



## Mission Statement

### National Interfaith Humanitarian Mission

There is a grave humanitarian crisis in Mindanao. The mission notes a total of **325,294 IDPs** in Mindanao, a big portion of which are in home-based and evacuation-center based in Lanao del Sur, and a smaller portion in Maguindanao and Davao del Sur.

While the current crisis has not reached proportions similar to the 600,000 IDP situation in 2008, the apparent lack of decisive resolution to end the Marawi siege, the AFP's unbending tack of using airstrikes despite massive destruction of properties and government troops casualties, and the continuing use of aerial bombardment as a counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency method has steadily increased the total number of IDPs. We foresee this displacement to rise and spread to other areas as the AFP resorts to aerial bombardments which does not discriminate civilians, adversely affects farms and livelihood, and by evidence of experience domestically and internationally, has not proven effective in decimating terrorist armed groups.

The mission has served a measly proportion of this total number of IDPs, having provided relief to 1,222 families and have prioritized home-based evacuees. The mission notes that while government and private sector relief missions have gradually tried to address the humanitarian needs in more than 16 evacuation centers in Lanao del Sur, the hidden humanitarian crisis lies in the home-based evacuees as an unaccounted number continue to be unserved or underserved.

The emergency situation has also forced local government units in Marawi's nearby towns to absorb the influx of IDPs and have tried to cope with the needs. The mission notes that lack of suitable infrastructure for temporary shelter, sanitation facilities, as well as lack of potable water are the main challenges faced by evacuationcenter-based IDPs. The Mission is also concerned of a spike in local inflation with government unable to control prices of basic commodities.

The mission had provided medical services to only one area, in Balo-i town, but the findings may be representative of the health situation of the IDPs. In this area, the mission notes that the **top 10 diseases and health concerns are: Upper Respiratory Tract Infection, Skin Diseases, Pulmonary Tuberculosis ( suspected ( Class III) and active (Class V), Acute Gastroenteritis, Peptic Ulcer Disease/Dyspepsia, Musculoskeletal pain, Hypertension, Headache, Pneumonia, Gyne cases and Pregnancy.** These are common chronic diseases already prevalent in pre-evacuation conditions but further aggravated and heightened with the prolonged IDP crisis. In general, there is poor quality of health services as noted by doctors and other medical personnel. This is evidenced by the lack or non-availability of medicines and the apparent overstretched capacities of health services providers from the local government units. National government agencies need to augment these exhausted capacities of local health systems on the ground.

**The mental health welfare of IDPs is also a cause of concern.** IDPs benefitting from psycho-social intervention of the mission in Lanao del Sur and Mamasapano, Maguindanao exhibited signs of post-traumatic stress and anxieties. This is especially evident among children who expressed their fear as they witnessed heavily armed men, who they referred as 'ISIS', occupying their community and engaging in firefight with military elements. They express the same feeling and fear towards government soldiers. They witnessed helicopters hovering above Marawi City and dropping bombs on their communities. Their current temporary shelter in evacuation centers particularly those near Marawi City does not insulate them from the source of their fears as they continue to hear the sound of bombs especially at night time. The mission is concerned that there is lack of systematic government services to address this aspect of the humanitarian crisis, with an apparent lack of social workers and other

appropriate and trained personnel on the ground. There is also continuing uncertainty regarding the education of displaced children, as no comprehensive plan has been unveiled yet for this purpose, and no temporary programs have been set up to engage IDP children and introduce productive activities in evacuation centers and households fostering IDP families. The mission is also especially concerned with the mental health and psychological wellbeing of women who bear the most burden of economic displacement and difficulties of child rearing in these difficult external conditions.

The mission notes in particular that while IDPs from Marawi City has generated public concern as well as the efforts of local government and line agencies, the response to the humanitarian situation in Maguindanao and Davao del Sur have not been as systematic and urgent. The local government of Matan-ao, Davao del Sur has provided initial relief services to the 1,000 IDPs but there is a greater need to address the rehabilitation and sustained security of the residents after their return. There is also great need to address the situation of 1,000 IDPs in Barangay Salat, President Roxas.

