

10 February 2015

## PHILIPPINES

# Long-term recovery challenges remain in the wake of massive displacement

Millions are newly displaced each year in the Philippines, mainly by natural hazard-related disasters such as typhoon and floods, but also by conflict and violence most of which is concentrated in the southern island group of Mindanao. The number of people newly displaced fell by more than half, from 7.5 million in 2013 to around three million in 2014. The absence of a major disaster of equal severity to Haiyan – the super-typhoon which devastated the region in 2013 – largely explains this drop.

As of February 2015, IDMC estimated that nearly half a million people were living in displacement. Around 80 per cent had been displaced by disasters while an estimated 95,000 had fled conflict and violence in Mindanao. The total number of people displaced by conflict and violence reached its lowest level since 2011. A reduction in the number and intensity of fighting incidents largely explains this decline.

The government has made considerable efforts to address the immediate needs of those displaced by conflict and natural hazard-related disasters. In the wake of typhoon Haiyan, a massive response by the government and the international community provided essential support to avert a large-scale humanitarian crisis. Little information is available however about progress towards solutions for the approximately four million people who had returned home following Typhoon Haiyan. Housing and livelihood needs in Haiyan-affected areas remain considerable, with few having managed to complete their recovery.

Delays in reconstruction and restrictions placed on return also slowed progress towards solutions for those displaced by the 2013 conflict in Zamboanga city. Poor donor response to the Zamboanga Action Plan (ZAP), with only 47 per cent of the \$12.8 million requested covered by the time the ZAP closed in August 2014, and limited engagement from development actors, seriously hampered the international community's capacity to respond and the search for durable solutions. The adoption in October 2014 by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) of a durable solution strategy for IDPs in the Mindanao city of Zamboanga has laid the basis for continued international involvement and more attention being paid to long-term solutions, in particular with regards to the right to adequate housing for the most vulnerable IDPs.



## Internal displacement in the Philippines in 2014 (including conflict and disasters)

- Capital
- Cities
- International boundary
- Regional boundary
- Displacement by conflict
- ▲ Volcano
- ★ Locations hit by tropical storms
- Storm track
- Bopha-affected areas
- Haiyan-affected areas
- Displacement by disasters

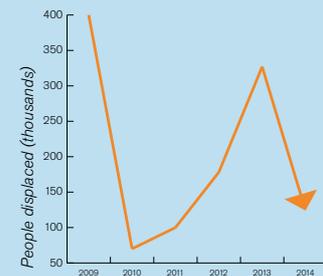
Date created: February 2015

Sources: UNHCR, 20 November 2014 (Haiyan); Mindanao Protection cluster, 15 January 2015 (Mindanao, including Bopha); NDRRMC, 19 December 2014 (Hagupit), 10 January 2015 (Seniang)

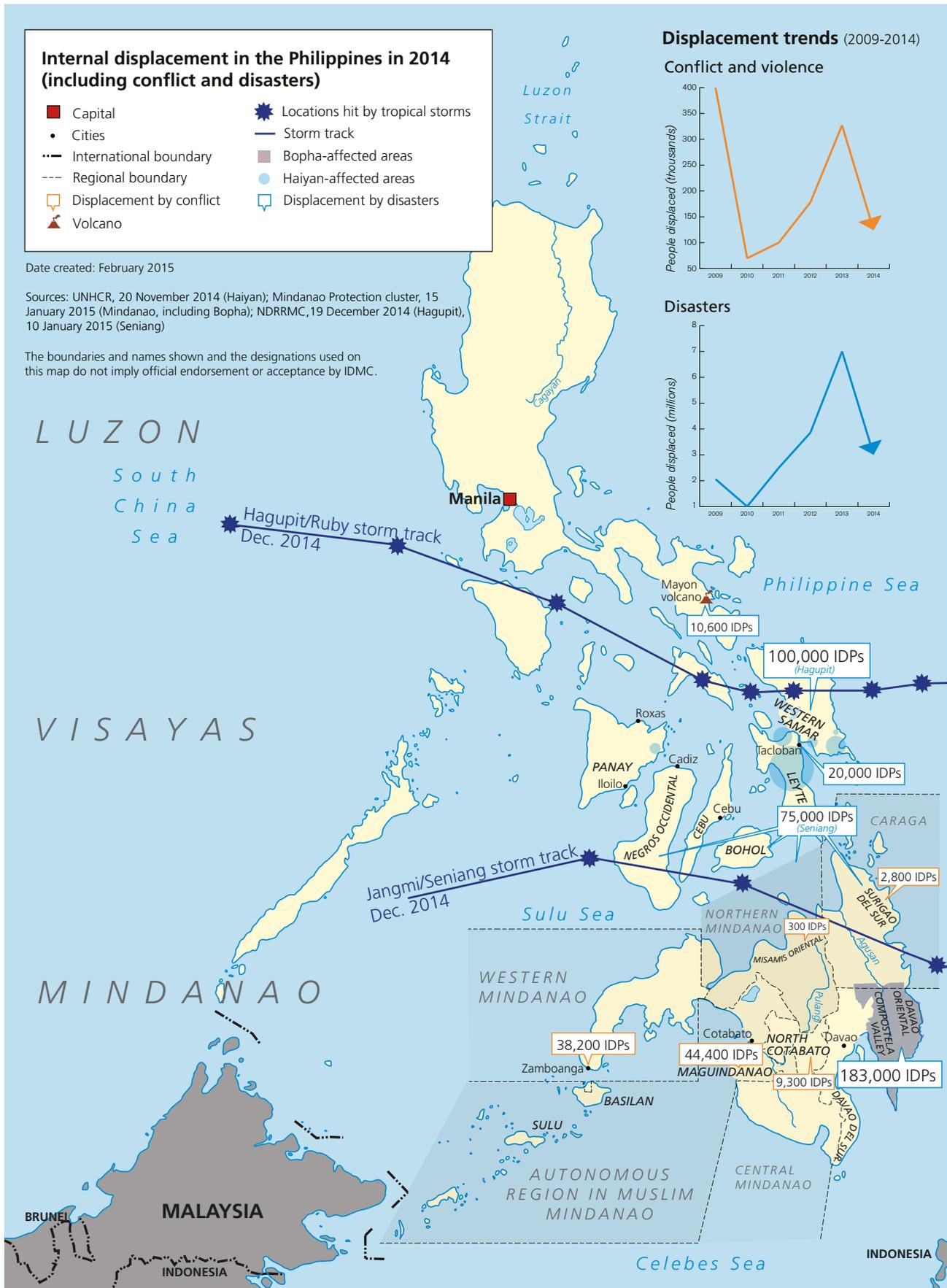
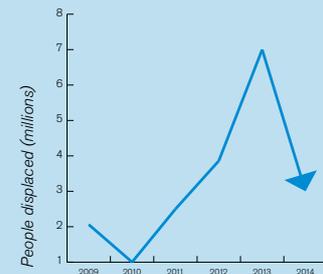
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

