, including local NGOs and church organisations, participate in the relief and rehabilitation efforts, often filling the assistance gap. Many also actively advocate for the rights of IDPs. In 2003, at the height of displacement, a coalition of NGOs in partnership with the UN, donors and INGOs established the [Mindanao Emergency Response Network \(MERN\)](#). This coordination, response and training network was composed of 36 organisations, most of them local NGOs (PRWeb, 9 March 2004). While MERN used to be very effective, it is not as active now as it used to be, due to a general decline in humanitarian activities in the Philippines south (IRIN, 18 March 2008). The Task Force Tabang Maguindanao was established in 2006 by non-government peace organisations, to attract attention to the plight of thousands of displaced in Maguindanao province at the end of June 2006. During 2007, national and international NGOs have made a renewed effort to raise the awareness among fighting parties of the human rights of the civilian population. The same initiative also informs IDPs of their rights, thereby strengthening IDP populations and giving them their own voice (IRIN, 28 January 2008).

In 2005, the Commission on Human Rights Philippines (CHRP) and the non-governmental organisation Balay organised a series of regional consultations among local stakeholders and IDP communities, which culminated in a First National Multi-Stakeholders Forum on IDPs held in December 2005. In addition to creating public awareness on the issue of internal displacement, one of the concrete outcomes of the conference was to gather support for a bill on internal displacement. After having been presented to the Philippines Congress in 2006, the Senate Bill 1480, or "Internal Displacement Act of 2007" was filed before the Senate in August 2007. As of June 2008, it was pending before the Senate Committees on Justice and Human Rights; Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Finance ([see an advanced draft](#)). The Bill comprehensively addresses the needs and rights of IDPs in the different phases of displacement.

CHRP also drew up a National Action Plan on internal displacement which, according to one staff of a Philippine congressman, triggered efforts among IDP service providers, including a series of policy forums aimed at encouraging grassroots stakeholders to formulate IDP-related initiatives in local legislations and advocate for IDP rights, pending the entry into force of the Internal Displacement Act. The last such forum held before publication of this report was on 1-2 May 2008 in Davao Compostela Valley.

According to the staff person, many of those activities were successful, despite financial constraints (Email correspondence, 18 June 2008). Other initiatives from civil society include the Bantay Ceasefire, a network of grassroots organisations that has since January 2003 conducted investigative missions of armed incidents and has established early warning networks in the field capable of preventing small incidents from turning into larger confrontations. (Mindanews, 19 August 2005). Academic institutions are also involved in conducting assessments, research,

training, monitoring, and evaluation. The universities of Mindanao State University, Notre Dame University, and Ateneo University have all established peace institutes for the training of future peace builders (Government of the Philippines, International Funding Agencies, Mindanao stakeholders, December 2005, p. 12).

International response

International response

Executive summary

Having drastically reduced its presence in the south a couple of years after the 2003 conflict outbreak, the international community appears to be stepping up its activities again. ICRC increased its presence in the Philippines in 2006, to better assist the people displaced by conflict and to facilitate access to Muslim communities in Sulu and Basilan Provinces where recurring displacement is common (ICRC, 13 September 2007). WFP has stepped up its food aid, partially in reaction to rising food prices and is now planning to provide food to 1.5 million people living in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao, including a large number of IDPs (IRIN, 18 March 2008; AFP, 18 July 2008).

Between 2004 and 2006, an UNDP-EU funded programme aimed at addressing the relief and rehabilitation needs of IDPs was implemented in Mindanao, providing assistance to more than 26,000 families (UNDP, 13 February 2006). As of June 2008, a second phase of the programme was being negotiated between UNDP and the EU, with a focus on strengthening the capacities of local bodies (Local Government Units, Civil Society Organisations, community organisations) to respond effectively to displacement (UNDP, email, 26 June 2008).

Overall, the response of the international community remains largely focused on the development and rehabilitation needs of the displaced as a vulnerable group within a larger target population in Mindanao's conflict-affected areas. In the wake of the 1996 government-MNLF peace agreement, the international community, through the UN, established a multi-donor programme (MDP) to assist with development, peace-building and humanitarian relief for the conflict-affected civilian population. The fourth phase of the MDP, the UN's ACT for Peace (Action for Conflict Transformation for Peace) Programme is being implemented by the government and the ARMM regional government in 20 provinces and 14 cities. With funding from Australia, New Zealand and Spain, ACT for Peace will run to 2010.

Spearheaded by the World Bank, the multi-donor Mindanao Trust Fund (MTF) was established in July 2005, at the request of the government. The MTF funds conflict-affected areas based on inputs from a 2004 needs assessment which estimated the cost of needed reconstruction and development at more than \$400 million (GoP, International Funding Agencies, Mindanao Stakeholders, December 2005, p.xiv). While the first phase of the MTF, focused on building the capacity of the implementing agencies, started in 2006, the full implementation phase will only take place under the condition that a formal peace agreement be reached with the MILF (WB, January 2008).

Working closely with the government, UN agencies, donors and most international NGOs have agreed that the development approach should be prioritised and prefer not to engage the government on sensitive human rights issues (JHA, February 2007, pp.22-24). The "war on terror", waged by the government with the active support of the United States and the political backing of some main donors including Japan and Australia, has also helped shape agendas.

There are indications, however, that this could be changing. Following the July 2007 fighting in Basilan, several donors publicly expressed concern regarding the military offensive, warning the Philippine government that an escalation of violence could curtail ongoing programmes and jeopardise the gains of the peace process (DPA, 26 July 2007). Recent UN reports have shed light on conflict-related human rights violations, including the UN report on extrajudicial killings, the final considerations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the UNSC report on children and armed conflict in the Philippines (UN, 21 February 2007; UNSC, 24 April 2008; UNCRC, 6 June 2008). In his report, the UN rapporteur on extrajudicial killings attributed most of the upsurge in political killings to the army. He urged the government to eliminate extrajudicial killings from its counter-insurgency campaign and establish a mechanism to monitor human rights abuses within the framework of the government-MILF peace process (UNHRC, 16 April 2008, p.25). These reports and their recommendations must be followed by concrete action if the displaced and returnees are to receive assistance and protection.

Hopes raised by the significant progress made during mid-2008 in the peace talks between the government and the MILF, which led to an agreement on the crucial issue of "ancestral domain", were short-lived as frustrations over delays to the deal quickly turned into violence in North Cotabato. With violence now threatening to spread, prospects of an imminent final peace deal are waning. The rapid deterioration of the situation is raising concerns of a possible larger military confrontation which would throw Mindanao's civilians into yet another cycle of war and displacement. More than ever, the international community must step in and help put an end to the fighting before the gains of the peace process made in recent years are lost.

While priority must be given to the peaceful resolution of conflicts between the government and the various rebel groups, the human rights of all Philippine civilians need to be better safeguarded and the government must become more accountable for past violations of those rights. The "war on terror" must not be an excuse for curtailing fundamental civil and personal liberties, nor serve as a repressive tool against ethnic or religious minorities.

While enabling effective humanitarian interventions, the government and the international aid community must ensure that genuine long-term efforts to tackle widespread under-development and poverty support rather than undermine those rights.

The UN-GRP Multi-Donor Programme

In the wake of the 1996 government-MLNF Peace Agreement, the international community established a Multi-Donor Programme (MDP) to assist with the realisation of agreement. Associating the Philippine government with the UN and donor countries such as Australia, New Zealand and the Netherlands, the MDP consisted mainly of development-oriented programmes and peace-building activities. Throughout its successive phases, the MDP also included a humanitarian relief component to address the immediate needs of the civilian population affected by the conflict between the government and the MILF and in particular of the hundreds of thousands of people regularly forced to leave their homes to seek refuge in evacuation centres. As part of the fourth phase (2005-2009) of the MDP, a UNDP-EU funded IDP programme aimed at addressing the relief and rehabilitation needs of the displaced was implemented between October 2004 and January 2006 in Mindanao and provided assistance to more than 25,000 families. The programme, entitled **Rehabilitating Internally Displaced Persons and Communities in Southern Philippines** was implemented in some 15 provinces among the most affected the 2003 fighting and population displacements. Out of the target of 10,000 IDP families, the IDP programme was able to provide relief and assistance to 25,726 families, of which 16,798 families were assisted to return home or resettled elsewhere (UNDP, 13 February 2006).

For more information on the achievements of the programme during 2005, see [GOP-UNDP IDP Programme: accomplishments as of 31 December 2005](#) (MEDCo, 31 December 2005) and [GOP-](#)

[UNDP-EC Programme on Rehabilitating Internally Displaced Persons and Communities in Southern Philippines](#) (MEDCo, 31 October 2005).

Phase 4 of the GRP-UN Multi-Donor Programme: ACT for Peace

The ACT for Peace Programme (Action for Conflict Transformation for Peace Programme) is the 4th Phase of the GRP-UN multi-donor programme. It is being implemented in Peace and Development Communities (PDCs) in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao. In the initial stages of the Programme, PDCs were primarily MNLF communities, but in the 3rd and 4th phase, the Programme coverage has expanded to non-MNLF communities as well, i.e. to indigenous peoples communities and areas affected by the communist insurgency. The UN and government agencies such as the Mindanao Economic Development Council and the ARMM regional government. But the main partners in ground implementation are the Peace and Development Advocates (PDAs). They are recruited mainly from the MNLF command structure, some being former combatants. Under ACT for Peace there has been an increased focus on capacity building for Local Government Units (LGUs) in peace-building, etc, in recognition of their strategic importance in Programme sustainability and long-term peace (UNDP, email, 26 June 2008; UNDP, 31 May 2005).

In reaction to the fighting which had broken out in Basilan in July 2007, several donors, including Canada, Japan, the EU and the World Bank, have expressed concern regarding the military offensive, reminding the Philippine government that many donors had already committed aid in the context of the Mindanao Trust Fund, although the precondition of a peace agreement had not yet been fulfilled, and that an escalation of violence could curtail ongoing programmes (DPA, 26 July 2007).

During 2006, the UN food agency, WFP, launched an US\$ 27 million food aid operation to assist up to 2 million people living in the conflict-affected areas of Mindanao. WFP hoped to be able to assist an estimated 120,000 vulnerable IDPs (WFP, March 2006, p.2). With food prices rising in the course of 2007, so did the number of malnourished people dependent on food aid from WFP, particularly in the ARMM region. In June 2008, WFP assisted some 300,000 displaced people in Mindanao (IRIN, 9 June 2008).

Multi Donor Trust Fund for Mindanao (2004-2008)

While the political aspects of the ongoing peace talks between the government and the MILF need time to find a solution, it was seen as crucial that the peace talks be strengthened by a plan that would seek to comprehensively address the socio-economic concerns of MILF rebels and communities living in the areas most-affected by fighting, destruction and displacement in Mindanao. Following a request by the Philippine government, the World Bank agreed in 2004 to prepare the establishment of a Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Mindanao (MDTF) also known as the Peace Fund. The Peace Fund, which is spearheaded by the [World Bank](#), received support from the [European Commission \(EC\)](#), the [United Nations \(UNDP\)](#) and [Australia \(AusAID\)](#).

The main objective of the MDTF is the reconstruction and development of areas affected by conflict in the past years in Mindanao (comprising mainly Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, Basilan and Sulu). It is hoped that improving the socio-economic conditions in these areas will pave the way for successful peace talks and sustainable peace.

In order to identify priority reconstruction and development programs in conflict-affected communities, a [Joint Needs Assessment \(JNA\)](#) was conducted towards the end of 2004. In addition to better identifying the rehabilitation needs of MILF combatants, MILF communities and Indigenous People (IPs), the assessment was expected to provide more information on the

location, profile and socio-economic needs of the displaced and affected communities. Previous social assessments of displaced populations (namely "[Social Assessment of conflict-affected areas in Mindanao](#)", WB, March 2003), conducted in 2002-2003, had shown the main needs to revolve around security, livelihood project and access to basic services and infrastructure. The JNA estimated the cost of the reconstruction and development needs at more than \$400 million (Government of the Philippines, International Funding Agencies, Mindanao Stakeholders, December 2005, p. xiv).

