**Highlights**

- Local health authorities observe increasing cases of acute watery diarrhoea in Zamboanga evacuation centres.
- 2,200 people displaced by renewed fighting in Zamboanga.
- UN Humanitarian Coordinator reiterates the humanitarian community’s support to Government-led relief operations and calls on all parties to abide by humanitarian principles.

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<th>170,000</th>
<th>111,940</th>
<th>19,396</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Estimated affected people in Zamboanga city and Basilan province</td>
<td>People displaced in Zamboanga</td>
<td>People displaced in Basilan</td>
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Source: Department of Social Welfare and Development Region IX / Protection Cluster

**Situation Overview**

Military operations from the ground and air continued in Zamboanga city as the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) conducted clearing operations in an effort to end the 17-day standoff with elements of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in the villages of Santa Barbara and Santa Catalina. Fighting was also reported in the coastal areas of Rio Hondo, Mampang, and Mariki as some of the remaining MNLF fighters sought refuge in the mangroves. The renewed fighting forced about 2,200 people to flee from their homes and move inside the evacuation centres over the past two days. Out of the estimated 170,000 people affected by the conflict, 111,940 remain displaced in Zamboanga (101,432 inside evacuation centres and 10,508 outside the centres) compared to 109,701 people (99,193 inside evacuation centres and 10,508 outside the centres) on 23 September. On Grande Santa Cruz island, located just south of Santa Barbara, an estimated 100 people are trapped as a result of a naval blockade. The Philippine Red Cross is currently negotiating access to the island. In Basilan, 19,396 people are still inside 17 evacuation centres and unable to return home due to insecurity.

In some parts of Zamboanga, local businesses are reopening but close up early in the afternoon. School classes at all levels, both public and private, resumed on 25 September except for those in the worst affected areas where fighting is on-going. Local public transportation is now also operational except in six villages. Despite some improvement in the less affected parts of the city, significant health, water and sanitation concerns were reported inside evacuation centres.

Local health authorities noted an increasing trend in cases of acute watery diarrhoea; with reports of 754 cases of acute watery diarrhoea and 12 cases of acute bloody diarrhoea recorded. There are reports that a child died of dehydration in the largest evacuation centre hosting over 70,000 people. In the more than 30 evacuation centres, only 12 have functional health outposts and emergency disease surveillance is limited to eight evacuation centres according to assessments conducted by health personnel. Suspected cases of measles were also reported and the city health office began to conduct vaccinations. However, lack of vaccinators is hampering immunization for more than 30,000 children between six months and 15 years old.

According to the Water, Health and Sanitation (WASH) Cluster, most of the evacuation centres are not equipped to handle the water and sanitation needs of the displaced population for a prolonged period of time. The largest evacuation centre in Zamboanga has only one toilet per 1,500 people. This is far more than the recommended international standard. There are reports of long queues to the latrines and people have resorted to open toilets.

*For more information, see “background on the crisis” at the end of the report*
defecation. The local water district trucks drinking water but due to the large demand, there is inadequate water supply for all the evacuation centres with insufficient water containers, and basic hygiene items such as soap, sanitary napkins, gender sensitive latrines and bathing facilities. The accumulation of garbage also poses serious health risks.

With the growing concern on the dire living conditions of the conflict-affected communities, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), Ms. Luiza Carvalho, in a statement on 25 September, reiterated the humanitarian community's support to the Government-led humanitarian relief operations. The HC also expressed the need for principled humanitarian action in Zamboanga and Basilan. She said the “United Nations calls on all parties to uphold the principles of impartiality, humanity, neutrality and independence” and “all humanitarian workers providing support to the victims of violence are protected and respected, and their safety is ensured by all actors.”

Humanitarian Response

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

Needs:
- Two new evacuation centres were opened as a result of the on-going conflict between the AFP and MNLF. A total of 35 centres are in need of camp management support.
- Over 10,000 houses were burned or destroyed (3,591 in Santa Catalina; 2,113 in Rio Hondo; 1,685 in Kasanyangan; 1,592 in Santa Barbara; and 1,179 in Mariki. With significant number of families without houses, it is expected that the displacement will be prolonged. These families are expected to remain in camps as temporary and permanent shelters are constructed.
- More camp managers are required to conduct beneficiary profiling.

Response:
- 280 emergency shelter tents provided in Cawa-Cawa and Santa Maria Elementary School evacuation centres.
- Additional family tents provided in the Joaquin Enriquez Sports Complex and solar lamps distributed.

Gaps & Constraints:
- Evacuation centres located on the outskirts of the city need to be allocated equal attention.
- Insufficient supply of non-food items, emergency shelter, and family tents in evacuation centres with poor living conditions and WASH facilities.

