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# Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA)

## Philippines: Returnees



<b>DREF operation n°</b> MDRPH025	<b>Categorization of crisis<sup>1</sup>:</b> Yellow
<b>Operations manager:</b> Patrick Elliott Operations Manager IFRC Philippine Country Office	<b>Point of contact:</b> Atty. Oscar Palabyab Secretary General Philippine Red Cross
<b>Date of issue:</b> 1 April 2017	<b>DREF operation budget:</b> CHF 72,088
<b>Operation start date:</b> 31 March 2017	<b>Operation timeframe:</b> 3 months (31 March to 30 June 2017)
<b>N° of people affected:</b> 7,000	<b>N° of people to be assisted:</b> 5,018
<b>Host National Society:</b> Philippine Red Cross (PRC) is the nation's largest humanitarian organization, working through 103 chapters and sub-chapters covering all administrative districts and major cities in the country, including in Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga City. The National Society has at least 1,000 staff at national headquarters and chapter levels, and approximately one million volunteers and supporters, of whom some 500,000 are active volunteers.	
<b>Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners currently actively involved in the operation:</b> PRC is working with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in this operation. The National Society has also been supported by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).	
<b>Other organizations involved in the operation:</b> The government departments involved include the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), National Commission on Muslim Mindanao, Philippine Coast Guard and Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). Community and Family Services International (CFSI) is the NGO participating in coordination efforts.	

## A. Situation analysis

### Description of the situation

Since 15 February 2017, there has been a rapid increase in the number of Filipino returnees from the state of Sabah in Malaysia arriving in Zamboanga City, Mindanao. While repatriations were procedural and common prior to the increase, the sinking of a vessel that previously transported the returnees prompted suspension of the exercise in September 2016. The suspension of repatriations led to a backlog of approximately 7,000 undocumented Filipino migrants in Sabah.

As of 27 March, a total of 1,982 returnees have arrived since the exercise started on 15 February. The vessel with the first batch of 411 returnees arrived on 15 February, with the second batch (of 430 people) arriving on 1 March. The third batch (301 people) arrived on 8 March, the fourth (423 people) on 12 March, the fifth batch (201 people) on 15 March and the latest on 22 March (216 people). More returnees are expected to arrive in the city over the next weeks in line with an agreement reached by Philippine and Malaysian governments in November 2016 to clear the backlog.

After the fifth batch of returnees arrived on 15 March, an Information Bulletin was issued on 17 March. Following arrival of sixth batch of returnees on 22 March, the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) Zamboanga City chapter – which has been supporting the provision of health, safety and welfare services to the returnees – determined the need to enhance its capacity to address the needs of the anticipated more returnees. On 23 March, the leadership of PRC communicated formally the intention to seek support from the IFRC Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). The request followed dialogue between the PRC national headquarters, PRC chapters in Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga City, local government counter parts and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).



Based on assessments conducted through key informant interviews with returnees who have arrived, immediate needs include temporary accommodation, food, sleeping materials, hygiene items, medical support and psychosocial support.