See the final reports of the JNA study:

Joint Needs Assessment for Reconstruction and Development of Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao. Integrative Report Volume I [[Internet](#)]

Joint Needs Assessment for Reconstruction and Development of Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao. Human Development Report. Volume II [[Internet](#)]

Joint Needs Assessment for Reconstruction and Development of Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao. Rural Development Report. Volume III [[Internet](#)]

The final establishment of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund is conditional upon a successful peace agreement between the Philippine government and the MILF rebels. In March 2006, the first phase of the World Bank-administered Mindanao Trust Fund (MTF) was launched (WB, 27 March 2006). This initial phase aimed at establishing the organisational set-up and piloting a few test programmes. Phase 2 should see the full implementation of the MTF, but it will not start before a formal peace agreement is reached between the government and the MILF. In reaction to the fighting which had broken out in Basilan in July 2007, several donors, including Canada, Japan, the EU and the World Bank, expressed concern regarding the military offensive, reminding the Philippine government that many donors had already committed aid in the context of the Mindanao Trust Fund, although the precondition of a peace agreement had not yet been fulfilled, and that an escalation of violence could curtail ongoing programmes (DPA, 26 July 2007).

For 2008, members of the MTF planned to : "continue to build capacity of BDA to enable it to expand to more sites, broaden partnerships, and engage more stakeholders. At the same time, it will expand the range of its assistance to address the unique needs of internally displaced persons, intensify LGU participation into the peace building, reconstruction and development effort, and to begin addressing the issue of re-integration for combatants in a post peace agreement scenario." (WB, January 2008)

Other international actors involved in the assistance and rehabilitation of the displaced in Mindanao include Japan, the United States and a number of international aid organisations including among others ICRC, Oxfam-GB, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Save the Children, VSO-UK, Accion contra el Hambre (ACF Spain), World Vision and Movimondo-Italy. [ICRC](#) has increased its presence in the Philippines in 2006, to better assist the people displaced by conflict. In January 2007, it opened an office in Zamboanga, to facilitate access to Muslim communities in Sulu and Basilan provinces where recurring displacement is common (ICRC, 13 September 2007).

References to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

Known references to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as of December 2006

- Reference to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation

- Other References to the Guiding Principles (in chronological order)
- Availability of the Guiding Principles in local languages
- Training on the Guiding Principles (in chronological order)

Reference to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation

Efforts by civil society to move forward the incorporation of the UNGPID in the national legislation (2000-2006):

There have been several efforts by the civil society, mainly NGOs, to push for the adoption of a resolution regarding the adoption of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement by the Philippine Congress as a first step towards their complete or partial incorporation into national legislation.

In December 2006, a Senate Bill No. 2548, entitled "An Act Improving Philippine Commitment to Human Rights Promotion and Protection by Providing the Necessary Mechanisms for the Prevention of the Occurrence and Protection from the Adverse Effects of Internal Displacement and for Other Purposes," or 'Internal Displacement Act of 2006' was filed by Senator Aquilino Q. Pimentel, Jr. [See [advanced draft text of the Bill](#)]

The bill was first in in November 2004, by [Congresswoman Rosales Etta](#) in the House of Representatives.

In February 2002, House Resolution No. 449 entitled "Resolution urging the Philippine Government to adopt in full the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as a concrete step in the promotion and protection of human rights in the country." was filled by Congressman Roseller Barinaga

A resolution with the same content and title was approved by the house of representatives on December 4, 2000. The original resolution was filed through Congressman Barinaga, Congresswoman Etta Rosales and Congressman Dilangalen.

Assessment of the use of the GPID in the Philippines by the UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Internal Displacement

CHR 3 February 2003, p. 16

"The Representative was impressed by the commitment of the authorities to make use of the Guiding Principles in the formulation of policies and legislation addressing the problem of internal displacement. He was also pleased to learn, during his meeting with the Speaker of the House of Representatives, that a number of resolutions had been submitted calling for the observance of international humanitarian law. In addition, he learned that several training courses on the Guiding Principles had been carried out, including for the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and that organizations working in the affected areas were also promoting their application by insurgent groups. Various organs of the Government, such as the Department of Foreign Affairs, the DSWD, the Senate and the House of Representatives, all expressed interest in convening a national meeting on internal displacement and the Guiding Principles. In discussions with the authorities, the need to address the issues of displacement and migration through cooperation among the countries of the region was also stressed. In this connection, the Representative expressed his support for the initiative of the Government to consider the possibility of convening a regional seminar on good practices in addressing internal displacement."

Other References to the Guiding Principles (in chronological order)
Dissemination of the Guiding Principles

Balay, 30 October 2002

"On November 21, we shall be launching the Cebuano and Filipino translations of the Handbook on Applying the Guiding Principles in Davao city. The UN Information Office in Manila is our partner for this activity. We shall replicate this in Midsayap in Central Mindanao and in Zamboanga City.

Balay has initiated a signature campaign to call the Arroyo government to adopt the UNGPID. We have also obtained the resolutions of at least five conflict-affected villages in North Cotabato whose official have endorsed the UNGPID. These villages are part of the space for peace rehabilitation project where Balay is one of the partner-NGO. Our contribution is in raising awareness on IDPs rights, psychosocial healing of traumatized persons and families, livelihood and education support for survivors, youth development, disaster management training and peace advocacy.

Another resolution was also passed by the Provincial Government of Cotabato supporting a bill in Congress for the passage of a law indemnifying victims of forced displacement. Religious leaders, such as priests and bishops, community folks, educators, members of various NGOs, peoples organizations (Lumads, Muslims and Christians) have supported our signature campaign. I have talked to Vice President Guingona and gave him a copy of UNGPID and a briefing paper on internal displacement. He said that he will look into the documents and study if the government could move for its adoption. A good news is that the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has referred to human rights and international humanitarian law as their framework for relief and rehabilitation of conflict-affected areas.

Balay has also initiated two regional consultation-workshops in Central Mindanao and Southern Mindanao in an attempt to come up with a proposed legislation and other advocacy actions for human rights protection of displaced families and communities. We are also behind filing of a resolution in the National Anti Poverty Commission for the government to adopt UNGPID."

Balay, 12 November 2001

"The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (UNGPID) is gaining attention and acceptance in strife-torn areas in Mindanao. Our institution, Balay, has produced a primer (Tagalog and English versions) on the phenomenon of displacement and the rights of those affected. They have been distributed in evacuation centers; some copies were sent to government authorities and NGOs. We also held workshops on IDPs rights among the evacuees, and developed a trainer's pool to reach out to more IDPs. Just recently, we were asked by the UNDP in Mindanao to provide the inputs on IDP's rights in the formulation of disaster management plans of local government units. A position paper of civil society organizations addressed to the peace panel of the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was based on the UNGPID."

Other relevant documents:

Balay Module on Basic Human Rights Orientation Course and the Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), Balay, 13 March 2001

Practical Guide in Promoting the Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Balay, March 2001

Availability of the Guiding Principles in local languages

The Guiding Principles have been translated into three Philippine languages (Maguindanaon, Tagalog and Cebuano) by the Ecumenical Commission for Displaced Families and Communities (ECDFC), United Nations Information Center (UNIC) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Source: ECDFC, UNIC and UNHCR

Date: 2001

Documents:

[UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in Maguindanaon](#), pdf 35 kb

[UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in Tagalog](#), pdf 40 kb

[UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in Cebuano](#), pdf 40 kb

Training on the Guiding Principles

NRC Training Workshops

In November 2004, the Global IDP Project of the Norwegian Refugee Council conducted a three-day training on the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement for the Human Rights Commission in Mindanao. The general objective of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of the CHRP key personnel in promoting and protecting the rights of IDPs, especially women and children, thereby strengthening the agency's role as a national human rights institution in advocating for IDPs' concerns.

A training-workshop on the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement was held in Quezon City, Philippines, from November 22 to 24, 1999. It was organized by the Ecumenical Commission for Displaced Families and Communities (ECDFC), in cooperation with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

Documents:

[Action Plan from the November 2004 workshop](#)

[Workshop on the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement: Quezon City, Philippines 22-24, November 1999, NRC, 1999](#)

LIST OF SOURCES USED

(alphabetical order)

abs-cbnNEWS.com, 28 January 2004, "Thousands of Mindanao evacuees still homeless"
Internet : <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/NewsStory.aspx?section=PROVINCIAL&oid=43474> ,
accessed 26 February 2004

abs-cbnNEWS.com, 6 September 2004, "\$3.7-M project for Mindanao rehab"
Internet : <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/NewsStory.aspx?section=Provincial&OID=58951> ,
accessed 24 September 2004

abs-cbnNEWS.com, 6 December 2007, "1,500 Sulu families flee as AFP pursues rogue MNLFG group"
Internet : <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/storypage.aspx?StoryId=101554> , accessed 16 January 2008

abs-cbnNEWS.com, 5 March 2007, "Midsayap evacuees start returning to their villages"
Internet : <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/storyPage.aspx?storyId=68818> , accessed 5 March 2007

abs-cbnNEWS.com, 27 April 2007, "Sulu on fire"
Internet : <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/storypage.aspx?StoryId=75229> , accessed 14 August 2008

Accion Contra el Hambre (ACH), June 2004, Liguasan Marsh Vulnerability Survey
Internet : http://www.actionagainsthunger.org/thought/AAH_Philippines_vulnerability_8-04.pdf ,
accessed 16 August 2005

Action by Churches Together (ACT), 4 March 2003, Assistance for Mindanao Evacuees - ASPH31
Internet : http://www.act-intl.org/appeals/appeals_2003/ASPH31.pdf , accessed 26 March 2003

Agence France-Presse (AFP), 12 August 2008, "Humanitarian crisis looms in Philippines as fighting continues"
Internet : <http://www.france24.com/en/20080812-humanitarian-crisis-looms-philippines-fighting-continues> , accessed 12 August 2008

Agence France-Presse (AFP), 11 March 2007, "Rebels say Philippine ceasefire on verge of collapse"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/EK0I-6Z843L?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 13 March 2007

Agence France-Presse (AFP), 23 August 2007, "More residents flee Philippine fighting"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/EK0I-76C4VK?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 27 August 2007

Agence France-Presse (AFP), 18 July 2008, "UN expanding food aid to rebellion-torn southern Philippines"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/MUMA-7GP7FD?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 23 July 2008

Agence France-Presse (AFP), 10 August 2008, "Fighting resumes in southern Philippines despite Muslim agreement"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/MUMA-7HD82E?OpenDocument> ,
accessed 11 August 2008

Agence France-Presse (AFP), 16 August 2008, "Philippine villagers refuse to return home after fighting"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/MUMA-7HK86N?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 18 August 2008

Agence France-Presse (AFP), 25 July 2007, "Thousands flee feared clash in southern Philippines"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/SJHG-75F9MW?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 30 July 2007

Agence France-Presse (AFP), 26 April 2007, "Philippine peace talks to resume after vote"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/SODA-72M7N9?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 30 April 2007

Agence France-Presse (AFP), 12 December 2006, "Muslim rebels say ready to resume Philippines peace talks"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/VBOL-6WEEMJ?OpenDocument> , accessed 13 December 2006

Agence France-Presse (AFP), April 2008, "In war ravaged Philippine south, a battle to save the hungry"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/YYAA-7DB3SB?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 7 April 2008

Agence France-Presse (AFP), 15 April 2004, "Philippines aims for 2004 peace pact with Muslim rebels"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/9ca65951ee22658ec125663300408599/7a99680aa4797c0149256e78000cbb01?OpenDocument> , accessed 16 April 2004

Aljazeera, 21 April 2005, "Unveiling the War in Sulu"

