GOVERNING HUMAN-INDUCED DISASTERS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

INSIGHTS FROM THE 2017 MARAWI CONFLICT

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Policy Report

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Executive Summary

In May 2017, a battle broke out between the Philippine defence and security forces and Islamic State (IS)-affiliated militants in Marawi City during an attempt to capture the then IS emir in Southeast Asia. The clash escalated quickly into a government-led siege that lasted until October 2017. The city was left in ruins, many locals were killed or harmed, and up to 98 per cent of the total population were forcibly displaced, leading to serious humanitarian consequences. The 2017 Marawi Conflict highlights the unique challenges of governing human-induced disasters — a dynamic process involving multiple actors working with each other at different levels and scales to jointly reduce and manage disasters caused by human action or inaction. In such a context, national militaries tend to dominate the response, security measures usually overrule civilian arrangements, and aid workers often face higher security risks and restrictions to humanitarian access. The conflict also emphasises the urgent need to re-assess the applicability of traditional disaster risk management (DRM) practices in densely populated urban areas and the impact of rapidly evolving technologies on humanitarian assistance.

From October to December 2019, the RSIS Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Programme conducted desk research and key informant interviews to examine disaster governance issues during and right after the 2017 Marawi Conflict. Disaster governance systems are effective when they enable assistance to reach those who are most in need, promote dialogue and cooperation among various actors, and facilitate inclusive approaches that consider different stakeholder interests. This report summarises the main challenges, good practices, and key opportunities relevant to protecting and assisting vulnerable populations caught in the midst of battle. It presents the (i) tactical issues of security and access in providing aid and relief, (ii) operational issues concerning urban environments and information operations, and (iii) strategic issues relating to jurisdictional overlaps, civil-military relations, gender perspectives, and the role of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in disaster governance. Finally, it offers policy recommendations for enhancing the governance of human-induced disasters in the Philippines and Southeast Asia in light of emerging threats, and how the governance efforts could potentially interact with other risks in the region.

The 2017 Marawi Conflict

Human-induced disasters are events triggered by man-made or technological hazards. Situations of armed conflict are considered man-made hazards. An armed conflict turns into a disaster when it disrupts the functioning of society on a large scale and results in widespread damages and losses beyond the physical fighting.

The conflict in Marawi started from a joint-mission by the Philippine military and police to capture Isnilon Hapilon.[1] Hapilon, the leader of the Abu Sayyaf group (ASG), sought to consolidate jihadist forces in the region at the time. An armed struggle erupted and violence escalated as Hapilon called for reinforcements from the Maute group (MG) also known as IS-Lanao. This prompted President Duterte to declare martial law for the entire island of Mindanao to ramp-up military deployments, carry out warrantless arrests, and impose other measures to manage the crisis.[2]

More than 1,000 combatants and civilians were killed by the time military operations officially ceased after the confirmed deaths of militant leaders Isnilon Hapilon and Omar Maute.[3] No less than 350,000 local inhabitants were forcefully displaced: separating families, destroying livelihoods, disrupting social services, and weakening institutions.[4] This led to massive humanitarian needs as the affected communities required protection and extensive assistance in health, food, water, and shelter. Damages and losses to the local economy was estimated at around PHP 18.5 billion (approximately US$370 million).[5]

[1] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), "Philippines: Crisis in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao", 1 June 2017.
[2] Republic of the Philippines, "Proclamation No. 216, s. 2017", *Official Gazette*, 23 May 2017.
[3] International Institute for Strategic Studies, "Chapter Four: The siege of Marawi: significance and implications", *Asia-Pacific Regional Assessment 2018*, June 2018.
[4] UNOCHA Philippines, "Humanitarian Bulletin Philippines – Issue 10", November 2017.
[5] Asian Development Bank, "Emergency Assistance for Reconstruction and Recovery of Marawi: Report and Recommendation of the President – Summary Assessment of Damage and Needs", November 2018.

