PROTECTING FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN THE COVID-19 CONTEXT
(Role and experiences of NHRIs and opportunities for collaboration with UNHCR)

Webinar co-hosted by GANHRI and UNHCR
June 3 2020
OVERVIEW OF DISPLACEMENT IN PHILIPPINES

ARMED CONFLICT: 153,092K
Main driver of forced displacement in Mindanao due to ongoing conflict with ISIS inspired & communist militant groups

NATURAL DISASTERS: 207,414K
Philippines’ location along the Pacific “typhoon belt” and “ring of fire” makes it particularly prone to typhoons, floods and earthquakes

VIOLENCE: 14,122K
The phenomenon of “rido”, clan or family feuds leading to sporadic eruptions of violence, is a particular feature affecting/displacing whole communities and villages

374,629 Individuals

Nature of displacement
- Recurring
- Cyclical
- Protracted
UNHCR ACTIVITIES IN PHILIPPINES

Guided by HC Policy on UNHCR engagement in IDP Situation (dated Sep 2019)

PROTECTION CLUSTER

Transition of inter-agency functions at national and sub-regional levels in favor of a national system

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Ensure that capacity development programmes and activities of UNHCR and others focus on capacitation of national actors, including IDPs, returnees, and national staff, for IDP protection and solutions

IDP BILL

Identify and support “champion” individuals within the government or partner organizations, who will continue to promote and development an IDP law and/or policy after UNHCR’s departure.

DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Promote the need for long-term engagement in community cohesion, livelihoods, civil registration and civil status documentation, and housing, land and property rights

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED SO FAR?

UNHCR has successfully established protection coordination platform s led by the government and co-led by UNHCR including BARMM PWG, Protection Forum, Protection Strategy technical working group and Mindanao Virtual platform

Capacity building of BARMN on protection mainstreaming, information management, emergency preparedness and response (supported by eCentre) – 493 BARMN staff trained in the course of 2019

UNHCR joint advocacy with CHR for the passage of the IDP Bill at BARMN and National level with full support from Special Rapporteur on HR of IDPs and the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines

HLP Forum, policy review, and technical support to the LDRC; Civil registration for Marawi IDPs; IDP Profiling in BARMN islands; Municipal Protection Profiling; Quick Impact Projects
UNHCR ACTIVITIES IN PHILIPPINES

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**ADOPTION OF PROTECTION STRATEGY AT HCT LEVEL**
Advocate on behalf of affected populations for effective protection, informing and influencing the priorities of the Humanitarian Coordinator, UNCT/HCTs, other clusters, national and local authorities and other relevant audiences.

**INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**
Ensure information management capacity in support of UNHCR’s country-level cluster coordination and operational response.

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE**
In countries prone to conflict or disaster induced displacement, undertake sound risk analysis and other preparedness measures according to the level of risk, including through inter-agency processes, to drive organizational preparedness and emergency declarations, in accordance with UNHCR’s revised Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response.

**WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED SO FAR?**
Endorsement of Protection Strategy for Mindanao at HCT level in January 2019. UNHCR has successfully established and led a technical working group in coordination with UNFPA and UNICEF as CPGBV cluster leads to ensure that HCT protection objectives are met in a timely manner.

UNHCR is supporting BARMM government with technical know-how on data collection and development of information management tools in addition to secondment of IM expert. UNHCR is also training IM technical staff from the government in order to enhance their data management skills.

Provision of core relief items in coordination with BARMM and local govt units; training BARMM government on emergency preparedness and response supported by eCentre experts, conducting IDP profiling in the BARMM islands.
Access to WASH: Access to clean water is an issue especially the IDPs at the transitory sites in Marawi City.

Access to food: Delivery of relief assistance is irregular and in some cases, IDPs receive limited portions of food.

Risk of infection vis-à-vis Social Distancing: Overcrowded evacuation centers and transitory sites would be conducive to the rapid spread of virus. Thus, social distancing and self-quarantine are impossible in such conditions.

Mobility: Instituting community quarantine and lockdown limits the mobility of the IDPs who often found difficult in securing permit from municipalities

Lack of COVID-19 response mechanism in IDP sites. There are no clear guidelines as to mechanisms on social distancing and self-quarantine in the transitory sites and evacuation centers.

Livelihood The economic activities of the IDPs have been disrupted especially those relying on the informal economy such as pedicab drivers, carpenters, and laborers. They have lost their income and could not afford to provide the necessities of their family.

Access to information: lack of communication and methods of dissemination on COVID-19 related information that will raise the awareness of the IDPs. Social media such as Facebook is the common platform but is not a reliable source and not all have access on it. Flyers on COVID-19 awareness are not widely spread in IDP sites.

Education: Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, temporary classrooms were reportedly congested and thus, no longer conducive for learning. Some public schools are used as COVID-19 facilities and no online learning available.
UNHCR RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Achievements and envisaged activities

Activation of virtual protection coordination platforms: UNHCR has activated two protection coordination platforms in Mindanao to ensure continued protection monitoring and coordination through remote means amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

UNHCR is stepping up its support to BARMM to address the protection needs of displaced families through enhancing the digital and virtual operating capabilities of the local service providers and by mobilizing local community volunteers with adequate training and PPEs in order to mainstream protection centres assistance.

Risk communication: UNHCR works with UNICEF in the translation of COVID key messaging into local languages in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, such as Maranao. These materials will be distributed to IDP sites to enhance community-level awareness.

Technical support to government: Secondment of Protection and IM experts to the BARMM government to provide support and strengthen BARMM’s capacity in carrying out inter-agency protection coordination, organize information system to enhance monitoring, reporting, and other protection activities in the region.
UNHCR RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Achievements and envisaged activities

**Provision of hygiene kits to IDPs:** UNHCR is in the process of finalizing the procurement of hygiene kits for 3,500 vulnerable families across Mindanao.

**Capacity building** on Protection, Information Management, and Emergency Preparedness: Virtual trainings to MSSD, MILG, and BARMM-READY, including community leaders and volunteers who currently respond to displaced families on the ground focusing on Protection, Information Management, and Emergency Preparedness.

**Advocacy for the passage of the IDP Bill:** Remote coordination and provision of support to Parliament members in the drafting, sponsorship etc. of the BARMM IDP Bill and other bills concerning protection of IDPs.

**Protection monitoring through community volunteers:** Tapping into pool of monitors and community volunteers to conduct protection monitoring on behalf of UNHCR. Volunteers will be provided with additional training, IT equipment and online tools to carry out the monitoring and reporting with the support of UNHCR’s project partners.
UNHCR COLLABORATION WITH CHRP TO ENHANCE PROTECTION SPACE FOR IDPS IN CONTEXT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- Monitoring and reporting on the situation of displaced persons
- Advice to Governments to ensure the situation of displaced persons is addressed in COVID-19 responses (advisory note)
- Facilitating access to services and information.
Thank you