

BRIDGING THE GAPS: ENSURING PROVISION OF PROTECTION SERVICES TO PROTRACTED DISPLACEMENT IN MARAWI CITY

BACKGROUND

- On 23 May 2017, the siege in Marawi City began when the Islamic State-inspired group known as Maute Group invaded the city and clashed with the government security forces. Martial Law was declared on that same day following a jail break and burning of cathedral and school. In October 2017, this month-long siege came to an end when the Philippine government called off the conflict. The urban gunfight between the group had caused devastating damages not only to the city, but also to the lives of its people.
- Majority of the residents fled the city on 24 May 2017 to seek safety in the neighboring towns in the Provinces of Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur and Cagayan de Oro City, while some of the residents sought refuge with their relatives in metropolitan cities such as Cebu, Davao, and Manila, as well as in other parts of the country.
- Marawi City has a total number of 96 barangays. Of which, 24 barangays that are situated in the business center areas were mostly affected by the siege. The 72 remaining barangays were least affected by the said siege, and residents of these barangays gradually returned to their habitual residences in October 2017.
- *Kathagombalay*, a Maranao term for “rebuilding”, was established as a one-stop-shop where internally displaced persons (IDPs) from

the most affected areas (MAA) can process their permits for the repair and reconstruction of their houses and properties. The 24 barangays that are mostly affected are grouped into nine sectors. The first seven sectors are composed of 15 barangays whose residents have been processing their permits for eventual returns, while the barangays under the last two sectors are covering the reclamation sites in which, the return of the residents are still for further discussion. The *Kathagombalay* is a mechanism which ensures that the returnees are the rightful owners of their lands and houses in order to prevent conflict among the claimants.

- The application for *Kathagombalay* is still ongoing. As of reporting, there are around 2,129 families that have completed the processing for *Kathagombalay*. Of the total number, 113 families returned to Sector 1 of MAA, while the undetermined number of families that are yet to be documented returned to Sector 2 of MAA.
- The rehabilitation program in Marawi City is still ongoing with 60% completion rate as of April 2021. The return of the residents to their places of origin follows a cluster approach and this would depend on the progress of the rehabilitation, such as the completion of road networks which are foreseeable to be completed by September to October 2021.

CURRENT PROTECTION CONDITION OF THE PROTRACTEDLY DISPLACED FAMILIES AT THE TRANSITORY SITES IN MARAWI CITY

There are around **17,768 families (approximately 88,840 individuals)** from the most affected areas in Marawi City. Of this, 113 families returned to their places of origin, and 209 families were awarded with permanent shelters in Dulay West and in Pagalamatan in Saguwaran. Of the total number that are still displaced, 4,166 families (approximately 20,830) are reportedly staying in different transitory shelters (TS). Reports confirmed that 959 out of 4,166 families are unofficial occupants who need to be documented and validated by the authorities.

The following are the protection issues faced by the displaced families who are currently staying in different transitory sites.

Access to WASH. Access to water both for drinking and domestic use remains to be inadequate in Biyaya ng Pagbabago (Sagongsongan) TS, Lakeview (Boganga) TS in Site 2 and Site 3, and Pindolonan Bakwit Village. In Rorogagus TS, the water rationing for the IDPs has not been sustained. To date, some of the IDPs continue to buy water for drinking for Php 300.00 (USD 6) every month while others depend on river water nearby for both drinking and domestic use.

Poor sanitation and hygiene condition, such as full septic tanks that needs emptying, in Biyaya ng Pagbabago (Sagongsongan) TS remains unresolved. The dirt from the septic tanks directly flow in an open drainage canal which increases IDPs' exposure to health risks as it gives foul smell. In Lakeview (Boganga) TS, the desludging project of the BARMM only caters to 150 households. As stated by the National Housing Authority (NHA), the desludging of septic tanks in Sagongsongan TS will begin once the procurement process is completed.



Water containers piled up along the road to get water from the water trucks in Lakeview (Boganga) TS.

¹Source: Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM) as of 04 June 2021

On the other hand, the management of solid waste in TS is inconsistent. While garbage collection is regular in other TS, IDPs located in Lakeview (Boganga) TS in Site 3 find themselves burning or dumping their garbage anywhere as garbage collection does not often reach their area.