Differentiating Natural and Human-induced Disaster Responses

There are two broad contexts shaping humanitarian response. These are: natural disasters and human-induced disasters, which includes situations of armed conflict. Relations between and among the responding actors, and the ways they interact, vary depending on the type of disaster. Humanitarian actors are expected to be neutral, impartial, and operationally independent in order to gain access to and acceptance from affected populations. The role of the military in disaster response is a controversial one. This is because the "rule of last resort" states that militaries and their assets should only be used in critical life-threatening situations and if there were no other civilian and humanitarian alternatives.[6]

Natural disasters are less sensitive as no actors are actively involved in conflict and humanitarian principles are rarely contested. With increased opportunities for coordination, cooperation becomes the key interface between civilian, humanitarian, and military actors.[7] In human-induced disasters, however, the default strategy is to co-exist.[8] International Humanitarian Law (IHL) requires a clear distinction between combatants and non-combatants. As such, civilian and humanitarian actors would have to distance themselves from military actors to prevent questions over their neutrality, impartiality, and operational independence, which can hamper humanitarian action and endanger aid workers. Compared to natural disasters, coordinating in human-induced disasters is far more challenging.

Despite general acceptance of the respective role of different actors, in Southeast Asia however, militaries tend to be first responders and front liners to different types of disasters.[9] In the 2017 Marawi Conflict, the military was not only a primary actor in the conflict, it was also the administrator of the martial law and the central agency for overall humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts. These had implications at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. The dominating role played by militaries in disaster response is further discussed in the context of a related regional framework in the following sections.

[6] UNOCHA, "Oslo guidelines: Guidelines on the use of military and civil defense assets to support United Nations humanitarian activities in complex emergencies", 2007.
[7] UNOCHA, "UN CMCoord Field Handbook (Version 2.0)", 2018.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Jessica Ear, Alistair D.B. Cook, and Deon V. Canyon. "Disaster Response Regional Architectures: Assessing Future Possibilities", Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2017.

Approach and Methodology

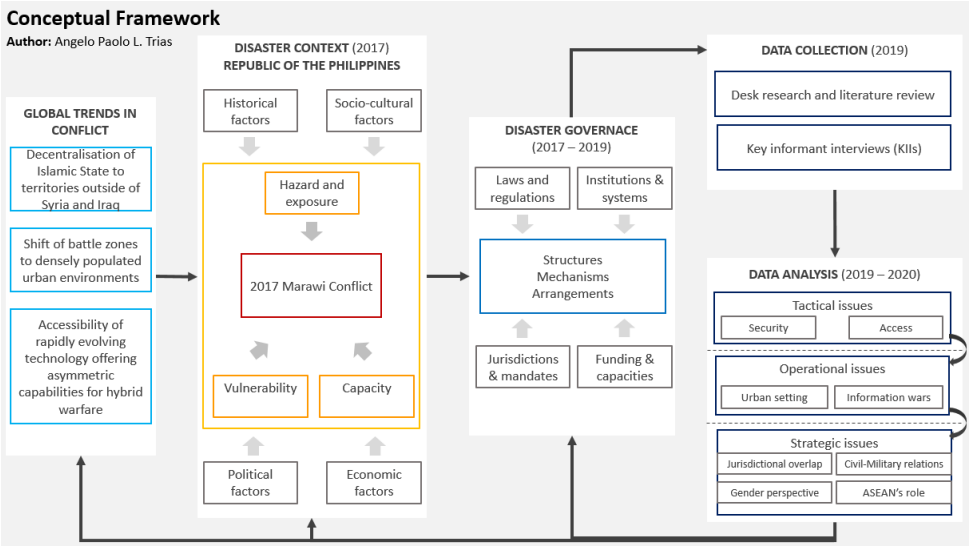
The study by the RSIS HADR Programme examined data collected through desk research, key informant interviews, and field observation.

Two main questions are addressed in this report:

- What are the factors that facilitate or limit the protection and assistance of conflict-affected populations?
- What are the processes that promote or hinder cooperation between actors responding to human-induced disasters?

A conceptual framework developed by Angelo Paolo L. Trias (co-author) based on literature review was used to analyse the disaster governance structures, mechanisms, and arrangements of the Philippine government and its key partners (see Figure 1).

