



© Cabrera | IRDT

# THEMATIC PROTECTION BULLETIN BRIDGING THE GAPS

Ensuring the provision of protection services to a protracted displacement situation 05 DECEMBER 2019 | Issue No. 1

## BACKGROUND

- On 27 January 2019, two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were detonated at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Jolo, in the island province of Sulu. The attack resulted to 27 deaths and dozens more injured. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has tagged a faction of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) known as “Ajang-Ajang” as the perpetrators of the said attack.
- Two days after the incident, President Rodrigo Duterte visited the site and ordered the military to launch an “all-out offensive” against the ASG and alleged Islamic State (IS)-linked elements operating in the province of Sulu.
- Prior to the local elections last May 2019, the AFP and Philippine National Police (PNP) raised a nationwide “heightened alert,” with intensified checkpoint operations and strict implementation of the electoral gun ban.
- The AFP carried out military operations against the ASG on 29 January which have affected some barangays in Patikul, including Barangay Latih. According to the 2015 census, the said barangay has a population of 6,089 individuals. However, only those living in the upper part were heavily affected and displaced.
- The military offensive in Patikul has escalated and spread to nearby municipalities, which resulted to displacement among other civilians in order to avoid being caught in the crossfire.

## CURRENT PROTECTION CONDITION OF DISPLACED FAMILIES

- More than **360 families (1,800 individuals)** have been displaced in Barangay Latih since January 2019. Out of this figure, 70 families (350 individuals) are living in temporary shelters which are referred to by locals as “evacuation centers” in the lower part of Barangay Latih, while 290 families (1,450 individuals) are living with friends and relatives, also known as “homebased IDPs.”
- According to the Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU), there is no indication of the possibility of return in the near future as the situation remains unstable.
- The barangay local government unit has been providing support to these IDPs, but due to the prolonged displacement, resources of the barangay have also been stretched to the fullest. As local authorities as well as private and civic organizations have provided food, non-food items, and cash assistance, IDPs expressed eagerness to return to their places of origin. While return is not possible, IDPs have requested for additional support in terms of shelter materials to improve the makeshift shelters that they have built more than six months ago. They also expressed the need for additional latrine units for men and women, solar street lights for safety and security, and livelihood assistance to complement the food assistance provided by the local government units.



© Cabrera | IRDT

## BRIDGING THE GAPS

In order to bridge the gaps and address the residual needs of the IDPs, the local government units need support in the following areas:

- *Desludging and construction of additional WASH facilities in Latih evacuation center.*
- *Provision of livelihood support to home-based IDPs and those who are living in the temporary shelters;*
- *Installation of solar lights especially in the temporary shelters to prevent or reduce the risks of gender-based violence;*
- *Regular monitoring of the protection condition of the IDPs in close coordination with protection actors to address safety and security concerns as they arise.*

DISCLAIMER: The Thematic Protection Bulletin aims to provide a starting point for information and analysis that can help protection 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 Bulletin reflects the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and other sources of international law and practice. The information reported in the Thematic Protection Bulletin 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 UNHCR Mindanao, Philippines takes no responsibility for the incompleteness or inaccuracy of the information. The information provided in this Thematic Protection Bulletin does not necessarily reflect the views of UNHCR or any individual member of the Protection Cluster. Photos featuring children were taken with their consent.

## KEY FIGURES

Total number of displaced population



**360** Families



**1,800** Individuals

Current location of displaced population



70 families (350 individuals)  
in temporary shelters



290 families (1,450 individuals)  
in home-based settings

## LEGEND

- Conflict
- Provincial boundary
- Municipal boundary
- Barangay boundary
- Road
- Displaced individuals
- Returned individuals
- Presently displaced individuals
- Evacuation center

## LOCATION MAP

