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DIASPORA

A BRIEFING PAPER ON
INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT
AND ITS
PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACT TO
IDPs IN THE PHILIPPINES



BALAY
Rehabilitation Center

is a non-government organization that extends psychosocial relief and rehabilitation programs and services to internally displaced families and communities. It also provides assistance to political prisoners and other traumatized victims of political repression.

Established in 1985 through the leadership of the late Senator Jose W. Diokno and Dr. Mita Pardo de Tavera, it now has offices in the National Capital Region/ Luzon, Zamboanga City, Cotabato City, Davao City.

BALAY is a member of the International Society for Health and Human Rights (ISHHR) and the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT).

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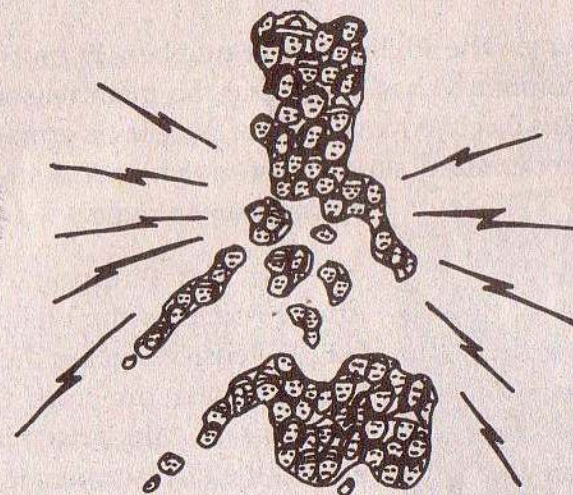
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he Philippines ranks as the third country in Southeast Asia with the most number of internally displaced persons (IDP). According to the World Refugee Survey of the US Committee for Refugees (USCR). Burma is on top of the list because of the number of people driven from their homes by armed conflict and violations of human rights by the ruling military junta. Indonesia comes next, followed by the Philippines.

Noting that the forced movement of people is one of the sordid faces of human rights violations in the world today, the USCR survey has placed the world's internally displaced population to be at least 20 million people. They have identified 41 countries all over the world where mass exodus of people are

pervasive. The Philippines is number 28 on the list. The Committee has noted that the main reasons behind this forcible movement of peoples is armed conflict, generalized situation of violence and atrocities against human rights.

UNGPID
Principle 1.1
Internally displaced persons shall enjoy, in full equality, the same rights and freedoms under international and domestic law as do other persons in their country. They shall not be discriminated against in the enjoyment of any rights and freedom on the grounds that they are internally displaced.

In the Philippines, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) offensives against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) positions in Mindanao caused most of the displacement in 2001. Many of the displaced persons have sought refuge in government-managed evacuation centers. Others moved in with their relatives in places far from the armed clashes. Some migrated in other parts of the country.

REFUGEES AND IDPs

Internally displaced persons are distinct from refugees in a way that the latter are compelled to leave their homes and cross an international border to seek safety in another state. On the other hand, IDPs move within

the confines of their national territory to escape from persecution or harm.

Refugees are accorded international legal protection through the Refugee Act of 1958. The rights of the IDPs are recognized by the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (UNGPID) adopted by the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1998.



The Guiding Principles, which draw heavily from human rights provisions found in the International Bill of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, recognizes that the primary responsibility of protecting the rights of IDPs rests upon state authorities. The 30 principles of UNGPID set the legal framework for IDP's rights in cases prior to their displacement, during displacement, humanitarian assistance and return and rehabilitation.

The Philippines has not yet adopted the Guiding Principles as a framework in addressing the phenomenon of internal displacement. The civilians caught in the line of fire are simply regarded as casualties of war, and not as persons who are entitled to human rights protection as any other human beings. But those driven away from their homes and communities by armed conflict, militarization and forced evictions are not mere "collateral damage" that can be dispensed with purportedly due to the demand of national security. Neither are the victims of political repression casualties in a political contest. Rather, these people are human beings who are being denied of their very right to life, freedom and development.