Figure 1



Interview Findings and Field Observations

I. Tactical issues

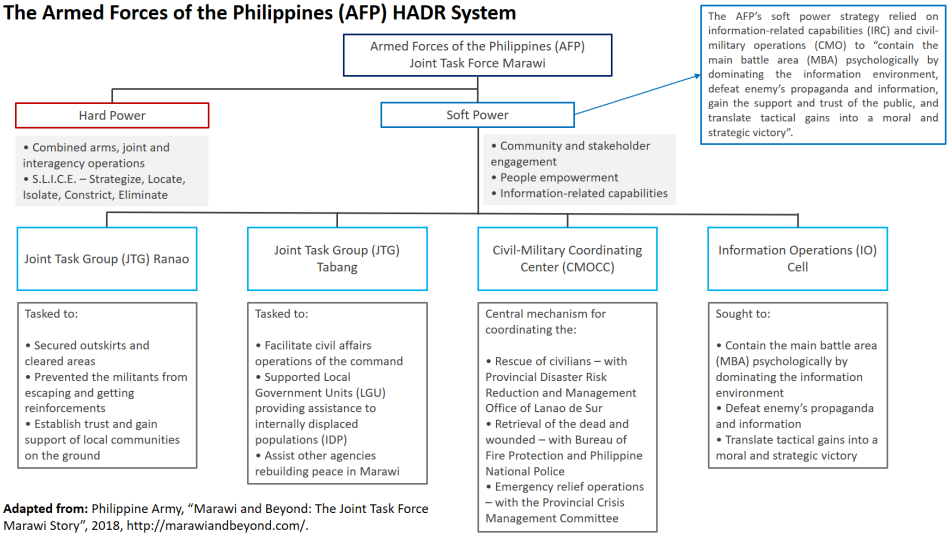
On securing access: Continue strengthening civil-military relations and interfaith dialogue to breakdown institutional and religious barriers in response efforts

Civilian and humanitarian actors had two options for securing access to affected populations during the Marawi Conflict. The first was through the Civil-Military Coordinating Center (CMOCC), the central HADR mechanism of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). The other was to directly negotiate with religious leaders of local communities and informing the AFP. There were civilian and humanitarian actors that bypassed these agencies at their own risk. But by and large, actors involved in official or organised efforts liaised with the military that controlled access and security in the whole of Mindanao under martial law.

The HADR system of the AFP was designed, planned, and operated to support its soft power strategy.[10] While the HADR system was instrumental in saving lives and alleviating the suffering of civilians, it was also a means to legitimising the conduct of military operations and generating support from the nation.[11] The system comprised of four inter-related components: the CMOCC, Joint Task Group (JTG) Ranao, JTG Tabang, and Information Operations (IO) Cell (see Figure 2).

[10] Philippine Army, "Marawi and Beyond: The Joint Task Force Marawi Story", 2018, http://marawiandbeyond.com/.
[11] Ibid.

Figure 2



Adapted from: Philippine Army, "Marawi and Beyond: The Joint Task Force Marawi Story", 2018, http://marawiandbeyond.com/.

Most civilian and humanitarian actors gained access to affected communities through the CMOCC. Those who had prior working relationships with the AFP were prioritised and supported. For instance, the Makati Medical Center Foundation (MMCF), which has a private-public partnership with the AFP Medical Center since 2013,[12] had a distinct advantage over other actors offering help. The MMCF is an example of how the private sector can successfully engage the military by aligning their core business offerings to institutional needs or government efforts. During the response, the MMCF was able to communicate expediently as they knew how and who to contact in the CMOCC for the required support. They were also able to deploy their volunteers and equipment faster than many other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) because they had prioritised access to the use of military airlifts. They were also assured of close protection.

Most organisations that offer humanitarian aid and disaster management support have existing partnerships with civilian agencies of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) but only a select group were well-connected with the AFP and understood how they worked. The Marawi case serves as a reminder to humanitarian organisations that respond to human-induced disasters of the necessity to maintain dialogue with defence and security forces.

[12] Frances Mangosing and Nikko Dizon. "AFP, top hospital OK partnership", 20 June 2013, https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/429537/afp-makati-medical-center-sign-deal-to-improve-military-hospitals.

Such regular communication can help these organisations to develop a better understanding of how to promote and protect humanitarian principles in the midst of battle, and pursue common goals whenever appropriate.