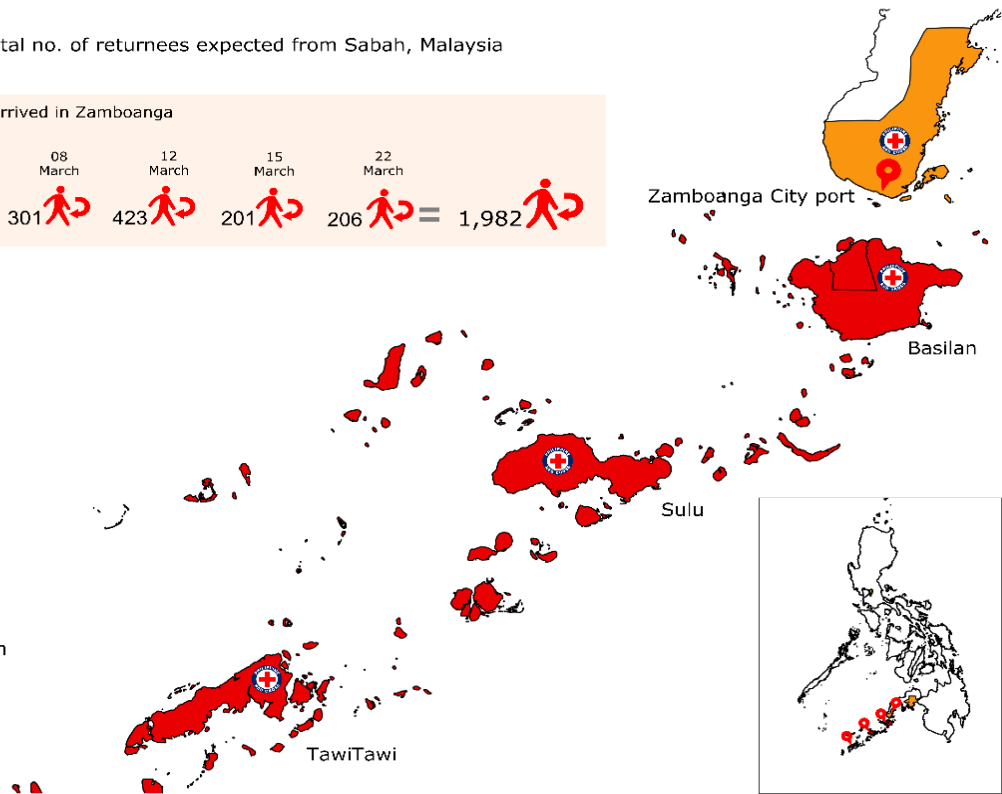
<sup>1</sup> Based on the IFRC Secretariat's Operational Response Framework. This categorization implies that the response intervention is within the capacity of the National Society of an affected country to manage with resources available in-country. If requested, the IFRC Country Office may provide any necessary technical or management support to the National Society, and if required, the IFRC Regional Office may support the mobilization of regional disaster response tools, with Geneva supporting the allocation of Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF).

7,000  = Total no. of returnees expected from Sabah, Malaysia

Batches of returnees arrived in Zamboanga

15 February	01 March	08 March	12 March	15 March	22 March	=	1,982
411 	430 	301 	423 	201 	206 		

 Area of arrival  
 Area of destination



## Summary of current response

### Overview of Host National Society

The Philippine Red Cross (PRC) is providing services to support returnees by improving their health, safety and welfare, complementing the assistance being provided by the public authorities. The support by PRC is being provided on one-off basis in view of the scale of returnees' needs following the backlog of repatriations. Under normal circumstance, the National Society does not engage in providing welfare services to returnees in routine repatriations.

So far, 1,982 people have returned to the country from Sabah. Using resources mobilized locally, the National Society has provided welfare services, including hot meals and psychosocial support, to returnees arriving in Zamboanga City. Specifically, the Zamboanga City Chapter has mobilized 21 staff and volunteers to provide welfare services to the returnees. As of 22 March, the National Society had provided 1,483 people with psychosocial support, supported 234 individuals to make phone calls and send 'safe and well' messages to their families (both local and international calls), provided 1,799 individuals with hot meals and attended to 23 individuals with first aid. Furthermore, 234 individuals registered with PRC to be linked with family members who contact the National Society regarding the status of their loved ones.



PRC volunteers and staff assisting the deportees by serving hot meals in Zamboanga City, Mindanao. (Photo: PRC)

Red Cross medical technicians are also on hand to undertake triage before referring cases requiring medical assessment and assistance to DOH. The National Society has also placed an ambulance on-standby.

PRC is coordinating closely with DSWD on the provision of immediate relief and with DOH on medical assessment and assistance. Furthermore, the National Society is coordinating with the public authorities in Manila (through its National Headquarters) and local government units in Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga City (through its chapters) to advocate for adequate support by the authorities for returnee reintegration.

## Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

The IFRC Country Office is coordinating with PRC and the ICRC, and supporting the National Society to disseminate updates on the response to Movement partners with in-country presence and to the IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office (APRO) in Kuala Lumpur. The Country Office and APRO are also providing technical guidance to PRC.

## Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

The repatriations are being coordinated between the Philippine and Malaysian authorities. The lead government agency in supporting the returnees is DSWD. Support provided by the authorities includes temporary accommodation, medical assessment and assistance, and transportation arrangements for those heading to onward destinations.