Internet : <http://web.archive.org/web/20060427070952/www.aljazeera.com/Opinion+editorials/2005+Opinion+Editorials/April/21+o/Unveiling+the+War+in+Sulu+By+Amirah+Ali+Lidasan.htm> , accessed 1 September 2005

Alston, Philip, 26 November 2007, Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/1EB3FBEA9CB42A19C125749D00392FCD/\\$file/A_HRC_8_Philippines_Advance_Edited.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/1EB3FBEA9CB42A19C125749D00392FCD/$file/A_HRC_8_Philippines_Advance_Edited.pdf) ,

Asia Times Online, 18 May 2007, "Widening the war in the southern Philippines"

Internet : http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/IE18Ae01.html , accessed 23 May 2007

Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), 22 March 2005, "Massacre of a civilian family by military caused intense fighting and massive displacement in Maimbong, Sulu"

Internet : <http://www.ahrchk.net/ua/mainfile.php/2005/1003?print=yes> , accessed 30 March 2005

Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), 26 August 2005, "PHILIPPINES: Starvation and hunger threaten hundreds of displaced villagers following intense fighting in Maguindanao, Mindanao"

Internet : <http://www.ahrchk.net/ua/mainfile.php/2005/1230/> , accessed 29 August 2005

Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), 19 September 2005, "Three children die at evacuation centre due to hunger; adequate food urgently needed for starving evacuees"
Internet : <http://www.ahrchk.net/ua/mainfile.php/2005/1254/> , accessed 19 September 2005

Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), 26 May 2005, Philippines: Incidents of death, torture, disappearance and displacement of civilians during a military operation
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/ACIO-6CRLDJ?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 3 June 2005

Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), 18 August 2008, "Muslim separatists raid two southern Philippine towns"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/MUMA-7HM8JZ?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 18 August 2008

Balay, 10 March 2003, Notes on the Mindanao Crisis
Internet : http://www.hrnw.org/monitor/ids2003_0506_01.htm , accessed 28 July 2003

Balay, 26 February 2002, Notes on the phenomenon of internal displacement in the Philippines
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/1C40BC114192045A802570B7005999DC/\\$file/Displacement2001SituationReport.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/1C40BC114192045A802570B7005999DC/$file/Displacement2001SituationReport.pdf) ,

Balay, March 2001, Practical Guide in Promoting the Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/49CC89938FA1530FC125729500595F2F/\\$file/Acetates_Practical_Steps.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/49CC89938FA1530FC125729500595F2F/$file/Acetates_Practical_Steps.pdf) ,

Balay, 27 November 2001, Cabatagan Armed Conflict Displacement Fact Sheet
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/6009C934D96EAB35802570B700599907/\\$file/Balay_displacement_fact_sheet_27_Nov01.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/6009C934D96EAB35802570B700599907/$file/Balay_displacement_fact_sheet_27_Nov01.pdf) ,

Balay, 2004, Notes on the Mindanao Displacement due to the January 2003 Armed Conflict between the GRP and MILF
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/C45C54CA603B935D802570B700599C24/\\$file/Balay+IDP+statistics.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/C45C54CA603B935D802570B700599C24/$file/Balay+IDP+statistics.pdf) ,

Balay, 13 March 2001, Balay Module on Basic Human Rights Orientation Course and the Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP)
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/CECFF468A5CF5579C1257295005936A3/\\$file/HROC_Module_Outline.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/CECFF468A5CF5579C1257295005936A3/$file/HROC_Module_Outline.pdf) ,

Balay, June 2006, Notes on Internal Displacement in the Philippines
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/D09334E96E3D232BC125725E0036FC/E0/\\$file/Notes+on+ID+in+the+Philippines+June06+Balay.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/D09334E96E3D232BC125725E0036FC/E0/$file/Notes+on+ID+in+the+Philippines+June06+Balay.pdf) ,

Bantay Ceasefire, 2 February 2006, Bantay Ceasefire investigative report on Mamasapano, Maguindana clashes in late January 2006
Internet : <http://lists.samba.org/archive/rsync/2006-February/014566.html> , accessed 8 March 2006

Bantay Ceasefire, August 2003, Bantay Ceasefire 2 Grassroots Mission: An Assessment of Displaced Communities in Pikit, Cotabato and Pagalungan, Mindanao, July 13-15, 2003.
Internet : <http://www.mindanews.com/2003/08/31nws-mission.html> , accessed 21 April 2004

Bantay Ceasefire, 12 March 2007, Bantay Ceasefire Report on the Monitoring of Internally Displaced Persons and the War in Midsayap, Cotabato and Datu Paglas, Maguindanao
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/231A52FDB15F56D3C12572C10031B84F/\\$file/Bantay+12+March+07.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/231A52FDB15F56D3C12572C10031B84F/$file/Bantay+12+March+07.pdf) ,

Bantay Ceasefire, 28 July 2005, Guindulungan & Talayan Updates
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/53E391B0634489C8802570B700599D9F/\\$file/Guindulungan-Talayan+Updates.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/53E391B0634489C8802570B700599D9F/$file/Guindulungan-Talayan+Updates.pdf) ,

Bantay Ceasefire, 4 April 2007, Midsayap Update
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/70BEEC1F2CAE0844C12572C100313DDE/\\$file/BantayCeasefireReport-MidsayapUpdate-April04-07-1.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/70BEEC1F2CAE0844C12572C100313DDE/$file/BantayCeasefireReport-MidsayapUpdate-April04-07-1.pdf) ,

Bantay Ceasefire, 29 January 2007, Bantay Ceasefire Report on the Displacement of Civilians in Six Barangays of Midsayap, Cotabato
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/8048EBD8BE1692F5C12572890037951F/\\$file/BantayCeasefireReport_MidsayapJan2007.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/8048EBD8BE1692F5C12572890037951F/$file/BantayCeasefireReport_MidsayapJan2007.pdf) ,

Bantay Ceasefire, 16 January 2005, Joint Damage Assessment Mission, Linangtangan, Mamasapano, Maguindanao
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/CE1A45AF1EEB5599802570B700599D6A/\\$file/BC+REPORT+Jan++16+2005.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/CE1A45AF1EEB5599802570B700599D6A/$file/BC+REPORT+Jan++16+2005.pdf) ,

Bantay Ceasefire & Mindanao Peoples Caucus, 20 February 2007, IDP Assessment Mission, February 13-16, 2007
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/7D25F293A9842615C125728F005133EC/\\$file/idp_assessment_13feb2007.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/7D25F293A9842615C125728F005133EC/$file/idp_assessment_13feb2007.pdf) ,

BBC News, 20 February 2007, "Philippines approves terror bill"
Internet : <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6374875.stm> , accessed 22 February 2007

BBC News, 16 April 2007, "Appeal to end Philippine clashes"
Internet : <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6559853.stm> , accessed 17 June 2008

BBC News, 30 March 2004, "Guide to the Philippines conflict"
Internet : <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/asia-pacific/1695576.stm> , accessed 27 April 2004

Brookings Institution, 23 April 2008, Rising Food Prices and Displacement
Internet : http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0423_food_prices_koser.aspx , accessed 6 August 2008

Bulatlat, 27 October 2007, "Thousands Flee Homes in Northern Negros"
Internet : <http://www.bulatlat.com/2007/10/thousands-flee-homes-northern-negros> , accessed 16 January 2008

Bulatlat, 15 May 2008, "In Compostela Valley, Lumads Flee Homes amid Military Operations"

Internet : <http://www.bulatlat.com/2008/05/compostela-valley-lumads-flee-homes-amid-military-operations> , accessed 6 August 2008

Bulatlat, 28 June 2008, "AFP Attacks Civilian Community in Sulu"

Internet : <http://www.bulatlat.com/2008/06/afp-attacks-civilian-community-sulu> , accessed 31 July 2008

Bulatlat, 28 May 2005, "Troops Force Manobos To Flee Andap Valley", in *Bulatlat* Vol. V, No. 15, 22-28 May 2005

Internet : <http://www.bulatlat.com/news/5-15/5-15-manobo.htm> , accessed 15 August 2005

Bulatlat, 29 May 2005, "Manobo Villages Looted by Soldiers, Persons Missing – Rights Group", in *Bulatlat* Vol. V, No. 16, 29 May-4 June 2005

Internet : <http://www.bulatlat.com/news/5-16/5-16-manobo.htm> , accessed 15 August 2005

Bulatlat, 16 June 2006, "Still No Peace in War-torn Sulu"

Internet : http://www.bulatlat.com/news/6-16/6-16-sulu_printer.html , accessed 11 January 2007

Bulatlat, November 2006, "Army Troops Scored for Alleged Torture, Harassment in Negros", in *Bulatlat* Vol. 20, No 36, Oct. 15-21, 2006

Internet : <http://www.bulatlat.com/news/6-36/6-36-troops.htm> , accessed 6 December 2006

Center of Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance (COE-DMHA), 20 May 2008, "More than 400,000 affected by Philippines storm"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/KHII-7EU83Q?OpenDocument> , accessed 14 July 2008

Center of Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance (COE-DMHA), July 2008, "Philippine troops clash with communist, Muslim rebels in south"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/KHII-7G686T?OpenDocument> , accessed 14 July 2008

Center of Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance (COE-DMHA), 31 July 2008, Southern Philippine province warns of violence if included in autonomous region

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/RMOI-7H3VEY?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 14 August 2008

Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), November 2007, Submission to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Philippines

Internet : <http://www.cohre.org/store/attachments/COHRE%20Philippines%20UPR%20Submission%20FINAL.pdf> , accessed 17 June 2008

Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), 5 December 2006, "The Philippines named a Housing Rights Violator for the forced eviction of hundreds of thousands"

Internet : http://www.cohre.org/view_page.php?page_id=236 , accessed 14 March 2007

Christian Science Monitor (CSM), 14 March 2007, "'Pocket wars' and peace in Philippines"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/DHRV-6ZA9NY?OpenDocument> , accessed 14 March 2007

Citizen's Disaster Response Center (CDRC), 3 February 2006, "3,000 civilians remain displaced due to military offensive"

Internet : <http://www.cdrc-phil.org/DA-2006-02.pdf> , accessed 16 November 2006

Citizen's Disaster Response Center (CDRC), 4 July 2006, "Thousands flee as clashes start anew in Maguindanao and Bukidnon"

Internet : <http://www.cdrc-phil.org/DA-2006-10%20Maguindanao%20and%20Bukidnon.pdf> ,
accessed 16 November 2006

Citizen's Disaster Response Center (CDRC), 16 May 2005, "Thousands of Families Internally Displaced in Calbiga, Samar and Surigao del Sur"

Citizen's Disaster Response Center (CDRC), 16 November 2005, "Thousands flee as Sulu war ensue"

Community and Family Services International (CFSI), October 2003, Transition interventions with Internally Displaced Persons: From Conflict toward Peace and Development in the Southern Philippines

Internet : <http://www.cfsi.ph/Mindanao7.pdf> , accessed 18 March 2004

Community and Family Services International (CFSI), July 2002, Promoting the transition from conflict to peace and development at the community level, Progress Report Number Four, 1 April through 30 June 2002

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/F49DBD15E1BD6CA5802570B700599A03/\\$file/Mindanao4.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/F49DBD15E1BD6CA5802570B700599A03/$file/Mindanao4.pdf) ,

Consuelo Foundation, 8 December 2007, Assessment report on the humanitarian situation in Sulu

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/C52C3104F82C0C37C12573D100560791/\\$file/Sulu+Assessment+Report+Mendoza+Oct07.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/C52C3104F82C0C37C12573D100560791/$file/Sulu+Assessment+Report+Mendoza+Oct07.pdf) ,

Cyberdyaryo, 5 August 2002, "Minanao war refugees still in evacuation centers"

Internet : http://www.cyberdyaryo.com/features/f2002_0805_02.htm , accessed 6 November 2002

Davao Today, 9 September 2006, "US-Backed Military Operations in Sulu Decried"

Internet : <http://davaotoday.com/2006/09/09/us-backed-military-operations-in-sulu-decried/> ,
accessed 11 January 2007

