

Date: 10 June 2018

Issue No. 02; 04 July 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 most recent report provided by the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office of Maguindanao as of 19 June 2018, 5,136 families (23,465 individuals) have been displaced.

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.

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.

There is an advice from the authorities that the IDPs can safely return to their respective residences. However, IDPs have chosen to stay away from their places of origin because of the continued military operations. There are evacuation centers that are vacated, but only because the IDPs have just transferred to other temporary displacement locations.

## PROTECTION ISSUES AND RESPONSES

ISSUES	RESPONSES	WAYS FORWARD
<b>Threats to life, safety and security</b>		
<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).</p> <p>A pregnant mother and a 3-year old girl were also killed by another mortar hit in Barangay Lower Idtig, GSKP, while a 14-year old boy was seriously wounded.</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>
<p>IDPs in all affected municipalities have been advised by authorities to return to their places of origin, but have opted not to return because of continuous military operations in their home barangays and the fear that the firefights may escalate.</p> <p>Some of the IDPs took the risks to go back to their places of origin but have not permanently returned to their respective residences. They occupy schools and other community structures which for them are safe and they can easily move out if necessary. The belongings of the IDPs are loaded onto carts posted alongside the roads without protection from sun and rain.</p>		<p>Advocate with AFP and LGUs to provide IDPs with complete, objective, up to-date, and accurate information, including on physical, material and legal safety issues in their current displacement locations and places of origin.</p>
<b>Access to food aid and nutrition</b>		
<p>IDPs expressed their concerns about lack of food supply.</p> <p>IDPs continue to express their need for food because of the irregular supply. There is no means of income in the displacement sites, thus, the male members of the families are taking the risks to go for fishing in spite of the insecurities in order to earn and bring food for their families.</p>	<p>ARMM HEART and LGUs have distributed food packs.</p> <p>DSWD Region XII provided 6kg of rice, canned goods, and coffee.</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>

<b>Access to non-food items</b>		
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>CFSI, MMI and UNHCR provided 1,134 kitchen sets to IDPs in Pagalungan.</p> <p>DSWD Region XII provided hygiene kits and 2 pcs blanket (malong) to displaced families.</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>
Home-based IDPs in Pikit have constructed temporary kitchens outside their host family's house and had to borrow kitchen essentials from their relatives to cook their food.		
There are PWSN, such as elderly persons, newborn babies, and their mothers, and young girls and boys among the IDPs in Pagalungan, but their specific protection needs are not targeted.		Advocate with Government and humanitarian responders for a targeted response in prioritizing PWSN in the profiling and provision of humanitarian assistance.
<b>Camp coordination and camp management</b>		
Some of the IDPs in Pagalungan and Pikit are sheltered in an open space such as the municipal gym of Pagalungan, if not sharing spaces in congested classrooms without partitions. (As of 17 June, the IDPs sheltered at the municipal gym have transferred to other displacement locations)	<p>Rapid assessments have been conducted by the government and other humanitarian agencies.</p> <p>CFSI, MMI and UNHCR provided plastic sheets (4X5 meters) to each of the families and plastic rolls (4X50 meters) to each evacuation center in Pagalungan.</p> <p>The MSWDO-Pagalungan have deployed volunteers to manage the evacuation centers in different locations.</p>	<p>Follow up with government and advocate with humanitarian agencies for provision of temporary shelter / partition materials or setting-up of more adequate facilities in the designated ECs.</p>
Most of the IDPs in Pagalungan and Pikit do not possess 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.		
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).		Refer the issue to CCCM lead and co-lead agencies to establish committees responsible for the management of the evacuation centers.
No camp managers have been assigned to designated evacuation centers in Pagalungan.		
<p>There is a lack of WASH facilities such as latrines in the evacuation centers in Pagalungan and Pikit, i.e., 600 families are sharing 3 toilets with insufficient supply of water for washing as well as drinking. This leads to open defecation and making use of the nearby rivers for defecation as well as for washing.</p> <p>Only one (1) water source each has been observed in the evacuation centers of Pagalungan and Pikit and these are being used for drinking and domestic purposes. IDPs in these evacuation centers do not have means for water storage.</p>	<p>Rapid assessments were conducted by the government and other humanitarian agencies.</p>	<p>Refer the issue to WASH lead and co-lead agencies to ensure a proper supply of potable water as well as sufficient sanitary facilities are provided</p>
<b>Access to shelter</b>		
Some of the IDPs are sheltered in an open space, if not sharing spaces in congested classrooms without partitions. Most of the IDPs do not have available tarpaulins and cannot put up temporary shelters. Instead, they have placed mats and empty cardboard boxes, banana leaves, or on the open ground, which serves as their sleeping area.	<p>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.</p> <p>Rapid assessments were conducted by the government and other humanitarian agencies.</p>	<p>Refer issue to ARMM HEART and PLGU of Maguindanao, as well as humanitarian agencies with shelter programs and advocate provision of tarpaulins to home-based IDPs who are in need of emergency shelter.</p> <p>Continue protection monitoring to ensure that shelter needs are fully met.</p>
IDPs from affected barangays of General SK Pendatun and Sultan sa Barungis have taken		