### Displacement trends (2009-2014)

#### Conflict and violence



#### Disasters



The signing in March 2014 of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) put an end to a 40 year-old conflict, raising hope of sustained peace and opportunities to better address internal displacement in the country. Also, a revised version of the IDP bill, previously vetoed by the president in 2013, made good progress in Congress with its adoption by the lower house in August 2014.

With the humanitarian phase now officially declared over following Haiyan and the Zamboanga conflict, the government and the international community must ensure that continued attention is paid the needs of thousands of families still displaced and who have not yet achieved durable solutions. The planned relocation of over 200,000 families living in unsafe coastal areas will be another major challenge given the lack of available land and poor capacity and resources at the local level.

## Background and causes of displacement

Armed conflict and human rights violations have displaced millions of people in the Philippines over the past three decades. Most violence-related displacement has taken place on the island group of Mindanao in the southern Philippines, where the government has been fighting insurgent groups since the 1970s. The Philippines is also prone to frequent disasters brought on by natural hazards, which cause massive displacement. In many cases, natural disasters make the already precarious living conditions of people displaced by conflict worse and increase their vulnerability.

### *The Bangsamoro armed conflict*

Muslim insurgent groups have been fighting the government in Mindanao for more than a century. In 1976 the Moro National Liberation

Front (MNLF) and the government signed the Tripoli Agreement, which established a degree of autonomy for 13 provinces and nine cities in the southern Philippines. After only limited success in implementing it amid continuing conflict, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was formally established in 1990. Six years later, MNLF entered into a final peace deal with the government, leaving the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) as the country's main Muslim insurgency group.

In August 2008, a failed land deal between the government and the MILF on the issue of an autonomous *Moro* homeland led to the collapse of peace talks and sparked renewed clashes. The fighting led to the displacement of at least 750,000 people across several Mindanao provinces, with ARMM particularly affected ([DSWD](#), 15 May 2009). In July 2009 the signing of a ceasefire led to the re-opening of peace talks and no major armed confrontation were reported in the following years. In 2013, opposition to the Bangsamoro peace talks by a faction of the MNLF led to the group's attack on the city of Zamboanga in September. This caused widespread destruction in the city and forced around 120,000 people to flee their homes ([NDRRMC](#), 1 October 2013). The MNLF signed its own peace deal with the government in 1996, but considers implementation to have been inadequate.

Other armed groups in Mindanao include the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) – which is mostly active in the western province of Sulu and Basilan and is known for kidnapping – and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), a MILF breakaway group.

### *Conflict and human rights violations in eastern Mindanao*

The 45-year armed conflict between the government and the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), is estimated to have claimed

over 40,000 lives ([ICG](#), 14 February 2011). Its effects are felt throughout the country, but are particularly significant in eastern Mindanao, an NPA stronghold.

