

# Monthly Mindanao DISPLACEMENT Dashboard

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The Mindanao Displacement Dashboard is a monthly publication of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Mindanao, Philippines. This publication aims to provide an overview of the protection environment of displacement incidents in Mindanao for each month. Displacement incidents were collected with the support of Protection Cluster members in Mindanao.

## HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN SURIGAO DEL SUR PROVINCE

Reports of human rights violations, including killings, allegedly committed by a paramilitary group that is believed to be supported by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) occurred in eastern Mindanao. Descriptions of events are similar to those faced by the Monobo indigenous population from Talaingod staying in the Davao (Haran) church compound (see below).

The three related incidents were against peasants and teachers in indigenous peoples' communities that caused the displacement of 480 families (2,400 persons) in San Miguel municipality in Surigao del Sur province during three weeks of August.

On 09 August, members of a para-military group of bagani or tribal warriors forced their way into Sitio Nalindog, Barangay Bolhoon where according to NGO reports, they rounded up and interrogated villagers including children. Residents were accused of being supporters or members of the New People's Army (NPA). The armed group also allegedly pillaged a teacher's house for the Tribal Filipino Program of Surigao del Sur causing classes to be suspended at the Nalindog Tribal Community School. This incident prompted 46 families (estimated 230 persons) to seek safety in the town's gymnasium and day care centers. Another 38 families (estimated 200 persons) fled in panic and fear from the sub-villages of Nahikyad, Bishop and Tambunon on 20 August. In the neighboring village of Siagao, around 332 families (estimated 1,660 persons) were displaced a day after known members of the Bagani Force and uniformed men from the 36th Infantry Battalion lobbed a grenade in one of the houses in the village. On 28 August, two peasant brothers were shot dead. The displaced families sought refuge at the Barangay Tina Gymnasium and Tina Central Elementary School. The IDPs from Siagao returned on 30 August after a dialogue was facilitated by the San Miguel local government unit with the security actors in the area. The displaced families from the village of Bolhoon are still in evacuation centers.

## PROTRACTED DISPLACEMENT OF MANOBO TRIBE IN DAVAO DEL NORTE PROVINCE

Around 700 indigenous people who have been displaced multiple times since March this year due to alleged harassment of members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Alamara para-military group remain in the UCCP Haran compound in Davao. Protection monitoring revealed that these IDPs from the municipalities of Kapalung and Talaingod of Davao del Norte province have a legitimate fear returning to their places of origin due to continued presence of armed actors protecting mining companies in the area.

Many of the indigenous people in these areas have been identified as New People's Army (NPA) sympathizers because of their past use of arms against government and non-government actors, including mining and logging companies, to protect their land. According to IPs, if you do not cooperate with the AFP and para-military groups in these areas one is at risk of being considered as members of the NPA. IPs complain they have been subject to abuse, detention and attacks by the AFP and government supported armed groups.

The IP/IDPs continue to live in congested tents with inadequate water and sanitation in the UCCP Haran compound. The main request of the IP/IDPs to enable their return is the demilitarization of their communities. Meanwhile, there is concern that the number of IP families staying in Haran will likely increase because of recent security incidents in Kitaotao municipality in Bukidnon province, a neighboring area. The Davao city authorities have stepped up their monitoring and support to the IDPs in Haran and made assurances that IPs from this area will not be forced to return as long as conflict exists in their communities.

## GPH/MILF PEACE PROCESS UPDATES

The proposed plenary debates of the Basic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BBL) did not push through as scheduled in August because of the lack of quorum or absenteeism in the House of Congress. Senators requested another extension to study the bill. The delay has increased tension in some communities as thousands took to the streets to express their desire for the BBL to be passed, while in some quarters there is resignation that the peace process has failed.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) leadership has expressed serious concern that the new substitute bill provides less autonomy than the present ARMM law. The peace panel appealed to lawmakers to consider the original draft of the Bangsamoro Basic Law, and the previously agreed Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB) and the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB).

Meanwhile, the House of Congress and Senate state that they will finish the deliberations of the bill within the next month despite the delays and lack of attendance in sessions. The President announced the signing of a new Executive Order allowing for the extension and function of the office of the Bangsamoro Transition Committee (BTC) until the bill is ratified. The BTC was established in early 2013 to lead the transition of the current Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) government to a Bangsamoro political identity.

## CLAN WAR BETWEEN MILF GROUPS

Infighting between two command groups of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) on 14 August in Palimbang municipality of Sultan Kudarat province sent 550 families (estimated 2750 persons) fleeing from the villages of Napnapan and Kanipa'an. Local authorities confirmed that the clash that raged until the morning of 17 August was a conflict involving members of the MILF who were engaged in an internal clan conflict. Members of the MILF's 104th base command stormed the location of the 105th base command to avenge the death of a member who was shot dead a week earlier. Eight persons were killed in the fighting, four from both sides including an eight-year-old boy hit by a stray bullet. The Sultanate of Maguindanao sent mediators to both sides to prevent the fighting from escalating. On 18 August both warring groups returned to their respective communities. As of this report, the displaced families still refuse to return home.

