WHO Response to the Marawi Conflict

Background

On 23 May 2017, armed clashes broke out between government military forces and militants of the Maute group. The conflict resulted in over 350,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in evacuation centres and relatives’ homes in Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte. Poor environmental conditions, lack of safe water and sanitation facilities and low immunization coverage also increased the risk of communicable diseases.

The World Health Organization supported the Philippine Department of Health (DOH) in ensuring continuous health services to the IDPs and residents of the affected communities as well as preventing and detecting outbreaks. On October 2017, the Philippine government declared the end of the Marawi conflict.

WHO Humanitarian Response

Coordination and Leadership

WHO prioritised the emergency as a ‘grade 1’ event, which means special resources were deployed by the country office to address the situation. At the onset of the conflict, WHO deployed four staff members to provide support to disease surveillance, information management, water, sanitation and hygiene, and coordination. WHO co-chaired the health cluster with the DOH at the regional and national levels, including the mental health and psychosocial support cluster. After the conflict, WHO participated in a joint assessment to determine the availability of health resources and services in barangays where the IDPs have returned.

Health Services and Logistics

WHO supported the deployment of mobile teams to provide health services to IDPs in four underserved municipalities of Saguiran, Balo-i, Pantar, and Pantao Ragat, including medical services, nutrition, psychosocial support, and UNFPA-supported reproductive health services. WHO gave logistical support to the DOH with delivery of rapid diagnostic test kits for cholera and jerry cans. Mental health and psychosocial support were also provided to health workers and the IDPs affected by the conflict.

Disease Surveillance and Capacity Building

Local health workers from 39 municipalities were trained on the Surveillance in Post Extreme Emergencies and Disasters (SPEED) early warning system. WHO also trained health workers on the use of the cholera rapid diagnostic test kits for improved cholera surveillance. WHO continuously supported the government in the analysis and interpretation of disease surveillance data. No outbreak of any disease were monitored throughout the duration of the conflict.

Support in Numbers

- 90 barangays reached with mobile health services
- 39,481 patients provided with health services through the mobile health clinics
- 9 rural health units provided with additional medicines and supplies
- 50 health workers trained on SPEED
- 5,000 jerry cans provided to the IDPs through DOH
- 1,000 rapid diagnostic test kits for cholera given to DOH


Update as of 17 January 2018

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