Given that the majority of people in Mindanao are Muslim, religious leaders played an important role in facilitating emergency response. They assisted the military in persuading civilians to evacuate from the battle zone. They also supported the relief efforts of civilian and humanitarian actors by facilitating the registration of displaced persons and delivery of relief items. Many organisations who aided the local communities had two things in common: they were faith-based organisations, and they had actively participated in peacebuilding efforts years before the Marawi Conflict. While securing access to affected communities largely depends on overcoming physical barriers, gaining acceptance relies more on penetrating social structures. Socio-cultural and religious factors played an important role in building trust.

Civilian and humanitarian actors with established networks with local community and religious leaders in Marawi were able to carry out relief and assistance efforts relatively swiftly. The Philippine Relief and Development Services (PHILRADS), which has participated in interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding efforts in Mindanao for years, was able to harness their pre-existing relationships in Marawi to gain access to and acceptance by local communities. Faith-based organisations tend to have strong grassroots connections. PHILRADS used their people-to-people links to scale up and diffuse their activities through networks of small churches, family gatherings, and University Christian Youth Groups.

On managing public perceptions: Adopt visible humanitarian practices that are relevant and appropriate to the local context

The main challenge of the AFP when conducting HADR was the negative perception of uniformed personnel in affected communities. The Maranaos carry a long-standing grudge from atrocities they endured at the hands of the military during martial law in the 1970s. To break this stigma and reach the most vulnerable populations, particularly women and children, the AFP mobilised Hijab Troopers — a group of hijab-wearing female army and police personnel with a mission to assist rehabilitation and recovery efforts for internally displaced people (IDP) traumatised by the conflict.[13] This programme was well received by affected communities as it

[13] Armed Forces of the Philippines, “All-Female Soldiers, Police on Peace Mission to Marawi”, 30 August 2017, https://www.facebook.com/notes/armed-forces-of-the-philippines/all-female-soldiers-police-on-peace-mission-to-marawi/10159285169995607/.

demonstrated the sensitivity and respect of the AFP for the local culture, norms, and religion.

On rapidly evolving technologies: Ensuring the responsible use of data is a key issue of humanitarian protection in the digital age

It is often the civilians, and not the warring parties, who bear the brunt of the fighting. About 240,000 IDPs sought refuge from host families in neighbouring municipalities.[14] Home-based IDPs presented the biggest problem to the civilian and humanitarian actors providing assistance and relief. Home-based IDPs are "people who have been forced to flee their homes to avoid the effects of armed conflict, generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-caused disasters, but are staying with relatives or friends".[15] Data responsibility is a key issue of humanitarian protection in the digital age. IDP profiling and tracking was particularly sensitive because it carries political and military value. It can be used as a tool for favouring relatives, enticing potential voters, and seeking out relatives of militants.

The unavailability of official identification documents of conflict-affected people, data privacy issues, and low capacity for integrated information management in the government limited the coverage of aid to home-based IDPs. Because they were largely unaccounted for, the home-based IDPs did not receive as much attention and support as those staying at evacuation centres and transitory shelters. This has far-reaching consequences since home-based IDPs represent the majority of Maranaos. Any rehabilitation and recovery effort that does not adequately consider the needs of these individuals and their host families are likely to be deemed inappropriate and unsustainable.

[14] International Maritime Organization, "Marawi Crisis Displacement Tracking Matrix", Report 9, October 2017, https://displacement.iom.int/system/tdf/reports/DTM%20%239.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=4047

[15] OCHA, "Humanitarian Bulletin — Philippines", Issue 09, 1 – 30 September 2017, p.1, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHAPhilippines_Humanitarian_Bulletin_No9_September_2016_FINAL.pdf

On localisation efforts: Focus on building and supplementing sub-national capacities and resources whenever possible

Another constraint is the low representation of local actors in planning and decision-making roles. The Task Force Bangon Marawi, a government inter-agency group coordinating the rehabilitation and recovery efforts in Marawi, was praised because it was created during the conflict and not after, which afforded more time for the respective actors to strategise and mobilise resources. The effort was well-supported by member agencies from the start, as evidenced by the regular attendance of decision-makers at the general meetings. However, the task force was not built to be responsive to local needs. The UN established humanitarian systems with regional and provincial government units to push for more localisation, but the national government who took over had used a different system where local representatives with contextual knowledge were under-represented. This was a major hindrance to setting the plans in motion on the ground.