**Initial Findings on the Human Rights Situation**

After collating data from the human rights documentation done in Marawi, Maguindanao, and Davao del Sur here are the findings:

- 1. **Martial Law and the AFP’s indiscriminate aerial bombardment approach has spawned massive human rights violations.** The Mission’s findings belie the claim of AFP spokesperson Padilla and the Commission on Human Rights that no human rights violations have been caused by Martial Law. The Mission asserts that the massive forcible evacuation in Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, North Cotabato and Davao del Sur are consequent human rights violations caused by the declaration of Martial Law and the subsequent employment of aerial strikes as a military tactic. The Mission has established that barely two weeks since the May 23, 2017 declaration of Martial law there has already been at least 325,294 individuals who were internally displaced from Marawi (65,198 families), Maguindanao (1,248 families), North Cotabato (260 families), and Davao del Sur (187 families).

**Figure 01: Marawi**

COMMON CASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS	
1.	Forcible evacuation
2.	Aerial bombardment
3.	Indiscriminate bombardment
4.	Destruction of properties
5.	Divestment of properties
6.	Violation of Domicile
7.	Use of civilian facilities for military purposes
8.	Threat, Harrassment, Intimidation
9.	Death in evacuation
10.	Other killings

**Figure 02: Maguindanao**

Violations	Incidents	Individual Victims	Community Victims
Extrajudicial Killing due to indiscriminate aerial bombing and mortar shelling	1	1	
Forcible Evacuation		22	1, 248 families
Threat, Harassment and Intimidation		36	1,248 families
Destruction of Properties due to indiscriminate aerial bombing and mortar shelling		24	
Divestment of Properties		12	2 families
Coercion		22	4 families
Violation of Domicile		12	

**Figure 03: Matan-ao, Davao Del Sur**

Violations	Incidents	Individual Victims	Community Victims
Extrajudicial Killing	1	1	
Forcible Evacuation		1000	187 families
Frustrated Murder	1	1	
Threat, Harassment and Intimidation		5	187 families
Destruction of Property		1	
Divestment of Properties		1	
Coercion			
Violation of Domicile			

**Figure 04: Brgy. Salat, President Roxas, North Cotabato**

HRVs	Number of Victims
Forcible Evacuation	260 families /1000 plus individuals
EJK due to indiscriminate aerial bombing and firing	1 individual
Frustrated Killing due to indiscriminate aerial bombing and firing	2 individual
Threat, Harassment and Intimidation	260 families of Barangay Salat 42 mission delegates
Arson/Destruction of Properties	14 civilian houses

2. **Martial Law's adverse and grave impact on the human rights and welfare of civilians demonstrates its lack of effectivity and casts doubt on its appropriateness as a response to a small, armed, and foreign-affiliated terrorist group.** The government has banked on terrorism to justify Martial Law, its corresponding military operations and aerial bombardments. The military operation conducted in Marawi and Maguindanao openly announced by government to be an operation against the small Maute and other terrorist groups that they claimed to be affiliated with the ISIS, can be characterized as an overkill. In fact, the Mission notes that as the government stepped up aerial strikes leading to the destruction of swathes of homes and infrastructure, the number of ISIS-affiliated terrorists have actually increased rather than decreased. Martial Law has also reinforced, justified, and empowered the military mentality of treating massive internal displacement as a collateral of war. This mentality has fueled military bravado to indiscriminately bomb civilian homes and mosques, yet no evidence of effective decimation of terrorist forces have been shown in the 3-week old crisis. Other violations of civil and political rights, as documented by the Mission, are attributed to Martial Law's further heightening of military impunity towards human rights as it has given them additional powers such as warrantless searches, arrests, profiling, and the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.
  
3. **Intensified indiscriminate aerial bombardment is the primary character of Martial Law.** Intense aerial bombardment and mortar shelling is common in the three areas where the NIHM was conducted. This resulted to immense destruction of properties.

