

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Over 28,000 IDPs continue to long for durable solutions in Zamboanga.
- Field assessments and recovery support for IDPs stepped up in Maguindanao.
- Cash Working Group sets priority actions in preparation for the next emergency.
- Assistance to revitalize seaweed farming rebuilds crisis-affected coastal communities.

## FIGURES

### Zamboanga Crisis

# of IDPs in Grandstand evacuation centre	3,100
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# of IDPs in transitional sites	13,800
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# of IDPs hosted by relatives and friends or renting temporary homes	11,300*
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Source: CCCM Cluster (as of 18 May 2015), \*Protection Cluster (as of 27 April 2015)

### Central Mindanao Displacement

# of IDPs in evacuation centres	32,300
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# of displacement sites	21
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Source: IOM/ARMM-DSWD Displacement Tracking Matrix, which covered 21 displacement sites (as of 22 May 2015)



UNHCR/R. Maquilan

## In this issue

- Displacement in Zamboanga P.1
- IDP relief continues in Maguindanao P.2
- Coordinating cash as emergency aid P.3
- Seaweed farming for crisis recovery P.4

## Zamboanga: IDPs in continued search for durable solutions

In September 2013, heavy fighting between a faction of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the government forces displaced an estimated 118,800 people in Zamboanga City. The three-week conflict killed at least 140 people and destroyed over 10,000 houses.

Twenty months later, some 28,200 people are still displaced. About 3,100 of them are staying in the evacuation centre inside the Grandstand sports complex, while about 13,800 have moved to 10 transitional sites. In addition, over 11,300 internally displaced people (IDPs) are hosted by relatives or friends, or are renting temporary homes with rental assistance.

### Remote transitional sites continue to suffer the lack of water and livelihoods

Some transitional sites are relatively small and located in urban areas with access to basic services and infrastructure such as schools, sanitation and health facilities. Other larger transitional sites, including Mampang which hosts some 7,000 IDPs, are found on the outskirts of town, disconnected from livelihood opportunities. They also suffer irregular and insufficient provision of water and electricity. Limited livelihoods and dependency on food packs increase tension among the IDPs and therefore the risk of gender-based violence. Isolation and the lack of security expose IDPs, particularly women and children, to harassment, threats and theft.



Credit: UNHCR/R. Maquilan  
Zamboanga City (May 2015) – Permanent shelter site in Kasanyangan to provide home to some 3,000 IDP families.

Adding further to the stress, the city's plan to rehabilitate the Grandstand falls short of allocating adequate living space for the IDPs to be consolidated in one area of the premises. Some of these IDPs are thus expected to have to move to transitional sites.

### The city approves the code of policies for beneficiaries

Humanitarian organizations continue to support the authorities to alleviate the day-to-day suffering of the displaced families, while advocating prompt implementation of durable solutions through the Zamboanga City Roadmap to Recovery and Reconstruction (Z3R). UN agencies and NGOs worked with the city government to draft the Code of Policies for Beneficiary Assistance and Awarding of Permanent Housing and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR), including a grievance mechanism, to facilitate fair and transparent allocation of permanent shelters to the IDPs. The City Council on 26 May approved the Code and the IRR, and preparations are now underway for information campaigns to familiarize the IDPs with key elements of the documents.

With only 21 per cent of the planned permanent shelters under the Z3R constructed so far, however, many IDPs are expected to remain displaced until late 2015, continuously relying on assistance.

## Relief and recovery support continues for conflict-affected families in Maguindanao

Two months after the government's joint law enforcement operations against the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), over 32,200 people remain displaced in five municipalities of Maguindanao province, according to IOM's [latest assessments](#) conducted in partnership with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). With the majority of the IDPs back in their places of origin, local governments and aid agencies have extended assessments and recovery support in their return sites, while continuing to provide humanitarian aid to the remaining IDPs in evacuation centres.

*Remaining IDPs are in dire need of shelter, water and protection support, while their returns are stalled by insecurity and the lack of livelihood*

Most of the IDPs who have not been able to return home are in the municipalities of Datu Salibo and Datu Saudi Ampatuan, where the continuous presence of the military forces and lawless groups threaten the security of communities. Some IDPs attend their farms during the day but return to the evacuation centres at night. IOM's above-mentioned assessments of 21 displacement sites revealed critical needs for shelter, water and protection among the majority of the remaining IDPs.

