

Clan Feud in Barangay Molon, Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat

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INCIDENT BACKGROUND

On 20 April 2019, around 235 families (approximately 712 individuals) from remote communities along the borders of Lake Sebu, South Cotabato and Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat fled their homes for safety, after armed clashes due to a clan feud in Barangay Molon, Palimbang municipality, Sultan Kudarat province.

The internally displaced persons (IDPs) were from the sitios (sub-villages) of Kumilat, Kisayan and Molmol, all in Barangay Ned, municipality of Lake Sebu in South Cotabato and from Barangays Molon and Kalibuan, municipality of Palimbang in Sultan Kudarat. Most of the IDPs are upland farmers from indigenous (Lumad) communities.

The displaced families sought refuge at a community structure (covered court) in Barangay Ned, where they stayed without proper beddings or privacy partitions. Food assistance was scarce, as the local government faced restrictions on the disbursement of funds during the election period.

Despite lack of clearance from the security sector that the IDPs' place of origin was safe to return, the barangay chairperson allowed some of the IDPs to return on 29 April in order to access their farmland. However, persons with specific needs were advised to stay at the evacuation site, because tensions were still ongoing. These 317 vulnerable individuals included children and infants, pregnant women and mothers with small children, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities (PWDs).

On 30 May – only one day after some of the IDPs returned – some civilians were injured in an incident of renewed fighting, forcing the returnees to immediately evacuate again to safer ground.

Root Cause of the Clan Feud (*rido*)

The *rido* reportedly started more than ten years ago, when the Municipal Government of Palimbang decided to convert the Sitio of Molon into a separate Barangay (the smallest local government unit). A certain Adam was then elected as the first barangay chairperson. On the next elections, another individual named Kalid Kulintang was elected as the new chairperson, but Adam refused to vacate his office in the barangay hall. Residents of Sitio Bogtok – Adam's stronghold in Barangay Molon – also refused to acknowledge Kalid as the new chairperson and still recognized Adam as their leader. Fighting then ensued between these two sides, with the clashes mostly occurring in neighboring areas such as Barangay Ned.

The main actors in the latest confrontations are supporters of these two parties to the original dispute. Earlier in April 2019, a group led by a certain supporter of Adam (who is also known to be affiliated with an armed group) allegedly stole 13 horses and a carabao from civilians who supported Kalid. A week later, they allegedly returned using the stolen horses and further ransacked other civilian residents.

Another group, led by a supporter of Kalid, then retaliated with an ambush that led to a firefight. A 14-year-old child who was reportedly riding one of the horses at the time, was killed during this incident.

CURRENT SITUATION

As of this report, IDPs from Palimbang who sought refuge in Barangay Ned have already returned, but those from Lake Sebu are still displaced. Food security is a major issue, as the host barangay lacks resources to provide adequate food assistance to the IDPs. This has led to a risk of forced return, even though the security situation in the place of origin remains volatile.

An undetermined number of the displaced families go to their habitual residences during daytime to tend to their crops, and return to the evacuation site at night to avoid risks to their safety. The vulnerable persons who were advised by the barangay chairperson to stay behind still remain in the evacuation site.

The armed supporters of one of the feuding parties are currently encamped at Sitio Kumilat, in Barangay Ned. The forces of the opposing party are reportedly planning to attack and take over this location.

Considering that the affected areas (place of origin and host community) are in different provinces, the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) of South Cotabato has already requested the Region XII office of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) for support in providing additional assistance.