Davao Today, 13 November 2006, "Soldiers Sexually Molested NGO Workers — Gabriela"

Internet : <http://davaotoday.com/2006/11/13/soldiers-sexually-molested-ngo-workers-gabriela/> ,
accessed 28 February 2007

Davao Today, 16 December 2006, Human Rights in Mindanao: A Year of Living Dangerously

Internet : <http://davaotoday.com/2006/12/16/human-rights-in-mindanao-a-year-of-living-dangerously/#more-592> , accessed 19 December 2006

Davao Today, 2 January 2007, "Philippines Is Top Housing Rights Violator"

Internet : <http://davaotoday.com/2007/01/02/philippines-is-top-housing-rights-violator/> , accessed 8 January 2007

Davao Today, 8 January 2007, "Abducted, Blindfolded, Tortured, Molested"

Internet : <http://davaotoday.com/2007/01/08/abducted-blindfolded-tortured-molested/> , accessed 8 January 2007

Davao Today, 3 February 2007, "Military's Tagging of MNLF Fatalities as Abu Sayyaf Worsens Tension in Sulu"

Internet : <http://davaotoday.com/2007/02/03/militarys-tagging-of-mnlf-fatalities-as-abu-sayyaf-worsens-tension-in-sulu/> , accessed 5 March 2007

Davao Today, 11 February 2007, "Terror Law Undermines Efforts for Justice and Peace in Mindanao"

Internet : <http://davaotoday.com/2007/02/11/terror-law-undermines-efforts-for-justice-and-peace-in-mindanao/> , accessed 28 February 2007

Davao Today, 18 October 2007, "In Mindanao, war shatters the Ramadan"

Internet : <http://davaotoday.com/2007/10/18/in-mindanao-war-shatters-the-ramadan/> , accessed 16 January 2008

Davao Today, 5 March 2006, "Alamara 'Atrocities' Displace Hundreds in Paquibato"

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 31 March 2004, DSWD Status Report of CY 2003 Armed Conflict Victims in Mindanao

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/4B4CE8C006E8A6B7802570B700599D86/\\$file/DSWD+Status+Report+of+CY+2003+Armed+Conflict+Victims+in+Mindanao.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/4B4CE8C006E8A6B7802570B700599D86/$file/DSWD+Status+Report+of+CY+2003+Armed+Conflict+Victims+in+Mindanao.pdf) ,

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 22 July 2003, Status of evacuation centers

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/56F89C22AA4D1765802570B700599AF8/\\$file/Evacuation_centers_status_22July03.xls](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/56F89C22AA4D1765802570B700599AF8/$file/Evacuation_centers_status_22July03.xls) ,

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 25 March 2004, Mindanao Armed Conflict, ARMM region, Statistical Report March 2004

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/76F0A5A9D55F3977802570B700599CA/\\$file/armed+conflict++in+ARMM@03+25+04+TERMINAL+REPORT.xls](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/76F0A5A9D55F3977802570B700599CA/$file/armed+conflict++in+ARMM@03+25+04+TERMINAL+REPORT.xls) ,

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 9 October 2003, Mindanao Armed Conflict Terminal Statistical Report 2003

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/7BDB77E6412A85E4802570B700599C05/\\$file/Armed+Conflict.IX.X.XI.XII.ARMM.TERMINAL+REPORT.xls](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/7BDB77E6412A85E4802570B700599C05/$file/Armed+Conflict.IX.X.XI.XII.ARMM.TERMINAL+REPORT.xls) ,

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 9 February 2005, 2004 Annual Consolidation Statistics

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/7C0F420AE118FDC9802570B700599E6A/\\$file/2004-Annual+Stat.Consolidation.xls](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/7C0F420AE118FDC9802570B700599E6A/$file/2004-Annual+Stat.Consolidation.xls) ,

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 25 October 2006, Initial report on the armed conflict in Calatrava, negros Occidental

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/8EC6B87C24EA98ACC125728F005CF64/\\$file/Dromic+11+Oct+2006.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/8EC6B87C24EA98ACC125728F005CF64/$file/Dromic+11+Oct+2006.pdf) ,

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 2006, 2005 - Annual Disasters Statistical Consolidation

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/C392E9CC8AE174F9C125710D003319B5/\\$file/2005-+ANNUAL+NATIONWIDE+CONSOLIDATION..xls](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/C392E9CC8AE174F9C125710D003319B5/$file/2005-+ANNUAL+NATIONWIDE+CONSOLIDATION..xls) ,

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 5 November 2001, Comprehensive statistics on the evacuees in Mindanao

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/D31520E49F47B0C1802570B700599919/\\$file/General_summary_5_Nov01.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/D31520E49F47B0C1802570B700599919/$file/General_summary_5_Nov01.pdf) ,

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 18 August 2006, Armed Conflict in Maguindanao

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/F8D7165C63B13B74C125728F005B1060/\\$file/Dromic+29+June+2006.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/F8D7165C63B13B74C125728F005B1060/$file/Dromic+29+June+2006.pdf) ,

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 12 August 2005, Armed Conflict in Indanan, Sulu

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 16 March 2005, Armed Conflict in Barangay Pentiguian and Pembalayan, Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 2 April 2005, Armed Conflict in Barangay Quinarabasahan, Malinao, Albay

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 20 February 2005, Armed Conflict in Barangay Poypoy, Calintaan, Occidental Mindoro

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 26 January 2005, Armed conflict in Maguindanao

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 26 May 2005, Military Operation in San Agustin, Surigao del Sur

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 28 April 2005, Military Operation in Brgys. Bunawon and Sandulot, Siaton, Negros Oriental

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 31 March 2004, CY 2003 Armed Conflict in Mindanao

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 5 July 2005, Military Operation in Calbiga, Samar

Departement of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, 9 June 2005, Armed Conflict in Panamo, Sulu

Department of Social Welfare and Development of the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (DSWD-ARMM), 8 November 2002, Notes from presentation by DSWD ARMM

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/AC1C733F7323738C802570B7005999E3/\\$file/DSWD+presntation+figs.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/AC1C733F7323738C802570B7005999E3/$file/DSWD+presntation+figs.pdf) ,

Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA), 5 July 2006, "At least 780 families trapped in fighting in southern Philippines"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/KHII-6RE9XL?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 7 July 2006

Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA), 13 July 2008, "Four communist rebels killed in southern Philippine fighting"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/KKAA-7GHA46?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 23 July 2008

Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA), 26 July 2007, "Donor countries, agencies worried about southern Philippines"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/LRON-75GCAV?OpenDocument> , accessed 30 July 2007

Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA), 3 August 2006, "Thousands flee as military attacks rebels in southern Philippines"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/LSGZ-6SBBYU?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 7 August 2006

Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA), 8 September 2006, "Peace talks between Philippines, Muslim rebels deadlock"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/LSGZ-6TFH2T?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 11 September 2006

Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA), 2 July 2008, "Philippine troops warned of more Muslim rebel attacks"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/LSGZ-7G6BV8?OpenDocument> , accessed 14 July 2008

Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA), 22 April 2008, "Pullout of Malaysian peacekeepers spells trouble for Philippines"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/MUMA-7DXA6D?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 24 April 2008

Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA), 7 September 2005, "Philippines, communist rebels agree to resume peace talks"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/SKAR-6FZBLB?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 16 September 2005

Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA), 8 July 2006, "Evacuees swell to 30,000 in southern Philippine clashes"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/SODA-6RK7HF?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 20 July 2006

Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA), 5 February 2007, "Philippines to seek disarmament of Muslim rebels in 1996 peace pact"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/VBOL-6Y5EH4?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 5 February 2007

E-Balita News, 14 September 2006, "1,000 displaced by military drive against Abu Sayyaf"

Internet : <http://www.ebalita.net/go/news/news.php?id=2514> , accessed 14 November 2006

E-Balita News, 15 September 2006, "1,000 displaced by military drive against Abu Sayyaf"
Internet : <http://www.ebalita.net/go/news/news.php?id=2514> , accessed 3 October 2006

East-West Center Washington, 2005, Forging Sustainable Peace in Mindanao: The Role of Civil Society
Internet : <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/stored/pdfs/PS017.pdf> , accessed 15 August 2005

Ecumenical Commission for Displaced Families and Communities (ECDFC), 23 November 2001, Recorded Armed Conflict Related Displacement Incidents (January-November 23, 2001)
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/7918B7A60A4E87D2802570B7005998F0/\\$file/ECDFC_Jan_Nov_2001_armed_conflict.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/7918B7A60A4E87D2802570B7005998F0/$file/ECDFC_Jan_Nov_2001_armed_conflict.pdf) ,

Ecumenical Commission for Displaced Families and Communities (ECDFC), 8 June 2000, E-mail from the Research, Documentation and Publication Program (RDPP), "Internal Displacement in the Philippines"

Embassy of Japan in the Philippines, 5 November 2003, "Japan, as the top donor, promotes peace and development efforts in Mindanao"
Internet : <http://www.ph.emb-japan.go.jp/pressreleases/press-57.htm> , accessed 28 April 2004

European Commission, 22 July 2004, "European Commission in RP calls for project proposals for uprooted people Grants of € 500,000 to € 1.2 M are available"
Internet : <http://www.delphi.cec.eu.int/docs/UprootedPeoplefinalrevised.doc> , accessed 8 February 2005

European Commission, 15 February 2007, "European Commission launches the € 12 million Mindanao Health Sector Policy Support Programme"
Internet : http://www.delphi.ec.europa.eu/docs/EC_12m_healthsector.pdf , accessed 21 February 2007

Global IDP Project, 15 September 2005, Main conflict-induced displacement incidents in the Philippines during 2005
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/4F28B74F57242E42802570B700599E56/\\$file/Main+displacement+incidents_15Sept05.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/4F28B74F57242E42802570B700599E56/$file/Main+displacement+incidents_15Sept05.pdf) ,

GMA News, 25 November 2007, "Surigao Sur evacuees face disease outbreak"
Internet : <http://www.gmanews.tv/story/70084/Disease-outbreak-feared-at-Surigao-evacuation-center> , accessed 17 January 2008

GMA News, 11 December 2007, "Kids in Quezon province to be homeless on X'mas"
Internet : <http://www.gmanews.tv/story/72435/Kids-in-Quezon-province-to-be-homeless-on-Xmas>
accessed 17 June 2008

Government of the Philippines, 29 July 2008, "Peace in Mindanao to open floodgates to development of resource-rich region"
Internet : <http://www.gov.ph/news/default.asp?i=21680> , , accessed 6 August 2008

Government of the Philippines, 9 February 2005, "Philippines: Gov't program extends aid to Maguindanao evacuees"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/MHII-69G9S6?OpenDocument> ,
accessed 11 February 2005

Government of the Philippines, 7 May 2008, "Child rights group alarmed by report of 2,380 children affected by armed conflict in Southern Mindanao"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/MUMA-7EM7YE?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 15 May 2008

Government of the Philippines, 23 May 2005, "IDP Programme extends relief aid to evacuees in Lanao del Norte"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/RMOI-6CN9UT?OpenDocument> , accessed 23 May 2005

Government of the Philippines, 23 May 2005, "Matalam evacuees find new refuge in donor-funded gov't core shelters"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/RMOI-6CN9W8?OpenDocument> , accessed 23 May 2005

Government of the Philippines, 21 July 2005, "B'laan IDPs in Tupi, South Cotabato get aid from EC-funded program"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/RMOI-6EH57R?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 21 July 2005

Government of the Philippines, 7 March 2005, "Displaced families in Sulu starting to return home"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/VBOL-6A9EEN?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 8 March 2005

Government of the Philippines, 25 May 2005, "Philippines: Mindanao's war-torn areas get AUS\$ 65-M"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/VBOL-6CQJ3L?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 13 September 2005

Government of the Philippines, 31 May 2005, "Japan pledges \$ 400 million for peace and development in Mindanao"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/VBOL-6CXJCZ?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 13 September 2005