<p>shelter with relatives, where 3 to 4 IDP families have been monitored sharing one host house, or under incomplete housing structures, forcing them to place their belongings on carts along the roadside.</p> <p>The schools were no longer used as evacuation centers in order not to disrupt the classes. Though in Langgapanan Elementary School the IDPs were allowed to occupy the classrooms at night time and vacate it at day time.</p> <p>The IDPs who were temporary sheltered at the municipal gym in Pagalungan have transferred near the Tunggol bridge in Datu Montawal. They erected their tents along the riverbanks.</p>		
<p>Access to health</p>		
<p>Several babies and very young children need immediate medical attention, including children with fever and diarrhea.</p>	<p>First responders have referred cases of illness to the rural health unit (RHU).</p> <p>Rapid assessments were conducted by the government and other humanitarian agencies.</p>	<p>Continuous protection monitoring.</p>
<p>IDPs from all affected municipalities have expressed symptoms of psychological distress. When they hear and see helicopters or fighter jets, they get nervous and uneasy.</p>	<p>Monitored cases in Pagalungan have been referred to the LGU for psychosocial support</p>	<p>Refer to DSWD and humanitarian responders who are organizing / facilitating psychosocial activities.</p>
<p>Fever, colds/cough and diarrhea are the most common ailments monitored among children in Pikit.</p>	<p>UNHCR has coordinated with the MDRRMO Pikit and the officers of the Pikit Rural Health Unit to help address the medical issues of the IDPs.</p> <p>The RHU of Pikit has committed that all IDPs who will come to their office will be accommodated and be given free pro re nata medicine if available.</p>	
<p>Access to education</p>		
<p>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.</p> <p>IDP children in most of the displacement locations in GSKP, Sultan sa Barungis, Pagalungan, Pikit and Datu Montawal are not attending schools.</p>	<p>The disruption of classes of the IDP children were referred to the LGU for actions, i.e., tracking of IDP children who are out of schools; schools in host barangays should accommodate the IDP children.</p> <p>A number of teachers from interior schools whose learners have been displaced by the armed confrontation have gone the evacuation centers where their pupils are temporarily sheltered and conducted classes there.</p> <p>There are resumption of classes of the schools in host communities.</p> <p>Rapid assessments were conducted by the government and other humanitarian agencies.</p>	<p>Refer the issue to the Department of Education (DepEd) to track and profile the needs of the displaced children, as well as provide temporary learning spaces (TLS) in schools where classrooms have been used as temporary shelters.</p> <p>Continuous protection monitoring.</p>
<p>Access to livelihood</p>		

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. They cannot access their livelihood because of the ongoing military operations.	Rapid assessments were conducted by the government and other humanitarian agencies.  The Barangay LGU of Buliok, Pagalungan have established a mechanism that allow fishermen to access the fishing area on a scheduled basis granting that they will sign in and out at the logbook.	Advocate with Government and humanitarian responders to consider provision of <a href="#">livelihood or cash assistance</a> at the start of the early recovery phase.  Continuous protection monitoring.
Emergency Registration		
LGUs do not have disaggregated displacement data. Health workers have difficulty locating pregnant mothers and newborn babies for immunization and emergency health care purposes.  LGUs do not have displacement data of orphans and children separated from parents.		Advocate with DSWD and OCD to promote displacement data disaggregation.
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.		Advocate for a targeted response with DSWD, provincial government and municipal government to ensure that the needs of the PWSN are met.