## Needs analysis, beneficiary selection

Up to 5,018 people are expected to arrive in Zamboanga port from Sabah, over the coming weeks, to bring the total number to 7,000. Already, 1,982 people have arrived already in six batches: 411 on 15 February, 430 on 1 March, 301 on 8 March, 423 on 12 March, 201 on 15 March and 216 on 22 March. The returnees appear to be a combination of complete families and sole individuals. Many arrived with only the very basic, if any possessions, they could carry.

Upon arrival, the returnees are received by DSWD. Once processed, they are transported to the places where they – or their kin – originate from. For those whose roots are Zamboanga, where families are available, processing is reasonably quick. However, for families whose roots are the island provinces of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, processing takes days.

Based on key informant interviews with returnees who have arrived, immediate needs include temporary accommodation, hot meals, sleeping materials, hygiene items, medical support and psychosocial support. Staying connected is also essential for returnees and in this regard, domestic and international phone calls are crucial to restoring family links or sending “safe and well” messages. Some returnees also need support to meet transportation costs as they head to their places of origin, mainly the islands of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

Considering that more returnees are expected to arrive over the coming weeks, PRC has developed a plan to support the needs of their immediate humanitarian needs. This plan has been based on coordination between PRC National Headquarters and its four chapters – namely Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga City – their respective local government units, and the DSWD. The trigger for scaling up is arrival of the sixth batch of returnees on 22 March.

## Beneficiary selection

PRC will provide assistance to all 5,018 returnees expected in Zamboanga port from Sabah over the coming weeks. Each returnee household or individual will be provided with a PRC beneficiary card with their and household members' names. The card will form the basis for the recognition of bearers as beneficiaries of PRC. During distributions, PRC volunteers will countercheck if the names on the card are listed in distribution sheets. Upon receipt of any items or assistance, each household head will sign the award sheets or lists.

## B. Operational strategy and plan

### Overall Objective

This operation aims to meet the immediate food, non-food and welfare needs of 5,018 returnees.

### Proposed strategy

This DREF operation contributes to the overall PRC plan of action, whose total budget is CHF 84,088. The operation will be implemented over three months – inclusive of replenishments – and will be completed by 30 June 2017. A final report will be made available three months after the end of the operation.

Provision of assistance and post-assistance monitoring will be carried out by PRC staff and volunteers at the chapter levels – in Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga City – with support of on National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) member. Interventions of the chapters will include provision of psychosocial support, hot meals, non-food items and support for restoring family links.



A PRC volunteer assists a returnee in Zamboanga to make a free call to a family member. PRC is supporting restoring family links.  
(Photo: PRC)

Specific activities will include:

1. Setting up of welfare desks
2. Providing psychosocial support
3. Providing hot meals to all returnees
4. Supporting returnees to make free calls to their relatives
5. Providing essential household items (two blankets, two plastic sleeping mats, two mosquito nets and one hygiene kit) to 5,018 returnees, i.e. 1,004 families based on the region's average of five members per family.
6. Disseminating basic hygiene messages to the returnees

## **Operational support services**

### **Human resources**

An experienced PRC NDRT member will be deployed to Zamboanga City to support the operation, including on information management. In all, however, activities under this operation will be implemented by the PRC chapters in in Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga City utilizing existing staff and [Red Cross 143<sup>2</sup>](#) volunteers. Where necessary, support of other neighbouring chapters will be sought.

One member of the regional disaster response team (RDRT) member will be deployed to support specific aspects of the operation – mainly at the national headquarters – as per PRC's request.

### **Gender and diversity**

PRC ensures that its interventions are aligned with its own as well as the [IFRC Minimum standard commitments to gender and diversity](#) in emergency programming. The PRC operation will provide support to all returnees who include children, pregnant or lactating women, men and boys. Most, if not all, belong to the socially vulnerable households, and lack relevant resources to cope with basic humanitarian needs on their own.

### **Logistics and supply chain**

Logistics activities aim to effectively manage the supply chain, including procurement, customs clearance, fleet, storage and transport in accordance with the operation's requirements and aligned to IFRC's logistics standards, processes and procedures. Over the past years, PRC's logistics capacity has been enhanced and as such all warehousing and transportation activities required in this operation will be mobilized by the National Society.