Early Recovery

Needs:
- Resettlement of an estimated 10,000 families whose homes were burned.
- Immediate need to identify relocation sites; site preparation and development as well as construction of the shelters for affected families.
- Damage analysis from UNOSAT reveals an estimated 3,400 structures destroyed by fire with growing numbers as conflict continues. These structures include homes and basic service infrastructures.
- Debris and rubble from the worst affected communities need to be cleared.

Response:
- Early Recovery Cluster providing technical assistance and support to the city government in the recovery and rehabilitation of affected areas.
- Debris and rubble are cleared and rehabilitation response plan being formulated and expected to be implemented through cash-for-work schemes.

Gaps & Constraints:
- Intermittent fighting and the presence of unexploded ordnance prevent immediate clearing of debris and rubble and other early recovery activities.

101,432 people are inside evacuation centres in Zamboanga
Education

Needs:
- About 12,270 school children are directly affected by the conflict, whose homes were destroyed due to fire.
- 9,269 children enrolled in the four public elementary schools are located in the conflict zone; need to replace the teaching and learning materials of the affected students and schools.
- 46,967 students enrolled in 27 schools who evacuated as their schools are located in designated ‘areas of concern’ need learning kits.
- Need to strengthen coordination and monitoring to ensure quality mental health and psychosocial support in accordance with accepted guidelines.
- Temporary learning and child friendly spaces required especially in major evacuation centres.
- Need to address damage of severely affected but highly populated Zamboanga State College of Marine Sciences and Technology and Southern City schools.

Response:
- 158 schools located outside the ‘areas of concern’ resumed classes; however, only one-third of enrolled children attended.
- On-going supervised neighbourhood play, and play and art therapy sessions for day care children.
- 10 learning tents for 14 temporary learning spaces established.
- Additional 20 tents and education in emergency supplies (library books, teachers’ packs and sports goods to support learning-cum-psychosocial sessions) mobilized.

Gaps & Constraints:
- Schools in areas directly affected by the conflict not yet accessible.
- Many students are still unable to attend classes due to on-going military operations.

Food Security

Needs:
- Between 23 - 24 September, the number of people being assisted in evacuation centres increased from 99,000 to 101,000, with another 10,500 displaced people staying outside evacuation centres (with family and friends). All of the displaced require food assistance.

Response:
- 18 metric tons of high energy biscuits provided since the emergency onset.

Gaps & Constraints:
- Due to the prolonged crisis, food support will be required for the coming six months in Zamboanga and Basilan to meet the immediate as well as medium-term food needs of the affected people.
- Government provision of ready-to-eat food supplies will only be sufficient until around 4 October.
- Camp managers are overstretched; efficient food distribution is a significant challenge with insufficient supply of cooking and feeding utensils, kitchens and fuel.

Health

Needs:
- Over 100,000 people in evacuation centres and at least 10,000 outside the centres are in need of emergency health services including general medical consultation and treatment, mental health and psychosocial support, reproductive health services, emergency disease surveillance, health promotion, and immunization.
- An estimated 3,700 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) require reproductive health services.

30,000+ children six to 15 years need measles vaccination
Response:

- Measles vaccination is on-going; 802 children six to 59 months received measles vaccination and vitamin A and 1,061 children five to 15 years received measles, mumps, and rubella vaccines.
- PLWs identified and registered in 23 out of 33 evacuation centres assessed by the Reproductive Health Working Group (210 pregnant and 174 lactating women registered).
- Emergency disease surveillance training provided to 34 nurse volunteers.

Gaps & Constraints:

- More than 30,000 children six to 15 years require measles vaccination; lack of vaccinators hampers immunization activities.
- Sporadic fighting a concern for the security of humanitarian workers providing medical support.

Nutrition Needs:

- Out of the over 100,000 people inside 35 evacuation centres, an estimated 12.5 per cent are children 0 to 59 months, 3.5 per cent pregnant women, and three per cent lactating women require nutrition services including support and protection for breastfeeding and prevention and control of under-nutrition including micronutrient deficiency.
- 201 children are moderately malnourished while 77 children fall under the severely malnourished category.
- Infant formulae distribution, which is violation of the national milk code, was reported in the Jose Enriquez Sports Complex housing more than 70,000 people.

Response:

- A total of 2,661 children 0 to 59 months received vitamin A supplements, 18 children received zinc sulfate drops, and 204 children received zinc sulfate syrup.
- 1,902 children were dewormed and 175 pregnant women were supplemented with iron folic acid.
- 200 posters and 150 flipcharts delivered to partners as protection aides and posters supporting breastfeeding in emergencies.
- Advocacy conducted at the national government level to put an end to the distribution of infant formulae.
- Establishment of outpatient treatment of acute malnutrition and promotion and protection of infant and young children feeding and care are in progress.

Gaps & Constraints:

- No disaggregated data for children 0 to 59 months and pregnant and lactating women delays nutrition planning response.
- Nutrition cluster not localized to aid response coordination
- Lack of funding for nutrition interventions.

