

Date: 10 June 2018

Issue No. 01; 19 June 2018

**Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) vs. Bangsamoro
Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in Maguindanao and
North Cotabato**

INCIDENT BACKGROUND

Airstrikes were launched against a faction of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) by the Philippine Air Force (PAF) in the marshy areas of the municipalities of Datu Montawal, Pagalungan, Gen. SK Pendatun, and Sultan sa Barongis in the province of Maguindanao, as well as in the municipality of Pikit in the province of North Cotabato on 10 June 2018.

This incident was part of an ongoing operation by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) against the BIFF faction led by Esmail Abubakar (aka Commander Bungos), whose group had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (ISIS).

The operation was coordinated with the MILF ceasefire panel. However, due to time constraints, no pre-emptive evacuation was organized.

A BIFF bomb factory in the southern parts of Liguasan Marsh was reportedly destroyed as a result of this operation. In addition, 15 members of the BIFF faction were killed and 8 were wounded, according to reports. This information was, however, denied by the leadership of the BIFF.

Residents of these areas who were, at that time, taking their pre-dawn meal in preparation for the day's fast as part of their observance of the Islamic month of Ramadhan were forced to evacuate to safer locations.

CURRENT SITUATION

Based on the report of the Department of Social Welfare and Development – Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center (DSWD-DROMIC) as of 13 June 2018, approximately **4,200 families (20,279 individuals)** were forced to flee from the municipalities of Pagalungan, Datu Montawal, Sultan sa Barungism, General SK Pendatun and Pikit. This figure is expected to rise as military operations continue and the BIFF is anticipated to retaliate.

Most of the displaced are staying with host families, while the rest have settled in designated evacuation sites, such as schools, gyms, and in other community structures. IDPs who are home-based, particularly those in the remote areas, are at risk of being excluded from registration processes.

The government of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) through the ARMM Humanitarian Emergency Action Response Team (ARMM-HEART), DSWD ARMM, and DSWD Region XII are presently working in close coordination with the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils of the affected municipalities within their respective jurisdiction, which have conducted assessments to different displacement sites, to address the displacement.

The displaced population perceive that their displacement may take longer than expected. They have expressed that they will not return until government troops have pulled out from the area, because they fear that they may be caught in the crossfire.

In the municipality of Pagalungan, the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council has issued a resolution declaring a “State of Calamity” in three affected barangays, namely: Dalgan, Kalbugan and Buliok.

An undetermined number of civilians residing in the area known as the Salbu, Pagatin, Mamasapano and Shariff Aguak (SPMS) Box and in neighboring towns have also pre-emptively evacuated to nearby villages because of fear of a possible escalation of conflict in their areas, triggered by the increasing presence of the military.

PROTECTION ISSUES AND RESPONSES

ISSUES	RESPONSES	WAYS FORWARD
Threats to life, safety and security		
<p>There is an ongoing movement of people to safer locations in spite of the alleged advice of the military that they can already safely return to their respective residences. There are carts along the roads piled with the belongings of the displaced families.</p> <p>Aircraft flying overhead and mortar shelling create reluctance to return for residents of the affected communities, especially elderly persons and children.</p>	<p>The local government unit (LGU) has facilitated the evacuation of civilians to safer ground.</p> <p>Rapid assessments conducted by the government and other humanitarian agencies took place.</p>	<p>UNHCR with partners will conduct continuous protection monitoring to follow-up on the displacement</p>
<p>Some of the IDPs who are staying in evacuation centers (ECs) are not permitted to use electricity. This creates fear among them during night time, especially for most of the male IDPs who expressed their concern that they might be suspected by the military as BIFF members while moving in the dark.</p>	<p>CFSI, MMI and UNHCR provided 1,134 solar lanterns to IDPs in Pagalungan.</p>	<p>Advocate with relevant counterparts to allow reconnection of electricity in evacuation centers.</p>
<p>There are IDP families in Pagalungan who took the risk of staying overnight in their residences, recalling their past experiences that there were houses looted and burned.</p>	<p>Based on security assessments that have been conducted by the government and other humanitarian agencies, it has been determined that families could stay for now in that area.</p>	<p>Continue protection monitoring to ensure that IDPs are not at risk of falling victim to violence in case of any further clashes.</p>
<p>A 41-year old woman was killed when a mortar shell fell near her in Sitio Panganalaga, Barangay Bulod, GSKP (16 June 2018). According to media reports, a pregnant mother was also killed by another mortar hit in Barangay Lower Idtig, GSKP, while her 14-year-old son was seriously injured.</p>		<p>Follow up on any assistance provided to victims' families, and advocate with the security sector and the LGUs to strengthen measures to ensure the protection of civilians.</p>
Access to food aid and nutrition		
<p>IDPs expressed their concerns about lack of food supply.</p>	<p>ARMM HEART and LGUs have distributed food packs.</p> <p>Rapid assessments have been conducted by the government and other humanitarian agencies to identify urgent needs.</p>	<p>Advocate with DSWD, provincial government and municipal government for distribution of regular food rations to affected populations, including to home-based IDPs.</p>
<p>There are Persons With Special Needs (PWSN), such as elderly persons, newborn babies, and their mothers, and young girls and boys among the IDPs, but their specific protection needs are not targeted.</p>		<p>Advocate for a targeted response with DSWD, provincial government and municipal government to ensure that the needs of the PWSN are met.</p>
Access to non-food items		
<p>Most of the IDPs left their homes without bringing necessary belongings, such as cooking and serving utensils, water containers etc. Some IDPs said that they share/alternate in using cooking and serving utensils.</p>	<p>CFSI, MMI and UNHCR provided 1,134 kitchen sets to IDPs in Pagalungan.</p> <p>Rapid assessments were conducted by the government and other humanitarian agencies.</p>	<p>Continue protection monitoring to gather up-to-date information on the IDPs' situation and needs.</p> <p>Refer the issue to DSWD and humanitarian responders, and follow up to ensure that the need for non-food items is properly met.</p>
<p>There are PWSN, such as elderly persons, newborn babies, and their mothers, and young girls and boys among the IDPs, but their specific protection needs are not targeted.</p>		<p>Advocate with Government and humanitarian responders for a targeted response in prioritizing PWSN in the profiling and provision of humanitarian assistance.</p>
Camp coordination and camp management		
<p>Some of the IDPs are sheltered in an open space, if not sharing spaces in congested classrooms without</p>		<p>Based on the assessments that have been conducted, advocate</p>