Those who are affected are mainly Lumads – a self-ascriptive term used by the indigenous peoples of Mindanao. They are regularly displaced, both by armed clashes and by the militarisation of their community. Caught between the two warring parties, Lumads are exposed to high levels of violence and are at risk of abuses by both sides. Many communities are split between those who support NPA and those who seek government protection. Most of the violence and human rights violations civilians suffer, and which causes regular displacements, takes place in remote areas and is under-reported ([IDMC](#), 9 August 2013). In 2014, the largest displacement incident took place in Lianga municipality, Surigao del Sur, where at the end of October some 1,800 Lumads belonging to the Manobo ethnic group fled their homes as a result of military operations and alleged human rights violations, including the extra-judicial killing of a tribal leader and anti-mining activist (MPC, 15 November 2014, [Newsdesk Asia](#), 28 October 2014).

#### *Natural hazard-related disasters*

The Philippines, and Mindanao in particular, is prone to rapid-onset natural hazards, mainly typhoons and floods but also earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. At the end of 2013, typhoon Haiyan, the worst disaster of its kind to have affected the Philippines in recent history, hit the country affecting more than 14 million people across nine regions and displacing an estimated four million ([IDMC-IOM](#), May 2014).

During 2014, some of the regions that were still recovering from Haiyan continued to suffer from successive typhoons with high winds and floods causing further destruction. This was the case, for example in Samar, one of the provinces worst affected by Haiyan and where typhoon Hagupit,

the strongest typhoon to hit the country in 2014, caused widespread destruction ([ICRC](#), 18 December 2014).

In addition to living in a country with exceptional exposure to natural hazard events, Filipinos are also disproportionately affected compared with other nations with similar populations and exposure to such events. Poor standards of housing and infrastructure and the high number of vulnerable people living in areas prone to hazards mean disaster and displacement risk levels are high. Disaster risks are compounded by poor governance and lack of accountability, resulting in ineffective or unenforced building codes and land zoning regulations. Other factors include the scale of rapid and unplanned urban migration, insufficient understanding of the impacts of climate change and other hazards and the lack of effective early warning systems ([IDMC](#), January 2013, p.3).

## **Displacement figures**

IDP figures in the Philippines fluctuate constantly due to the high frequency of disasters and the high number of conflicts or other sources of violence. As some people are newly displaced, others return, integrate locally or settle elsewhere. At best, the figures provide a snapshot at one given time of situations which may change significantly in a matter of weeks or months.

IDMC estimates that at least three million people were displaced in the Philippines during 2014, 96 per cent of them by natural hazard-related disasters, the remainder by conflict and generalised violence.

Displacement was largely temporary with the majority of those displaced managing to return to their homes in the weeks or months following their displacement. By the end of the year, it was estimated that 478,000 people were still displaced

in the Philippines, mainly in Mindanao, with the majority, or 80 per cent, displaced by disasters.

Figures on conflict-related displacement are mainly based on data collected by the Mindanao Protection Cluster (MPC) which is led by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Data is provided by the Protection Cluster members and only reflects reported displacement events. The main source for natural hazard-related displacement data is the government's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC).

#### *Displacement due to conflict and violence*

At least 123,800 people were newly displaced during 2014 with armed conflict the principle driver of displacement (71,800) followed by crime and violence (32,000) and clan-related violence (20,000) (MPC, 15 January 2015). As in previous years, IDPs were largely concentrated in Mindanao, and in particular in the ARMM region. Their displacement was mainly caused by fighting between the government and various Muslim non-state armed groups, including the BIFF and the ASG, but also by incidents of clan violence.

By the end of the year, it was estimated that 95,000 people remained displaced in Mindanao. ARMM recorded the highest number of IDPs (44,400), followed by western Mindanao (38,200), central Mindanao (9,300), Caraga (2,800) and northern Mindanao (300).

In 2014, the largest displacement was caused by a military operation launched at the end of January by the Armed Forces of the Philippines against the BIFF. A total of 48,200 people were displaced as a result in North Cotabato and Maguindanao provinces. While some fled in anticipation of the violence, others were displaced by airstrikes and shelling that accompanied the military operation (MPC, 14 March 2014).

In western Mindanao, nearly all IDPs were displaced prior to 2014, mainly as a result of the

September 2013 conflict between the government and the MNLF in the city of Zamboanga (MPC, 15 January 2015). The conflict in Zamboanga displaced a total of 120,000 people. Most had managed to return in the following weeks and months. However, 15 months later some 35,000 people remained displaced in the city and risked falling into protracted displacement ([OCHA](#), 30 January 2015).

#### *Natural hazard-related displacement*

Based on government reports compiled by IDMC, it is estimated that three million people were displaced by natural hazard-related disasters during 2014. The largest displacement took place as a result of typhoon Hagupit which made landfall on 6 December, affecting more than four million people in eight regions and displacing over 1.7 million ([NDRRMC](#), 10 December 2014).

