



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Manila, April 10th, 2015

Philippines: EU provides some €600, 000 to displaced people in Mindanao

Manila, April 10th 2015 – After the recent escalation in violence in Mindanao, the European Union is providing €300, 000 to fund emergency humanitarian assistance to people who have been displaced in the Maguindanao area. This will enable the provision of life-saving relief items to the most vulnerable and support the management and provision of services at evacuation and displacement sites.

The two-month emergency project will more specifically focus on the most vulnerable families. It will help ensure that they have access to safe and dignified shelters, water and sanitation facilities as well as lifesaving non-food items such as blankets, sleeping mats and hygiene kits. Psychosocial support will also be provided, allowing the displaced persons to exchange with others about their traumatic experience and receive information on potential further specialized support.

Moreover, the European Union is continuing its assistance to the families displaced by the fighting which took place in Zamboanga in 2013 by providing a further €297, 600 on top of the assistance provided already in 2013 (€ 300,000) and 2014 (€ 250,000), bringing the total humanitarian aid for this particular crisis to almost €850 000. A year and a half after the displacement took place, some 20 000 people remain in evacuation and transitional sites, living under very difficult conditions. The EU-funded aid will also focus on the most vulnerable individuals, providing them with food, protection, livelihood support, and health services until the authorities can provide a more permanent solution for the displaced.

In both cases, the assistance is being made available through the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) through its Small Scale Response mechanism. The first project, in Maguindanao, will be implemented by a consortium made up of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and Plan International - two humanitarian actors who have a long established presence in the Philippines. The operation in Zamboanga will be implemented by another consortium comprising NGO Action Contre la Faim (ACF) and Plan International – both already operational in the area from previous ECHO funding.

Background:

The armed conflict in Central Mindanao, southern Philippines, intensified in February 2015 when fighting erupted between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in the towns of Pagalungan and Pikit. The clashes further escalated when the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) launched an "all-out offensive" against the BIFF troops. The fighting resulted in the displacement of over 120 000 people in the provinces of Maguindanao.

In September 2013, a faction of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) seized hostages in Zamboanga, leading to an intervention by the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The ensuing clashes lasted for more than two weeks and left some 45 dead and over 100 000 people displaced in Zamboanga City.

ECHO's Small Scale Response fund is a global mechanism which allows for rapid funding of up to €300 000 for humanitarian aid in countries affected by natural and man-made disasters.

For more information

The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO):

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm

Factsheet on the Philippines:

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/philippines_en.pdf