



## PHILIPPINES ICRC OPERATIONAL UPDATE

In June 2020, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) continued to support national authorities, health-care facilities, places of detention and the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, the ICRC resumed activities focusing on protection and assistance activities in the conflict-affected areas of the country that had been slowed down during the first few months of the outbreak.

While closely following humanitarian concerns in detention facilities and the ICRC-supported COVID-19 isolation centers attached to them, we continued to provide technical and policy support to authorities at the national and sub-national level. In Mindanao, the ICRC conducted field visits to conflict-affected areas to monitor respect for international humanitarian law (IHL) by the parties to the armed conflicts and to assess humanitarian needs of affected populations,

including children, families of the missing, those with conflict-related physical disabilities, and IDPs.

In Mindanao and in the National Capital Region (NCR) the ICRC provided material support, training and expert advice to support the work of the key health facilities, Red Cross and medico-legal departments. The ICRC also engaged with weapon bearers, national and regional authorities, religious and academic experts, media and civil society, to discuss its humanitarian activities and to increase the understanding and respect for IHL in the Philippines.

This is the third overview of the ongoing ICRC activities in the country, containing hyperactive links to additional online content. Previous reports can be consulted here: [May 2020](#), [June 2020](#).



ICRC

# OVERVIEW TO DATE OF ICRC RESPONSE TO COVID-19



Assisted detention authorities in setting up eight COVID-19 isolation facilities (1,130 beds) and provided assistance to 53 detention facilities (36,000 beneficiaries)



Supported authorities in developing technical guidelines on management of COVID-19 in places of detention



Facilitated contact between detainees and their families in 25 detention facilities and 8 COVID-19 isolation centers through donation of 73 tablet devices



Supported priority hospitals in conflict-affected areas with PPE (1200 sets for 260 staff members)



Organized Helping the Helpers sessions for health workers in Mindanao



Donated body bags and PPE to crime laboratories in Region 10 and Region 11



18,500 residents and displaced people in shelters benefitted from supply of potable water through donation of chlorine and fuel to Marawi City Water District



Provided financial support of PHP 56 million for COVID-19 response and essential community services of 25 PRC chapters in Bicol, Visayas and Mindanao