While most were able to return home in the weeks following their displacement, some 180,000 were unable to do so. This included 100,000 people who remained displaced as a result of typhoon Hagupit, 69,100 people displaced by tropical storm Jangmi at the end of December, as well as 10,600 people displaced by volcano Mayon in September ([NDRRMC](#), 19 December 2014; [NDRRMC](#), 10 January 2015, [NDRRMC](#), 19 December 2014).

At least 203,000 people displaced prior to 2014 had still not found durable solutions. This included 20,000 people displaced by typhoon Haiyan in November 2013 and who were still living in camps as well as 183,000 people displaced by typhoon Bopha in December 2013 ([UNHCR](#), 7 November 2014; MPC, 15 January 2015).

As of early February 2015, the total number of natural hazard-related disaster IDPs in the Philippines stood at 383,000.

#### *Gaps in data collection*

Government figures tend to only partially capture

the reality of displacement as they generally reflect the initial movement of people who seek refuge in government-run camps. They sometimes fail to account for, or at least underestimate, the number of IDPs who opt to stay with host families or in makeshift shelters. They also generally fail to capture secondary movements of those for whom return may not be possible or who chose to settle elsewhere ([Philippines HCT](#), 31 August 2014, p.12).

Efforts in the Philippines to collect data disaggregated by sex and age (SADD) remain limited. In Zamboanga this data was collected in 2014 by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and through a profiling exercise carried out by UNHCR. In Haiyan-affected areas, some sources did capture SADD data, albeit often only partially, while many others did not ([IOM-IDMC](#), May 2014; [RI](#), 20 March 2014). Overall, the inclusion of a gender analysis into assessments was described as weak ([SCHR](#), 15 August 2014).

## Patterns of displacement

Displacement in the Philippines tends to be short-term and localized, with the most of the displaced seeking refuge with host families or in camps set up by the government. One month after Haiyan, it was estimated that 97 per cent of the displaced were living outside official camps, mainly with host families ([DSWD](#), 6 December 2013). In Zamboanga the proportion of IDPs living outside camps was much lower, with half of them living in such facilities ([OCHA](#), 24 November 2013).

Most IDPs remain as close as possible to their homes so as to be able to return when conditions allow. However, such return is not always possible, either because of continued insecurity, slow reconstruction of damaged homes or loss of land and housing. While some manage to locally integrate or settle elsewhere, others, often the most vulnerable, remain in camps or in makeshift shelters sometimes for months or years without

access to adequate housing or sustainable livelihoods.

By and large, the extent of protracted displacement following earlier conflicts or disasters in the country is not known. Available data suggests that half of the 484,000 people displaced by conflict and disaster at the end of 2014 had been displaced for more than a year (MPC, 15 January 2015).

As the same areas are regularly affected by conflict, violence and natural disasters, some groups and communities tend to experience multiple displacements. In central Mindanao, 40 per cent of families fled conflict or violence at least once between 2000 and 2010, and 25 per cent were displaced twice or more ([WB/WFP](#), December 2011, p.3).

In eastern Mindanao where typhoon Bopha displaced an estimated 1.3 million people in December 2012, some 183,000 people remained displaced, many living in dilapidated bunkhouses and evacuation centres. In January 2014, tropical storm Lingling damaged many homes that were being reconstructed as well as temporary sites forcing many IDPs and returnees into renewed displacement (UNHCR, June 2014). In December 2014, the National Housing Authority estimated that at least 7,000 houses still needed to be constructed ([GoP](#), 1 December 2014).

## Protection concerns

IDPs who seek refuge in government run camps and transit centres generally receive basic assistance, including food, water, sanitation and shelter. However, such assistance has generally been inadequate to meet basic needs. Little information was available on IDPs who opted to stay in host family or in private rented accommodation following Haiyan ([IDMC-IOM](#), May 2014, p. 40). In Zamboanga, a profiling of IDPs in host fami-

lies conducted at the end of 2014 showed that the main concerns of the displaced were related to lack of access to shelter, health services and livelihoods. Less than one third of the displaced reported being able to provide for the basic needs of their families after their displacement, down from 65 per cent before they were displaced (UNHCR, 7 February 2014, p.32).

#### *Access to adequate food, water and shelter*

In North Cotabato province, 400 IDPs displaced by fighting between the government and the BIFF in November 2014 lived in cramped conditions with insufficient food, water and only one toilet (OCHA, 29 November 2014). In Zamboanga city, urban IDPs lacked access to basic services in both camps and transit sites. During 2014, water shortages were reported in the camps as dry weather led city government officials to impose water rationing (OCHA, 20 May 2014). In September 2014, aid agencies raised concerns about the lack of adequate facilities in Masepla transit site where some 4,000 IDPs had been relocated by September 2014. Access to water, which had to be brought by truck as the site is not connected to the municipal water system, was particularly problematic for the most vulnerable such as elderly people, pregnant women and persons with disabilities (OCHA, 1 October 2014).