partitions, which has an effect on the privacy of the women and girls who may face protection risks related to sexual and gender-based violence. Most of the IDPs do not have available tarpaulins and cannot put up temporary shelters. Instead, they have placed mats and empty cardboard boxes on the open ground, which serves as their sleeping area.		and follow up with government and humanitarian agencies for provision of temporary shelter/partition materials or setting-up of more adequate facilities in the designated ECs.
Farm animals and livestock are tied inside the perimeter of the evacuation centers of Pagalungan and may pose health and sanitation risks to IDPs (e.g. due to diseases that may spread or animal excrement not being cleaned).	Rapid assessments have been conducted by the government and other humanitarian agencies.	Refer the issue to CCCM lead and co-lead agencies to establish committees responsible for the management of the evacuation centers.
There is a lack of WASH facilities in Pagalungan evacuation centers, i.e., 600 families are sharing 3 toilets with insufficient supply of water for washing as well as drinking.	Rapid assessments were conducted by the government and other humanitarian agencies.	Refer the issue to WASH lead and co-lead agencies to ensure a proper supply of potable water as well as sufficient sanitary facilities.
Access to shelter		
Some of the IDPs are sheltered in an open space, if not sharing spaces in congested classrooms without partitions, which has an effect on the privacy of the women and girls who may face protection risks related to sexual and gender-based violence. Most of the IDPs do not have available tarpaulins and cannot put up temporary shelters. Instead, they have placed mats and empty cardboard boxes on the open ground, which serves as their sleeping area.	CFSI, MMI and UNHCR provided 992 pieces plastic sheets (4m x 5m), 4 pieces of plastic rolls (4m x 50m), and 1,134 mats to IDPs in Pagalungan. Rapid assessments were conducted by the government and other humanitarian agencies.	Continue protection monitoring to ensure that shelter needs are fully met.
Access to health		
Several babies and very young children need immediate medical attention, including children with fever and diarrhea.	First responders have referred cases of illness to the rural health unit (RHU). Rapid assessments were conducted by the government and other humanitarian agencies.	Continuous protection monitoring.
There is a need for psychosocial intervention for distressed families, especially the children and other vulnerable groups.		Refer to DSWD and humanitarian responders who are organizing/facilitating psychosocial activities.
Access to education		
Classes are about to open and according to the IDPs, most of the children from barangays recently affected by the fire may not be able to go to school during this school year.	IDP children were accommodated at the schools in host communities. Rapid assessments were conducted by the government and other humanitarian agencies.	Refer the issue to the Department of Education (DepEd) to track and profile the needs of the displaced children. Continuous protection monitoring.
Access to livelihood		
Most of the IDPs are farmers and fishermen whose access to a source of income has been disrupted because of the tensions surrounding the marshy areas.	Rapid assessments were conducted by the government and other humanitarian agencies.	Advocate with Government and humanitarian responders to consider provision of livelihood assistance at the start of the early recovery phase. Continuous protection monitoring.