## ICRC presence in the Philippines



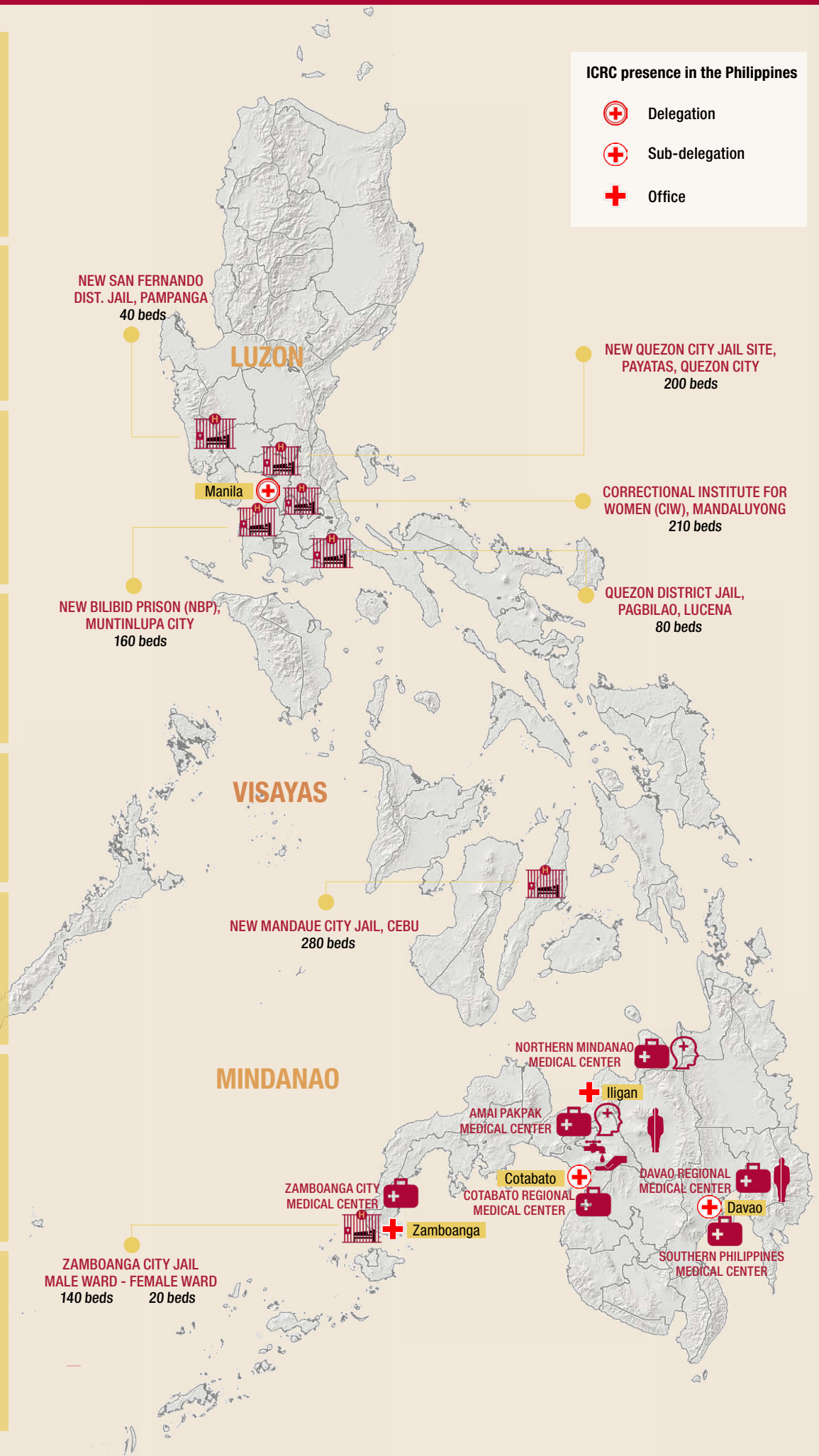
Delegation



Sub-delegation



Office





# HIGHLIGHTS OF ICRC RESPONSE TO COVID-19 *(for the month of JUNE 2020)*



## INFECTION-CONTROL IN DETENTION FACILITIES

ICRC continued to monitor the situation and provide technical and material assistance in [COVID-19 isolation centers](#) established with ICRC support. It also visited other detention places, such as the facility managed by the Bureau of Immigration.

### BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTER



Technical advice on strategic planning for the prevention, control and management of COVID-19 in their detention facility



Rapid COVID-19 symptom screening of PDLs and donation of hygiene materials and cleaning supplies



### ZAMBOANGA CITY JAIL



Completion of ICRC assistance in setting up COVID-19 isolation areas in male and female dorms of the Zamboanga City Jail (ZCJ) through installation of latrines and washing blocks for both female and male quarters, and of systems to protect tents in the isolation area from flooding and direct sun exposure.



Donation of medical items and supplies to both dorms



Improvement of the water supply intake and distribution system ensuring a better and regular access to water for PDLs



Donation of personal hygiene items for staff and detainees



Monitoring of the COVID-19 suspected and confirmed cases and swabbing done for staff and detainees

### TECHNICAL ADVICE



Provided technical input on the working guidelines for management of COVID-19 in places of detention to the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases



## SUPPORT TO VITAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

ICRC continued to support provision of basic healthcare to people in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao, by assisting priority hospitals with medical donations and technical advice, and by delivering sessions on mental health for the health workers.



Supported extension of COVID-19 isolation ward at the [Cotabato Regional Medical Center \(CRMC\)](#) by setting up medical tents and sanitary facilities and providing PPE



### HELPING THE HELPERS (HtH) PROGRAM

With focus on the health frontliners in Mindanao, ICRC organized 81 sessions of the [program](#) and extended support to 343 helpers on how to care for themselves and to provide basic mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for those affected by COVID-19



## PARTNERING WITH THE PHILIPPINE RED CROSS

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic ICRC has maintained a close coordination with the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) on the COVID-19 response, to ensure PRC's delivery of essential blood and ambulance services, especially in conflict-affected areas.