In Aleosan municipality of North Cotabato province, two armed groups reportedly affiliated with the MILF were caught in retaliatory attacks that displaced a total of 15 families (estimated 75 persons) on 27 August. The clash was said to be an offshoot of a clan conflict from two months ago when two persons from one clan were ambushed and killed. The IDPs returned to their places of origin after two days.

## FAMILY FEUD IN LANA DEL NORTE

A simmering conflict between two political families in Pantar, Lanao del Norte which started in April this year flared up again resulting in a firefight on 26 August. The fighting caused the displacement of 1,410 families (estimated 7,759 persons) from eight barangays and reportedly injured four persons. The IDPs sought refuge in the Pantar Covered Court and the Pantar National High School. A ceasefire was reached between the warring families by dusk. According to a field mission by NGO Nonviolent Peaceforce, the present humanitarian situation in evacuation centers is dismal. Sectoral gaps were highlighted are; inadequate latrines and lack of potable water, and lack of food. The evacuation sites lack coordination. Persons identified with specific needs require medical attention, and school classes have temporarily been suspended. The municipal and provincial Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) have responded with food assistance and some camp management activities.

### DISCLAIMER

The Monthly Mindanao Displacement Dashboard 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 Dashboard reflects the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and other sources of international law and practice. The information reported in the Monthly Mindanao Displacement Dashboard 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 Monthly Mindanao Displacement Dashboard does not necessarily reflect the views of UNHCR or any individual member of the Protection Cluster.

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## ZAMBOANGA DISPLACEMENT SITUATION

One month before the two year anniversary of the conflict in Zamboanga, the number of persons who remain displaced is still around 28,000 (23% of the total population that was displaced). Almost all of the remaining IDPs are Moros and extremely vulnerable; mainly from the Sama-Badjao and Tausug tribes. Their homes were completely destroyed during the conflict. The Grandstand was closed after IDPs were forced to immediately leave one month ago. After almost two years, they have been allowed to return to the communities they were living in before the conflict; in Rio Hondo and Lupa Lupa. IDPs are thankful to be back in their place of origin but no preparation for their return was made. IDPs are living in makeshift shelters, without adequate water and other services in these communities.

The situation of 146 IDP families in Lupa Lupa and in 83 families in Mariki Elementary School who were relocated from the Grandstand remain without adequate support. Some IDPs continue to stay in congested makeshift dwellings and tents occupied by at least 4-5 families while others resort to take refuge in partially damaged houses. WASH facilities do not exist and families are buying water in Buggoc transported by boat to Mariki. A Joint Site Assessment report made in July (24, 2015) which the local authorities participated in, has identified actions required to improve conditions. As at the end of August, no interventions have been made.

Over 4,000 families continued to live in transitory sites or with host families waiting to be transferred to permanent dwellings. As of August, only 22% (1,480 units) out of the 6,638 target permanent housing units have been completed, and still many of these locations do not have water and electricity. There is progress being made as more and more IDPs are being allowed to return to their communities of origin such as Rio Hondo, Mariki, and sitio Hongkong and construction slowly continues to relocate families to areas such as Kasanyangan where IDPs can access their livelihoods. But construction in these areas continues to be held up for various administrative reasons, lack of permits, contracts, funds and materials to construct.



Despite the lack of shelter and services existing for families in sitio Lupa Lupa in Rio Hondo who were forced to leave the Grandstand EC, many people expressed gratitude that they have been allowed to return to their place of origin. Rio Hondo is one of the 'ground zero' areas which was initially declared a 'no build zone'. The local government allowed some IDP families to return to their place of origin while waiting for the completion of construction of permanent shelters in Kasanyangan. This situation has created severe protection conditions for these 'returnees'.

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## MAGUINDANAO AFP VS BIFF ARMED CONFLICT UPDATES

Six months after the start of the Law Enforcement Operation (LEO) by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) against the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) an estimated 1,000 internally displaced persons remain in informal settlements or living with host families in Maguindanao. Consultations with communities reveal that IDPs are still reluctant to return because of insecurity in their places of origin with the ongoing LEOs and with no agreement on the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) there is fear of potential conflict that keeps the region in an unstable situation. Another reason for some IDPs are not able to return is the lack of support for the rehabilitation of their damaged or destroyed houses.

AFP law enforcement operations continue in Maguindanao. The likelihood of armed encounters between the AFP and the BIFF remains high. According to a recent AFP security briefing, about 350-500 BIFF members are still present in the so-called SPMS Box (the area within a 10-square kilometers of intersecting highways connecting the municipalities of Datu Salibo, Pagatin, Mamasapano and Shariff Aguak). This BIFF presence is significantly higher number than previously reported.

## DISPLACEMENT FROM NATURAL HAZARDS

The Southwest Monsoon affecting Mindanao in the first week of August which was enhanced by Typhoon Hanna (international name: Soudelor) caused disruption in the lives of 7,982 families (estimated 38,819 persons) when they were forced to flee their homes in northern and central Mindanao.