In Barangay Dapiawan, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Maguindanao, Sophia, 38 years old, Maguindanaoan, a farmer was forced to vacate her house on June 4, 2017 when she heard a series of loud explosions coming from a 105 mm mortar. She went to the Dapiawan village center for shelter. When she went back to her house on June 13, she saw that her house's glass windows were already broken and the roof of her house was already damaged after it was hit by gunfire.

In Marawi, houses and other structures have been destroyed because of the aerial bombardment launched by the AFP. Some have seen their own houses being bombed by fighter planes. While some have only seen photos of their destroyed houses in social media and other online news. There are those that have not heard of any news about their relatives who were left in Marawi to look after their houses.

Arafat, 29 years old Maranao, married, saw by himself the airstrike hitting their community on June 27 in the morning. The neighbouring houses were already hit. So they left. When he came back early the next morning, he found his house destroyed too.

The cost of houses destroyed ranges from as low as two hundred thousand pesos to as high as six million pesos. Houses built to endure conflict may even have an underground to keep them safe during days of conflict.

Hadji Jahlil is a Maranao businessman. They waited for the Ramadan to come before occupying his newly built house worth six million pesos. But the air strike came quicker than Ramadan. Upon having safely evacuated to his relatives he saw a photo of his destroyed house on the news.

Clearing operations on the other hand resulted to divestment of properties.

In Marawi, eyewitnesses and owners of the houses also said that they have seen their personal properties such as motorcycle, bed frames and refrigerators inside military trucks. Cash and other personal effects such as jewellery were discovered missing after their houses were ransacked. On May 24, 2017, Tamil and his family left their house. That same day, he returned to check the house but did not proceed when from a distance he saw presence of men in military uniform in his house. When they have gone and he was able to get into the house, he found that his motorbike and some household items were missing.

In Maguindanao, Bambang, 39, Maguindanaoan, farmer said that he and his family evacuated on June 4, 2017 to Sitio Anti, Libutan Mamasapano, Maguindanao. Few days later, Bambang and his brother-in-law, Ishak, 45, along with the latter's son Lakmudin went back to Tambalalang to get their belongings. When they arrived at their houses, they found out that their belongings (kitchen stuff, sleeping mat, extension wire, and others) were missing. They later saw about a hundred soldiers of 40<sup>th</sup> IBPA headed towards them which forced them to run for safety.

- 4. Martial Law demonstrates an anti-people and anti-insurgency motive, with the Moro and Lumad civilians and communities as its target.** Contrary to the government claim that the target of Martial law and the military operations are the terrorists, the NIHM find that it is the innocent civilian Maranaos of Marawi, Maguindanaoans of Mamasapano and Datu Saudi, and Blaans of Matanao, who suffer the most from massive human rights violations.

While the Maguindanaoan and Blaan victims are mostly peasants and the Marawi victims cut across all sectors of society it is the poor who suffer the most since they have brought nothing in the evacuation and might have nothing to go back to when they return to their communities.

Properties destroyed by aerial bombardment and mortar shelling are not owned by the terror groups. They are properties of innocent civilians. That is why the common question of evacuees are, "Are we the Maute or ISIS? Why is it that our houses were bombed by the AFP?"

In Marawi, Idris, 55, and his son Jalal, 25, both Maranao, are not terrorists. They are innocent civilian residents. On May 23, 2017 late in the afternoon they were on their way to evacuate with their family when the two decided to come back quickly to the house in order to take more belongings. Jalal's sister during the interview said she saw with her own eyes when bomb hit the house while the two are still there. Until today their bodies have not been recovered.

In Datu Saudi, Ampatuan, Maguindanao, Jaynudin, 35 years old Maguindanaon is not a terrorist. He is a farmer. On June 8, 2017 was found dead in the middle of a rice field owned by his landlord. The family and community members believe that Jaynudin may have been hit by a bomb, as their community was struck by bombings from the military.

