

**UNICEF Philippines  
Zamboanga Emergency Situation Report 1**

**20 September 2013**

**Highlights**

- On 9 September, 200 armed members of a faction of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) loyal to its founder Nur Misuari landed on Zamboanga City in Western Mindanao and engaged the members of the Philippine military in fierce running gun battles. So far, 103 persons lay dead, 180 more wounded and more than 10,000 houses were completely destroyed. The Philippine military is continuing with its mop-up operations in rounding up remaining MNLF fighters in a few areas. The Human Rights Watch issued an announcement on 19 September accusing the MNLF fighters for taking civilians hostage and using them as human shields. It also criticized the government forces for mistreatment of captured MNLF members.
- More than 113,000 persons from 14 barangays (villages) have been displaced from their homes. Most of them are staying in makeshift abodes and tents in 57 evacuation centres. The government has not declared a state of emergency for Zamboanga City.
- President Simeon Benigno Aquino has pledged PhP 3.9 billion (US\$88.6 million) for the relief and rehabilitation of families affected by the conflict in Zamboanga city.
- The Philippine Government is leading the humanitarian relief efforts while the UN has offered its support. UNICEF has sent initial batch of hygiene and water kits and working with its cluster partners for assessment and immediate response.

## Situation Overview and Humanitarian Needs

- It is believed that the MNLF is still holding some 21 civilian hostages. Some 178 hostages have so far been rescued, released or have escaped from their captors.
- The number of IDPs has nearly doubled the past two days. The Government has made evacuation mandatory in the affected barangays to avoid civilians getting caught in the crossfire or being used as hostages by the MNLF. A city-wide curfew has been imposed from 8 pm till 5 am.
- Zamboanga City was at a standstill since the start of the conflict and is just starting to pick up the pieces. After all commercial and industrial establishments, including banks, markets and factories have been closed since Day One but a few have started to open their business. The airport has also resumed its operations today on a limited scale.
- Armed conflicts and displacement were recorded in other areas like Basilan and Sulu Provinces, but on a smaller scale. The IDPs in Lamitan City, Basilan have started to return home.

<b>Estimated Affected Population</b> <i>(Estimates calculated based on initial figures from the Office of Civil Defense, 19 September 2013)</i>			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male (49%)</b>	<b>Female (51%)</b>
<b>(a) Total Affected Population</b>	218,303	106,968	111,334
<b>(b) Children Affected (Under 18 years) – 42% of (a)</b>	91,687	44,927	46,760
<b>(c) Children Under-Five – 12.5% of (a)</b>	27,288	13,371	13,917
<b>(d) Children 6 to 23 months – 29% of Under-Five</b>	7,914	3,878	4,036
<b>(e) Pregnant and lactating women – 6.5% (a)</b>	14,190	-	-
<b>(f) Total Displaced Population (a proportion of the above)</b>	113,389	55,561	57,828
<b>(g) Children Displaced – 42% of (f)</b>	47,623	23,159	24,464

- Out of the total affected population, an estimated 12.5 per cent children 0 to 59 months, 3.5 per cent pregnant women, and 3 per cent lactating women require nutrition services including support and protection for breastfeeding, and prevention and control of under-nutrition including micronutrient deficiency.
- There is a need to maintain and manage the use and de-sludging of portable toilets (portalets) in the evacuation centres including disinfecting the units.
- While there is a good supply of water in the evacuation centres, camp managers are focusing on reducing the queue of people for water distribution.
- A comprehensive damage and needs assessment of the education system need to be conducted to determine the status of schools in the affected areas. Seven schools with a total enrolment of 20,379 students are located in the conflict zone. Moreover, 14 schools and a day

care centre are hosting about 17,211 displaced people. Classes in all learning institutions (schools, day care centres, and madrasah) in the entire city remain suspended.

- There has reportedly been increasing number of children in distress and who need psychosocial support.
- There need to be verification of and response to reported grave child rights violations, i.e. children taken as hostages by the MNLF; children killed and maimed; and attacks and burning of schools.
- Unexploded ordnances (UXO) are reported to litter the streets.

### **Inter-Agency Collaboration and Partnerships**

- The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is the overall responsible agency for disaster response. It coordinates the relief effort with the City Government of Zamboanga headed by Mayor Beng Climaco.
- The clusters at the national level have provided direct and indirect support for the government response. No action on organizing clusters at the city level has been decided yet. UNICEF co-leads with the Government the clusters on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Nutrition, Education (with Save the Children) and the Child protection Working group (CPWG). The Department of Health (DOH) is the lead for WASH and Nutrition, the Department of Education (DepEd) for Education, and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) for Child Protection.
- The UN sent a small mission in Zamboanga City to conduct a rapid assessment on the humanitarian situation as well as in security.

### **Programme response**

#### **Nutrition**

- Vitamin A supplementation, deworming, and measles vaccinations for children 0 to 59 months are being done in all evacuation camps. More than 14,000 children 0-59 months currently staying in evacuation centres are being targeted for these services.
- Infant formula distribution, which is violation of the national milk code, was reported in three major evacuation centres (Jose Enriquez Sports Complex, ICES and ICAS in Tetuan village). This issue has been raised with local health authorities and camp managers have been advised to be vigilant against this practice. A directive was issued by government cluster lead agency to stop the distribution of infant formulae to affected populations inside and outside the evacuation centres.
- 200 posters and 150 flipcharts were delivered to partners as information materials to support breastfeeding in emergencies.

#### **WASH**

- 1,300 hygiene kits and 1,000 water kits (jerry cans and hyposol), and 350 WASH posters distributed to displaced families.

- 10 portalets were provided in evacuation camps. A total of 30 portalets provided so far for the response.
- Quad-Cluster meeting (WASH, Health, Nutrition and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support) was convened for coordination and sharing of needs assessments information.

### Child Protection

- A rapid assessment is currently conducted by one of the partners. A local partner NGO monitors on the ground doing protection monitoring and sending regular reports, alerts and appeals for humanitarian/protection support.
- Some groups and individuals giving stress debriefing to IDPs and released hostages including children.
- The Department of Social Welfare and Development for Region IX conducted afternoon play and art therapy sessions to children in the Day Care Center set-up inside the evacuation center in Joaquin Enriquez Memorial Sports Complex.

### Education

- Sessions on trauma healing and psychosocial support were provided in the evacuation centres by trained volunteers, teachers, and guidance counselors deployed by Department of Education Zamboanga City Division.
- On-going sessions on supervised neighborhood play, and play and art therapy for day care children conducted by the personnel of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.
- There need to be school supplies, learning materials and tents to support education cum-psychosocial sessions for affected/displaced school children.
- Mindanao Education Cluster members are currently conducting a preliminary assessment.

### For further information, please contact

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