Some of those who returned are facing difficulties rebuilding their lives because their houses were burned in the conflict or their farms damaged. UNHCR is validating the claims of damage to houses and providing temporary shelter packages to the returning IDPs, while FAO and WFP are supporting the authorities with livelihood assistance and cash-for-return programmes.

Besides the protection and livelihood concerns, armed clashes and prolonged displacement have degraded local health care and sanitation services. Field assessments conducted by the health sector partners in 62 IDP return sites found extensive damage to health facilities and medical equipment and health and nutrition supplies missing. Half of the communities assessed lost access to fresh water after the military operations.

To enhance the IDPs' access to timely and reliable information and accountability for the assistance provided, members of the newly established Communications Core Group – led by the ARMM Bureau of Public Information and joined by international and local partners – continues to conduct field consultations with the affected communities. They are also planning communication campaigns in partnership with local radio stations.

As both humanitarian support for the remaining IDPs and recovery assistance for the returning IDPs are expected to carry on for the next months, humanitarian agencies are coordinating closely with the regional and provincial authorities to align their priority programmes and address gaps in response, while continuously monitoring the security situation. A provincial rehabilitation workshop planned in early June is hoped to serve as a venue to develop an integrated rehabilitation plan informed by compiled assessments.

## Coordinating cash as emergency aid

### Why cash for emergency and why in the Philippines?

The use of cash transfers in emergencies has become an increasingly common form of humanitarian assistance. Delivering cash is now widely accepted as a more dignified alternative to the traditional in-kind assistance, as it honours the rights of crisis-affected households to decide how to prioritize and meet their multiple needs, while stimulating local markets.

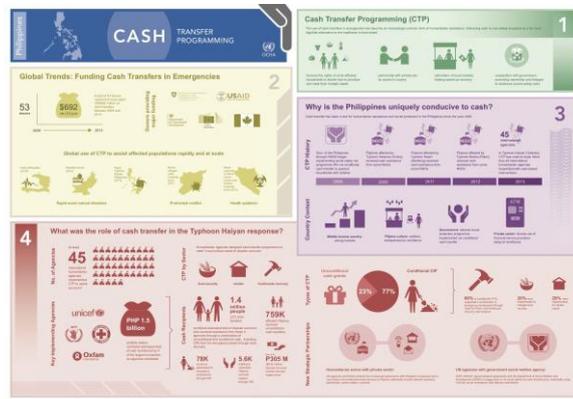
Cash transfer programming (CTP) has been part of emergency response in the Philippines since 2009. The country is uniquely conducive to CTP because of its strong markets, resilient and entrepreneurial culture, existing government-run social protection programmes implemented via conditional cash transfer and diverse financial service providers adept at processing remittances.

*The Philippines is uniquely conducive to cash because of its economy, culture and the existing government and financial services*

*In response to Typhoon Haiyan, at least 45 international aid agencies implemented CTP to address critical needs for shelter, food and livelihoods, benefiting 1.4 million people*

## Cash transfers during Typhoon Haiyan response

When Super Typhoon Haiyan (locally known as Yolanda) hit the Philippines in 2013, cash transfers were rapidly scaled up. At least 45 international aid agencies implemented CTP to address critical needs for shelter, food and livelihoods, benefiting 1.4 million people. WFP and UNICEF partnered with the Philippine Government's DSWD and used its conditional cash transfer platform to help the poorest of the typhoon-affected communities. UN agencies, the Red Cross and NGOs also partnered with Philippine businesses, which provided long-standing financial services to process remittances of Filipinos nationwide, including mobile network operators, pawnshops, the postal system and couriers. To map out these new partnerships and coordinate various programmes, cash working groups were established at the national and sub-levels in Manila and in Visayas (Roxas and Guiuan), respectively.



Credit: OCHA (click to download the infographic)

## Cash Working Group gears up in preparation for the next emergency

As the country underwent subsequent emergencies including Typhoon Hagupit (Ruby) and renewed conflicts in central Mindanao, the need for an established multi-sectoral CTP governance structure to enhance response became salient. The Manila Cash Working Group (CWG) was revitalized in March 2015 to serve as a platform to support technical knowledge sharing and coordination and integration of CTP at the strategic and operational levels.

The group's current focus is on emergency response preparedness. Together with its Steering Committee, the CWG is working on [the nation-wide mapping of financial service providers](#) in partnership with the Central Bank of the Philippines, streamlining reporting of CTP, formulating a template for partnership agreements between aid agencies and financial actors, and developing common market assessment tools. In addition, a recent scoping mission in Mindanao informed the possibility of establishing a CTP coordination structure at the sub-national level to respond to complex emergencies.