With diminishing amounts of food assistance available in camps, children are at particular risk of poor nutrition. In October 2014, a survey conducted in camps and transit sites showed that more than half of the children over two years old were stunted and as a result needed supplementary feeding (OCHA, 1 November 2014).

#### *Access to health care*

Overcrowded conditions and inadequate access to potable water and sanitation exposed IDPs in camps to a range of communicable diseases. IDPs continue to die of largely preventable and treatable diseases.

In Zamboanga, most IDPs in camps, but also in transit sites, have continued to struggle to access appropriate health-care. There is an insufficient number of available medical staff and lack of medicine. In August 2014, the emergency threshold of death for children under the age of five had been breached six times since the end of the conflict (OCHA, 1 September 2014). Government efforts to strengthen its health response, including by providing training to traditional midwives, providing free medical services for IDPs and creating rotating mobile clinics, were only partially successful. As of February 2015, some 219 IDPs, half of them children under five, were reported to have died since September 2013 with pneumonia and acute gastroenteritis the leading causes of death (OCHA, 30 January 2015).

#### *Gender based violence*

Displaced women and children, particularly those living in camps, are at significant risk of gender based violence, including domestic violence, trafficking and prostitution. Displacement-affected areas of Mindanao are known to be targets for human traffickers due to the high number of poor IDPs looking for work (Brookings, July 2013, p.7).

In Zamboanga, exploitation and violence against women and children is a major concern in camps as well as in transit sites (UNHCR, June 2014). Threats include sexual exploitation, human trafficking, drug use and gender-based violence (GBV). With depleted assets, insecure livelihoods and dwindling assistance, displaced women in camps often have had no choice but look for alternative sources of income to feed their children. There were numerous reports during 2014 of displaced women, including pregnant women, engaging in prostitution (The Inquirer, 5 January 2015; Manila Times, 6 April 2014). Other factors increasing protection risks for women and children include chronic power outages or lack of electricity and limited police presence in camps, particularly at night. Children, many of whom drop out of school as a result of displacement, also faced

increased risks of trafficking and of being forced into child labour ([OCHA](#), 30 January 2015).

Similar protection risks were reported for children displaced in early 2014 by fighting between the government and the BIFF in North Cotabato and Maguindanao. Other problems included separation from parents and care givers, domestic and sexual violence, but also risk of recruitment into armed groups ([UNICEF](#), June 2014, p.35).

In Haiyan-affected areas, women and children in overcrowded camps lacked adequate bathing and latrines facilities and were at greater risk of domestic and sexual violence ([CARE](#), November 2014, p. 11; [Philippines HCR](#), 31 August 2014, p.31). Protection incidents were reported to have decreased over time as a result of measures taken to reduce overcrowding in the camps, improve access to separated latrines and increase the number of women and child friendly spaces ([IDMC-IOM](#), May 2014, p.36)

## Obstacles to durable solutions

Following conflict or disasters, the government tends to encourage the return of all those displaced as a result. In situations where return to some areas may not be considered safe, for example in coastal areas considered at risk of natural hazards or in areas affected by recurrent fighting, the government may offer relocation ([OPAPP](#), 1 August 2014). By and large, no assistance is offered to IDPs wishing to integrate locally.

Return is the preferred durable solution for the majority of the displaced but many IDPs face challenges including ongoing conflict in area of return, destruction of housing, loss of livelihoods and lack of access to housing, land and property.

### *Access to adequate housing*

More than 12 months after Haiyan, at least 20,000 IDPs were still living in tent settlements and tran-

sit sites, almost all in the eastern Visayas region ([UNHCR](#), 7 November 2014). Of those who had returned, an estimated 95,000 families, or 475,000 people, continued to live in emergency or makeshift shelters considered as unsafe or inadequate ([OCHA](#), 22 October 2014, p.13).

In Tacloban, the capital of the Eastern Visayas region, a city which was nearly destroyed by Haiyan, reconstruction has been slow. According to the mayor, of the 14,500 permanent houses needed for the displaced residents, less than three per cent, or 400 homes, had been constructed one year after Haiyan. Some 400 families were still living in tents and hundreds were staying in temporary houses ([Rappler](#), 28 October 2014).

While emergency shelter assistance provided in the months following Haiyan was able to meet immediate needs, assessment carried out in March 2014 showed a slowing down of the recovery process due to diminishing amounts of assistance as well as a pattern of additional housing assistance flowing to some of the same areas and households. The uneven and decreasing distribution of assistance has impeded meeting the longer-term housing needs of those being overlooked as many of them do not have the capacity to recover on their own. Eight months after the disaster, only three per cent had completed their housing recovery. The vast majority, or 82 per cent, believed they would not be able to return and rebuild without further external assistance. The provinces with the highest needs were Biliran, Eastern Samar, Leyte and Samar ([REACH](#), 27 September 2014).

