



WFP Philippines

Armed Conflict in Mindanao

Situation Report #1

30 March 2021

In Numbers

66,019 displaced people (13,570 families)

staying in **55 evacuation camps** across **10 municipalities**

Situation Update

- The conflict between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) reignited on 18 March 2021. Firefights and mortar shells forced thousands of residents to flee their homes in the towns of Shariff Aguak, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Mamasapano, and Datu Salibo, (also known as the SPMS box – an area where BIFF operates, according to the military) and Shariff Saydona Mustapha. Sporadic skirmishes have also been reported outside the SPMS box (Guindulungan and Datu Hoffer municipalities).
- The SPMS box was affected by military operations against the BIFF group in 2019, which continued until 2020. The United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) expects prolonged fighting and further displacements given the scale of the military operation.
- According to the Ministry of Social Services, as of 29 March 2021, a total of **13,570 families** or **66,019 people** have been displaced and are staying in **55 evacuation camps** and some with their relatives in **10 municipalities** (Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Shariff Saydona Mustapha, Datu Salibo, Shariff Aguak, Mamasapano, Datu Unsay, Datu Hoffer, Guindulungan, South Upi) in Maguindanao and in Midsayap municipality of North Cotabato.

Highlights

- WFP will provide logistics support to the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) Government. WFP will bolster the movement of food and non-food items from the Government's Emergency Operation Centre to evacuation camps.
- WFP is assisting with coordination on food security and logistics.

- An Emergency Operations Centre has been set up in the Maguindanao Provincial Capitol compound to coordinate the humanitarian response.

Current Humanitarian Response

- The Ministry of Social Services and Development organized an inter-agency assessment among BARMM agencies on 19 March and found that:
 - the priority needs of the displaced are food, shelter, health, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), protection, and camp coordination and camp management (CCCM);
 - the majority of displaced households were engaged in smallholder farming, fishing, and petty trading;
 - the markets are accessible unless movement or road closure is imposed. The nearest public markets are located in Shariff Aguak and Datu Piang. Makeshift markets (*Talipapa*) are also functional;
 - in evacuation camps, families usually share kitchen utensils. Displaced populations have resorted to using improvised cooking tools and firewood.
- Following the assessment, the BARMM Government started to distribute food to displaced populations in evacuation camps. Other humanitarian actors have provided temporary shelter materials, sleeping kits, hygiene kits, cooking kits, and water.



WFP's mobile storage units, which were loaned to the BARMM Government for their storage and warehousing requirements in their COVID-19 response, are currently used to store relief items for the armed conflict response. ©WFP/Fahima Abdulaziz

- During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, WFP loaned three mobile storage units to the BARMM Government to aid in their pandemic response. These MSUs now store food and other items for this operation.

Gaps and Bottlenecks

- The volatile security situation affects physical access by government and humanitarian agencies to provide aid to the affected populations. Closure of major roads limits IDPs' ability to move, and populations in nearby villages have no access to livelihoods and other social services/humanitarian support.
- Limited storage and transportation has caused delays in delivering food aid to internally displaced populations (IDPs).
- There are gaps in the humanitarian response. For example, efforts to register IDPs and other affected populations to deliver the most appropriate humanitarian assistance are not yet complete.
- Discussion amongst WFP and Food Security Cluster members and government are ongoing, and the cluster will meet next week upon conclusion of government profiling.
- Poor conditions in evacuation camps due to a lack of WASH facilities, electricity, and cooking areas worsen the situation of IDPs. Minimum health protocols to prevent COVID-19 transmission need to be reinforced.

- A separate assessment on the impact of the conflict and displacement on the livelihoods of the affected populations is needed, particularly on farming and fishing. Non-cultivation of the agricultural land, particularly rice paddies and corn areas can potentially worsen food insecurity, which is already exacerbated by the pandemic.

WFP Response

- WFP supports the BARMM Government with food and logistics cluster coordination and assessments.
- BARMM Government asked WFP to support its humanitarian response with logistics. A grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), will permit WFP to transport essential items to evacuation camps. The Government may require more MSUs to augment three already provided by WFP.
- On 29 March, BARMM's Ministry of Social Services and Development, with support from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM), started an IDP Profiling and Disaster Response Tracking Digital Survey. WFP and other humanitarian actors will also support this. It will establish a registry of households affected by the clashes based on IDPs' family information.
- The BARMM Government has also expressed the need to support IDPs with cash assistance to mitigate food insecurity, considering the disruption of land preparation and planting season given the security

challenges. WFP is reviewing available resources and will appeal to partners to support the BARMM Government with cash-based transfers.