STATE OBLIGATION

While members of the civil society have the obligation to observe the rights of each other, the International Bill of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law have ruled that governments have the duty to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of the peoples that they serve. In the same manner, the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (UNGPID) has acknowledged that state authorities are responsible for the prevention of arbitrary displacement. Governments are bestowed with the mandate to see to it that the rights of IDPs are upheld, specially at the time of their evacuation, and to ensure their access to humanitarian assistance, and to work for their safe return and rehabilitation as soon as conditions war-

rant for their return with dignity to their place of origin. It is the function of state authorities, therefore, to create the conditions for the prevention of internal displacement and political repression. The government also has the obligation to take steps so that the rights and psychosocial well-being of IDPs and other survivors of state-perpetrated political violence are upheld.

**UNGPID
Principle 3.1**
National authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons within their jurisdiction.

DISPLACEMENT SITUATION

At the end of 2001, government records show that the remaining number of internally displaced persons (IDP) caught in the armed conflict in Mindanao is at least 67,292. This figure is 6.7 percent of the 1,002,855 persons affected since the government declared the "total war" policy in March 2000.¹



LOCATION OF IDPS		NO. OF PERSONS
Dawah Evacuation Center, SK, Maguindanao		796
Mahad Alisone, Parang, Maguindanao		1,125
IDPs Outside of Evacuation Centers	Maguindanao	28,391
	Lanao del Sur	19,656
	Basilan	2,561
	North Cotabato	8,734
	Sultan Kudarat	6,029
Total No. of Remaining IDPs		67,292

Executive Summary of the Mindanao Armed Conflict, DROMIC, January 23, 2002

The DSWD reported that there are only two remaining evacuation centers serving a total of 1,912 persons at the end of the year. They consider the rest of the evacuees as still displaced but temporarily stay-

ing with their relatives or other settlements and have not returned to their place of origin.

Field reports from BALAY regional office note that there are a number of evacuation centers in Pikit, North Cotabato which have been considered as closed by DSWD despite the presence of displaced persons. A reason offered by authorities is that the evacuees have opted to resettle in those areas for various reasons, notable among them is their lingering fear over their safety in their place of origin. An implication of this is that these IDPs may no longer get priority relief and rehabilitation services because they are thought to have relocated already.

FEAR FOR SAFETY

One of the reasons why the IDPs refuse to return is the presence of soldiers and the existence of unexploded ordnance and land mines in their

place of origin. BALAY has called on government authorities to clear of unexploded ordnance and land mines the villages that were caught in the war between soldiers and fighters of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Central Mindanao. Land mine explosions are believed to be behind the injuries sustained by five persons in Barangay Tiba, Matanog town in Maguindanao. The residents could not tell which group was behind the planting of the land mines at the height of the Estrada administration's all-out war last year against the MILF. But many evacuees from the villages of Sarakan, Sapal, Sarmiento, Tiba, Langkong and Minantao, all in Matanog, Maguindanao, refused to go back home because of fear for their safety.²

Caseworkers of BALAY-CMR office found out during their investigation in Barangay Tiba on Oct. 26 and 27, 2001 that a certain Kamad, a 40-year-old farmer, was injured when a land mine exploded while he was gathering coconuts in June. Not long after that, four persons from the same area were wounded when another land mine exploded while they were clearing their farm. The victims were identified as Mando Paro, 40; Asim Sarigon, Mukamad Sarigan and his 11-year-old son Nasrudin.

UNGPID Principle 4.2

Certain internally displaced persons, such as children, especially unaccompanied minors, expectant mothers, mothers with young children...shall be entitled to protection and assistance required by their conditions and to treatment which takes into account their special needs.

UNGPID Principle 6

Every human being have the right to be protected against being arbitrarily displaced from his or her home or place of habitual residence.

UNGPID
Principle 7.2
The authorities undertaking such displacement shall ensure, to the greatest practicable extent, that proper accommodation is provided to the displaced persons, that such displacements are effected in satisfactory conditions of safety, nutrition, health and hygiene, and that members of the same family are not separated.