In Matanao, Davao del Sur, Daniol Lasib, 58 years old, is a respected Blaan tribal leader, an elected council member of Barangay Calonsabac and a strong leader of lumad organization Aksasatu Matanao (Unity of Matanao). He is not a terrorist. On May 26, 2017 with his son-in-law, Lindo Samling, who was driving the motorbike they were riding, was shot by 5 men in civilian clothes alleged to be members of 73<sup>rd</sup> IB, in the boundary sa Barangay Kapoc at ang Barangay Kabasagan,

which are two villages away from Colonsabac. They were on their way to visit Daniol's daughter who was confined at the hospital. Daniol Lasib's body was riddled with bullets which caused his instant death.

The AFP's purported motive of pushing for the declaration of Martial Law to run after terrorists has also lost focus as more and more evidence demonstrates that AFP forces have intensified counterinsurgency operations and have continued to victimize Lumad schools, enabled extrajudicial killings of activists in communities, illegal arrests, and trumped up charges against political dissidents.

- 5. Victims call to lift Martial Law, end aerial to aerial bombardment, and stop to militarization.** They also cry for justice for the human rights violations committed against them. They demand indemnification of damages.

For Marawi, they call for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the city and provide livelihood for the residents. Overwhelming majority of the respondents interviewed expressed that they did not agree to the imposition of martial law and aerial bombardments conducted by the AFP. Some said that authorities could have pursued the Maute group without declaring Martial Law. More so, the bombings are unwarranted and had practically wrecked Marawi. Some cannot help but say that unlike the previous Martial law the present Martial law was able burn Marawi into ashes which caused all residents to evacuate. This did not happen during the time of Marcos they say.

- 6. Alarming and condemnable criminal and terrorist acts of local terrorist groups which are reportedly funded, directed, and controlled by ISIS and foreign terrorist organizations.** The Mission notes condemnable and heinous crimes and other atrocities committed by what the AFP names as the Maute-ISIS terrorist groups. The hostage-taking of Fr. Chito Sukanob and his companions and other civilians are criminal acts. More efforts need to be done in order to establish facts surrounding claims of civilians being used as human shields, the recruitment of minors, and other human rights violations.
- 7. Glaring involvement and violation of Philippine sovereignty by US involvement and participation in the Marawi siege and possibly in other "counter-terror" campaigns in Mindanao.** The Mission notes with a sense of urgency the need to expose and investigate the role of US military and covert operations forces in Marawi and other parts of Mindanao. US involvement in purported counter-terrorism efforts in other parts of the world have pointed to their complicity with terror groups like ISIS themselves through funding and direction. Countries with US involvement in these matters have also seen prolonged and unresolved conflicts such as in the case of Syria, Iraq, Libya and other countries with US personnel, equipment, and war materiel on the ground.

## **Initial Recommendations**

The Mission recommends both immediate and medium-term actions:

1. Immediate lifting of Martial Law and a stop to aerial bombardments.
2. Independent on-site investigation to determine the extent of impact on civilian lives and properties with a view towards attaining justice for victims, providing indemnification, and rehabilitation, and to investigate the political and military issues surrounding the attack on Marawi and other areas.
3. Intensify the humanitarian response with particular focus on home-based evacuees and evacuation centers without recognition status from the government. AFP should desist from employing discrimination of relief aid such as the case of Kalinaw Mindanao being prevented from delivering 400 relief packs to Marawi City. Channel services to other communities impacted by aerial bombardments such as North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Davao del Sur and other peasant and Lumad areas.
4. Swift, systematic, grassroots-based humanitarian services from government especially at the national level, and formulate and institutionalize a comprehensive rehabilitation plan in a prolonged and a post- humanitarian situation.
5. Urgently impose and enforce strict compliance of a price freeze on basic commodities to ensure the welfare of IDPs from opportunistic businesses trying to maximize profits from the situation. Institute other measures to protect the welfare of IDPs.
6. Organizing and support to survivors/IDPs to empower them in claiming and asserting their rights and leading the direction towards rehabilitation and indemnification.
7. Full prosecution of the ISIS-affiliated local terrorist group/s for criminal acts against civilians.
8. For the Philippine government to demand the immediate pull out of US troops and personnel in areas of conflict in Mindanao. For congress to investigate US role in the Marawi siege.

**Davao City**  
**June 21, 2017**