II. Operational issues

On urban environments: Re-assess the applicability of traditional disaster risk management (DRM) practices in densely populated urban areas

The Marawi Conflict was the longest urban battle in the modern history of the Philippines, and mainly fought using hybrid warfare and modern tools like drones and social media.[16] Warfare in cities presents many systemic challenges beyond infrastructure that make it especially difficult to protect and assist civilians. The proliferation of information technologies further expanded the "battle area" from the physical-material space to the psychological-narrative space. There is an urgent need for policy makers and practitioners involved in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to learn to navigate both tangible obstacles and technological pathways to reach people in need.

As the Marawi Conflict dragged on, it became clear that the urban environment slowed down operations. The AFP, being used to traditional jungle warfare, had to adapt to the realities of urban operations and the peculiarity of enemy tactics. Exposure to snipers made it very risky to move around in the open, while traps

[16] Charles Knight and Katia Theodorakis. "The Marawi crisis — urban conflict and information operations", *ASPI*, 31 July 2019, https://www.aspi.org.au/report/marawi-crisis-urban-conflict-and-information-operations.

up to evacuate locals trapped in the firefight. However, the civilian actors providing assistance and relief were faced with similar constraints. As such, most of their efforts were focused outside the main battle area, while local government units (LGUs) were unable to properly discharge their functions because public buildings and infrastructure were captured or destroyed.

One of the goals of the militants is to convince the local population, through information operations, to stay inside the city and join the fight against the Philippine government. Operations would have been far more complex had that been the case. For instance, militants can use more civilians as human shields to further limit the options for military offensive. Militants can also use civilians to blend into the crowd, making it hard for humanitarian actors to distinguish combatants from non-combatants. There seems to be a low capacity and lack of preparation for dealing with this scenario at local and national levels. This raises the necessity to revisit city DRM strategies in light of the evolving disaster risk environment.

On information operations: Reconsider the psychological-narrative aspects of response efforts and the impact of rapidly evolving technologies on humanitarian assistance

The weaponisation of technology is to "win the hearts and minds of people". Extremist messaging became highly localised and closely linked to local grievances. To counter disinformation and propaganda, the AFP employed strategic communications and psychological campaigns of various mediums in and outside the battlefield. Most of the information war was fought on social media. The AFP actively monitored social media accounts advocating violent extremism and participated in online discussions to quell negative perceptions and discredit the militants. The AFP used religiously appropriate words, showed culturally acceptable behaviours[17], and regularly uploaded powerful images of the troops and locals working together. Such efforts by the AFP prevented the armed conflict from turning into a cultural and religious war, which could have affected more people. This shows that narratives that shape the operating environment matter in human-induced disasters as effective management of information is conducive to reducing risks and threats, and providing assistance and protection to vulnerable groups.

[17] Culturally acceptable behaviours refer to actions that show sensitivity to, understanding, and respect of the system of meaning, social norms, and power relations in the conflict-affected community.

III. Strategic issues

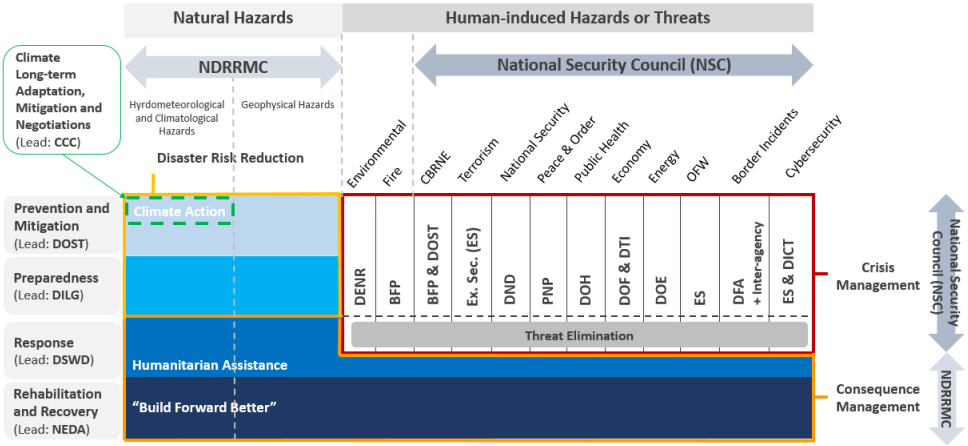
On jurisdictional overlaps: Harmonise existing frameworks and systems for a more coherent and holistic human-induced DRM approach