PROTECTION ISSUES AND RESPONSES

Issues	Responses	Ways Forward
<p>Threat to life, safety and security</p> <p>The security situation remains volatile because of the unsettled dispute between the parties. Residents of surrounding sub-villages are afraid that a firefight may erupt anytime.</p>	<p>The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) established a military patrol base in the area to monitor the situation and to help prevent potential skirmishes between the parties. The military unit assigned in Palimbang declared that the families who had been displaced from Brgy. Molon were able to return safely.</p> <p>Local officials in Barangay Ned, on the other hand, are still awaiting clearance from the military to validate that the IDPs' area of origin is already safe for return. However, some IDPs are returning to their farmlands during daytime while staying in the evacuation site at night for their safety.</p>	<p>Advocate with the local government unit (LGU) and with humanitarian partners to provide immediate responses to the protection needs of the IDPs, particularly in the event that displacement becomes protracted due to persistent concerns about their safety.</p> <p>Follow-up also with the LGU on their contingency plan.</p>
<p>Access to food and nutrition</p> <p>The IDPs expressed concerns about scarcity of food supplies and are seeking assistance from the government or other concerned agencies. Due to restrictions on financial disbursements during the election period, the local government unit in the host community is unable to distribute food packs.</p>	<p>The Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Office (MDRRMO) of Lake Sebu conducted an assessment and provided bags of rice for the IDPs. However, they also acknowledged that the assistance provided may not be sufficient because of their resource constraints.</p> <p>The MDDRMO has submitted a report to the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) of South Cotabato and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Region 12 office, recommending further action to augment the assistance. This is in line with the existing protocol when more than one LGU is affected by an emergency.</p>	<p>Follow-up with DSWD Region XII and with the Provincial Government of South Cotabato on the requested support.</p>
<p>Protection of Persons with Specific Needs</p> <p>According to local officials, 317 affected vulnerable individuals such as children, elderly persons, pregnant women, PWDs, mothers and infants were advised not to returned to their habitual residences because tensions between the feuding parties are still ongoing in their area of origin.</p>	<p>The host LGU continues to monitor the needs of IDPs, including those with specific needs.</p>	<p>UNHCR continues to advocate with the barangay officials, MSWDO, and MDRRMO of the host community for sustained food support and medical assistance, particularly to persons with specific needs. Further referrals to other humanitarian actors would also be undertaken, especially in case of protracted displacement.</p>
<p>Shelter</p> <p>IDPs are staying at an open area inside the covered court of Barangay Ned. With no adequate beddings and privacy partitions, they are only using thin mats to cover the cold floor at night.</p>	<p>UNHCR, together with partner NGOs and in coordination with the host LGU, would distribute tarpaulins, mats, and blankets to the IDPs.</p>	<p>Continue monitoring and conducting referrals as needed.</p>
<p>Psychosocial Intervention</p>	<p>Partner NGO, Magungaya Mindanao Inc.</p>	<p>Following the conduct of psychosocial</p>

Based on their assessment, the MDRRMO identified the need to conduct psychosocial interventions for the affected children. However, there is no available expertise locally to carry out such support.	(MMI), has committed to help the host municipal LGU in conduct psychosocial support activities among displaced children.	interventions, monitor and do further case referrals if needed.
Child associated with armed group A 14-year-old boy was killed during an ambush, which was carried out by one of the parties to the dispute in retaliation for alleged theft committed against them by the other party. Reportedly, the victim was the brother of an armed supporter of one of the parties, and was said to be riding one of the allegedly-stolen horses when he was killed.	During a joint protection monitoring mission with UNHCR and other Protection partners, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Region XII documented witnesses'/informants' accounts of the incident.	CHR to do further investigation and appropriate action. The incident would also be referred to the Child Protection Working Group for follow-ups and further intervention.

PERSONS OF CONCERN

No. of Fam	+/-	No. of Persons	+/-	Location (Origin)				Location (Current)				
				Province	Mun	Barangay	Sitio	Province	Mun	Barangay	Sitio	Exact Location
15		53		South Cotabato	Lake Sebu	Ned	Kisayan	South Cotabato	Lake Sebu	Ned	Proper	Barangay Hall
136		391		South Cotabato	Lake Sebu	Ned	Kumilat	South Cotabato	Lake Sebu	Ned	Proper	Barangay Hall
54		118		South Cotabato	Lake Sebu	Ned	Molmol	South Cotabato	Lake Sebu	Ned	Proper	Barangay Hall
30		150		Sultan Kudarat	Palimbang	Molon		Sultan Kudarat	Palimbang	Malisbong		

DURABLE SOLUTIONS

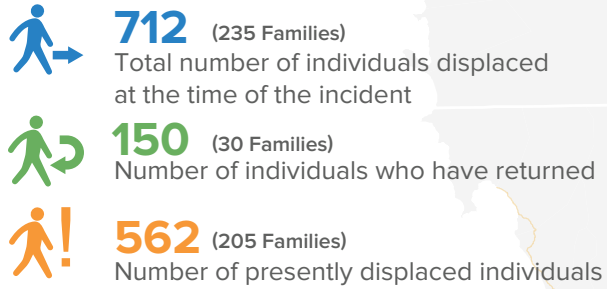
No. of Fam	+/-	No. of Persons	+/-	Location (Displaced)			Location (Current)			Type (Please select one)		
				Province	Municipality	Barangay	Province	Municipality	Barangay	Return	Relocation	Local Integration
30		150		Sultan Kudarat	Palimbang	Malisbong	Sultan Kudarat	Palimbang	Molon	/		

The IDP Protection Assessment Form

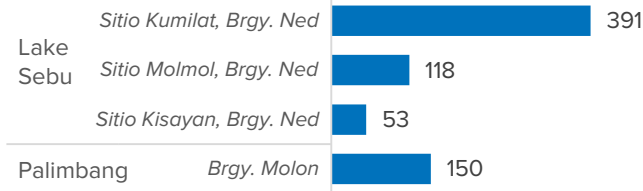
The IDP Protection Assessment Form aims to provide a starting point for information and analysis that can help humanitarian agencies, policy makers and other stakeholders concerning instances of forced displacement or solutions (repatriation, resettlement, integration). The number of people displaced/affected 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.



KEY FIGURES



Displaced individuals by place of origin (Sitio)



LEGEND



LOCATION MAP