Access to safety and security. The feeling of insecurity among IDPs remains in various TS due to lack of streetlights and absence of security officers or volunteers for foot patrol especially at night. In Lakeview (Boganga) and Rorogagus TS, IDPs reported communal tension with the reported unofficial and undocumented occupants who allegedly incite commotion in TS and host communities.

Access to livelihood. The access to livelihood opportunities within IDP communities or in the nearby areas continue to be scarce. Due to the lockdown measures brought about by pandemic and lack of start-up capital, the sources of income of IDPs have been greatly impacted. Some IDPs who availed of the livelihood support provided by the local government unit and other organizations were not sustained because of lack of interest on the livelihood support provided. Among the common skills of IDPs include carpentry, driving, and vending.

Access to food security. The IDPs expressed concern on sustained access to quality and nutritious food supply due to declining food aid and disrupted means of livelihood. The recent food ration they received was in May 2021 during the month of Ramadhan. Less nutritious food commodities such as dried fish and canned goods have become staple among most of the displaced families. In this time of the pandemic, IDPs more than ever need better access to food that gives them full nourishment and boost their immune system.

Access to basic services. The high transportation cost has to continue to limit IDPs' access to services such as education and health. Facilities of these services are remotely located from TS.

Access to education. Some displaced children find it difficult to comply with their requirements at school due to modular learning approach that has been implemented since the pandemic. This learning modality posed concerns to the parents and guardians who themselves were not able to study and cannot provide the needed educational and teaching support of their children. Schools at a distance and high transportation cost are compounding this issue especially among the secondary level students.

Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM). While there are camp administrators and/or focal persons assigned in the TS, several sectoral issues are not reported, referred, and addressed in a timely manner since the CCCM is not fully implemented in the transitory sites. The reporting of issues depends on how fast, active, and skillful the assigned IDP leaders are. Also, there are no available information boards in all TS.

Access to durable solution. The families who were awarded with permanent shelters continue to be confronted with similar issues in various TS. Among these issues include 1) access to livelihood due to remoteness of the TS from the town proper; 2) lack of food supply; 3) lack of streetlights; and 4) high transportation cost from and to the town proper. This situation has been prompting IDPs to clamor for their immediate return to their places of origin.

BRIDGING THE GAPS

The following are the recommended actions for the government and other protection actors to help bridge the gaps and address the continuing protection needs of the displaced populations:

- ✓ Conduct of regular desludging of septic tanks in Boganga and Sagonsongan TS to lessen the foul smell they produce and reduce health and sanitation issues that the IDPs are currently facing;
- ✓ Improve drainage canals and put cover on them to avoid accidents, especially for children and elderlies, and help reduce health risks;
- ✓ Improve solid waste management through awareness raising campaigns on proper waste management and regular schedule of garbage collection in all TS;
- ✓ Improve camp coordination and camp management/administration through constant capacity building of IDP leaders to strengthen their ability to report, refer and address protection issues in a timely manner;
- ✓ Establish referral mechanisms that will ensure the involvement of IDPs in the transitory sites and the concerned agencies mandated to protect and uphold the rights of IDPs;
- ✓ Establish a regular water rationing schedule if installation of water system is no longer possible at the Biyaya ng Pagbabago (Sagonsongan) TS. Also, the on-site water system in Rorogagus TS must be installed and water system located in Dulay Proper and Pindolonan Bakwit Village TS must be repaired to address the water needs of the IDPs.
- ✓ Augment available medicines at the health centers/stations especially the ones for common illnesses such as hypertension, diabetes, and hyperacidity, among others;
- ✓ Repair and install security outposts and streetlights in TS to alleviate the feeling of insecurity felt by the IDPs;
- ✓ Provide nutritious foods that will boost the immune system of the IDPs and will help them combat illnesses;
- ✓ Provide sustainable livelihood assistance based on the available skills of IDPs;
- ✓ Improve access road in Lakeview (Boganga) TS in Site 3;
- ✓ Install information boards in all TS to improve IDPs' access to accurate and timely socioeconomic and demographic information as well as protection conditions of the IDPs, as well as hotlines and contact numbers of local officials; and
- ✓ Government authorities to fast track returns of IDPs to their places of origin without impeding their overall protection.

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