Provision of financial assistance (about PhP35 million) to support the establishment of 2 molecular laboratories for COVID-19 testing that will be run and operated by the local PRC chapters in the cities of Cotabato and Zamboanga, thereby strengthening the capacity of the Red Cross to support the healthcare system and authorities in key areas in Mindanao.



Donation of 5,000 hygiene kits to be allocated to community quarantine facilities in Marawi city, Cotabato City, and Zamboanga city





## OTHER HUMANITARIAN INITIATIVES

### HUMANITARIAN FORENSICS



[Webinar](#) on religious burials of Muslim individuals during COVID-19 times from the perspective of forensic science and Islam was organized jointly with the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and Institute of Islamic Studies of University of the Philippines. Sixty-five participants, including health and other BARMM government officials, scholars, religious leaders and humanitarian workers, shared their insights and made recommendations to ensure the dignity of the dead and their families, in full respect of health guidance and religious rites.



Donation of body bags and PPE to crime laboratories in Region 10 (140 body bags) and Region 11 (160 body bags), as the lead units for the Management of the Dead and Missing (MDM) Cluster response.

### ECONOMIC SECURITY/ ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS (AAP)



In Davao, Zamboanga, Cotabato and Iligan, multipurpose cash grants (amounting to PhP 4,000 per family) were given to 116 families of missing persons and 198 families of persons with disabilities



Consistent with principles of accountability to affected people, the ICRC maintained contact with beneficiaries in conflict-affected areas, to share messages on COVID-19 prevention and to get feedback on the impact of assistance received from the ICRC.



Messages to help increase the resilience of communities amidst the threat of COVID-19 were aired via 3 radio stations reaching 500,000 people in Mindanao and parts of Visayas. These messages focused on the normalization and validation of emotional reactions towards COVID-19 and the uncertainties it brings, on coping with stress in a productive way, and on health promotion.

## NON-COVID OPERATIONAL RESPONSE

### CONFLICT-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES



After a suspension due to COVID-19 quarantine restrictions, ICRC has resumed reconstruction of the conflict-damaged school in Ragayan, which provides education for more than 250 elementary students.

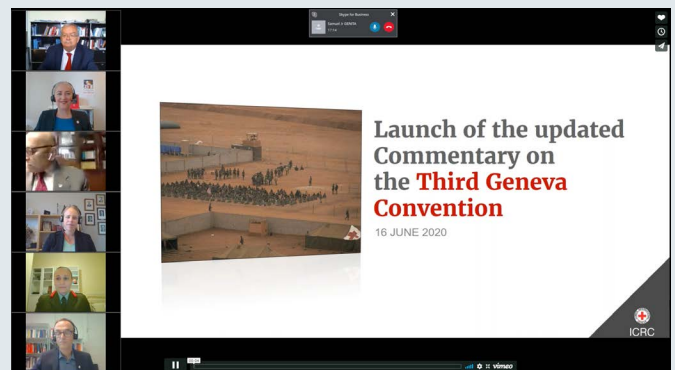
### HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY



The Philippine government made a [pledge](#) to transform the national IHL Ad Hoc Committee into a permanent body. The commitment is connected to the 33rd International Red Cross Red Crescent Conference, held in Geneva in December 2019, which encouraged States to consider establishing IHL committees.



ICRC held a global online launch of its [Updated Commentary to 3rd Geneva Convention](#) (covering protection of prisoners of war) with participation of Philippine representatives. The updated commentaries reflect the developments in law and practice over the past decades, to provide practical guidance on the implementation of the Conventions. The event was attended by representatives of the Department of Justice, Public Attorney's Office, Commission on Human Rights, PNP Academy, Office of the Special Envoy on Transnational Crime, Department of Education, civil society, and the academe. A [video recording](#) of the launch can be viewed here.



ICRC maintained regular institutional dialogue with senior officers of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), to ensure understanding of its purely humanitarian mandate and conduct of its operational activities in a neutral and impartial manner, but also to discuss PNP and AFP's respective modernization plans, in particular when it comes to further integration of international humanitarian law (IHL) at the strategic level.



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