Government of the Philippines, 28 September 2004, "EC, UNDP strengthen support to Mindanao, back P203-M rehab program for war affected families"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/90adfc84065b386f49256f1e000d451e?OpenDocument> , accessed 28 October 2004

Government of the Philippines, 8 February 2005, Status of the GRP-MILF Peace Process

Internet : <http://www.usip.org/philippines/reports/rosario.pdf> , accessed 1 September 2005

Government of the Philippines, International Funding Agencies, Mindanao Stakeholders, December 2005, Joint Needs Assessment for Reconstruction and Development of Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao. Rural Development Report. Volume 3

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/549A2370BE5377CDC125723500504AD3/\\$file/JNA_Rural.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/549A2370BE5377CDC125723500504AD3/$file/JNA_Rural.pdf) ,

Government of the Philippines, International Funding Agencies, Mindanao Stakeholders, December 2005, Joint Needs Assessment for Reconstruction and Development of Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao. Human Development Report. Volume II

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/A28CD2E3970B34F9C12572350050246E/\\$file/JNA_Human_dev_FINAL.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/A28CD2E3970B34F9C12572350050246E/$file/JNA_Human_dev_FINAL.pdf) ,

Government of the Philippines, International Funding Agencies, Mindanao Stakeholders, December 2005, Joint Needs Assessment for Reconstruction and Development of Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao. Integrative Report Volume I

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/E1DCFA060F8E3E0EC1257235004FD0D5/\\$file/JNA_Integrative_report.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/E1DCFA060F8E3E0EC1257235004FD0D5/$file/JNA_Integrative_report.pdf) ,

GRP-MILF, 7 August 2001, Joint Communiqué

Internet : http://web.archive.org/web/20031227032608/justpeace.net.ph/process/peacetalk/p2001_0827_01.htm , accessed 26 November 2001

GRP-MILF, 7 May 2002, Implementing Guidelines on the Humanitarian, Rehabilitation and Development Aspects of the GRP-MILF Tripoli Agreement on Peace of 2001

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/C42E6D1BED79F6D3802570B700599A08/\\$file/implementing_guidelines_may_02.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/C42E6D1BED79F6D3802570B700599A08/$file/implementing_guidelines_may_02.pdf) ,

IMT, GRP-MILF CCCH, & Bantay Ceasefire, 28 January 2005, Joint Assessment to Areas Affected by 27 January 2005 Air Strike

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/ADD10DC83358F6C4802570B700599D9E/\\$file/mamasapano_damage_assessll.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/ADD10DC83358F6C4802570B700599D9E/$file/mamasapano_damage_assessll.pdf) ,

Indigenous People Rights - Monitor (IPR-Monitor), April 2008, The human rights situation of indigenous people in the Philippines, submitted to the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights for the Universal Periodic Review of the Philippine government

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/3CFC82DD9F21169AC125749B00360363/\\$file/IPRM_PHL_UPR_S1_2008_IndigenousPeopleRightsMonitor_uprsubmission.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/3CFC82DD9F21169AC125749B00360363/$file/IPRM_PHL_UPR_S1_2008_IndigenousPeopleRightsMonitor_uprsubmission.pdf) ,

Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), 2 July 2006, "Stop the war, Save the Civilians, Save the Evacuees!"

Internet : http://www.iidnet.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=126&Itemid=42 , accessed 28 February 2007

Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), 13 July 2006, "MPC, Bantay Ceasefire appeal for support to IDPs and ceasefire"

Internet : http://www.iidnet.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=128&Itemid=42 , accessed 20 July 2006

InPeace Mindanao, 15 December 2003, "21 Mindanao bombings claim 80 lives, injure 345 under GMA watch; 86,686 victims of human rights violations"

Inside Mindanao, 26 March 2008, The plight of Umbai of Saranay: From being displaced due to conflict to being a peace advocate

Internet : <http://www.insidemindanao.com/article45.html> , accessed 19 August 2008

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 28 January 2008, "Efforts to boost awareness of IDP rights"

Internet : <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76444> , accessed 29 January 2008

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 18 March 2008, "Conflict IDPs in Mindanao face shortages"

Internet : <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=77347> , accessed 19 March 2008

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 9 June 2008, "Rice crisis increasing poverty, puts MDG target out of reach"

Internet : <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=78632> , accessed 17 June 2008

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 17 August 2008, "Displaced villagers in Mindanao begin to return home"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/KKAA-7HM3VU?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 18 August 2008

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 31 March 2008, Philippines: The slow process of typhoon recovery

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/YSAR-7D9MPQ?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 14 August 2008

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), October 2007, Submission from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in anticipation of consideration of the combined second, third and fourth periodic report of the Philippines submitted to the Committee under Articles 16 and 17 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/86D14E9A35C29135C125749D0055E6BF/\\$file/idmcphilippines39.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/86D14E9A35C29135C125749D0055E6BF/$file/idmcphilippines39.pdf) ,

International Alert (IA), December 2003, Breaking the links between economics and conflict in Mindanao

Internet : http://www.international-alert.org/pdfs/economics_and_conflict_in_mindanao.pdf , accessed 19 August 2005

International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), 2006, Philippines Landmine Monitor Report 2006

Internet : <http://www.icbl.org/lm/2006/philippines.html> , accessed 8 August 2008

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 13 September 2007, "Philippines: ICRC steps up IDP response as fighting escalates in Mindanao"

Internet : <http://www.icrc.ch/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/philippines-interview-130907> , accessed 17 September 2007

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 14 August 2008, "Operation under way to aid more than 80,000 displaced people in Mindanao "

Internet : <http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/philippines-news-140808!OpenDocument> , accessed 18 August 2008

International Crisis Group (ICG), 14 May 2008, The Philippines: counter-insurgency vs. counter-terrorism in Mindanao

Internet : http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_east_asia/152_counterinsurgency_vs_counter_terrorism_in_mindanao.pdf , accessed 15 May 2008

International Crisis Group (ICG), 13 July 2004, Southern Philippines Backgrounder: Terrorism and the peace process

Internet : http://www.crisisweb.org/library/documents/asia/south_east_asia/080_southern_philippines_bac_kgrounder_terrorism_n_peace_process.pdf , accessed 14 July 2004

International Herald Tribune (IHT), 21 February 2007, "UN expert urges Philippines to solve political killings"

Internet : <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2007/02/21/news/phils.php> , accessed 5 March 2007

Janet M. Arnado & Mary Ann Arnado, 15 November 2004, Casualties of Globalization. Economic Interest, War, and Displacement along Ligawasan Marsh, Philippines

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/2BA8CC75833FC50A802570B700599D81/\\$file/Final+report+ligawasan+marsh.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/2BA8CC75833FC50A802570B700599D81/$file/Final+report+ligawasan+marsh.pdf) ,

Journal of Humanitarian Assistance (JHA), February 2007, International Organisations in Mindanao: To Protect or Not?

Internet : <http://jha.ac/2007/02/01/international-organisations-in-mindanao-to-protect-or-not/> , accessed 19 February 2007

Kalinaw Mindanaw, April 2005, The Sulu Mercy Mission Report

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/6CF53D7100DBFF4A802570B700599E44/\\$file/sulumercymissionreport-lay-out.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/6CF53D7100DBFF4A802570B700599E44/$file/sulumercymissionreport-lay-out.pdf) ,

Karapatan, 2008, Dangerous Regime, Defiant People

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/2DA8253178F78706C125746B003ECC7E/\\$file/karapatan_2007hr_report.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/2DA8253178F78706C125746B003ECC7E/$file/karapatan_2007hr_report.pdf) ,

Karapatan, 2008, Submission by the Non-Government Organization, KARAPATAN Alliance for the advancement of People's Rights Related to the Philippines for the Upcoming Universal Periodic Review First Session April 2008

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/ECF158E57312AFE1C12574970032CC0E/\\$file/KAR_PHL_UPR_S1_2008_Karapatan_uprsubmission.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/ECF158E57312AFE1C12574970032CC0E/$file/KAR_PHL_UPR_S1_2008_Karapatan_uprsubmission.pdf) ,

KAWAGIB Moro Human Rights Organisation, 15 December 2007, Moro Human Rights Violations 2007 Report

Internet : http://www.mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3504&Itemid=247 , accessed 31 July 2008

Luwaran.com, 5 February 2007, "Military abuses in Midsayap reported"

Internet : <http://www.luwaran.com/modules.php?name=News&file=print&sid=178> , accessed 5 March 2007

Manila Bulletin, 3 January 2005, "Concern aired over 4,000 dislocated by Abu Sayyaf attacks"

Internet : <http://www.mb.com.ph/issues/2005/01/03/MAIN2005010325657.html#> , accessed 19 September 2005

Margarita M. Frederico, Clifford J. Picton, Steven Muncy, Luis Ma Ongsiapco, Celia Santos and Vladimir Hernandez, March 2007, "Building Community following displacement due to armed conflict", in *International Social Work* (50): 2, 171-184

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/76C44358218461AFC125746A004939B0/\\$file/Building+community+following+displacement+3+2007+Intl+soc+work+50+2.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/76C44358218461AFC125746A004939B0/$file/Building+community+following+displacement+3+2007+Intl+soc+work+50+2.pdf) ,

Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo), 31 October 2005, GOP-UNDP-EC Programme on Rehabilitating Internally Displaced Persons and Communities in Southern Philippines

Internet : http://medco.gov.ph/medcoveb/uploads/IDP/EU-IDPBriefer_31October05.pdf , accessed 31 January 2006

Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo), 3 November 2004, Mindanao Joint Needs Assessment

Internet : <http://medco.gov.ph/medcoveb/uploads/jna.pdf> , accessed 16 August 2005

Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo), 20 January 2005, "Donor-funded government program extends relief aid to 5,000 evacuees in Maguindanao"

Internet : <http://www.medco.gov.ph/medcoveb/newsfeatl.asp?NewsMode=20&NewsDetailID=835> accessed 26 January 2005

Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo), 26 January 2005, "Government pursues peace-building efforts in Sultan Kudarat"

Internet : <http://www.medco.gov.ph/medcoveb/newsfeatl.asp?NewsMode=20&NewsDetailID=839> accessed 26 January 2005

Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo), 26 July 2005, "GMA orders relief efforts to evacuees in Maguindanao"

Internet : <http://www.medco.gov.ph/medcoveb/newsfeatl.asp?NewsMode=20&NewsDetailID=919> accessed 28 July 2005

Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo), 26 July 2005, "IDP programme extends quick relief to evacuees in Maguindanao"

Internet : <http://www.medco.gov.ph/medcoveb/newsfeatl.asp?NewsMode=20&NewsDetailID=920> accessed 28 July 2005

Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo), August 2004, Mindanao Updates

Internet : <http://www.medco.gov.ph/medcoveb/uploads/mdoupdt.pdf> , , , , accessed 28 October 2004

Mindanao Peaceweavers, April 2005, Sulu: State of War Calls for Peace, Report of the Sulu Peace and Solidarity Mission of the Mindanao Peaceweavers, March 27- 31, 2005

Internet : http://www.iidnet.org/adv/mda/docs/sulu_mission_report.pdf , accessed 20 September 2005

Mindanao Peaceweavers, 19 June 2008, MPW statement on Sulu military operation

Internet : http://www.mindanaopeaceweavers.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=756&Itemid=55 , accessed 30 July 2008

Mindanao Martus Community, 11 March 2008, Human Rights Watch 2007

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/E07C9CCC9641AE1DC12574970034111C/\\$file/HRW+2007+martus+community.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/E07C9CCC9641AE1DC12574970034111C/$file/HRW+2007+martus+community.pdf) ,

Mindanews, 2 August 2006, "Find ways to resolve land conflict; return displaced Higaonon families"

Internet : http://mindanews.com/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=569 , accessed 7 August 2006

Mindanews, 31 December 2006, "Mindanao 2006: 3-year cycle of war finally broken"