The stagnation of the recovery process runs the risk of having a large number of people unable to bounce back who are thus less able to cope with future disasters. In December 2014, Typhoon Hagupit swept across the eastern Visayas region with the provinces of Northern Samar, Eastern Samar and Samar suffering the brunt of the destruction and some of the same communities

affected once again ([ICRC](#), 18 December 2014). Most of the 41,200 houses destroyed were in these three provinces ([OCHA](#), 18 December 2014).

#### *Access to housing, land and property*

Whether displaced by conflict or disasters, IDPs who had weak security of tenure in their area of origin often face particular obstacles to returning and reclaiming homes and property.

In Zamboanga, most of the remaining IDPs belong to Muslim minority groups, including indigenous communities, who had their homes destroyed or damaged in the conflict. The main obstacle to immediate return is a city government decision to declare “no-build zones” in Muslim-majority coastal areas where many of the displaced had their homes. The authorities judge these are at high risk of floods or further attacks from the MNLF or constitute protected areas under the country’s environmental laws ([PIA](#), 21 March 2014). Towards the end of 2014, the city government agreed to lift some of these restrictions and to allow some IDPs to return, although in areas such as the island of Sumariki this return will only be temporary as the government intends to relocate them to a new site in an undetermined location.

Another critical factor preventing the return of the displaced is their weak tenure security. The majority owned their homes but not the land on which these were constructed (UNHCR, June 2014). The lack of formal tenure means the city government has not prioritised them for return and reconstruction assistance, leaving them in a situation of prolonged displacement in camps and transit sites (MPC, 28 October 2014). While some have been promised return once reconstruction is finalised, few have been given any dates or clear information on when this will happen. The fact that criteria determining eligibility for housing assistance had not been formalised as of early 2015, and that new ‘temporary’ transit sites were still being constructed, have added to the confusion and

scepticism of many IDPs who fear their temporary stay may well become permanent.

Similarly, as part of its response to Haiyan, and in an effort to reduce the number of people living in areas it considers at high risk of hazards, the government decided in March 2014 to use multi-hazard mapping surveys to establish “safe zones”, “unsafe zones” and “controlled zones” in coastal areas affected by the typhoon. While many IDPs have been informed they will be relocated, the absence of clear guidelines from the national government on eligibility criteria has raised fears that Local Government Units (LGUs) – the lowest tier of government in the Philippines – may choose criteria based on tenure status, excluding from housing assistance IDPs with weak security of tenure who were tenants and informal settlers ([Oxfam](#), 11 August 2014, pp.7-8). Another problem is the slow mapping process which is leaving many unsure of what and where their future will be. It was also not clear if these relocation sites would offer comparable living conditions and livelihood opportunities, a key concern for those targeted by these plans ([Oxfam](#), 30 April 2014, 8). In August, the government estimated at 205,000 the number of families living in coastal areas considered as hazard-prone and unsafe and who would need to be relocated to safer areas ([OPARR](#), 1 August 2014, p.10).

#### *Access to livelihoods*

In Zamboanga, most IDPs in the camps and transit sites have lost their livelihoods as a result of their displacement, in particular those who were seaweed collectors or fishermen (UNHCR, June 2014). Many are indigenous Badjaos who were living in houses built on stilts over water and whose livelihoods depend on the sea. While some who have been relocated to transit sites such as Masepla have access to the sea and to their fishing boats, the remoteness of the site, far away from markets, means they cannot sell their catches or receive considerably less for them ([OCHA](#), 30 January 2015; [RI](#), 15 December 2014). In January 2015, some 60 families were reported to have left the

transit site and returned to the Grandstand camp in the city, despite living conditions there being far worse ([The Inquirer](#), 8 January 2015). In 2014, the relocation of these IDPs to transit sites was criticised for failing to adhere to international standards, in particular with regards to the obligation to properly inform and consult with the displaced prior to their relocation ([The Inquirer](#), 2 October 2014; [HRW](#), 30 April 2014).

One year into the Haiyan response, the failure to restore the livelihoods of the displaced, and other affected population, was still a major gap. Millions were unemployed or considered to have vulnerable forms of employment. Although there were no specific figures for those who were displaced, the poorest among them were believed to face considerable challenges in recovering their livelihoods due to their temporary or permanent displacement ([Philippines HCT](#), 31 August 2014, p.18).

## National response

The Philippines has solid experience in responding to the needs of those displaced by conflict, violence and disasters. It has established and well-developed mechanisms and coordination structures. The cluster system, formally institutionalised in 2007 by NDRRMC, the country's main disaster coordinating body, has enabled close coordination between national authorities and the international humanitarian community. Clear coordination structures and multiple experiences of previous collaboration between the government and the international community on disaster response were essential to the overall success of the Haiyan humanitarian response ([HPN](#), January 2015).