The next CWG meeting will be held on 9 June, together with a workshop to launch the Lessons Learned Report on Cash Coordination for Haiyan.

## Seaweed – a profitable livelihood for crisis-affected coastal communities

The Philippines is one of the world's largest producers of seaweed and, within the aquaculture sub-sector, seaweed production remains among the top dollar-earners of the country. With low capital investment and a short culture period, seaweed farming can yield high profits owing to the demand for some seaweed species. As an opportunity to boost income and the quality of life without adding pressure on fishing grounds, seaweed farming continues to expand in coastal communities.

### Haiyan recovery and rehabilitation support

When Typhoon Haiyan barreled through the central Philippines in November 2013, it damaged and destroyed many seaweed facilities, crippling the livelihood of Filipino coastal farmers who relied on seaweed production as their main source of income. Initial assessments showed that US\$12.2 million was lost in the aquaculture and seaweed sector with production falling by 11 per cent in 2013 from the previous year's aggregate annual production of 1.75 million metric tons.

*A seaweed farmer with a hectare of seaweed can earn an estimated PHP200,000 (US\$4,500) over four cropping periods per year*

*“We learned about proper cutting and transferring of seaweeds to nursery grounds, and how long it takes for seaweed to reproduce”*  
- Jessica, typhoon survivor and seaweed farmer



Credit: FAO/A. Aduna Taluksangay transitional site, Zamboanga City (May 2015) – A woman attaching seaweed propagules onto the main culture line in preparation for culturing.

FAO worked together with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources to provide livelihood and rehabilitation assistance to 3,000 seaweed farming households in the central and western Visayas, as part of a total of 19,000 households supported through FAO’s Haiyan fisheries response programme. While the damage to seaweed farming was extensive, it also presented an opportunity during the recovery and rehabilitation to introduce better farming practices.

In addition to providing seaweed farming packages and establishing seaweed nurseries, trainings were conducted on how to select more suitable farming sites, the preparation of seedlings, seaweed farm maintenance and how to gain access to markets. “We learned about proper cutting and transferring of seaweeds to nursery grounds, and how long it takes for seaweed to reproduce,” says 31-year-old Jessica Pagua, from the Tagbanua indigenous group on the island of Coron. “Before, we were just drying seaweeds until they shrank. We didn’t know that we had to transfer them before drying, so the training helped us to cut our losses.” With the kits, materials and training

they have received, seaweed farmers like Jessica and her family are slowly recovering and re-establishing more productive and resilient seaweed farms.

### **Early recovery support for displaced families in Zamboanga**

Over half of the Philippines’ national seaweed output comes from Mindanao, with Zamboanga exporting most of the country’s dried seaweeds. Through the UN Peacebuilding Fund, FAO will be providing support to fisherfolk and seaweed farmers who were displaced by the September 2013 conflict in Zamboanga City, specifically targeting women and the youth among the families whose livelihoods have been impaired. The livelihood assistance will aim to introduce a more profitable and sustainable approach to fishing and seaweed farming in order to improve production assets and increase incomes of these families, which will in turn support their education and food needs.

## **In brief**

### **Local preparedness champions Typhoon Noul response**

As Typhoon Noul (Dodong) approached northeast Luzon to make landfall on 10 May, the Philippine government convened daily Pre-Disaster Risk Assessment meetings and hoisted storm signals and gale warnings to alert communities. Humanitarian partners in the country also readied themselves to support the government’s potential response. At the sub-national level, communities along the typhoon’s path implemented the Operation Plan (Oplan) Listo, a manual developed to enhance local disaster preparedness and response. Following the procedures and checklist of the Oplan Listo, provincial and municipal authorities convened local disaster management meetings, activated emergency operation centres, pre-positioned relief items and pre-emptively evacuated some 3,800 residents in low-lying and flood-prone areas of Region II (Cagayan Valley). In the end, Typhoon Noul caused minimal damage and exited the Philippine Area of Responsibility on 12 May, demonstrating once again the importance of national and local preparedness in responding to disasters.

*Another out-of-season typhoon hits the Philippines at Category-4 strength, testing local preparedness*

For further information, please contact:

**David Carden**, Head of Office, OCHA Philippines, [carden@un.org](mailto:carden@un.org), Tel. (+63) 917-513-9924

**Madoka Koide**, Associate Humanitarian Affairs Officer, [koide@un.org](mailto:koide@un.org), Tel. (+63) 917-597-4722

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