Internet : http://mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1517&Itemid=75 ,
accessed 1 March 2007

Mindanews, February 2007, "Civilian peace group: Land dispute caused Midsayap skirmishes"
Internet : http://mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1702&Itemid=50 ,
accessed 6 February 2007

Mindanews, 12 February 2007, "Hundreds flee as troops hunt down fugitives"
Internet : http://mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1759&Itemid=50 ,
accessed 12 February 2007

Mindanews, 15 April 2007, "CHR asks military to ensure safety of civilians during operations"
Internet : http://mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2186&Itemid=50 ,
accessed 17 April 2007

Mindanews, 17 April 2007, "OIC appeals to RP, MNLF to declare ceasefire in Sulu"
Internet : http://mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2200&Itemid=75 ,
accessed 17 June 2008

Mindanews, 23 April 2007, "More on Sulu Quagmire"
Internet : http://mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2246&Itemid=68 ,
accessed 30 April 2007

Mindanews, 25 April 2007, "Politics delays relief operations in Sulu"
Internet : http://mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2274&Itemid=50 ,
accessed 30 April 2007

Mindanews, 20 June 2006, "Farmers flee Bukidnon fighting"
Internet : http://mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=262&Itemid=50 ,
accessed 9 November 2006

Mindanews, 7 August 2007, "Sleepless in Basilan"
Internet : http://mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2992&Itemid=68 ,
accessed 7 August 2007

Mindanews, 10 October 2007, "HSA bad for peace process"
Internet : http://mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3076&Itemid=50 ,
accessed 29 July 2008

Mindanews, 26 June 2006, "Under Siege: Displaced by the displaced"
Internet : http://mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=309&Itemid=51 ,
accessed 7 August 2006

Mindanews, 7 July 2006, "Peace groups form task force to help Maguindanao victims"
Internet : http://mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=400&Itemid=50 ,
accessed 7 July 2006

Mindanews, 14 July 2006, "Maguindanao update: The farmers are planting again but... "
Internet : http://mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=445&Itemid=75 ,
accessed 14 November 2006

Mindanews, 16 July 2006, "A day in the life of the ceasefire monitors: averting a clash between CVOs and the MILF"
Internet : http://mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=461&Itemid=75 ,
accessed 14 November 2006

Mindanews, 6 August 2006, "Pimentel to military: show proof JIs are in Sulu"
Internet : http://mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=600&Itemid=50 ,
accessed 7 August 2006

Mindanews, 9 August 2006, "Ceasefire monitors avert CVO-MILF clash in Mamasapano"
Internet : http://mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=619&Itemid=50 ,
accessed 10 August 2006

Mindanews, 23 June 2001, "Evacuees main beneficiaries in GRP-MILF's 'agreement on peace'"
Internet : <http://web.archive.org/web/20040203194042/www.mindanao.com/kalinaw/peaceproc/grp-milf-evacs.htm> ,
accessed 16 November 2001

Mindanews, 19 August 2005, "Three Days with a Bantay Ceasefire Mission"
Internet : http://www.iidnet.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=63&Itemid=53 ,
accessed 11 August 2008

Mindanews, 21 November 2007, STATEMENT: It's happening again! Residents of Lumad communities fear for their lives
Internet : http://www.mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3334&Itemid=95 ,
accessed 11 December 2007

Mindanews, 11 December 2007, "Classes stop, residents flee due to alleged military harassment"
Internet : http://www.mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3481&Itemid=50 ,
accessed 11 December 2007

Mindanews, 16 June 2008, "Displaced!"
Internet : http://www.mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4547&Itemid=95 ,
accessed 24 June 2008

Mindanews, 25 July 2008, "SONA for GMA, SIPA for Mindanao's Lumads"
Internet : http://www.mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4796&Itemid=50 ,
accessed 4 August 2008

Mindanews, 12 August 2008, "Thousands flee war zones in North Cotabato; fighting now in 4 towns"
Internet : http://www.mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4924&Itemid=190 ,
accessed 12 August 2008

Mindanews, 14 August 2008, "Lack of food, meds, sleeping area, water plagues evacuees "
Internet : http://www.mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4939&Itemid=190 ,
accessed 18 August 2008

Mindanews, 11 August 2005, "MNLF-MILF clashes in NorthCot displace 5,000"

Mindanews, 11 September 2005, "Military drive forces farmers to flee"

Mindanews, 12 January 2005, "MILF says Mamasapano attack "never sanctioned;" Gov't asks MILF to punish perpetrators"

Mindanews, 13 January 2005, "Gov't, MILF ceasefire committees optimistic despite Jan. 9 attack"

Mindanews, 16 January 2005, "Mamasapano villagers going home"

Mindanews, 16 September 2005, "Breakthrough in GRP-MILF peace talks in KL"

Mindanews, 18 December 2002, "MILF wants EO issued to recognize its project implementing body"

Mindanews, 18 July 2003, "Ceasefire declared; cases vs MILF's Salamat et al reinvestigated; enforcement of warrants suspended"

Mindanews, 18 September 2005, "Mindanao won't get \$30-M aid from US without peace pact with MILF"

Mindanews, 19 February 2004, "Group wants lumads, refugees as observers in GRP-MILF talks"

Mindanews, 2 September 2005, "How many more Guindolongan child evacuees must die?"

Mindanews, 20 April 2005, "Moro group expresses optimism on the GRP- MILF peace talks"

Mindanews, 20 February 2005, "SOS from Sulu: Medicines, food for 'bakwits'"

Mindanews, 26 December 2004, "GRP, MILF: next round of informal talks in February"

Mindanews, 27 March 2005, "Sulu probe team cites HR violations by military; military says no violations"

Mindanews, 28 January 2004, "Thousands displaced by 2003 war in C. Mindanao still homeless"

Mindanews, 28 October 2002, "10,000 displaced by military operations in Maguindanao, Lanao Sur"

Mindanews, 3 September 2005, "Moro women want tripartite body to look into 1996 GRP-MNLF peace pact; say US troops frightening kids in Sulu"

Mindanews, 30 March 2003, "Gov't, MILF talk peace again"

Mindanews, 31 March 2003, "More civilians displaced as clashes erupt anew"

Mindanews, 4 May 2004, "Gov't to build 4,715 core shelters for ARMM evacuees"

Mindanews, 5 February 2004, "Housing units in war-torn areas substandard, says mayor"

Mindanews, 6 September 2004, "Gov't, MILF panels reach agreement on ceasefire implementation"

Mindanews, 8 March 2005, "Bakwits in Sulu: from 80,000 to 39,000"

Mindanews, 9 February 2003, "20,000 residents flee 11 Pikit barangays; 22 truckloads of Marines arrive in Pikit"

Mindanews, 9 July 2003, "117 evacuees dead in North Cotabato; 118th died today"

National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) & Moro-Christian People's Alliance (MCPA), 21 February 2005, The Renewed Outbreak of War in Sulu
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/4AB187AACD8940C8802570B700599D-A4/\\$file/Sulu+conflict+fact+finding+report.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/4AB187AACD8940C8802570B700599D-A4/$file/Sulu+conflict+fact+finding+report.pdf) ,

National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), 20 June 2008, NDCC update re flashflood incident in region 11
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/TUJA-7FS9DD?OpenDocument&rc=3&emid=FF-2008-000082-PHL> , accessed 14 August 2008

National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), 29 July 2008, Philippines: NDCC update - Typhoon Frank situation report No. 33
Internet : [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2008.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/ONIN-7H3NX2-full_report.pdf/\\$File/full_report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2008.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/ONIN-7H3NX2-full_report.pdf/$File/full_report.pdf) , accessed 14 August 2008

National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), 11 August 2008, NDCC Update, Complex emergency in Central Mindanao
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/0BC9951F28316ACBC12574A2002C2F72/\\$file/NDCC+IDP+report+11aug08.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/0BC9951F28316ACBC12574A2002C2F72/$file/NDCC+IDP+report+11aug08.pdf) ,

National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), 7 December 2007, NDCC update - Situation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Kalingalang Caluang, Sulu province
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/1C83319D380BFC0CC12573B000311800/\\$file/NDCC+IDP+Report+7Dec07.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/1C83319D380BFC0CC12573B000311800/$file/NDCC+IDP+Report+7Dec07.pdf) ,

National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), 22 August 2007, NDCC update re population displacement in Sulu and Basilan
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/37A4943D42B3CDAAC12573440025F5F0/\\$file/NDCC+IDP+Report+22+aug07.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/37A4943D42B3CDAAC12573440025F5F0/$file/NDCC+IDP+Report+22+aug07.pdf) ,

National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), 6 August 2007, NDCC update re population displacement in Basilan, Maguindanao and Shariff Kabunsuan Provinces due to armed conflict
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/381D654B98AECA89C1257337002C7C7F/\\$file/NDCC+IDP+Report+6+aug07.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/381D654B98AECA89C1257337002C7C7F/$file/NDCC+IDP+Report+6+aug07.pdf) ,

National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), 6 June 2008, NDCC update: Population displacement in Maguindanao and Basilan following armed conflict
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/A00555287C4FF359C125746B003CF81E/\\$file/NDCC+IDP+Report+6june08.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/A00555287C4FF359C125746B003CF81E/$file/NDCC+IDP+Report+6june08.pdf) ,

National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), 16 August 2008, NDCC Update, Sitrep No 8, Complex emergency in Mindanao
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/A200DF823F3C03EEC12574A9002CB2F5/\\$file/NDCC+IDP+report+16aug08.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/A200DF823F3C03EEC12574A9002CB2F5/$file/NDCC+IDP+report+16aug08.pdf) ,

National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), 13 August 2008, NDCC Update, Sitrep No 5, Complex emergency in Mindanao

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/A9C6795A7153E567C12574A400285DDF/\\$file/NDCC+IDP+report+13aug08.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/A9C6795A7153E567C12574A400285DDF/$file/NDCC+IDP+report+13aug08.pdf) ,

National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), 18 August 2008, NDCC Update, Sitrep No 10, Complex emergency in Mindanao

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/CFC809DDCDDFF0309C12574AA00274947/\\$file/NDCC+IDP+report+18aug08.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/CFC809DDCDDFF0309C12574AA00274947/$file/NDCC+IDP+report+18aug08.pdf) ,

National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), 19 August 2008, NDCC Update, Sitrep No 12, Complex emergency in Mindanao

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/FB48CFafa753482EC12574AA002A908D/\\$file/NDCC+IDP+report+19aug08.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/FB48CFafa753482EC12574AA002A908D/$file/NDCC+IDP+report+19aug08.pdf) ,

New York Times (NYT), 17 December 2007, "Philippine Talks Stall as Separatists Accuse Government of Changing Agreement"

Internet : http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/17/world/asia/17phils.html?_r=3&oref=slogin&oref=slogin&oref=slogin , accessed 17 June 2008

NonViolent Peaceforce, November 2007, Project Philippines Mindanao

Internet : <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/en/philippinesOctNov07> , accessed 14 July 2008

Notre Dame University & Commission on Population Region XII, 2004, Migration in Conflict Situation and its Implications on Local Governance

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/08C2416EF05384EE802570B700599BFA/\\$file/Migration_Report_high_compress.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/08C2416EF05384EE802570B700599BFA/$file/Migration_Report_high_compress.pdf) ,

Office of the Press Secretary, Republic of the Philippines, 4 March 2003, "Gov't assures safety of evacuees when they return to homes in former conflict areas"

Internet : <http://www.news.ops.gov.ph/archives2003/mar04.htm#Gov't%20assures> , accessed 28 July 2003

Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), 24 April 2007, "The Organization of the Islamic Conference offers assistance in restoring peace and stability in southern Philippines"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/LSGZ-72KG96?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 30 April 2007

Oxfam G-B, November 2000, Anthropometric and Household Food Security Survey among Displaced Families in Central Mindanao

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/BC0403DCC7FA80E8802570B700599968/\\$file/SURVEY+REPORT+.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/BC0403DCC7FA80E8802570B700599968/$file/SURVEY+REPORT+.pdf) ,