Coordination over the transition to recovery phase for both the response to the Haiyan disaster and the Zamboanga conflict proved more challenging mainly because of different understandings by the government and the international

community over what exactly constituted an "emergency" and an "early recovery" phase and how both are linked ([IAHESG](#), October 2014, p.49). The concept of early recovery does not exist in the Filipino disaster response system and there is little overlap between relief and recovery. Government decisions to end a humanitarian phase often do not coincide with the ending of actual humanitarian needs of IDPs. Indeed, most are unlikely to have started their recovery.

### *Response to displacement caused by natural hazards*

In Haiyan-affected areas, the government, with support from its international partners, was successful in meeting the immediate needs of millions of those displaced and major disease outbreaks were largely averted. In July 2014, the government declared the end of the emergency phase. The Reconstruction Assistance for Yolanda (the Filipino designation for Typhoon Haiyan), launched in December 2013, was then integrated into the Yolanda Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Plan (CRRP).

One year into the response, however, there were still many challenges. These included the slow rebuilding of permanent homes, the failed restoration of sustainable livelihoods and stalled relocation plans. Deficiencies in the response were mainly blamed on bureaucracy, corruption, slow disbursement of money to support the relief and recovery efforts at the local level and lack of clear guidelines and resources provided to LGUs to implement relocation ([Oxfam](#), 14 October 2014; [Rappler](#), 8 September 2014; [DRD](#), 18 June 2014, p.22). LGUs are responsible for disaster response and preparedness at the local level and for implementing relocation plans. Many, however, lack the resources and capacity to do so, in particular in the poorest municipalities ([DRD](#), 18 June 2014, p.23).

The PHP 167.86 billion (or \$4 billion) CRRP envisages the relocation of some 205,000 families cur-

rently living in areas considered as unsafe. Finding suitable land adjacent to livelihoods opportunities will be difficult given the limited availability of land, in particular in urban areas, and lengthy and expensive land acquisition processes ([Philippine HCT](#), 31 August 2014, p.19). Many LGUs will need guidance and technical support from both the government and its international partners ([Oxfam](#), 30 April 2014, p.15). The potential negative impact of relocations, in particular with regards to access to livelihoods, also needs to be carefully identified and mitigated. Given the fact that the majority of those targeted for relocation are landless, relocation strategies should integrate measures that aim at strengthening land tenure security ([WB](#), 8 December 2014, p.16).

#### *Response to conflict displacement*

As in previous years, the government made significant efforts to address the immediate humanitarian needs of people displaced by conflict and violence. Underfunding and insufficient attention paid to IDPs' long-term reintegration and recovery needs, however, continued to undermine their achievement of durable solutions. There is often weak capacity and poor understanding of IDPs' rights at the local level, in particular in the poorest municipalities which also have few resources to assist and protect the displaced ([Brookings](#), July 2013, p.23).

In May 2014, the Zamboanga city government started implementing its PHP3.5 billion (about \$70 million) "building back better" reconstruction and rehabilitation plan. The plan is largely focused on physical reconstruction, but neglects issues of economic recovery and compensation for lost property. In August 2014, the DSWD officially declared the Zamboanga humanitarian phase over ([OCHA](#), 3 October 2014). This was despite the fact that 35,000 IDPs were still living in camps with considerable humanitarian needs and no sustainable livelihood opportunities. Despite significant positive steps taken by the city government at the end of 2014, including allowing some IDPs to

return to areas previously determined as "no-return" areas and halting the transfer of IDPs from camps to transit sites lacking adequate services, the absence of any early recovery strategy and the failure to provide permanent housing for IDPs without formal tenure is putting many of the most vulnerable at risk of entrenched poverty, vulnerability and protracted displacement.

#### *Progress towards a national law for IDPs*

In August 2014, the House of Representatives approved the Internal Displacement Act of 2014 ([Philippine Congress](#), 14 August 2014), a bill recognising the rights all IDPs to protection and assistance, whether displaced by conflict, natural disasters or development projects. Covering all phases of displacement, it recognises, in particular, the importance of preventing displacement, penalising those responsible for forcing it and providing compensation to victims. It clearly sets out the government's responsibilities in protecting and assisting IDPs. Its designation of the Commission of Human Rights (CHR) as the national institutional focal point is intended to ensure that sustained attention is paid to displacement issues. By early January 2015, the bill was still being discussed in the senate. Once both chambers of the Congress agree on a common version, the bill is to be sent to the president for signing into law.

#### *Historical peace deal on Bangsamoro raises hope for Mindanao's IDPs*

In March 2014, after seventeen years of negotiations, the government and the MILF signed a Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro (CAB), raising hope of a sustained peace in the southern island of Mindanao. The CAB created the Bangsamoro, a new regional entity which will replace the ARMM by 2016, and spells out new wealth and power sharing arrangements for the region while also putting in place interim governance structures.