The Philippine DRRM System has at its core a civil defence structure. This is evident when considering the historical context and key actors involved. While the scope and scale of the system have expanded, the focus has remained the same — to protect the population from hazards or threats to their welfare and wellbeing. Mechanisms and arrangements for assisting conflict-affected communities are available. However, the key issue lies in clearly defining the roles and responsibilities. For instance, guidelines for protecting IDPs are available, but there is no legislation that interprets how the guidelines should be implemented.

There are two bodies responsible for managing human-induced disasters: the NDRRMC and the National Security Council (NSC). Both are cognisant of the fine line between crisis management (elimination of threat by NSC) and consequence management (minimization of collateral damage by NDDRMC), but the boundary between these areas were not always clear, especially in practice. This delays action, creates redundancies, and leads to wastage of resources. The Office of Civil Defense's (OCD) Policy Development and Planning Service is developing a Disaster Resilience Jurisdictional Matrix to help the two bodies come up with a more coherent human-induced disaster management approach (see Figure 3). This can serve as a guide for reconsidering the national Crisis Management Framework and the DRRM Framework to identify how best to integrate their activities. Such efforts can be viewed as good practice for other governments in Southeast Asia.

Figure 3

Disaster Resilience Jurisdictional Matrix (Working Draft)



Adapted from: Policy Development and Planning Service, Office of Civil Defense (OCD), Republic of the Philippines

BFP	Bureau of Fire Protection
CBRNE	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives
CCC	Climate Change Commission
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DICT	Department of Information and Communications Technology
DILG	Department of the Interior and Local Government
DND	Department of National Defense
DOE	Department of Energy
DOF	Department of Finance
DOH	Department of Health
DOST	Department of Science and Technology
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry Philippines
ExSec (ES)	Executive Secretary
NDRRMC	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
OFW	Overseas Foreign Workers
PNP	Philippine National Police

On civil-military relations: Balance military influence in civilian-led institutions involved in human-induced disaster risk management

The growing involvement of national militaries in emergencies and disasters in the region has led to an increased interest in Civil-Military Coordination. Improved dialogue between civilians and militaries can be observed – mostly in coordination and reporting. However, the broader implications of civil-military relations to disaster governance are still being understudied compared to other disaster management matters. This limits our understanding of how the relationship between civil society as a whole and the military institutions are meant to protect civil society and shape the way that risks and disasters are addressed.

The Philippine disaster management system — despite having opened up to civilians in response to the whole-of-society approach promoted by the Republic

Act 10121 — remains heavily influenced by the military. The headquarters of the NDRRMC is inside a military camp and is chaired by the Secretary of Department of National Defense. The OCD, the implementing arm of NDRRMC, continues to be led by former military officials. The same pattern can be observed in national crisis and emergency management organisations.

The Task Force Bangon Marawi is a similar case. The chairperson, decision-makers, and several heads of member agencies were previously from the military. For instance, the current Secretaries of the Department of Interior and Local Government, Social Welfare and Development, and Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process were all commanding officers during the Marawi Conflict. This reflects the strong military influence in disaster management functions that go well beyond the Marawi case.

The question is not whether the military-led structure is optimal or whether humanitarian assistance can be neutral and impartial given military appointments to the bureaucracy. But in what ways and to what extent would this facilitate or limit "bottom-up, inclusive, and participatory" governance approaches as endorsed by the national disaster law. This warrants further study not only in the Philippines, but also in other ASEAN member states like Indonesia and Thailand.

