



PHILIPPINES

# STANDING WITH PEOPLE AFFECTED BY ARMED CONFLICT

Long-running armed conflicts between government security forces and non-state armed groups continue to affect different parts of the Philippines. Exposed to the clashes, civilians flee their homes, only to face other challenges: lack of shelter, food, potable water, healthcare, education for children, and sources of income especially when displacement is prolonged. The hostilities may also lead to other consequences—death, injury, destruction of property, deprivation of liberty and loss of contact with family.

The **International Committee of the Red Cross** (ICRC) works globally to help people affected by armed conflicts and other situations of violence and to prevent and reduce the devastating impact of conflict. We strive to sustain direct access to affected people and communities and build acceptance of the parties to the conflict regarding our work. To carry out our exclusively humanitarian mission and to enjoy the trust of all sides, we maintain a strictly neutral, independent and impartial approach.

To meet humanitarian needs during and after conflicts in the Philippines where ICRC has been working since World War II, we partner with the Philippine Red Cross (PRC), and coordinate with authorities and other organizations. We help affected people with the basics of life—food, clean water, shelter, healthcare, sanitary facilities; as well as livelihood support, to allow them to regain dignity and build up resilience. We also strengthen the capacity of

health staff and facilities in conflict-affected areas to respond to emergencies through medical materials and specialized training.

Ensuring the protection of those who are not or no longer taking part in hostilities is an important task based on the universally ratified Geneva Conventions, which are at the origin of modern international humanitarian law (IHL) or the laws of war. Raising awareness of humanitarian law across various sectors of society—weapon bearers, justice actors, the media, academic and religious circles—and strengthening its domestic implementation helps secure the widest possible support for this law that aims to limit the effects of armed conflict.

By visiting places of detention, we strive to ensure that inmates, particularly those held in relation to the conflict, are treated humanely in compliance with national and international laws and standards. We support the national authorities in finding systemic solutions to the extreme overcrowding, while implementing improvement projects in some of the most congested jails.

In 2020, we will continue to stand with those affected by conflicts in the Philippines. We will act swiftly to ensure their protection and work toward enhanced respect of IHL, always engaging with authorities, weapon bearers, and others who can influence the fate of people caught in conflict.



ICRC

# OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS OF 2019

Last year, our multidisciplinary response in the Philippines focused primarily on improving the situation of civilians, wounded and detained persons in the conflict-affected areas of **Mindanao**.

We responded to emergency needs and filled gaps in assistance for affected people, including livelihood; mental health and psychological support for victims of violence; water and sanitation. We also supported the efforts of the Philippine Red Cross to bolster its operational capacities, particularly at its chapters in Mindanao.

We confidentially engaged with all parties to the conflict—government forces and non-state armed groups—with respect to their IHL obligation to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure from being targeted. We documented cases of alleged IHL violations and when required, held bilateral, confidential representations with parties to the conflict to end and prevent these concerns.

We strived to ensure the humane treatment of people detained due to conflict and helped them to maintain their family ties. We worked with authorities to strengthen systems that provide access to health, judicial guarantees and living conditions in detention facilities.

For 2020, the humanitarian activities of ICRC are carried out by over 200 local and international staff based in Manila and four offices in Mindanao (Davao, Cotabato, Iligan and Zamboanga).



## EMPLOYING DIPLOMACY FOR HUMANITARIAN OBJECTIVES

ICRC head of delegation in the Philippines Boris Michel meets with Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana as part of ICRC's humanitarian diplomacy efforts. We will continue to discuss with officials the relevant humanitarian law and policy issues which could ultimately impact the lives of people affected by conflict.

## SUPPORTING AUTHORITIES TO ADDRESS CONGESTION

An ICRC staff discusses with a jail officer how inmates are using the sunning area ICRC built. We will continue to provide technical support to jail authorities and mobilize officials at all levels to respond with urgency to extreme jail congestion.

**88 places of detention** visited to assess living conditions of inmates



## PROVIDING CLEAN WATER FOR DISPLACED PEOPLE

Over 10,900 residents and people displaced by the Marawi conflict benefited from rehabilitated water and sanitary facilities at Bualan spring. In 2020, the ICRC will rehabilitate three pumping stations in coordination with the Marawi City Water District (MCWD) and the Asian Development Bank, and complete the MCWD office renovation to ensure its capacity to deliver clean water to its customers.

**46,800 displaced people** gained access to potable water in Mindanao

## ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL NEEDS

Mel\* was forcibly held for 148 nights by an armed group in the 2017 conflict. He was one of severely distressed people who underwent individual psychological care sessions from ICRC.

The ICRC's MHPSS program in Mindanao, which started in 2018, provides direct care for victims of violence as needed while boosting efforts to train local entities to ensure sustainability.

**52 people** provided with individual psychological care



## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PHILIPPINE RED CROSS

With help from community members, ICRC staff and PRC volunteers install a tank to store clean water for families affected by conflict. Through the PRC's country-wide network, we are able to reach people in remote areas with aid. The ICRC also supported the PRC to conduct their principled humanitarian response in a safe and secure manner.

