

Indigenous & women most affected by Mindanao earthquake

Thursday 7 November 2019, by [JOHNSON Mark](#) (Date first published: 7 November 2019).

Indigenous people, women and children are the most affected by the recent earthquakes and flooding in Cotabato Province. ESSF is supporting local progressive initiatives to support these communities. Supporters of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and local big landowners have been spreading fake news about 'generous' military support to the civilian population.

According to the progressive Multi-Stakeholders Initiatives for Humanitarian Action against Disasters (MiHANDs), government agencies and mainstream NGOs are reluctant to provide support in some areas where there is low-level conflict with the New People's Army (NPA - the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines). Some remote communities have also been left out of government agency relief and reconstruction efforts. Others have received token and completely inadequate support. Most of these communities are indigenous.

Even where government agencies and NGOs have responded, many vulnerable people are not receiving support. "There are evacuation sites that lack sanitation facilities which prompted some of the affected families to stay outside the site and close to their damaged houses or neighbors where toilets are readily accessible. These affected families who stay outside of the evacuation centers are less likely included in the relief distribution." [1]

Government agencies including the Department of Labor and local governments across Mindanao have been providing some cash and material assistance. [2] Unfortunately, some pro-government activists have been spreading fake news that exaggerates the scale and efficiency of the official disaster response. [3] Photos of soldiers assisting civilians during a typhoon relief operation in Aurora province several years ago have been republished and reposed several thousand times in the last couple of days. As if to 'prove' that the Armed Forces of the Philippines have good relations with the Moro and Lumad peoples and the other rural residents in Mindanao.

As we wrote earlier, "Government services are of poor quality and not focused on the needs of the urban and rural poor, as well as the Moro and Lumad (indigenous) peoples. Government resources have long been concentrated on protection of corporate investors and a low-intensity confrontation with various armed rebels." [4]

The MiHANDs coalition is focusing its humanitarian assistance on 4,289 affected Bangsamoro and indigenous families. Cash donations will be used to provide food and non-food items. MiHANDs is also mobilizing its volunteers to provide psychosocial interventions as well as information and training for local people to reduce risk of water-borne diseases.

P.S.

To send donations

Bank details: Crédit lyonnais, Agence de la Croix-de-Chavaux (00525), 10 boulevard Chanzy, 93100 Montreuil, France
Account name: ESSF
IBAN : FR85 3000 2005 2500 0044 5757 C12
BIC / SWIFT : CRLYFRPP

Through PayPal

Click on the PayPal logo on the ESSF home page:

<http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?page=sommaire&lang=en>

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We will continue to report on the situation and the use of the ESSF solidarity fund.

Footnotes

[1] MiHANDs Needs Assessment 6 November 2019

http://www.europe-solidaire.org/ecrire/?exec=article&id_article=51090

[2] <https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/matanao-quake-victims-need-potable-water>

[3] See for example

<https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/fact-check/244272-photos-relief-operations-earthquake-hit-mindanao>

[4] ESSF/MiHANDs emergency appeal: earthquakes in Mindanao (Philippines)

http://www.europe-solidaire.org/ecrire/?exec=article&id_article=51076