

Violent Conflicts and Displacement in Central Mindanao

Challenges for recovery and development



World Food Programme



THE WORLD BANK GROUP

Violent Conflicts and Displacement in Central Mindanao

Challenges to Recovery and Development

December 2011 – Data Collected in November and December 2010

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www.emindanao.org/conflict-and-displacement

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The full dataset can be accessed at

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CONTENTS

- 1. Introduction 1
- 2. Methodology 2
 - The Study* 2
 - Study Limitations* 5
- 3. Population Displacement 6
 - Settlement Status* 6
 - Nature and Causes of Displacement* 7
- 4. Resources, Security and Livelihood 13
 - Services and Social Relations* 13
 - Access to Information* 17
 - Security* 18
 - Natural Capital* 22
 - Physical Capital* 24
 - Livelihood Strategies* 29
 - Expenditures* 34
 - Food Consumption* 37
 - Shocks and Coping Strategy* 42
 - Female-Headed Households* 43
- 5. Recovery and Peace 44
 - Priorities* 44
 - Building Peace and Security* 46
 - Assistance* 49
 - Settlement status and perceptions of location* 51
- 6. Conclusion 56
 - Annex: Findings from ARMM Islands 58
 - Tawi-Tawi* 58
 - Basilan* 62
 - Building Peace in Tawi-Tawi and Basilan* 64

1. INTRODUCTION

Central Mindanao has long been affected by cycles of displacements. These intensified during the first decade of the 21st century. After years of relatively low intensity conflict between 1976 and 2000, President Estrada's "All Out War" strategy declared in 2000 led to the displacement of more than 930,000 individuals. In the decade or so since then, there has been some patient progress in talks between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), but these are intermittently put under intense strain by the escalation of armed conflict on the ground.

When fighting does erupt, it leads to mass population displacement.¹ Renewed military operations in 2003 displaced at least 411,000 individuals. Many people were affected by military operations in 2005-07, and then, in 2008, the collapse of GPH-MILF negotiations over the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MoA-AD) once again displaced hundreds of thousands individuals. 'Vertical' conflicts over questions of self-determination are complicated by political power struggles at the local level, often in the form of clan conflicts (*rido*).

A number of studies have been undertaken to document the experience and needs of conflicted affected communities and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).² However, the complex set of factors that determine vulnerability³ among the general population and influence IDPs' settlement decisions have been less researched. Public perceptions on the most important ways to move forward have also not been explored in depth.

To address this information gap and provide a deeper evidence-base for operational planning, the World Bank and the World Food Programme commissioned a large-scale survey of 2,759 individuals in eight provinces and one urban center (Cotabato City) of Central and Western Mindanao. This was undertaken in November and December 2010. The main sections of this report present the results of that survey in Central Mindanao. The annex sets out some of the key findings from the islands of Tawi Tawi and Basilan.

The report begins with a summary of the methodology used for the survey and a description of the sample. It is then organized in three sections. The first section provides an overview of the context, scope and nature of displacement in Central Mindanao. The second section explores the environment (e.g. security) and resources or capital (social, natural, economic) available to households. It also looks at how those resources are used to shape livelihood strategies and livelihood outcomes such as food security. The third section explores respondents' priorities for resettlement, recovery and reconstruction. It analyzes the complex set of factors that influence whether displaced households decide to return to their places of origin, settle in new sites, or remain displaced.

¹ Oquist, Paul (2000). *Multi-Donor Support to Peace and Development in Mindanao – Phase 4 Preparation*, UNDP unpublished report in The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank (2005) *Joint Needs Assessment for Reconstruction and Development of Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao*.

² See for example Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), *Cycle of conflict and neglect: Mindanao's displacement and protection crisis*, May 2009; Mindanao Land Foundation, Inc., World Bank, *Unveiling what is behind the conflict-IDP component of the study on growth and lagging areas in Mindanao*, December 2008.

³ 'Vulnerability' is used here in relation to income, ownership of assets and access to services. It denotes a high degree of exposure to natural, social and political forces that can destroy or harm lives and livelihoods.