Oxfam G-B, 2001, Reaching for the gun: the humanitarian impact of small arms in Central Mindanao

Philippine Commission on Human Rights (CHR), 4 February 2008, Report on the situation of children affected by armed conflict in Lianga, Surigao del Sur

Internet : http://www.chr.gov.ph/MAIN%20PAGES/news/news_CRCFeb408.htm , accessed 31 July 2008

Philippine Commission on Human Rights (CHR), 2006, CHR Report on First National Multi-Stakeholders' Forum on IDPs, 9-10 December 2005
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/1F5555E7056BFAC1C125721F002DAC/EA/\\$file/CHR+National+Forum+Report+2005.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/1F5555E7056BFAC1C125721F002DAC/EA/$file/CHR+National+Forum+Report+2005.pdf) ,

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 22 July 2005, "Samar villagers flee homes as Army hunts rebels "
Internet : http://archive.inquirer.net/view.php?db=0&story_id=44359 , accessed 9 September 2005

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 17 September 2005, "RP-MILF peace talks in Malaysia make major breakthrough"
Internet : http://archive.inquirer.net/view.php?db=0&story_id=50494 , accessed 21 September 2005

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 8 April 2006, "Army says NPA camp captured"
Internet : http://archive.inquirer.net/view.php?db=0&story_id=72011 , accessed 10 January 2007

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 2 May 2006, "4,000 Sulu villagers kept evacuees by war on Sayyaf"
Internet : http://archive.inquirer.net/view.php?db=0&story_id=74351 , accessed 14 November 2006

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 13 August 2008, "North Mindanao villagers fear mines, fresh attacks"
Internet : <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/nation/view/20080813-154412/UPDATE-North-Mindanao-villagers-fear-mines-fresh-attacks> , accessed 13 August 2008

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 18 August 2008, "21 killed as MILF flee Lanao Norte towns--officials"
Internet : <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/nation/view/20080818-155350/21-killed-as-MILF-flee-Lanao-Norte-towns--officials> , accessed 18 August 2008

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 17 April 2007, "Gov't rejects OIC call for ceasefire in Sulu"
Internet : http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/nation/view_article.php?article_id=60913 , accessed 17 April 2007

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 28 May 2008, Church help sought to initiate peace talk between NPA, gov't
Internet : <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/regions/view/20080528-139377/Church-help-sought-to-initiate-peace-talk-between-NPA-govt> , accessed 6 August 2008

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 31 January 2007, "Classes remain suspended in North Cotabato villages"
Internet : http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/regions/view_article.php?article_id=46716 , accessed 6 February 2007

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 6 February 2007, "Refugee from Mindanao fighting dies in evacuation camp "
Internet : http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/regions/view_article.php?article_id=47850 , accessed 6 February 2007

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 6 May 2007, "Sultan Kiram yet to deliver aid to Sulu evacuees"

Internet : http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/regions/view_article.php?article_id=64405 ,
accessed 8 May 2007

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 18 May 2007, "MNLF calls for failure of election in Sulu"

Internet : http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/regions/view_article.php?article_id=66727 ,
accessed 23 May 2007

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 16 April 2007, "MNLF commander declares 'holy war' on gov't"

Internet : http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/nation/view_article.php?article_id=60591 ,
accessed 17 April 2007

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 18 August 2008, "A day in the life of Cotabato evacuees "

Internet : <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/regions/view/20080818-155298/A-day-in-the-life-of-Cotabato-evacuees> , accessed 18 August 2008

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 31 May 2008, "500 displaced families run out of food, says mayor"

Internet : http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/regions/view_article.php?article_id=139907 ,
accessed 14 July 2008

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 9 March 2005, "DSWD chief scores 'inaccurate reporting' about Sulu"

Internet : http://news.inq7.net/top/index.php?index=1&story_id=29929 , accessed 1 September 2005

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 9 February 2007, "Gov't rights body finds Marines at fault in Sulu clash"

Internet : http://services.inquirer.net/print/print.php?article_id=48515 , accessed 5 March 2007

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 21 July 2007, "Basilan residents flee homes in fear of military action"

Internet : http://services.inquirer.net/print/print.php?article_id=77987 , accessed 30 July 2007

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 7 August 2007, "6,000 flee Basilan villages as Abus attacks Marines camp"

Internet : http://services.inquirer.net/print/print.php?article_id=81119 , accessed 28 August 2007

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 9 June 2003, "Evacuees forced to leave ahead of President's visit "

Internet : http://www.inq7.net/nat/2003/jun/10/text/nat_3-1-p.htm , accessed 28 July 2003

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 12 June 2003, "Government denies forcing evacuees to leave centers"

Internet : http://www.inq7.net/nat/2003/jun/13/text/nat_6-1-p.htm , accessed 28 July 2003

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 27 May 2003, "US pouring money, guns into Mindanao"

Internet : http://www.inq7.net/nat/2003/may/28/nat_1-1.htm , accessed 27 April 2004

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 7 September 2003, "Live bombs keep clash site 'no-man's land' "

Internet : http://www.inq7.net/reg/2003/sep/08/text/reg_1-1-p.htm , accessed 21 April 2004

Philippine Daily Inquirer (The Inquirer), 13 August 2008, "Rebels gone, evacuees returning, says N. Cotabato gov"

Internet : <http://www.inquirer.net/specialfeatures/mindanaopeaceprocess/view.php?db=1&article=20080813-154292> , accessed 13 August 2008

Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC), 25 May 2007, Red Cross delivers assistance to displaced families in the continuing Sulu armed conflict

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/EK0I-73U7CB?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 18 July 2007

Philippines Senate, 6 December 2006, Senate Bill No 2548: An Act Improving Philippine Commitment to Human Rights Promotion and Protection by Providing the Necessary Mechanisms for the Prevention of the Occurrence and Protection from the Adverse Effects of Internal Displacement and for Other Purposes (Internal Displacement Act of 2006)

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/60967EA5444F9478C12572950053EB11/\\$file/idpfinal.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/60967EA5444F9478C12572950053EB11/$file/idpfinal.pdf) ,

Pinoy Press, 24 December 2007, "Surigao evacuees decry ravaged homes"

Internet : <http://www.pinoypress.net/2007/12/24/philippines-surigao-evacuees-decry-ravaged-homes/> , accessed 15 January 2008

Pinoy Press, 23 January 2008, "Davao Lumads Flee as Military Heightens Operations"

Internet : <http://www.pinoypress.net/2008/01/23/davao-lumads-flee-as-military-heightens-operations/> , accessed 11 August 2008

PRweb, 9 March 2004, "Accelerating Aid for Mindanao's War Victims"

Internet : <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2004/3/prweb109632.htm> , accessed 23 March 2004

Reuters, 4 December 2006, "Manila sends extra 2,000 troops to hunt militants"

Internet : <http://today.reuters.com/news/CrisesArticle.aspx?storyId=MAN291173> , accessed 2 January 2007

Reuters, 8 August 2005, "Philippine peace deal at risk as Muslims vote"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/EVOD-6F3HLV?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 15 August 2005

Reuters, 11 August 2008, "Thousands flee fighting in southern Philippines"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/KKAA-7HE9MX?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 11 August 2008

Reuters, 14 August 2008, "Displaced trickle back to villages in Philippines"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/KKAA-7HH83V?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 14 August 2008

Reuters, 17 August 2008, "Muslim rebels kill 7 soldiers in Philippine south"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/KKAA-7HLAYY?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 18 August 2008

Reuters, 6 August 2007, "Thousands flee war-torn southern Philippine island"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/LRON-75TE32?OpenDocument> , accessed 7 August 2007

Reuters, 31 October 2006, "Manila misses peace deadline with Muslim rebels"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/LSGZ-6V4DTF?OpenDocument> ,
accessed 1 November 2006

Reuters, 24 October 2007, Interview: Clan wars threaten truce in the Philippine south
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/LSGZ-78ACX5?OpenDocument> ,
accessed 25 October 2007

Reuters, 30 November 2007, "Fresh fighting in southern Philippines, 9 dead"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/LSGZ-79FDAF?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 11 December 2007

Reuters, 15 August 2008, "Farmers return to burnt-out homes in Philippines"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/MUMA-7HJ8GF?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 18 August 2008

Reuters, 9 July 2008, "Philippines, rebels talk to defuse rising violence"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/PANA-7GDH6P?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 14 August 2008

Reuters, 27 July 2008, "Philippines, rebels reach deal on Muslim homeland"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/RMOI-7GXMFR?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 29 July 2008

Reuters, 12 August 2005, "Arroyo favourite wins election in Philippine south"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/SODA-6F785M?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 16 September 2005

Reuters, 9 August 2006, "Philippine rebel chief wants land as part of peace"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/SODA-6SH7XG?OpenDocument> ,
accessed 10 August 2006

Reuters, 24 August 2007, "Philippine peace talks stalled on all fronts"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/SODA-76DA22?OpenDocument> ,
accessed 27 August 2007

Reuters, 3 December 2007, "Thousands flee army offensive in Philippine south"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/SODA-79JACE?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 11 December 2007

Reuters, 13 September 2005, "Philippines: Ex-rebel says Manila risks peace deal with Muslims"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/VBOL-6G7BJF?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 13 September 2005

Save the Children (UK), 2004, Their War, Our Struggle: Stories of Children in Central Mindanao
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/BFF47D6DB5969030802570B700599D-D6/\\$file/ourstruggle.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/BFF47D6DB5969030802570B700599D-D6/$file/ourstruggle.pdf) ,

Sun Star Network Online, 6 February 2007, "Midsayap conflict is 'far from over'"
Internet : <http://www.sunstar.com.ph/static/net/2007/02/06/midsayap.conflict.is.far.from.over..html>
accessed 6 February 2007

Sun Star Network Online, 22 February 2007, "Malacañang releases Melo report"
Internet : <http://www.sunstar.com.ph/static/net/2007/02/22/malaca.ang.releases.melo.report.html> ,
accessed 5 March 2007

Tabang Mindanaw, 2 May 2007, Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Program
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/426A382364B747F3C12572CF002D46AC/\\$file/EHAP+SULU+APril+2007.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/426A382364B747F3C12572CF002D46AC/$file/EHAP+SULU+APril+2007.pdf) , ,

Tabang Mindanaw, March 2007, Sulu humanitarian crisis
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/B08BC10AACFAE5FEC12572AC0033277C/\\$file/SULU+HUMANITARIAN+CRISIS.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/B08BC10AACFAE5FEC12572AC0033277C/$file/SULU+HUMANITARIAN+CRISIS.pdf) ,

Tabang Mindanaw, April 2007, Emergency Humanitarian Assistance programme, Nutritional Feeding for Displaced Children 12 years and below and other vulnerable groups for the month of April 2007.

