HIGHLIGHTS

• A year following the Marawi conflict, displaced families and those who have recently returned need continued humanitarian assistance.

• The Philippines updates its guidelines for international humanitarian assistance, which includes policies to facilitate international assistance to complement Government-led humanitarian response and recovery efforts.

• The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) introduces a new gender and age inclusive tool for humanitarian response.

A year since the Marawi conflict, humanitarian needs continue

It has been a year since the Marawi conflict, where fighting between Government forces and non-state armed groups on 24 May 2017 displaced over 350,000 people, forcing them to flee to neighbouring municipalities and to seek shelter with host communities and evacuation centres. Displaced families fled without their belongings, leaving their livelihood and children’s education behind. The fighting lasted more than six months, devastating much of the business district. On 29 October 2017, the first 712 displaced families began their return to Marawi after the fighting was declared over by Government forces. Marawi local authorities, together with Task Force Bangon Marawi with support from the humanitarian community, have assisted in the return process of displaced families while providing basic needs and shelter. While over 160,000 displaced people have since returned to their home areas, more than 237,000 remain effectively displaced. Out of the 96 Barangays that comprise Marawi City, the population of 24 Barangays from areas that have seen most of the destruction may not be able to return anytime soon. The Government continues to carry out clearing operations, with over 80 per cent cleared of unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices while a comprehensive relief and recovery plan is being finalized.

Rebuilding Marawi City after the conflict

Except for the most affected areas, activity in Marawi city is slowly returning. Many Marawi citizens are starting with very little. Cash assistance from Government programmes and cash-for-work opportunities were short term solutions, with the population still struggling to re-establish livelihoods and income earning for their families. While basic social services are gradually being restored, water supply and sanitation remain a priority, as well as restoring city health facilities, and schooling for children. The Humanitarian Country Team’s humanitarian response and resources overview also highlights the need for continuing food security and agriculture assistance, as well as protection and early recovery needs.
Displaced families hoping to return home

An estimated 100,000 people remain displaced in host communities located in nearby municipalities and other areas in Lanao del Sur province. Others have been moved to transitory shelters constructed by the Government to decongest evacuation centres. Those affected by the conflict will need continued humanitarian assistance. According to the Protection Cluster’s March 2018 Mindanao Displacement Dashboard, assistance for remaining IDPs, especially in home-based settings, has dwindled. Conditions in host communities and evacuation centres also remain a concern, especially with desludging of latrines, shortage of food assistance, and pressure for IDPs to return to their places of origin or transfer to Marawi relocation sites. Several families continue to keep their children in Iligan and other cities, especially those at the high school level.

Plans for rehabilitation and recovery

The recovery needs and interventions are being formulated under the Bangon Marawi Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Program (BMCRRP) in which priority activities of government agencies and sub-committees will be implemented from 2018 to 2022. Aside from the Most Affected Areas (MAA), in Marawi, it will cover Piagapo and Butig municipalities. The BMCRRP’s post conflict framework includes medium to long-term outcomes for Marawi City and its surrounding communities, local governance and peacebuilding, housing and settlements, livelihood and business development, physical infrastructure, social services, and land resource management. Cross-cutting interventions for vulnerable groups, culture and gender sensitivity, environmental protection and sustainability, poverty reduction, disaster risk reduction and conflict sensitivity and peace promotion are included in the plan, which is scheduled to be completed by June.

A Timeline of the Marawi Conflict

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Amidst the challenges of acquiring land for permanent housing units, issues of land ownership, and compensation to those who lost their property, there are 3,524 permanent housing units needed to be built for those who may not able to return. Pledges of support are coming from the private sector as well as local government agencies to build permanent housing. The San Miguel Foundation has pledged to build 2,000 units, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) with UN Habitat will be building 1,500 units. Two hundred seventy-four units will be provided by Provincial Government of Lanao Del Sur while 250 units will be provided by the ARMM government. The permanent housing units will reportedly prioritize formal residents of Marawi City that can no longer return to their homes, especially those living close to Lake Lanao and in areas declared as “no build zones”.