## PERSONS OF CONCERN

No. of Fam	+/-	No. of Persons	Location (Origin)			Location (Current)			
			Province	Municipality	Barangay	Province	Municipality	Barangay	Exact Location
188		940	MAGUINDANAO	GEN. S. K. PENDATUN	MIDPANDACAN	MAGUINDANAO	GEN. S. K. PENDATUN	MIDPANDACAN	Housebased in Sitio Balgan
202		1010	MAGUINDANAO	GEN. S. K. PENDATUN	MIDPANDACAN	MAGUINDANAO	GEN. S. K. 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	PAGAGAWAN	TALITAY	MAGUINDANAO	PAGAGAWAN	TALITAY	
58		290	MAGUINDANAO	PAGAGAWAN	BULOD	MAGUINDANAO	PAGAGAWAN	BULOD	
570		2850	MAGUINDANAO	PAGAGAWAN	DUNGGUAN	MAGUINDANAO	PAGAGAWAN	DUNGGUAN	
590		2950	MAGUINDANAO	PAGALUNGAN	KALBUGAN	MAGUINDANAO	PAGALUNGAN	KALBUGAN	
412		2060	MAGUINDANAO	PAGALUNGAN	BULIOK	MAGUINDANAO	PAGALUNGAN	BULIOK	
143		715	MAGUINDANAO	PAGALUNGAN	DALGAN	MAGUINDANAO	PAGALUNGAN	DALGAN	
219		985	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	BAGOANGUD	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	POBLACION	
10		33	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	BULIOK	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	POBLACION	Inug-ug Multipurpose
37		100	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	BULIOK	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	POBLACION	Norol Eilm
10		47	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	BULIOK	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	POBLACION	CFCST
171		770	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	BULIOK	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	POBLACION	House based
474		1707	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	TALITAY	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	POBLACION	
962		4035	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	INUG-UG	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	POBLACION	
228		735	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	BARUNGIS	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	POBLACION	
38		123	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	BARUNGIS	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	POBLACION	
16		75	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	RAJAH MUDA	NORTH COTABATO	PIKIT	POBLACION	House based

## 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  
 Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)-Region XII  
 Integrated Provincial Health Office (IPHO) - Maguindanao  
 Municipal Local Government Units of Pagalungan, Sultan Sa Barongis, General SK Pendatun, Pikit, Datu Montawal  
 Community and Family Services International (CFSI)  
 ACTED  
 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](mailto:PHICOPRC@unhcr.org).





## KEY FIGURES



**23,465**

Total number of displaced persons  
(5,136 families)



**0**

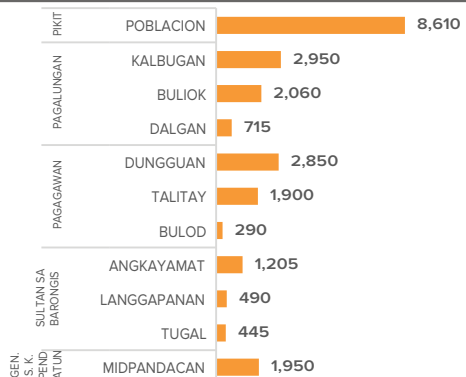
Number of persons who have returned  
(0 families)



**23,465**

Number of presently displaced persons  
(5,136 families)

## BREAKDOWN OF DISPLACED PERSONS PER HOST MUNICIPALITY



## LEGEND

- Conflict area
- Affected area
- Inland water
- Displaced persons
- Municipal boundary
- Road
- Evacuation center
- Presently displaced persons

## LOCATION MAP