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Displacement in Maguindanao due to AFP vs BIFF armed conflict

Source: MSSD as of 28 March 2021



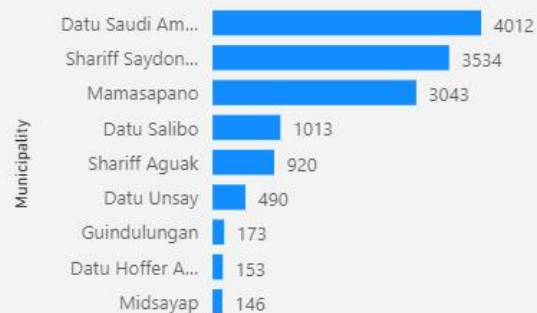
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TOTAL NUMBER OF
DISPLACED FAMILIES

64K

APPROXIMATE
INDIVIDUALS

IDP families by Municipality

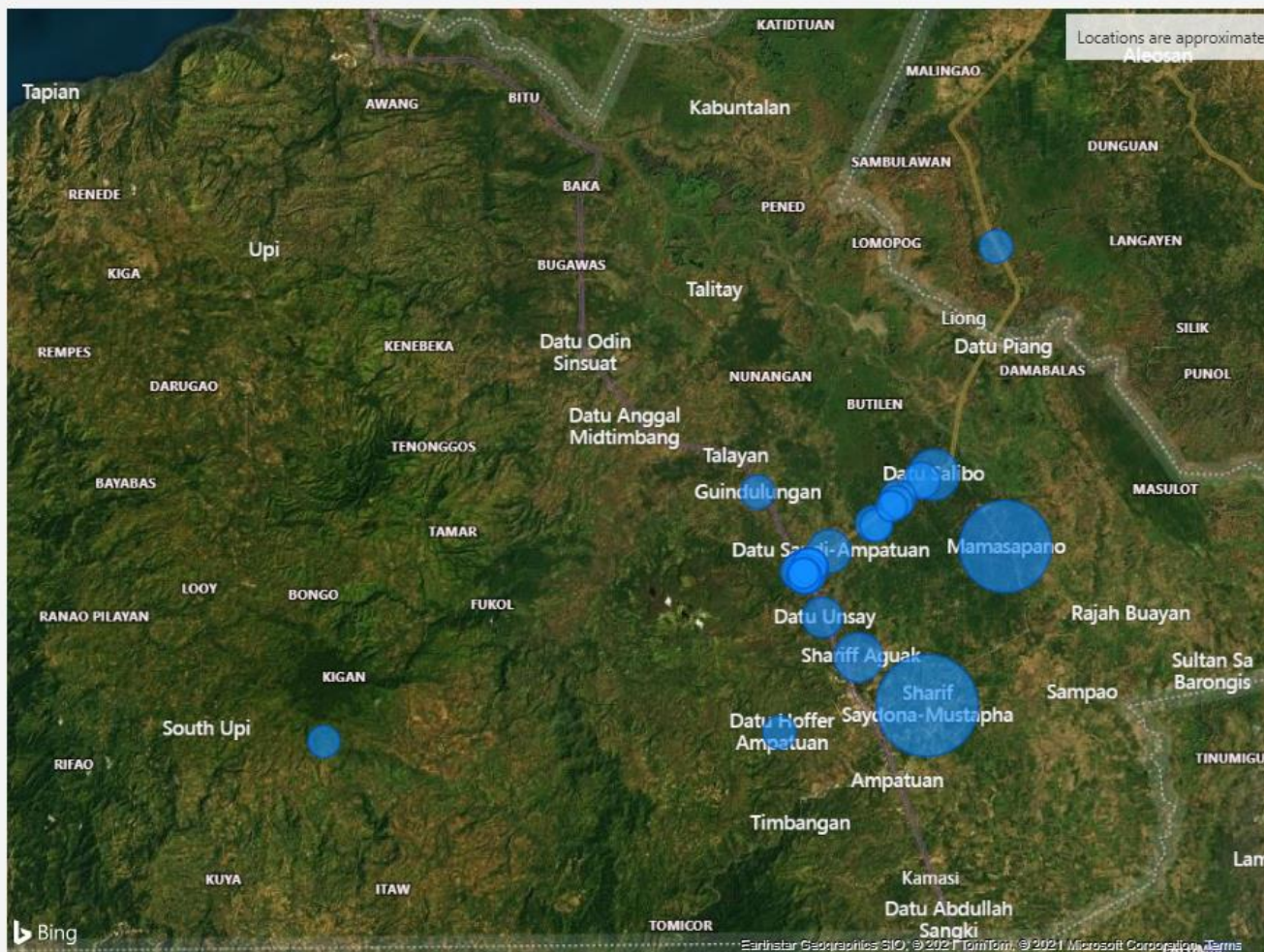


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IDP families by Barangay



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SOURCE: MSSD-BARMM - <https://bit.ly/3dhiMP8>