The BALAY staff assisted the victims to get medical treatment. They also called the attention of the military and the office of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to do something

to rid the affected areas of explosives left behind by the combatants. The Philippine Campaign to Ban Landmines (PCBL) had sought the cooperation of BALAY in this undertaking. According to evacuees, particularly from Dawah Center in Crossing Simuay in Sultan Kudarat town, Maguindanao, they would remain hesitant to return home unless their safety are guaranteed. Hundreds of civilians displaced by the military operations are also temporarily residing along the Narciso Ramos Highway. They are apprehensive of going back to their place of origin because of the presence of military troops.

ARMED CLASHES

Though President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has lifted the all out military assaults against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in February 2001, armed clashes between members of the

Areas Affected	No. of Displaced Persons	Due To
Lamitan, Tuburan, Maluso, Lantawan, Sumisip, Tipo Tipo, Isabela City in Basilan Province (Region IX); Pangutaran Island and Talipao in Sulu (ARMM), Puerto Princesa	96, 668	Series of military operations against Abu Sayyaf, especially following their assault and hostage-taking in Dos Palmas Resort in Palawan. The failed attempt of military to crush the bandit group when they siege the Luis Torres Hospital and kidnapped a nurse in Lamitan. Subsequent clashes with soldiers trying to rescue the captives who had also taken an American missionary couple for ransom. The incidents also took place in the context of the government crackdown against suspected Abu Sayyaf supporters in July 2001. More than 100 people were detained without charges at the heels of the government's declaration of a "state of lawlessness" in Basilan, that led to the torture of dozens of civilians suspected to be ASG sympathizers.
Municipalities of Jolo, Patikul, Indanan, Parang in Sulu Province; Cabatangan, in Zamboanga City ⁴	16,837	Armed clashes between government forces and Moro rebels loyal to MNLF founding chairperson Nur Misuari. The military carried out a series of bombing operations in civilian population they considered as lairs of MNLF. Government and military authorities branded the MNLF-Misuari group as "terrorists" to justify their military campaign that drove civilians villages in mass exodus. Local and international reactions especially coming from the Islamic communities prompted President Arroyo to recognize the role of Misuari in advancing the Bangsamoro struggle for self-determination and the forging of the 1996 Peace Accord.
12 villages in Pikit, North Cotabato	24,000	Military authorities said that their actions are directed against the Pentagon kidnap gang, something that they did not do when the criminal band abducted and killed a Chinese engineer in October. No kidnappers have been arrested in that operation, but the soldiers were able to stab deeper into the perimeter areas of Camp Rajamuda of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, threatening the already shaky peace talks between the government and the MILF.
TOTAL	137,505	The evacuees cited in this report have returned to their place of origin as of this writing.

Based on field reports from Balay regional offices and data obtained from DROMIC as of November 22, 2001

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the various Moro fronts continue to force thousands of civilians to leave their homes and farms to escape from harm. Military operations against the dreaded Abu

Sayyaf group in Basilan and Sulu, and the Pentagon kidnap gang in North Cotabato also contribute immensely to the number of civilians caught in the crossfire.³

War and armed conflict have produced civilian casualties. Government records have shown that 517 people have died since the armed conflict erupted between government forces and rebels in Mindanao in 2000. The atrocities of the dreaded Abu Sayyaf group and the military actions against it have also resulted in civilian casualties.

**UNGPID
Principle 8**

Displacement shall not be carried out in a manner that violates the right to life, dignity, liberty and security of those affected.

tions against it have also resulted in civilian casualties.

Region	No. of Dead	No. of Injured	Missing
ARMM	294	100	1
Western Mindanao	41	46	
Southern Mindanao	25	203	
Central Mindanao	157	156	
Total	517	505	1

Source: Number of Casualties, DROMIC, January 23, 2002

It is likely that the number of casualties is higher since there could be fatalities not reported, especially those who died at the height of the fighting, during evacuation, and those who succumb to sickness in evacuation centers. The government data did not indicate the reasons behind the deaths they reported. It is possible that those who died due to sickness in evacuation centers are not thoroughly documented. At least 60 children have died in evacuation centers in Pikit alone, according to reports of municipal social workers.

PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACT OF DISPLACEMENT

When disasters such as internal displacement strike, the physical effects are obvious and are the ones usually noticed—loss of lives, destruction of homes, properties, livestock, workplaces, places of worship. Too often, the emotional effects of disasters are taken as a normal reaction to a tragedy—which they truly are—but are taken for granted as a passing response to an extraordinary situation. It is seldom considered, especially by state authorities, government social workers and private service providers, that even more than the

**UNGPID
Principle 9**

States are under particular obligation to protect against the displacement of indigenous peoples, minorities, peasants, pastoralists and other groups with a special dependency and attachment to their lands.

physical effects of military operations and internal displacement, the traumatic effects cause long lasting suffering and disability that impair the normal and meaningful functioning of individuals, families and communities.

UNGPID

Principle 10.1

Every human being has the inherent right to life which shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his or her life.



Shock, a sense of unreality, and fear dominate long after the fighting is over. At the evacuation centers the sight, sounds, smell, and feeling of the tragic event persist, leaving an indelibly horrendous image in the hearts and minds of the displaced persons. They grieve for the death of their loved ones and wonder how did they ever survived. Not a few dwell on feelings of guilt for not being able to save their parents, siblings or kin. Others feel devastated by the loss of their homes; for the destruction of treasured personal belongings such as school uniforms, family pictures, pets; for lost documents, and for lost of friends and familiar neighborhood.

The extraordinary prevalence of such strong physiological, cognitive, and emotional responses to forcible displacement indicate that these are normal re-

actions to an extreme situation. The trauma being suffered by internally displaced persons is not a sign of "mental illness" or "moral weakness." They do not signify that traumatized people are going "crazy" or weak. However, unless their psychosocial disturbance is resolved relatively quickly, their distress may interfere with their ability to reconstruct their lives and restore shattered family and community relations. It may even lead to dysfunction and other debilitating emotional and behavioral conditions that will have devastating effects on the individual, their family, and their community.

FAMILY DISTRESS AND RECOVERY

Staying for long period of time in the evacuation centers has forced the displaced persons to confront their ordeal in an unrelenting way. In addition to the mental and emotional distress, they have to bear with the loss of privacy in overcrowded temporary shelters. Poor sanitation, inadequate shelters, contaminated water may result to outbreak of diseases, leading to deaths.

Having to rely on government agencies and private service providers for relief rations and other

UNGPID

Principle 12.2.1

Internally displaced persons, whether or not their liberty has been restricted, shall be protected in particular against rape, mutilation, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.

needs to live another day, the evacuees also have to confront their loss of independence. In many cases, this situation aggravates the deterioration in self-esteem especially among those who were economically-

UNGPID
Principle 12

Every human being has the right to liberty and security of persons. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention.

productive prior to their displacement. When usual family activities and economic preoccupation are disrupted, the authority of traditional bread winners are also undercut, thus altering family dynamics. Women who lost their husbands at the height of the conflict are driven to take on roles usually culturally relegated to the menfolk. Older children may also assume functions in the family inappropriate for their age. Subsequently, parent-child conflict and marital distress could arise.

COMMUNITY DISCORD AND HEALING

The destruction of communities and the socio-cultural fabric of internally displaced persons also cuts a deep wound in their hearts and minds. They reel from the loss tied to their cultural activities and social identities. To them, their mass exodus has separated them from their familiar world, or from a homeland where they draw their sense of safety and traditional subsistence, and where they find meaning in

their lives as individuals and as a people. To many evacuees, the ensuing feelings of loss and grief drive them to doubt themselves and their capabilities to go on with their lives. They also develop, if not heighten, feelings of mistrust towards others, especially to authorities and peoples they view as responsible for their misery.

The impact of armed conflict and internal displacement to individuals, families and communities are interrelated and inseparable. The trauma affecting the emotional and behavioral responses of an individual would, in one way or the other, take its toll on the relationship between, or among, parents and siblings. Social disruptions both reduces and interferes with the healing effects of the family and the community, and is in itself an enormous source of stress on the individuals who make up the family and the community.

