

## MARAWI CONFLICT SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

### I. Background of the conflict<sup>1</sup>

1. On 23 May 2017, members of the Maute Group, the Abu Sayyaf Group, and foreign jihadists affiliated with the extremist Islamic State occupied the Islamic City of Marawi. It is the same group that seized the small rural town of Butig in November 2016. However, unlike the siege of Butig, which was immediately quelled by the military, the occupation of Marawi persisted much longer. Ground level assaults and air bombing raids continued for months, until the city was cleared of militants in October 2017.

2. The conflict resulted in heavy human and economic costs. Around 369,196 people from Marawi City and the neighboring towns were displaced. Over 1,000 fatalities were recorded and many more were injured. The Bangon Marawi Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Program estimates total of P18.3 billion in damage and loss were incurred by the public and private sectors.<sup>2</sup>

3. The violence of 2017 was unprecedented, but it followed a pattern of increasingly regular conflict incidents. Between 2012 and 2016, 9,854<sup>3</sup> violent events in Mindanao have been recorded. Much of Mindanao has been affected by conflict and violence for decades, stretching far back to the colonial era, which bred a long-term struggle for autonomy. In addition, conflict has led to repeated displacement, human rights abuses, and economic damage.

4. The conflict in Mindanao is complex, as it is linked to other local forms of violence, collectively referred to as “*rido*.” Causes include: overlapping political and traditional leadership structures; a state whose security presence and political authority is relatively weak in many localities; cultural traditions of extended family loyalty and local patronage that intersect with national political patronage; limited application of formal justice systems; and high levels of crime including organized drugs, extortion, and kidnapping. In addition, the tactic of urban siege used in Marawi also follows a longer, established precedent. Prior to Butig and Marawi, areas of Zamboanga City were taken over by a faction of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in 2013. Marawi itself was briefly sieged by the MNLF in the 1970s.

5. Efforts to bring peace to Mindanao have been pursued through peace agreements with rebel factions and initiatives to bring socio-economic development to the region. Comparative international assessments of subnational conflicts and specific research on Mindanao show that neither economic development nor security-led approaches are on their own likely to bring peace. The evolving nature, character, and form of conflict and violence calls for sustained engagement and commitment from Government and for new and broader approaches and solutions.

### II. Government response

6. To coordinate recovery efforts in Marawi and other affected areas, the Government established the Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM) in June 2017.<sup>4</sup> The Task Force is chaired by the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), with the Secretaries of

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<sup>1</sup> Drawn from consultant reports, staff assessments, and government information.

<sup>2</sup> Government of the Philippines, National Economic and Development Authority-Regional Development Office. 2018. Bangon Marawi Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Program. Manila

<sup>3</sup> Data from International Alert

<sup>4</sup> Administrative Order No. 3 dated 28 June 2017 and amended by amended by Administrative Order No. 9 issued on 27 October 2017

National Defense and Public Works and Highways serving as vice-chairs. The reconstruction subcommittee is led by the Department of Public Works and Highways. TFBM comprises six subcommittees focusing on reconstruction; housing; security, peace and order; health and social welfare; business and livelihood; and land resource management; and is supported by four groups focusing on legal aspects; information management and strategic communications; finance and resource mobilization; and planning.

7. Following the completion of a Post-Conflict Needs Assessment in December 2017, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), together with other agencies and supported by the ADB and the World Bank, began preparation of the Bangon Marawi Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Program (BMCRRP), which aims to formulate rehabilitation and recovery programs, projects and activities (PPAs) to rebuild the livelihood of those affected by the crisis in Marawi and surrounding areas. The BMCRRP identifies 744 priority PPAs for implementation over the next four years, i.e. 2018 to 2022. It assumes that most short-term projects will be located outside the most affected area (MAA), which will require considerable time to be cleared of unexploded ordnance and debris. The total cost of short-term PPAs is estimated at around P22.08 billion with about 27% for physical infrastructure, 24% for livelihood and business development, 21% each for social services and housing and settlement, and 7% for cross-sectoral support such as local governance and peacebuilding and land resource management. The PPAs include investments to reconstruct and rehabilitate public infrastructure such as roads, water supply, electricity, telecommunications, schools, barangay health stations, and local health units. They also include cross-sectoral issues on prevention of violent extremism, empowerment through community mobilization and dialogue, legal advice and counseling, and monitoring human rights violations. The funding requirement for the medium-term priorities is estimated at P25.19 billion. The cost of rehabilitation of areas within the MAA is yet to be established.