### A family transfers to the Sarimanok Tent City in Marawi

Asniya, 24, recently transferred to the Sarimanok Tent City with her family. A year ago, she resided in Moncado, Marawi City, where she and her husband had a tailoring business. She was two months away from finishing her degree in education at Dangsalan Polytechnic College, and was volunteering for Community and Family Services International (CFSI) when fighting broke out. Her family fled to Iligan City, where they sought shelter for nearly six months. In mid-April, her family qualified for shelter in the Sarimanok Tent City.

Asniya’s hometown is one of the 24 barangays that sustained the most destruction during the armed conflict. She doesn’t know when she can return home, but was told was it could be up to three years. She looks worriedly at the overcast weather and wonders if the tent can withstand heavy rainfall. Her children, ages seven and eight, have stopped schooling in the midst of the repeated uprooting. She also worries about the water supply in the tent city. The water is trucked in twice a day, and there are no water pumps. “The water didn’t arrive today. I wonder if we will have enough?”

She shows her sewing machine and dressmaking table inside a crowded tent filled with her family’s belongings. “I’m a good seamstress - we had a successful business back home,” She remains hopeful in spite of the uncertainty. “I just need a table big enough to lay out fabric. I wish there was an area where I could cut and sew. Then I can take orders!” she said.

### A brief return via the Kambisita programme

Faisad, 60, is waiting inside a small truck pulled over on the side of the road in Marawi City while her family adjusts furniture and belongings that were hurriedly piled on. Her family was allowed to return to their home in Barangay Kapantaran in Marawi City, one of the most affected areas. “It was my first time to see my home again. It was completely destroyed – the foundation had collapsed and there was barely anything left. We just got a few chairs, and whatever small appliances we could find.”

Faisad’s brief visit is part of the Kambisita programme of Task Force Bangon Marawi and the Marawi City government for displaced families to visit their homes and retrieve personal belongings. The most affected areas are not completely secure - as of 28 March, over 80 per cent of unexploded ordnances and improvised explosive devices
A number of home-based IDPs are also reportedly expressing preference to stay permanently with host families and host municipalities after seeing the damage and loss to their homes during the Kambisita programme.

The damage and loss to homes have been cleared. For safety, they are escorted by the military and a medical team. “We are heading back to Iligan City where we continue to seek shelter. We still need food and cash assistance. I hope we are not forgotten.”

According to the latest IDP Protection Assessment report by the Protection Cluster, an increasing number of host families are asking for humanitarian support due to the protracted nature of displacement. A number of home-based IDPs are also reportedly expressing preference to stay permanently with host families and host municipalities after seeing the damage and loss to their homes during the Kambisita programme.

Sustaining support for returnees and displaced

Task Force Bangon Marawi and government line departments, with support from humanitarian agencies continue to address the needs of those who are displaced and not able to return. The Humanitarian Country, Team, composed of UN agencies, international and national non-governmental agencies, have issued a Marawi strategic response and resource mobilization plan which outlines continuing unmet humanitarian needs and a response framework that extends to December 2018. The United Nations Central Emergency Fund has also allocated a grant of US$5 million towards life-saving activities in Marawi, focusing on food assistance, protection and early recovery.

Sustained humanitarian assistance is critically important to assist those rebuilding their lives in Marawi City, and those who continue to hope, one year on, to return home.

The Philippine International Humanitarian Assistance (PIHA) guidelines

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) on 27 April briefed the diplomatic community on the newly promulgated Philippine International Assistance (PIHA) guidelines which
Under the new guidelines, a Philippine International Humanitarian Assistance Cluster (PIHAC) led by DFA is established and will be the primary body in coordinating incoming and outgoing international humanitarian assistance. The Guidelines were formulated as part of the lessons learned from the Typhoon Haiyan response in 2013, wherein the Philippine Government accepted the offer of international assistance to complement Government-led response and recovery efforts.

Under the new guidelines, a Philippine International Humanitarian Assistance Cluster (PIHAC) led by DFA is established and will be the primary body in coordinating incoming and outgoing international humanitarian assistance. The guidelines also aim to institutionalize the International Humanitarian Assistance Reception Center (PIHARC) or a One-Stop-Shop (OSS) facility to screen, facilitate and expedite the processing and entry of international humanitarian teams, equipment, and in-kind donations.