One component of the agreement, the annex on normalisation, outlines the steps the govern-

ment and the MILF will take to foster peace and security in the region ([OPPAP](#), 25 January 2014). If implemented successfully, the CAB would represent a major step forward for Mindanao's IDPs as it would contribute to preventing new displacement, improve humanitarian access to conflict-affected areas and address the recovery needs of those who have been displaced. As part of its contribution to the peace process, IOM launched in 2014 an assessment in five provinces in Mindanao with the aim to identify how many were still displaced following earlier conflicts there ([IOM](#), 30 January 2015).

Meanwhile, peace negotiations between the government and the CPP have remained stalled since April 2013. Following a temporary ceasefire announced by the CPP at the end of the 2014, the government announced a possible resumption of peace talks in 2015, although a clear timetable has yet to be set ([AC](#), 27 December 2014; [AP](#), 17 December 2014).

## International response

International organisations have long played an important role in filling gaps in the government's response to displacement caused by conflict in Mindanao and major disasters. In 2014, this included mainly operations in areas affected by typhoon Haiyan, the Bohol earthquake, the Zamboanga conflict and ongoing conflict and displacement in central Mindanao.

In early December 2013, one month after Haiyan, the UN launched a 12-month Strategic Response Plan (SRP) requesting \$788 million. At the time the SRP was closed, at the end of August 2014, it had been 61 per cent funded ([OCHA](#), 21 October 2014). Significant funding was also provided outside the SRP putting the total humanitarian funding for Haiyan at \$844 million ([OCHA](#), 19 January 2015).

Despite considerable success in helping the government cope with humanitarian consequences of the Haiyan disaster, there were also a number of shortcomings in the international response. Much of the assistance focused on Tacloban while other more remote areas remained underserved ([DRD](#), 18 June 2014, p.11). Another problem was slow progress in the restoration of people's livelihoods, which was identified as a key obstacle in helping relocate IDPs ([OCHA](#), October 2014, p.vii). Both the shelter and livelihood response suffered from poor funding which undermined progress. Insufficient attention was paid from the outset to land and property rights, seen as a key obstacle to durable solutions ([OCHA](#), October 2014, p.vii).

In recent years, interventions to address displacement caused by conflict in Mindanao have been hampered by persistent underfunding ([IDMC](#), 9 December 2013). Following the Zamboanga conflict in 2013, this remained the case with the Zamboanga Action Plan (ZAP) only receiving 47 per cent of the \$12.8 million requested. This seriously limited international presence and capacity to respond to the displacement crisis.

### *Support for durable solutions*

Despite increased recognition in recent years of the importance of planning for recovery and long-term solutions as early as possible in the relief phase and for ensuring greater involvement of development actors in the response to internal displacement, efforts to put this into practice remained limited in 2014.

The early recovery component of the ZAP received no support at all, while only 28 per cent of \$115 million requested were covered in the SRP, the lowest received by any cluster ([OCHA](#), 30 January 2015). For Haiyan, the international community focused mainly on emergency response activities and struggled to ensure a proper transition to early recovery ([IAHESG](#), October 2014, p.70).

In Zamboanga, efforts by the humanitarian community, including donors, mainly focused on the delivery of immediate relief and did not prioritise durable solutions, in particular for the most vulnerable ([UNHCR](#), June 2014). The adoption by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) of a durable solution strategy for IDPs in Zamboanga in October 2014 laid the basis for continued international involvement in 2015 and raised hope of increased attention being paid to long-term solutions, in particular with regards to the right to adequate housing for the most vulnerable IDPs.

The European Commission has been by far the largest humanitarian donor. In recent years it has contributed \$26 million in humanitarian funding for the socio-economic recovery of IDPs in Mindanao ([EU](#), 24 April 2014). At the end of 2014, the EU estimated that through its 'Aid to Uprooted People Programme' and in partnership with the World Food Programme, it had assisted some 62,000 IDP families from Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, North Cotabato, and Sultan Kudarat in asset creation and livelihood training ([WFP](#), 13 October 2014).

## About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is the leading source of information and analysis on internal displacement. For the millions of people worldwide displaced within their own country, IDMC plays a unique role as a global monitor and evidence-based advocate to influence policy and action by governments, UN agencies, donors, international organisations and NGOs.

IDMC was established in 1998 at the request of the Interagency Standing Committee on humanitarian assistance. Since then, IDMC's unique global function has been recognised and reiterated in annual UN General Assembly resolutions.

IDMC is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), an independent, non-governmental humanitarian organisation.

### Contact:

#### **Caroline Howard**

Head of Middle East, Europe, the Caucasus and Asia Department

Tel: +41 22 795 07 40

E-mail: [caroline.howard@nrc.ch](mailto:caroline.howard@nrc.ch)

#### **Frederik Kok**

Senior Regional Analyst

Tel: +41 22 799 07 12

Email: [frederik.kok@nrc.ch](mailto:frederik.kok@nrc.ch)

#### **IDMC**

Norwegian Refugee Council

Chemin de Balexert 7-9

1219 Geneva, Switzerland

[www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org)

Tel: +41 (0)22 799 0700

Fax: +41 (0)22 799 0701