**1,465 PRC volunteer mobilizations** conducted in support of ICRC activities in Mindanao



## AIDING COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY CONFLICT

The Tighawanon community receives essential goods and livelihood support to address needs and reduce vulnerabilities after being displaced by clashes. We will continue to address gaps in the emergency and early recovery response for conflict-affected people.

**23,300 people** received household items



## HELPING PERSONS DISABLED BY CONFLICT TO REGAIN THEIR MOBILITY

Bim-Bim, an amputee and victim of a stray bullet, received physical rehabilitation and a prosthesis through ICRC support. Now, he helps other persons with disability by working at the Davao Jubilee Foundation (DJF). We have been supporting DJF and its patients since 2000 as it is the only centre that provides physical rehabilitation services for amputees in Mindanao.

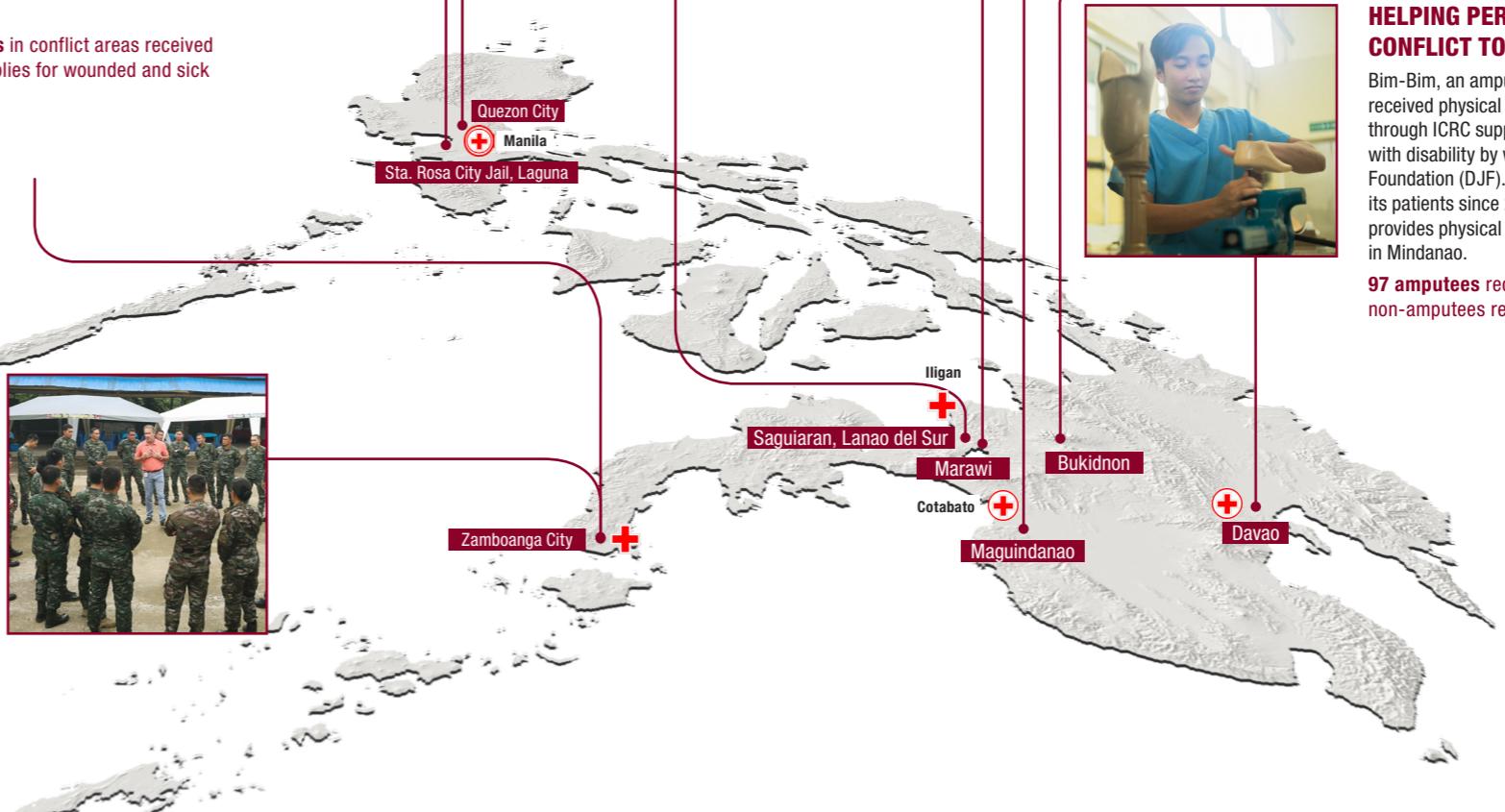
**97 amputees** received prosthetic devices while 17 non-amputees received various services at DJF



## PROMOTING RESPECT FOR HUMANITARIAN LAW

An ICRC delegate discusses IHL with Special Action Force members of the Philippine National Police operating in conflict-prone areas. We conduct sessions with government security forces and with non-state armed groups, to enhance their understanding of the law of armed conflict, and to allow space for neutral humanitarian action.

**4,000 members** of state security forces improved their knowledge of IHL, and international policing standards where relevant



### ICRC presence in the Philippines

- + Delegation
- + Sub-delegation
- + Office

# FACTS AND FIGURES FOR 2019