For many victims, these symptoms fade with time. But for many others, there may be longer-term emotional effects, both obvious or subtle, especially if no psychological intervention

UNGPID
Principle 15.d

Internally displaced persons have the right to be protected from against forcible return to resettlement in any place where their life, safety, liberty and/or health would be at risk.



is introduced. As the days and weeks pass by in an evacuation center, a displaced person may begin to experience a wide variety of emotional disturbances such as chronic grief, depression, anxiety and guilt.

Others may show signs of irritability and hostility. Some may demonstrate difficulties in controlling anger and suspiciousness. It is also not uncommon for traumatized evacuees to keep to themselves and shun other people. Sleep disturbances due to nightmares and flashing images of the tragedy will haunt many of them. During waking hours, the sights and sound of their ordeal may return to them as if the disaster is happening all over again, reinforcing their sense of helplessness and hopelessness.

**UNGPID
Principle 18**

All internally displaced persons have the right to an adequate standard of living, such as access to potable water and essential food, basic shelter, appropriate clothing, essential medical services and sanitation.

PSYCHOSOCIAL REHABILITATION

It has been two years since the government unleashed its "total war" policy against Moro rebels in Mindanao. Government social workers and private humanitarian organizations have responded with relief provisions and reconstruction assistance to rebuild destroyed infrastructures and houses. However, there seems to be a dearth in rehabilitation services to mend

the broken hearts, spirits and shattered relationships of peoples affected by the armed conflict. The armed conflict has traumatized entire peoples and communities. Traumatic stress continues to show cognitive, affective and behavioral manifestations.

Psychosocial services such as debriefing, counseling, grief processing and trauma resolution are hardly extended to the survivors of war, especially the children, who lost a member of family or treasured possessions such as books, school uniforms, and pets. In many war-torn communities, post traumatic stress manifestations are very notable such as heightened fear and anxiety on anything related to military and war; intense anger over their displacement and loss; feeling of disinterest in life; sense of powerlessness over an uncertain future; deepened feeling of animosity and mistrust between Muslims and Christians.

It seems that for government disaster managers, rehabilitation is focused mostly on rebuilding houses rather than consolidating family solidarity. They give attention to rebuilding schools but not on restoring the psychological, emotional and social well-be-

**UNGPID
Principle 19.1**

All wounded and sick internally displaced persons as well as those with disabilities shall receive to the fullest extent practicable and with least possible delay, the medical care and attention they require. When necessary, they shall have access to psychological and social services.

Physical	Psychological	Behavioral
A bottle of gasoline with chili pepper applied to victim's eyes, armpit, ears, nose and other parts of his body	Victim's head covered with plastic and tightened with masking tape	Denial of food and water
A bottle of gasoline with pepper was applied to victim's penis, and anus (Done for three days during interrogation)	Semi-hanging of the victim with the rope placed around the neck while undergoing interrogation	Denial of sleep
Victim's one leg resting straight forward and the other is bended at the back while his hands are tied at his back. (interrogation for 6 straight hours)	Victim blindfolded for more than a week	
Victim was hit with metal water pipe on the knees, hands, fingers and other parts of the body	A .45 caliber pistol was pointed on victim's head, his hands tied at the back with a nylon rope	
Victim was hanged for an hour while he is blind folded and hands tied at his back	Victim 'missing' for ten consecutive days	
Different kinds of physical beatings for three consecutive days. Victim collapsed four times	Denial of visitors; lawyer and family	
Continuous physical abuse for 10 hours		
Feet were beaten by a bamboo stick while interrogated for about 5 hours		
Victim is kicked, while somebody held his head and then locked his jaws		
Victim was kicked, mauled using Armalite rifle case and .45 caliber pistol hitting different parts of his body		
Victim's neck tied with a rope while his body was struck with the rifle butt		

Collated Summary of Psychosocial Impact of Torture on Detainees in Basilan Provincial Jail