All relief items will be released from pre-positioned stocks in-country and then will be replenished. Procurement for replenishment will be done as per IFRC standard procurement procedures. Blankets and sleeping mats will be sourced locally by the National Society with support of the IFRC in-country logistics team while hygiene kits and mosquito nets will be sourced via the IFRC Regional Logistics Unit (RLU) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The RLU will also extend technical logistics support to the Country Office and PRC, if required.

### **Information technologies (IT)**

The DREF allocation will cover costs of mobile phone credit and Internet cards for the four chapters involved. PRC will ensure that staff and volunteers involved in the operation are reachable via mobile phones. The chapters have computers for keying in data, preparing reports and sending official communication.

### **Communications**

All communications are being coordinated and shared with PRC and ICRC communications teams before publication. So far, the only public information released is [Information Bulletin](#) issued on 17 March.

### **Security**

Parts of Mindanao are security-sensitive due to the presence and operations of other bearers of arms. In particular, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi are areas of highest security concern. Given the context, and in accordance with security protocols, no national headquarters and/or expatriate personnel will be deployed to the three provinces. All activities will be implemented by the respective PRC chapters whose staff and volunteers come from the target communities.

### **Planning, monitoring, evaluation, & reporting (PMER)**

Reporting on the operation will be made in accordance with the IFRC minimum reporting standards. One update will be issued during the operation's timeframe and a final report within three months of the end of the operation. An internal review and lessons learned workshop will be held at the end of the operation to inform future similar interventions.

### **Administration and Finance**

The IFRC provides the necessary operational support for review, validation of budgets, bank transfers, and technical assistance to National Societies on procedures for justification of expenditures, including the review and validation of invoices. PRC has been supported for many years by the IFRC and is accustomed to these financial procedures.

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<sup>2</sup> Red Cross 143 is a flagship programme in which the National Society aims to have in place 44 volunteers in every village of the country, i.e. one team leader and 43 members, as first responders on the ground in times of disaster and/or crisis.

## C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLAN

### Quality programming

<b>Outcome 1: Adequate assessment, monitoring and internal review measures contribute to an effective and relevant response</b>				
<b>Output 1.1: Continuous analysis and monitoring guide implementation of the operation and an end-line internal review informs future similar interventions</b>				
<i>Activities planned</i>	Month	1	2	3
1.1.1 Mobilize PRC staff and volunteers for assessments, ongoing situation analysis and post-assistance monitoring				
1.1.2 Deploy one RDRT member to provide technical support to the National Society				
1.1.3 Undertake assessments, ongoing situation analysis and post-assistance monitoring				
1.1.4 Ensure that any adjustments to this plan are informed by continuous assessment of needs and feedback from affected people				
1.1.5 Undertake an internal review of the response and organize a 'lessons learned' workshop to inform future similar interventions				

### Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion

**Needs analysis:** Returnees are reaching Zamboanga City with only the very basic, if any possessions, they could carry from Sabah. They will be provided with mosquito nets and hygiene kits, complemented with dissemination of basic hygiene messages, including on prevention of Malaria which is endemic in the provinces of Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga. Safe water and sanitation facilities are available at the temporary accommodation and as such no need for PRC to intervene in these.

**Population to be assisted:** 1,004 returnee families will receive mosquito nets (2 per family) and hygiene kits (1 per family).

<b>Outcome 2: Immediate reduction in risk of water and vector borne diseases to returnees</b>				
<b>Output 2.1: Improved knowledge of hygiene among the returnees</b>				
<i>Activities planned</i>	Month	1	2	3
2.1.1. Provide hygiene kits and mosquito nets to returnee families				
2.1.3. Mobilize community health volunteers to disseminate basic hygiene messages to returnees				
2.1.4. Procure hygiene kits and mosquito nets to replenish those distributed to returnee families				

### Shelter (non-food items)

**Needs analysis:** Returnees will require essential non-food items, including sleeping items, to meet immediate needs in a dignified manner.

**Population to be assisted:** 1,004 returnee families will receive non-food relief items (2 blankets and 2 sleeping mats).

