



PHILIPPINES

ICRC RESPONSE TO COVID-19

As the number of COVID-19 cases grew steadily in May, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) continued to carry out programs geared to support national authorities, health-care facilities, places of detention and the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) to respond to the pandemic. Our operational response focused on populations most at risk from the spread of the virus, such as: detainees, displaced and vulnerable people in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao.

The ICRC invested a strong effort in assisting authorities to set up isolation centers in selected detention facilities and to assist the staff with expert technical advice, infection prevention and control training, essential protective equipment, hygiene and other items.

By the end of May, the support reached over 35,000 beneficiaries in 53 places of detention. Notably, the ICRC supported the establishment of 8 medical isolation centers managed by the BJMP (Bureau of Jail Management and Penology) and BuCor (Bureau of Corrections), with combined capacity of over 1,100 beds.

Simultaneously, the ICRC engaged in a close coordination with relevant national bodies, local authorities and international organizations to ensure that guidelines and policies on COVID-19 response take into consideration the situation in the congested places of detention.

The ICRC stayed in regular contact with people in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao where COVID-19 related movement restrictions and sporadic fighting resulted in compounded negative effects for vulnerable populations.

We have been monitoring the situation in those areas to assess the situation with regards to safety of civilians and healthcare workers, but also to determine how the ICRC could assist in a coordinated way the most vulnerable people who have limited options to engage in economic activities.

In its role as a neutral and impartial humanitarian organization, the ICRC has engaged with the parties to the armed conflict to remind them of their obligations with regard to international humanitarian law (IHL), in particular the provisions most relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

In Mindanao and in the National Capital Region (NCR) we provided material support, training and expert advice to support the work of the key health facilities, Red Cross and medico-legal departments.

This is the second overview of the ongoing ICRC activities in the country, where our expertise, resources and existing relationships continued to bring a distinct added-value for those most at risk. The information in this document is up to date as of 31 May 2020.



ICRC



INFECTION-CONTROL IN DETENTION FACILITIES

PLACES OF DETENTION:

53 facilities supported; 35,869 beneficiaries

Logistical support: Water trucking for 60,000 litres

Health and hygiene supplies: Donation of hygiene supplies (3,869 for detainees / 151 for jail staff), 1,400 surgical masks, cleaning materials, bleach and 5,000 soap bars, 1,650 PPE kits, and material for 96,000 masks to be made by detainees.

Technical advice on crafting guidelines, SOPs, training sessions and other support to BJMP & BuCor.

Info-as-aid posters and audio recordings in Tagalog for detainees in 430 operational jails (BJMP) and 7 Bureau of Corrections facilities across the country

ISOLATION AREAS IN PLACES OF DETENTION: 8 facilities supported; 1,130 bed capacity

Infrastructure support to build screening / triage / isolation facilities, including water and sanitation facilities

Donation of 2,300 PPE kits, medical equipment, cleaning / disinfecting / waste management materials, and furniture for the isolation centres

POLICE STATIONS:

20 facilities supported; 3,000 beneficiaries

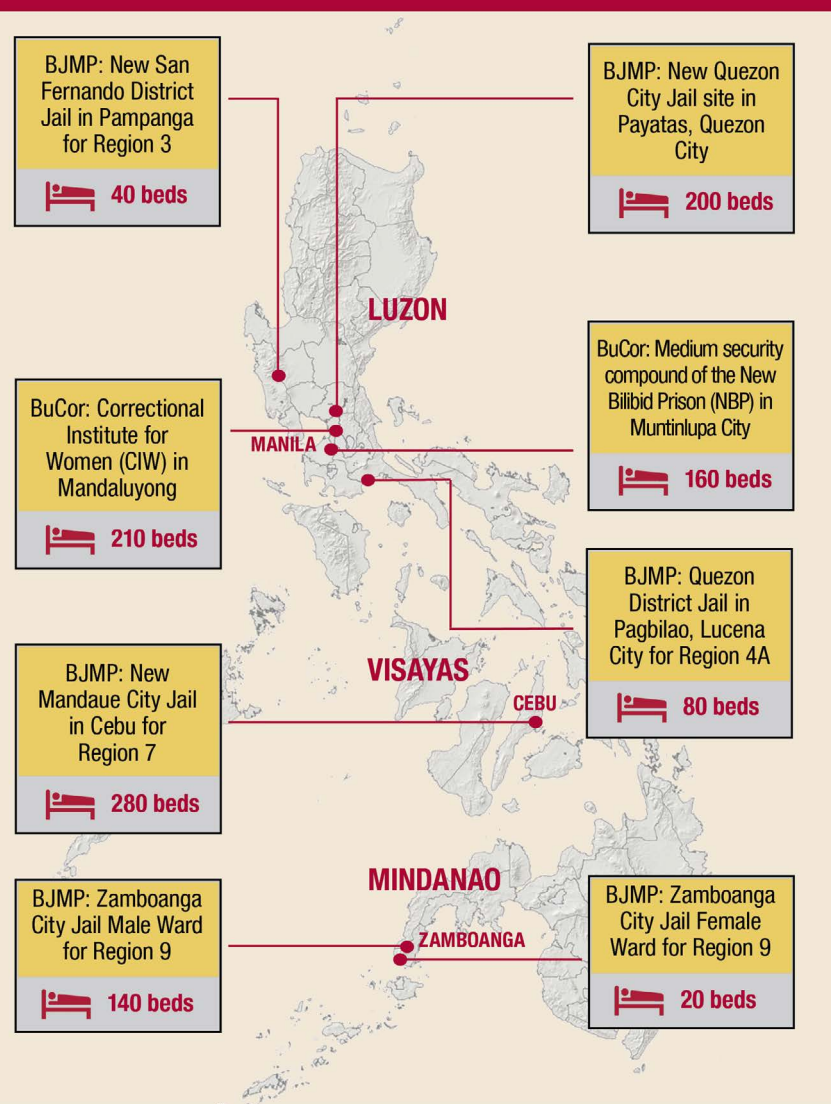
Donation of hygiene supplies and cleaning materials

RESTORING FAMILY LINKS:

68 tablets distributed in 15 detention facilities and seven COVID-19 isolation centers to facilitate contact between detainees and their families in the absence of family visits due to COVID-19.