Source: Mercy Mission Report, Sept. 2001

Cognitive	Behavioral	Emotional	Physical	Social
State of shock	Vengeful	Irritability	Body pains	Social stigma
Denial	Suspicious	Paranoia	Sleeplessness	Single parenthood
Blaming someone	Withdrawal	Extreme fear of loud voices, things associated with the torture i.e. ropes, bottles, etc	Chest pains	Severe financial problems
Confusion	Loss of appetite	Anxiety	Weakness	Employment problems
Disorientation		Fatigue	Loss of weight	Social isolation
Impulsiveness		Worrisome	Skin disorder	Disabled/ handicapped status
Nightmares		Hatred	Urinary tract infection	Lost property (belongings, etc)
		Pessimistic	Frequent neck and headaches	Permanently displaced
		Hopelessness	Limping	Loss of relatives

ing of traumatized children. They provide resettlement for IDPs but hardly consider the healing of community relations and building spaces for peace.

UNGPID
Principle 25

The primary duty and responsibility for providing humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons lies with national authorities.

CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

While the people have expressed outrage over the atrocities committed by the Abu Sayyaf, military operations to crush the terror group have resulted in reports of human rights violations. In July 2001, the government declared a "state of lawlessness" in Basilan that allowed government forces to hold warrantless arrests. Witnesses described the operation as "house to house," and confirmed news

reports that police and soldiers accompanied by hooded "spotters" pick up civilians suspected to be ASG sympathizers. More than 30 persons have been reportedly arrested in Basilan, 100 others were said to be picked up in Zamboanga on the first wave of the mass arrest that continued for several days. Witnesses said that the targets are the men who were taken without warrants.

Among those subjected to the surprise raids were the villages of Tabuk, Sumagdang, Calle Posporo, Marketsite, Kaumpurnah, in Carbon, Malamawi. Other

barangays in Lamitan, Lantawan, Maluso and Isabela City were not spared.

On July 15, 2001 seven more civilians were taken to the 103rd Army headquarters in Tabiawan, Isabela City, our source said. Their hands were reportedly tied behind their backs, though they were not hurt in front of their neighbors. The Commission on Human Rights office in Region IX was so appalled by the conduct of the crackdown. A newspaper quoted them as saying that the military operations were "Gestapo-type."



While many of those arrested earlier have been released, around 90 persons, suspected as Abu Sayyaf supporters, are still being kept in Basilan Provincial Jail. NGOs reported that they are restricted from seeing the detainees. When BALAY and other NGOs were given the chance to visit the jail on September 22 and 25, they were able to confirm the complaints of torture which were kept by authorities from the media.

As a result of their experiences, the Basilan tortured detainees are going through a wide range of psychological, mental, emotional and social problems. Below is a collated result following the data gathering and debriefing sessions with the suspected Abu Sayyaf detainees in Basilan. (*See Page 18.*)

PEACE AND STABILITY

There is a growing concern over the deployment of more than 600 US soldiers in combat exercises to hunt down Abu Sayyaf members in Basilan.

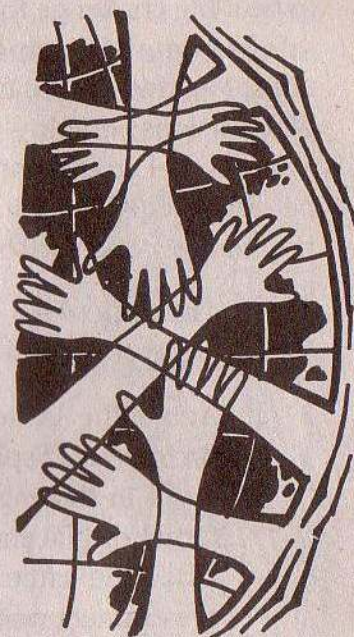
Human rights groups have warned that their participation in the country's internal peace and order matters might heighten the climate of armed conflict resulting in more displacement of villagers. Already, the proposal of the US to send in 1,700 additional soldiers in the Philippines is stoking anxiety over the likelihood of the Philippines becoming the next Afghanistan, where thousands of civilians were driven into exodus and on the edge of starvation because of the US war of aggression.