PERSONS OF CONCERN

No. of Fam	+/-	No. of Persons	+/-	Location (Origin)			Location (Current)			
				Province	Mun	Barangay	Province	Mun	Barangay	Exact Location
1229		5424		North Cotabato	Pikit	Poblacion	North Cotabato	Pikit	Poblacion	
188		940		Maguindanao	Gen. SK Pendatun	Midpandacan	Maguindanao	Gen. SK Pendatun	Midpandacan	
202		1010		Maguindanao	Gen. SK Pendatun	Midpandacan	Maguindanao	Gen. SK Pendatun	Midpandacan	
241		1205		Maguindanao	Sultan sa Barongis	Angkayamat	Maguindanao	Sultan sa Barongis	Angkayamat	
89		445		Maguindanao	Sultan sa Barongis	Tugal	Maguindanao	Sultan sa Barongis	Tugal	
98		490		Maguindanao	Sultan sa Barongis	Langgapanan	Maguindanao	Sultan sa Barongis	Langgapanan	
380		1900		Maguindanao	Datu Montawal	Talitay	Maguindanao	Datu Montawal	Talitay	
58		290		Maguindanao	Datu Montawal	Bulod	Maguindanao	Datu Montawal	Bulod	
570		2850		Maguindanao	Datu Montawal	Dungguan	Maguindanao	Datu Montawal	Dungguan	
590		2950		Maguindanao	Pagalungan	Kalbugan	Maguindanao	Pagalungan	Kalbugan	
412		2060		Maguindanao	Pagalungan	Buliok	Maguindanao	Pagalungan	Buliok	
143		715		Maguindanao	Pagalungan	Daligan	Maguindanao	Pagalungan	Daligan	

DURABLE SOLUTIONS (No returns yet)

No. of Fam	+/-	No. of Persons	+/-	Location (Displaced)			Location (Current)			Type (Please select one)		
				Province	Municipality	Barangay	Province	Municipality	Barangay	Return	Relocation	Local Integration

SOURCES:

Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao – Humanitarian Emergency Action and Response Team (ARMM-HEART)
 Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)-ARMM
 Municipal Local Government Units of Pagalungan, Sultan Sa Barongis, General SK Pendatun, Pikit, Datu Montawal
 Community and Family Services International (CFSI)
 Magungaya Mindanao Incorporated (MMI)
 Tiyakap Kalilintad

The IDP Protection Assessment Form (IDPPAR)

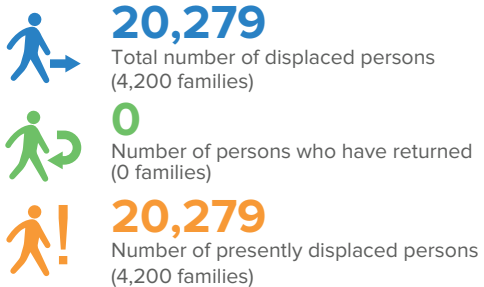
The IDP Protection Assessment Form aims to provide a starting point for information and analysis that can help humanitarian agencies, policy makers and other stakeholders concerning instances of forced displacement or solutions (repatriation, resettlement, integration). The number of people displaced/affected may differ from the number in need of humanitarian assistance. To the extent possible, the terminology used in the Dashboard reflects the *UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* and other sources of international law and practice. The information reported in the IDP Protection Assessment Forms has been received from members of the Protection Cluster across Mindanao. Consequently, unreported cases of forced displacement and solutions are not reflected. Updates will be provided as and when more information is received from members. Although efforts are made to verify the data, the Protection Cluster takes no responsibility for the incompleteness or inaccuracy of the information. At the end of every month, this data is compiled and distributed through the 'Protection Dashboard'. The information provided in this IDP Assessment Report does not necessarily reflect the views of UNHCR or any individual member of the Protection Cluster.

The Protection Cluster

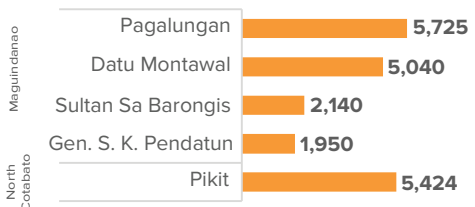
In the Philippines, the protection cluster has been established by the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) Circular No 5 series of 10 May 2007 (Institutionalizing Cluster Approach in Philippine Disaster System). The cluster approach is part of a global response aimed at providing more timely and consistent help to the internally displaced and other affected people in complex emergencies and disasters. The Protection Cluster in Mindanao meets in Cotabato, Iligan, Davao and other cities on a regular basis. Currently there are over 100 participating agencies including from the Government, State, Civil Society, national and international NGOs and agencies, as well as the United Nations. For more information, please visit the Protection Cluster website <http://www.protectioncluster.org/philippines/> or e-mail us at PHICOPRC@unhcr.org.



KEY FIGURES



BREAKDOWN OF DISPLACED PERSONS PER HOST MUNICIPALITY



LEGEND



LOCATION MAP