<b>Outcome 3: The immediate non-food needs of the returnees are met.</b>				
<b>Output 3.1: Essential household items are provided to the returnees.</b>				
<i>Activities planned</i>	Month	1	2	3
3.1.1 Register returnee families				
3.1.2 Mobilize and transport non-food items from prepositioned stocks to affected areas				
3.1.3 Distribute non-food items to returnee families				
3.1.4. Procure blankets and sleeping mats to replenish those distributed to returnee families				

## Health

**Needs analysis:** The repatriation process causes psychological stress on returnees. The operation will provide psychosocial support to the returnees and responders.

**Population to be assisted:** Up to 5,018 people will be provided with psychosocial support and referred for healthcare services if required.

<b>Outcome 4: The immediate mental health risks of returnees are reduced through targeted psychosocial support</b>				
<b>Output 4.1: Psychosocial support provided to the returnees</b>				
<i>Activities planned</i>	Month	1	2	3
4.1.1 Provide orientation and training of staff and volunteers on provision of psychosocial support				
4.1.2 Produce information, education and communication materials relevant for psychosocial support				
4.1.3 Provide psychosocial support to returnees and support referral processes for cases requiring specialist attention				
4.1.4 Organize peer support sessions, 'rest and recreation' and team building activities for staff and volunteers involved in the response				

## Food security and nutrition

**Needs analysis:** Returnees require food upon arrival and pending onward journey to provinces of origin. This operation will provide hot meals in temporary accommodation.

**Population to be assisted:** 5,018 people will be provided with hot meals.

<b>Outcome 5: The immediate food needs of the returnees are met.</b>				
<b>Output 5.1: Returnees have access to meals.</b>				
<i>Activities planned</i>	Month	1	2	3
5.1.1 Register returnee families				
5.1.2 Mobilize volunteers and staff to prepare meals in temporary accommodation centres				
5.1.3 Serve hot meals to returnees				

## Restoring Family Links

**Needs analysis:** Connectivity is essential for the returnees, especially in maintaining or establishing contact with family members.

**Population to be assisted:** Up to 5,018 people will be assisted to establish links with their family members or to send "safe and well" messages.

<b>Outcome 6: Family links are re-established and maintained between separated relatives</b>				
<b>Output 6.1: Returnees are supported to access appropriate means of communication to re-establish and maintain contact with their loved ones</b>				
<i>Activities planned</i>	Month	1	2	3
6.1.1 Set up welfare desks and undertake awareness sessions about RFL services among the returnees				
6.1.2 Provide phone services as well as collect and process 'safe and well' messages				
6.1.3 Collect and process tracing requests				
6.1.4 Provide mobile phone charging options to returnees				

**ANNEX 1: ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS TABLE TEMPLATE**

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<b>ASSUMPTIONS &amp; RISKS</b>	<b>LIST IF SPECIFIC AFFECTED SECTORS OR STATE 'ALL'</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>CAN CONTROL; MITIGATE / INFLUENCE; OR ONLY FACTOR-IN</b>
Access and logistics for delivery of materials is not hampered by bad weather conditions and security concerns	<b>All</b>	M	H	Factor into logistics planning
Presence of and operations by other bearers of arms in the operational areas do not impede delivery of services	<b>All</b>	M	H	Factor into security guidelines planning

## Budget

### DREF OPERATION

31/03/2017

MDRPH025 Philippines: Returnees

Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF
Clothing & Textiles	20,415
Food	6,022
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	15,060
Medical & First Aid	840
Teaching Materials	100
Other Supplies & Services	1,640
<b>Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES</b>	<b>44,077</b>
Storage, Warehousing	62
Distribution & Monitoring	1,200
Transport & Vehicle Costs	3,650
Logistics Services	1,600
<b>Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE</b>	<b>6,512</b>
National Society Staff	1,788
Volunteers	1,238
<b>Total PERSONNEL</b>	<b>3,026</b>
Workshops & Training	6,000
<b>Total WORKSHOP &amp; TRAINING</b>	<b>6,000</b>
Travel	6,563
Information & Public Relations	1,000
Office Costs	210
Communications	300
<b>Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>8,073</b>
Programme and Services Support Recovery	4,400
<b>Total INDIRECT COSTS</b>	<b>4,400</b>
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>72,088</b>

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## How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to **inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the **maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.**

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**Save lives,**  
protect livelihoods,  
and strengthen recovery  
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**  
and **safe** living.



Promote social inclusion  
and a culture of  
**non-violence** and **peace.**

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