Livelihood Needs:

- An estimated 46,000 people’s jobs were lost or disrupted due to conflict (15,000 workers in the canning industry, 4,800 in the plywood industry, 20,000 fisher folks and 6,000 in the public sector).
- Affected industries have a significant role in the economy of Zamboanga which generates income through exports to other parts of the Philippines and internationally.
- Prolonged conflict will continue to disrupt the local economy. Potential closure of other major industries will result in higher unemployment rates; this can trap a large percentage of the affected population into poverty and worsen the impact of the disaster.

Response:

- On-going outreach to partners on the ground to ensure up to date information on livelihoods impact.
Gaps & Constraints:

- Prevailing insecurity continues to impede opportunities to provide alternative livelihood or the resumption of key industry operations.

Protection

Needs:

- Reported violations of International Humanitarian Law including hostage taking of civilians for use as human shields, civilian properties destroyed, and civilians denied access to humanitarian relief.
- Verification and response to reported grave child rights violations.
- Displaced people outside the evacuation centres including indigenous communities and religious minorities are not registered and receive less or no humanitarian assistance.
- High risk of gender based violence (GBV), including trafficking to areas beyond Zamboanga, as evacuation centres are congested, lack of female police officers, and partitions for privacy.
- Significant numbers of children are distressed; need for child friendly and women friendly spaces.
- Presence of unexploded ordnance in civilian areas.
- No land or property titles for many displaced people whose homes were burned down.
- Reported detention of Muslims accused of MNLF membership.
- Security of displaced people returning to their places of origin during the day is at risk given the volatile security situation.
- Reported cases of theft inside evacuation centres despite presence of law enforcement officers.

Response:

- Protection assessment conducted daily; child protection assessment recently concluded.
- Regular protection monitoring conducted. An advisory on the conflict was issued and a forced displacement advisor deployed.
- 600 protection kits and 500 hygiene kits in Zamboanga and Basilan provided to 6,434 people with specific needs.
- Advocacy with the Government for the removal of military authorities from civilian establishments in Basilan.
- Displacement profiling and collection of disaggregated data on-going.
- Preparation of roll out for Mine Action education programme for the affected communities.
- Protection field monitoring team deployed in evacuation centres with high concentration of displaced people.
- Follow up on cases of MNLF fighters mixing with civilian hostages.
- Relocation assistance made available to displaced people.
- Women friendly space established at the Joaquin Enriquez Complex.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Low supply of protection kits; number of people with specific needs continue to increase.
- Existing protection monitoring system does not comprehensively capture protection concerns.
- Disaggregated data compilation yet to be completed. The lack of disaggregated data does not allow for better targeted response.
- Information on GBV prevention and response in emergencies including trafficking not provided in all evacuation centres and affected areas. Lack of female police officers assigned in help desks.
- Insecurity in the conflict-affected areas hampers humanitarian assistance to affected communities.
- Lack of psychosocial services for service providers.
- Lack of referral system for GBV cases in evacuation centres.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Needs:

- High and serious public health risk in evacuation centres.
- Severe lack of sanitation facilities in many evacuation centres. One toilet serves more than 1,500 people in the largest evacuation centre. This is below the accepted standard of one toilet per 20 people.
Background on the crisis
On 9 September, fighting broke out in coastal villages of Zamboanga city between a splinter group of the Moro National Liberation Front and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The clashes displaced more than 120,000 people during the height of the conflict, left over 100 dead, 200 injured, and at least 10,000 homes destroyed by fire and bombardment in the most affected villages of Kasanyangan, Mariki, Rio Hondo, Santa Barbara, and Santa Catalina in Zamboanga city. In coordination with government authorities, an inter-agency team including non-governmental organization partners conducted a rapid needs assessment in Zamboanga evacuation centres on 18 September. Key findings include the need for camp management support, non-food items, WASH and protection monitoring.

Gaps & Constraints:
- Limited access to most of the evacuation centres for assessment needed for response planning and response due to on-going military operations.
- Lack of available portalets for immediate deployment.
- Lack of space for emergency latrines, hand washing and bathing facilities including drainage.

Logistics
Response:
- Since the emergency onset, a total of 17 trucks were deployed to support land transport of relief items for subsequent delivery via sea vessel to Zamboanga.

Constraints:
- Insecurity leaves needs in Basilan unclear. Should the crisis persist, it is expected that logistical support will be required.

General Coordination
The Government activated the following clusters to coordinate the humanitarian response in Zamboanga: Camp Coordination and Camp Management, Education, Protection including child protection and GBV sub-cluster, Health, Reproductive Health, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, and WASH. Inter-cluster coordination meetings are held on an ad hoc basis chaired by the Department of Social Welfare and Development. The Office of Civil Defense provides secretariat support in convening the meetings. The Zamboanga City Crisis Management Committee also provides coordination and relief assistance at the operational level in collaboration with the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.