ICRC-SUPPORTED COVID-19 ISOLATION CENTERS

Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) and Bureau of Corrections (BuCor)



PARTNERING WITH THE PHILIPPINE RED CROSS

Strong cooperation with the **Philippine Red Cross (PRC)**, our main partner in the country, continued to focus on ensuring PRC's delivery of essential community programs such as blood and ambulance services. ICRC supported with financial assistance of Php 21 million for 8 PRC chapters in Bicol and Visayas, and all PRC chapters in Mindanao to cover disinfection materials for 8 months, support to PRC personnel on-duty, and material assistance consisting of:



37,500
Surgical masks



35,000
Surgical gloves



68 units
Thermal scanners



4,500
N95 masks



74 units
Sanitizers and
230 units of refill



3,000
Basic front-line
PPE



200 sets
Coverall
front-line PPE



5,025
Washable masks



5,025
Automatic
sprayers



PHP 2M
Worth of disinfection
materials



SUPPORT TO VITAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

To help ensure that people in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao received basic healthcare, the ICRC focused its support to the six COVID-19 referral hospitals (see map), in the process of having to overcome logistical challenges related to supply shortages and transport limitations. Working with the PRC, the ICRC assisted the Cotabato Regional Medical Center with setting up of a COVID-19 isolation facility, including latrines/showers, and electronic equipment, as well as donation of medical supplies.

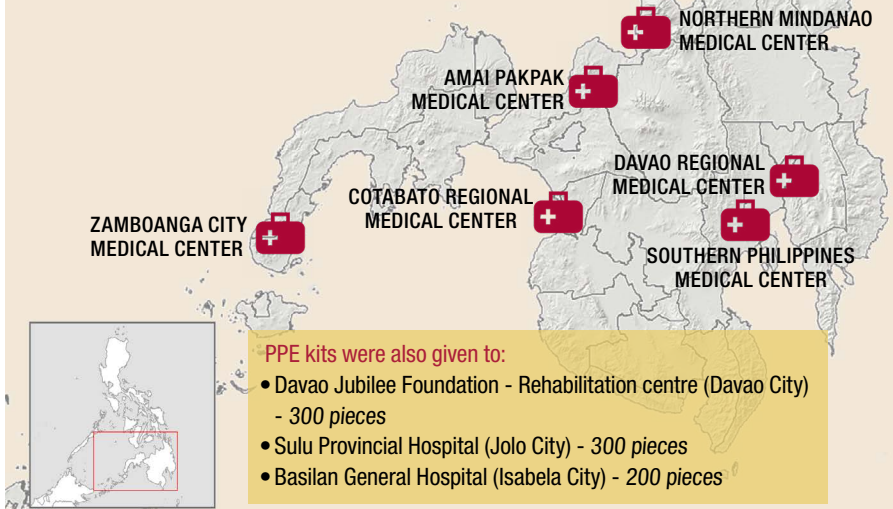


ICRC-SUPPORTED HOSPITALS IN MINDANAO



Priority hospitals in conflict-affected areas each received 1200 PPE sets for 260 staff members.

* Aside from the PPE sets, additional support was also given to Cotabato Regional Medical Center in terms of infrastructures, and review of flow with the management of the hospitals.



OTHER HUMANITARIAN INITIATIVES / SUPPORT



MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS)

The ICRC's "Helping the Helpers" program is intended to empower helpers to care for themselves and to provide basic mental health and psychosocial support for those affected by COVID-19. Weekly sessions were conducted for 112 frontline health workers in 6 different health institutions in Mindanao island and 1 in NCR, with the objective of helping them manage their stress (care for themselves) as well as to provide basic mental health support to others. ICRC also conducted sessions for selected jail staff in Manila who are looking after the health and safety of PDLs.



INFO-AS-AID MESSAGES in Tagalog promoting mental health awareness disseminated via social media and radio spots.

HUMANITARIAN FORENSICS

DISTRIBUTION OF BODY BAGS

- Medicolegal departments in NCR, Davao Region, Northern Mindanao Region
- Isolation centres in National Capital Region

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

- Technical support to government authorities to craft forensic policy and guidelines

GUIDELINES

Guidelines to ensure safe and dignified funerary and burial customs for COVID-19 patients (SOPs, training sessions, capacity-building):

- NGOs (religious and community leaders)
- Prison staff in five isolation facilities

INFO-AS-AID SUPPORT

- Posters on proper management of human remains, translated in four languages and distributed among:
 - Government authorities
 - Medicolegal departments



AWARENESS-GENERATION MESSAGES spread via SMS in five languages in Mindanao and social media posts, reaching over 200,000 people.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Reaching out to past and planned beneficiaries of food, household items and cash grants, reassuring that though postponed, the projects in Mindanao will resume as soon as conditions allow.

International Committee of the Red Cross
5F Erechem Building, Corner Rufino and Salcedo Streets,
Legaspi Village, Makati City 1229

T +63 2 88928901 F +63 2 8819 5997 or 8403 0996

[facebook.com/ICRCph](https://www.facebook.com/ICRCph)
www.icrc.org/ph



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