In the event of a catastrophic event in which government capacities are overwhelmed, the PIHA guidelines state that the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) shall recommend to the President the issuance of an appeal for international humanitarian assistance, with the PIHA Cluster, in coordination with the NDRRMC Response Pillar, determining the start and end for the call of international humanitarian assistance.

The PIHA guidelines also include the policy that “in case of donations from foreign governments, acceptance thereof shall be subject to the prior clearance and approval by the President of the Philippines upon recommendation of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs”. Local governments, as mandated by the Local Government Code (RA 7160), may also directly request or accept international humanitarian assistance provided that this will be coordinated with the NDRRMC.

The Government of the Philippines is hosting the 2018 International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) Asia-Pacific earthquake response exercise from 26-29 June in Clark, Pampanga that will bring together 400 foreign and local participants to practice national and international response and coordination methodologies. The exercise provides the opportunity for the Government to test the guidelines and also its interaction with international humanitarian actors and responders to practice multi-sector coordination including, civil military coordination, urban search and rescue, emergency medical teams, United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) and ASEAN’s Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ERAT) interoperability, and NDRRMC-HCT clusters’ response coordination.

Gender and age marker: a new tool in inclusive humanitarian programming is introduced in the Philippines

On April 26th a half day inter-agency orientation session on Gender and Age Marker was participated by about 30 attendees representing the sectors, clusters and working groups of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). The new IASC Gender and Age Marker was discussed and tested as a tool used by the humanitarian community to assess how gender is incorporated in humanitarian projects like the consolidated appeals, including Humanitarian Response Plans, Humanitarian Pool Funds and the CERF. Humanitarian practitioners and stakeholders have been
advocating for gender equality programming, and deepening gender analysis with the inclusion of age and adding a monitoring phase so that measures could be assessed at both design and implementation level. The idea is to ensure that gender is at the heart of the humanitarian response plan in emergencies.

The Philippine sessions came out with strategic recommendations to further enhance the IASC Gender and Age Marker (GAM). One is to include Early Childhood Age, this age group is from 0 – 8 depending on the country, but as a standard it is 0 – 5. Early Childhood Age can be based on the age milestones as per defined by UNICEF or the ECCD Law of the Country. The importance of adding this age group is to be able to include and identify the pregnant and lactating mothers. The 0 – 5 age group includes, child still in the womb and breastfeeding children. Another importance is that if this age group is included, there is a high possibility of knowing the number of pregnant and lactating mothers. The small children category can refer to the children not within the 0-5 and often are in elementary school.

The Philippine participants expressed their concern that the primary objective of the GAM is achieved. Accordingly, the old gender marker did not include accountability nor informed who should be monitoring the results of the marker and if gender equality is to be achieved, how the results are would be used in improving operations and project implementation. Hence a section in the Peer Review and Evaluation part of the Humanitarian Program Cycle should include Achievement and Challenges in achieving gender equality programming. The IASC Gender theme groups should work to advocate the review and inclusion of the gender monitoring results in the Peer Review and Evaluation. The country cluster/agency proponent should ensure that gender equality measures results are monitored and shared through a project mid-term review and after-action review, as well as ensuring that it is included in the project proposal design and implementation.

Relative to this, the question asked by the participants was on accountability: “Who monitors the compliance to ensure that agencies implemented a targeted action or gender mainstreaming and who provides feedback to implementing agencies to improve programming and strategies?” The HCT should require the implementing agencies to report on their compliance to the gender marker monitoring results and provide recommendations that will improve gender equality programming in close coordination with the Gender in Humanitarian Action Community of Practice or to the GenCap Advisor.

The Philippines participants informed that they will repeat the orientation to their own agencies. UN agencies, INGOs, and NGOs have agreed to roll out the GAM by conducting a feedback session within their agencies and at the sub-national level specifically at the Mindanao and will provide feedback to the HCT for their recommendations.

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