BALAY shares the fervent hope of everybody for the eradication of the phenomenon of forcible internal displacement and the human suffering that goes with it. As the United Nations High Commission for Refugees puts it:

UNGPID Principle 28

Competent authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to establish conditions as well as provide means, which allows internally displaced persons to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity, to their homes or places of habitual residence, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country. Such authorities shall endeavor to facilitate the reintegration of returned or resettled internally displaced persons.

"It is abundantly clear that unless ways can be found to counteract the withholding of, or outright violations of human rights, unless there is more equitable sharing of resources, more restraint and tolerance, the granting to everyone regardless of race, religion, membership of a particular social group or political party the right to belong—or alternatively to move in an orderly fashion to seek work, decent living conditions and freedom from strife—the world will continue to have to live with the problems of mass exodus. This problem, if left unchecked, will increasingly pose a threat to peace and stability."



RECOMMENDATIONS

BALAY welcomes the government's lifting of the "total war" policy and the resumption of the peace talks with the Moro Islamic Front (MILF). It also notes of the sincere efforts of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to responding to the welfare of families and communities displaced by armed conflict and militarization. However, it remains

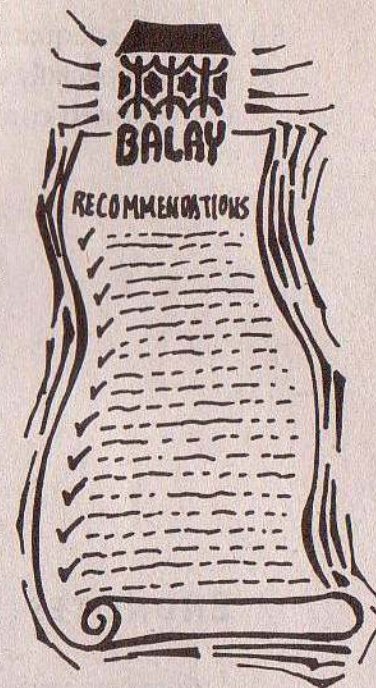
to be a big challenge for state authorities to ensure the safe return and comprehensive rehabilitation of the IDPs. Meanwhile, military actions which, in a number of occasions, employ weapons of mass destruction against rebel groups and notorious criminal bands must be discouraged since it is taking its toll among civilian population caught in the crossfire.

The following are the recommendations of BALAY to government authorities:

1. Adopt the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (UNGPID) as a framework in dealing with the phenomenon of internal displacement in the country, and popularize the same among the military and local government units.
2. Refrain from resorting to all out military approach, and the use of weapons of mass destruction, in dealing with peace and order issues since it only produces civilian casualties rather than solving the problem.
3. Continue to pursue peace negotiations as a means of settling political disputes; stop the practice of labeling as "terrorist" legitimate dissident groups or individuals to justify an all out assault.
4. Support grassroots participation in the peace process and respect the community-based initiatives to build "spaces for peace."

5. Implement the law creating Disaster Coordinating Councils (DCCs) from the provincial to barangay levels, and ensure the training of concerned government authorities and villagers in disaster preparedness and management to mitigate human suffering during displacement situations.

6. Cooperate with organizations working for the removal of land mines in conflict-ridden areas and adhere to the international call against the use of land mines.
7. Continue to work for comprehensive rehabilitation of displaced families and communities, including their recovery from trauma through psychosocial interventions.
8. Take steps to ascertain the fate of those reported to be missing and put a stop to the practice of warrantless arrest and torture in the guise of combating "terrorism." Allow the access of detainees (esp. in Basilan and Zamboanga) to legal and medical services and respect visitation privileges of their relatives in accordance to human rights principles.



9. Prosecute those responsible for cruel treatment of detainees and if applicable, indemnify displaced persons for the damage to their livelihood and properties.
10. Provide adequate protection and welfare assistance, especially to children and women caught in the armed conflict.

ENDNOTES

¹ Based on a report furnished by the Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center (DROMIC) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) dated January 23, 2002.

² Aquiles Zonio, "Land mines scourge of Mindanao folk," *Inquirer News Service*, October 31, 2001 and field reports from BALAY regional offices

³ Based on field reports from BALAY regional offices and data obtained from DROMIC as of November 22, 2001

Prepared by:

BALAY Advocacy Program

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