On 03 August a flashflood incident was experienced at Purok 4 Lalawan, Barangay Linabo, Malaybalay City, Bukidnon due to heavy rains brought by an Inter Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) and the southwest monsoon. A total of 15 families (estimated 52 persons) evacuated in Barangay Linabo covered court. The City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (CDRRMO) personnel composed of two teams instantly proceeded to the area and conducted an immediate evacuation. The IDPs returned to their respective homes the following day.

Pre-emptive evacuation was carried out on 04 August in Sitio Panamukan, San Jose, Malaybalay City, Bukidnon due to heavy rains caused by the ITCZ affecting northern Mindanao. A total of 200 families (estimated 300 persons) were evacuated to the San Jose Elementary School through the assistance of the CDRRMO while the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) distributed relief packs. On the same day, another pre-emptive evacuation was carried out in Barangay Poblacion, Valencia City with 157 families (528 persons) moving to the city gymnasium. One (1) person was injured and seven (7) persons were reported missing. A total of 41 houses in Barangay Poblacion were damaged. The city authorities declared a state of calamity. In Kapatagan municipality of Lanao del Norte province, the same weather disturbance displaced 36 families (estimated 160 persons) from Barangay Concepcion and another 130 families (estimated 559 persons) from Barangay Lapinig. Some 44 families (estimated 220 persons) from Barangay Poblacion of Sapad municipality in the same province evacuated to barangay day care center. All displaced families returned to their places of origin.

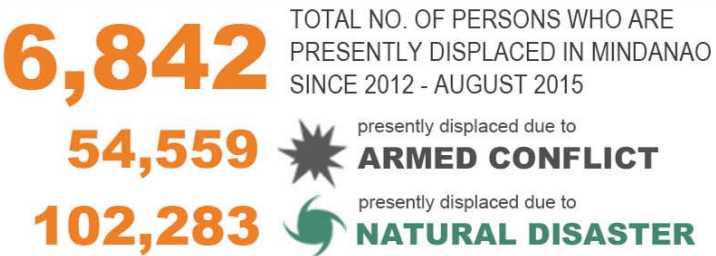
On 07 August, continuous heavy rains in Pikit municipality of North Cotabato province triggered flooding and the evacuation of some 7,400 families (estimated 37,000 persons) from the villages of Bago Inged, Buliok, Barungis, Kabasalan, Macasendeg and Punol. At least 70 percent of the population of the villages of Inug-og, Talitay, Rajamuda, Kalibet, Katilacan, Nabundas and Lumayong left their homes. The villagers fled to informal settlements and barangay halls as their communities were inundated with flood waters. The current number of IDPs that are still displaced has yet to be verified.



The *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* note that “internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.”

**Durable Solutions** - UNHCR with Protection Cluster members continue to identify communities that are subjected to protracted displacement over the course of the year to ensure all IDPs are identified and the appropriate attention and resources can be obtained to support finding a durable solution to their displacement.

## CURRENT NUMBER OF IDPS IN NEED OF DURABLE SOLUTION



## CLARIFICATIONS

**Typhoon Pablo displacement** - A large number of IDPs remain displaced from Typhoon Pablo in December 2012 in Eastern Mindanao, Region XI who are still in need of a durable solution. Many of these families remain in temporary shelters where local authorities have been slowly obtaining access to land and constructing permanent housing for these IDPs. As of March 2015, there are still an estimated 76,568 IDPs in need of a durable solution in this region.

**Forced Returns from Sabah** - Filipino nationals continue to be forcibly returned from Sabah, Malaysia to the Island province, Tawi-Tawi and to Zamboanga City. After the standoff between the Royal Army of Sulu and the Malaysian Security Forces in March 2013, a large number of Filipinos living and working in Sabah are arrested, detained and forcibly returned to the Philippines. Reports obtained from the ARMM DSWD describe that each week hundreds of individuals, many separated from their families living in Sabah, are forced to depart Sabah by boat and arrive in Tawi-Tawi or Zamboanga. While there are no exact figures of the number of persons arriving at this time, it is estimated that over 50,000 persons have been forcibly returned to the Philippines since March 2013. According to the DSWD, many of these individuals are vulnerable and are in need of assistance and many more immediately return to Sabah where their families reside and where they have found employment.

## NUMBER OF INCIDENTS CAUSING DISPLACEMENT IN 2015

	TOTAL IN AUGUST 2015		TOTAL SINCE JAN 2015	
	INCIDENTS	DISPLACEMENT (persons)	INCIDENTS	DISPLACEMENT (persons)
<b>ARMED CONFLICT</b> incidents with displacement	<b>5</b>	<b>12,984</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>243,892</b>
<b>NATURAL DISASTER</b> incidents with displacement	<b>2</b>	<b>38,819</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>96,382</b>

## DISPLACEMENT MOVEMENT IN AUGUST 2015 (see details in boxes)



## LEGEND