### **III. Challenges of Reconstruction and Recovery**

8. One year after the end of the armed conflict, most of the displaced individuals (estimated 369,196 individuals) from Marawi and the surrounding areas have returned to their former homes. Nonetheless, there are still over 73,266 people in host communities, evacuation centers, and transitional sites waiting to return home as of November 2018. Close to 90 per cent of those who continue to be displaced are staying in host communities.<sup>5</sup>

9. Recovery and reconstruction, in any given context, are often long and difficult, more so in the aftermath of conflict. International experience of reconstruction in fragile and conflict environments, show that engaging local leaders and the wider population is critical.<sup>6</sup> Rebuilding a city center with a large resident population is a complex multi-year process.

### **IV. Considerations Moving Forward**

10. Tackling conflict in Mindanao involves improving the governance environment, pursuing political reforms, and deepening the ongoing peace process. By taking careful initial steps and

<sup>5</sup> Lifted from the Humanitarian Bulletin Issue No. 7, dated August 2018 of the OCHA ([https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ochaphilippines\\_humanitarian\\_bulletin\\_no7\\_august\\_2018\\_final.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ochaphilippines_humanitarian_bulletin_no7_august_2018_final.pdf))

<sup>6</sup> Further information can be found in the ADB staff handbook Working Differently in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations: The ADB Experience. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/33774/files/working-differently-conflict-affected-situations.pdf>

pursuing a conflict-sensitive approach, reconstruction efforts in Marawi can support these wider objectives. Key points:

- (i) Ensuring the involvement and support of both local leaders and the wider population is fundamental, during planning and implementation. Local leaders are critical agents of change and many of them were personally affected by the damage to Marawi.
- (ii) Measures to incrementally improve local governance might reduce conflict risks. Key aspects, beyond finding appropriate mechanisms for consultation and participation, include supporting accountable, transparent and effective approaches. Many different innovative and well-established measures could be applied. Plans designed in Manila, and processes run centrally from Manila, are unlikely to respond to local context.
- (iii) Good analysis of local stakeholders is important. 'Winning hearts and minds' involves considering two main groups: first, the diverse range of local leaders. Second, the wider population.
- (iv) Improving the local economy will not on its own bring peace but it could support political commitments to peace. This is a long-term objective, not only for Marawi and its environs but for the wider region.
- (v) Specific work to limit the influence of extremists on young men and others is a difficult and specialized undertaking. The process of recruitment into insurgent groups is not a simple result of poverty or of brainwashing. The most effective approaches to limit recruitment will be locally defined. Local people discuss the need to encourage "the right path not the wrong way", building on religious principles and existing capacities.

### Chronology of Events

Milestone Event	Date
Start of siege (and declaration of Martial Law in Mindanao)	23 May 2017
Signing of EO creating TFBM - AO No. 3 (DND as Chair of TFBM) - AO No. 9 (HUDCC as Chair of TFBM)	28 Jun 2017 27 Oct 2017
Creating the TFBM response team in Iligan	27 Oct 2017
First meeting of BMTF with development partners	19 Dec 2017
End of siege	23 Oct 2017
Preparation of the damage and loss report by TFBM, led by the Office of Civil Defense (OCD)	Aug - Dec 2017
Preparation of the first draft of Damage and Loss assessment, led by OCD and NEDA	12-17 Dec 2017
First draft of BMCRRP*	23 Dec 2017
BMCRRP presented to Philippine cabinet	11 Jun 2017
ADB received request letter from DOF for emergency assistance loan in support of BMCRRP	31 Aug 2018
Formal presentation to Development partners of BMCRRP	10 & 15 Aug 2018

\*consolidated draft prepared by WB and ADB submitted to NEDA