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/D589A03FEA606419C125746A0049D9A1/\\$file/child+feeding+APril+2007+\(2\).pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/D589A03FEA606419C125746A0049D9A1/$file/child+feeding+APril+2007+(2).pdf) ,

Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), March 2000, "Fire in Mindanao: Notes on the MILF-GRP conflict"

Internet : <http://web.archive.org/web/20010506093422/www.info.com.ph/~tfdp/conflict.htm> ,
accessed 22 January 2003

Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), 2004, GMA's "Strong Republic": Building A Culture of Impunity, Human Rights Under The Arroyo Government January-December 2003

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/63EB360B4C6A4413802570B700599C21/\\$file/2003+revised+HR+sit.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/63EB360B4C6A4413802570B700599C21/$file/2003+revised+HR+sit.pdf) ,

The Manila Times, 12 June 2003, "'Peace sanctuaries' set up in Mindanao"

The Manila Times, 19 June 2004, "Mindanao war costly to children"

The Manila Times, 23 December 2004, "Peace talks with MILF to resume in February"

The Sun Star, Davao, 7 January 2005, "9T Kudarat folks flee home after Abu attacks"

Internet : <http://www.sunstar.com.ph/static/dav/2005/01/07/news/9t.kudarat.folks.flee.home.after.abu.attacks.html> , accessed 19 September 2005

The Sun Star, Davao, 23 January 2005, "Donor-funded program extends relief aid to 5T evacuees"

Internet : <http://www.sunstar.com.ph/static/dav/2005/01/23/news/donor.funded.program.extends.relief.aid.to.5t.evacuees.html> , accessed 31 January 2005

The Sun Star, Davao, 8 February 2008, "Sulu massacre an attack to sleeping civilians: CHR"

Internet : <http://www.sunstar.com.ph/static/net/2008/02/08/sulu.massacre.an.attack.to.sleeping.civilians.chr.html> , accessed 30 July 2008

The Sun Star, General Santos, 5 February 2004, "DWSD to probe missing P28-M for refugee houses"

Internet : <http://www.sunstar.com.ph/static/gen/2004/02/05/news/dwsd.to.probe.missing.p28.m.for.refugee.houses.html> , accessed 26 February 2004

The Sun Star, Manila, 13 August 2008, "Only 2 cups of rice per family of evacuees"
Internet : <http://www.sunstar.com.ph/static/net/2008/08/13/only.2.cups.of.rice.per.family.of.evacuees.html> ,
accessed 19 August 2008

Times Online, 25 January 2007, "The Philippines' Unending Guerrilla War"
Internet : <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1582112,00.html> , accessed 30
January 2007

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 6 June 2008, Consideration of Reports Submitted by
States parties Under Article 8 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the
Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, Concluding observations: The Philippines
Internet : http://www2.ohchr.org/tbrucrc/Philippines_OPAC.pdf , accessed 24 June 2008

UN Human Rights Council, 16 April 2008, Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial,
summary or arbitrary executions, Philip Alston, Mission to the Philippines
Internet : [http://www.internal-
displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/E096779D95FB10BEC12574970057DF
40/\\$file/alston+philippines+april+08.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/E096779D95FB10BEC12574970057DF40/$file/alston+philippines+april+08.pdf) ,

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 15 December 2006,
Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP): Typhoon Appeal 2006 for Philippines
Internet : [http://ochadms.unog.ch/quickplace/cap/main.nsf/h_Index/2006_Philippines_Typhoon/\\$FILE/2006
_Philippines_Typhoon_SCREEN.pdf?OpenElement](http://ochadms.unog.ch/quickplace/cap/main.nsf/h_Index/2006_Philippines_Typhoon/$FILE/2006_Philippines_Typhoon_SCREEN.pdf?OpenElement) , accessed 18 December 2006

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 12 February 2007,
Philippines Typhoons, Situation report Number 12
Internet : [http://www.internal-
displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/710635B755295D2CC1257289003904F
7/\\$file/OCHA_Sitrep_12_Philippines_Typhoons_16+Feb+07_final.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/710635B755295D2CC1257289003904F7/$file/OCHA_Sitrep_12_Philippines_Typhoons_16+Feb+07_final.pdf) ,

**UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of
indigenous people**, 5 March 2003, Human rights and indigenous issues. Commission on Human
Rights. Mission to the Philippines
Internet : [http://www.internal-
displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/5AADFA4FFE0DA923C12574A50030C
621/\\$file/indigenous+issues+CHR+5March03.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/5AADFA4FFE0DA923C12574A50030C621/$file/indigenous+issues+CHR+5March03.pdf) ,

United Nations, 21 February 2007, "UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions ends
Philippine visit"
Internet : [http://unphilippines.wordpress.com/2007/02/21/un-special-rapporteur-on-extrajudicial-
summary-or-arbitrary-executions-ends-philippine-visit/](http://unphilippines.wordpress.com/2007/02/21/un-special-rapporteur-on-extrajudicial-summary-or-arbitrary-executions-ends-philippine-visit/) , accessed 14 March 2007

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 20 April 2007, UNICEF Situation Report. Armed
Conflict in the Province of Sulu, Philippines
Internet : [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2006.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/99D53F0C0987F0D2C
12572CA0033499B-Full_Report.pdf/\\$File/Full_Report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2006.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/99D53F0C0987F0D2C12572CA0033499B-Full_Report.pdf/$File/Full_Report.pdf) , accessed 30 April 2007

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), October 2006, Uncounted Lives: Children, Women
and Conflict in the Philippines
Internet : [http://www.internal-
displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/4195F736A00885CCC1257289005B378
1/\\$file/Uncounted+Lives+-Oct+2006.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/4195F736A00885CCC1257289005B3781/$file/Uncounted+Lives+-Oct+2006.pdf) ,

United Nations Commission on Human Rights (CHR), 3 February 2003, Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons, Mr. Francis M. Deng, submitted pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 2002/56, Profiles in displacement: Philippines, E/CN.4/2003/86/Add.4

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/04AEDB9D05FAB3E1802570B700599D2F/\\$file/UN_deng_report_2003.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/04AEDB9D05FAB3E1802570B700599D2F/$file/UN_deng_report_2003.pdf) ,

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 31 May 2005, "UN, RP to start ACT for Peace with Australia, New Zealand"

Internet : <http://www.notes.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/f87cd78f6a9e12b2c125701c002d5a57?OpenDocument> , accessed 16 August 2005

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 13 November 2000, Multi Donor Group Support to Peace and Development in Mindanao: Third Assessment Mission Report

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/1408B85D8944B2D1802570B700599A0C/\\$file/UN_3rd_mission_report.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/1408B85D8944B2D1802570B700599A0C/$file/UN_3rd_mission_report.pdf) ,

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 23 September 2002, Multi Donor Group Support to Peace and Development in Mindanao: Fifth Assessment Mission Report

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/7DF4BD066DD88D5A802570B700599A16/\\$file/UN_5th_mission_report.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/7DF4BD066DD88D5A802570B700599A16/$file/UN_5th_mission_report.pdf) ,

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 21 September 2004, GOP-UNDP Programme on Rehabilitating IDPs and Communities in Southern Philippines

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/B54BCE1FEDAB6AF8802570B700599D84/\\$file/GOP-UNDP+Programme+Briefer.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/B54BCE1FEDAB6AF8802570B700599D84/$file/GOP-UNDP+Programme+Briefer.pdf) ,

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 31 August 2005, E-mail to NRC from UNDP official

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 4 February 2005, "UN, Australia renew commitment for peace in Mindanao"

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 5 November 2002, E-mail sent to NRC by UNDP official

United Nations General Assembly (UN GA), 21 December 2007, Children and armed conflict - Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/609-S/2007/757)

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/D9BD925F89E0641BC12573E1002EAA7/\\$file/Full_Report.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/D9BD925F89E0641BC12573E1002EAA7/$file/Full_Report.pdf) ,

United Nations Security Council (UN SC), 24 April 2008, Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Philippines

Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/E08ACA3239B8EC72C125749E0029B125/\\$file/N0831261.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/E08ACA3239B8EC72C125749E0029B125/$file/N0831261.pdf) ,

United States Institute of Peace (USIP), 31 January 2005, The Mindanao peace talks: Another opportunity to resolve the Moro conflict in the Philippines

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2005/usip-phl-31jan.pdf> , accessed 11 February 2005

UPI Asia Online, 7 February 2008, Manila rejects call for peace talks

Internet :
http://www.upiasiaonline.com/Politics/2008/02/07/manila_rejects_call_for_peace_talks/9224/ ,
accessed 17 June 2008

UPI Asia Online, 27 March 2008, Manila should fund peace talks, not war

Internet :
http://www.upiasiaonline.com/Security/2008/03/27/manila_should_fund_peace_talks_not_war/2178/ , accessed 17 June 2008

UPI Asia Online, 3 April 2008, Manila faces bigger, bolder insurgency

Internet :
http://www.upiasiaonline.com/Security/2008/04/03/manila_faces_bigger_bolder_insurgency/2143/
accessed 24 June 2008

US Agency for International Development (USAID), September 2004, Schools and Shelter Provided to Filipinos Who Fled Fighting

Internet : http://www.usaid.gov/press/frontlines/fl_sept04/pillars.html#3 , , accessed 31 January 2005

U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR), June 2001, World Refugee Survey 2001 (Washington, D.C., 2001)

Internet :
http://web.archive.org/web/20040322084259/www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/easia_pacific/2001/philippines.htm , accessed 26 November 2001

U.S. Department of State (U.S. DOS), 25 February 2004, Philippines Country Report on Human Rights Practices -2003, released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

Internet : <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27786.htm> , accessed 27 February 2004

U.S. Department of State (U.S. DOS), 11 March 2008, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2007

Internet : <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100535.htm> , accessed 5 August 2008

World Bank (WB), 2005, Addressing Gender in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations in the Philippines

Internet :
[http://Inweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/67ByDocName/AddressingGenderinConflictandPost-ConflictSituationsinthePhilippines/\\$FILE/WP+20_Web.pdf](http://Inweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/67ByDocName/AddressingGenderinConflictandPost-ConflictSituationsinthePhilippines/$FILE/WP+20_Web.pdf) , accessed 2 March 2005

World Bank (WB), 28 February 2005, The Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines: Roots, Costs, and Potential Peace Dividend

Internet :
[http://Inweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/67ByDocName/TheMindanaoConflictinthePhilippinesRootsCostsandPotentialPeaceDividend/\\$FILE/WP24_Web.pdf](http://Inweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/67ByDocName/TheMindanaoConflictinthePhilippinesRootsCostsandPotentialPeaceDividend/$FILE/WP24_Web.pdf) , accessed 2 March 2005

World Bank (WB), 27 March 2006, "Phase I of Mindanao Trust Fund Launched"

Internet :
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/EXTEAPR/EGTOPSOCDEV/0,,contentMDK:20865084~menuPK:502956~pagePK:2865114~piPK:2865167~theSitePK:502940,00.html> , accessed 16 January 2007

World Bank (WB), July 2006, The impact of armed conflict on male youth in Mindanao, Philippines
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/2CE5CACB40B55CD1C1257288004C3B25/\\$file/WP35_Web.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/2CE5CACB40B55CD1C1257288004C3B25/$file/WP35_Web.pdf) ,

World Bank (WB), 3 March 2003, Social Assessment of Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/77E6E3A6CEB51F06802570B700599D08/\\$file/socialassessment_WB.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/77E6E3A6CEB51F06802570B700599D08/$file/socialassessment_WB.pdf) ,

World Bank (WB), 2008, Mindanao Trust Fund, Reconstruction and Development Programme, Annual Report 2007
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/A1B08934693F9D26C125749C004D294A/\\$file/MTF+annual+report+2007.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/A1B08934693F9D26C125749C004D294A/$file/MTF+annual+report+2007.pdf) ,

World Food Programme (WFP), 19 April 2007, "WFP supplies food aid to 42,000 displaced by Jolo fighting"
Internet : http://mindanews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2220&Itemid=75 ,
accessed 19 April 2007

World Food Programme (WFP), March 2006, Assistance to Conflict Affected Mindanao (10489.0/EMOP-PHL)
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/02E7E75CB2857A49C125721E005C67FD/\\$file/wfp_EMOP_06.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/02E7E75CB2857A49C125721E005C67FD/$file/wfp_EMOP_06.pdf) ,

World Food Programme (WFP), 25 January 2008, WFP's Operational Priorities - January 2008
Internet : [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/F0F0CB8F8EC5FA5BC12573DE0032DE2B/\\$file/Full_Report.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/F0F0CB8F8EC5FA5BC12573DE0032DE2B/$file/Full_Report.pdf) ,

Xinhua News Agency, 4 August 2008, Philippine government cancels pact signing with rebels after court ruling
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/LRON-7H7G2D?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=phl> , accessed 14 August 2008

Xinhua News Agency, 5 August 2007, "12,000 flee homes to avoid violence in southern Philippines"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/SJHG-75T5Y3?OpenDocument> , accessed 6 August 2007