On gender perspectives: Military-led responses can limit the implementation of bottom-up, inclusive, and participatory disaster governance approaches

DRM actors seeking to develop strategies to manage the consequences of human-induced disasters need to locate the overlapping risks and establish the pathways to proactively address them through peaceful means.[18] One way could be to look into broader issues like gender and how it promotes or hinders overall disaster resilience. The gender perspective was often overlooked during the 2017 Marawi Conflict. Since most of the public's attention was on the fighting, much of the analytical focus was on combatants who were largely male.[19] Yet, local survey results showed that women played a significant role in promoting violent extremism leading up to the 2017 Marawi Conflict.

[18] Angelo Paolo L. Trias. "RSIS Commentary, CO20004, Networked World: Re-envisioning Disaster Risk", 6 January 2020, https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/nts/networked-world-re-envisioning-disaster-risk/#.Xi5T32gzbIU.

[19] UN Women Asia and the Pacific, "Preventing Violent Extremism" https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/peace-and-security/preventing-violent-extremism.

Given that women, too, take up active roles in conflict situations or peace processes, exploring their involvement in human-induced disasters would be equally and strategically important. Of interest to disaster governance are the ways women contribute to reduce conflict and advance stability. According to a study, recruitment of combatants occurred in two ways: by enticing the poorest young men who want an Islamic education, and by targeting university students with local grievances through Islamic study groups.[20] These individuals were mainly recruited online, but the radicalisation process leveraged offline connections.[21] The online networks used to reach the targeted individuals would expose their existing ties in local communities, with women often acting as bridges. It was the efforts of the matriarch-leader that have led to the growth of the IS-linked Maute group, which promises Islamic education to impoverished young men who take up arms.[22] Brides were also offered to the young men as a strategy to consolidate forces "fragmented by tribal lines" under one extremist ideology.[23]

Research on the role of women in violent extremism is not new,[24] although this would need to gain further traction in DRM policy. It is apparent that the key drivers of disaster vulnerability, such as inequality and poverty, can offer breeding grounds for radicalisation. It also appears that the DRM measures that lower people's susceptibility to the impact of natural disasters can contribute to countering violent extremism. These measures, however, cannot be effective without the adequate and active participation of women.[25]

On ASEAN's role: Setting clear expectations about one's role and capacity creates space for cooperation

ASEAN, represented by the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), provided assistance during the Marawi Conflict. However, the AHA Centre was very focused on specific tasks and kept a low profile throughout its mission, compared to its response to natural

[20] Impl.Project. "Preventing Violent Extremism in the Philippines", https://implproject.org/

[21] The Asia Foundation & Rappler, "Understanding Violent Extremism: Messaging and Recruitment Strategies on Social Media in the Philippines", 2018.

[22] Ibid

[23] Ana P. Santos and Nikko Dizon. "Women of the Eastern Caliphate: By blood and marriage", *Rappler*, 2019, https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/investigative/245822-women-eastern-caliphate-by-blood-marriage-isis-part-2.

[24] Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, "Countering Violent Extremism", https://giwps.georgetown.edu/priority/countering-violent-extremism/.

[25] Tamara Nair. "Upscaling Disaster Resilience in Southeast Asia – Engaging Women Through the WPS Agenda", RSIS Policy Report, 2018.

disasters in recent years. They delivered family tents as specifically requested by the Philippine government and left as soon as the tents were distributed. The government requested regional support through the Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP) and relief items were delivered through established mechanisms like the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA). However, there was no deployment of the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ERAT), and no updates or social media posts on the situation.

The approach of the AHA Centre is determined by the dynamics in the region. Affected states in the region are becoming more assertive in leading national responses to emergencies and disasters. The AHA Centre provides assistance by abiding to strict guidelines set by requesting governments on priority items needed and the limits of access. This is usually consensus-driven. For instance, AHA Centre agreed to focus only on humanitarian needs of affected communities, and not meddle with anything that relates to the Marawi Conflict and its causes. It appears that there is still limited understanding among local civilian humanitarian actors of how this works, making the Centre more prone to critique.

When it comes to humanitarianism, the actors, set-up, and operating standards of National Disaster Management Authorities (NDMA) in Southeast Asia are different from the expectations of the international community. NDMAs can be partly or even predominantly military or para-military. The AHA Centre is governed by the NDMAs of member countries and its mandate is operationalised through political and military support. It cannot be expected to be a neutral and impartial humanitarian actor because of this constraint. It is, however, a coordinating disaster management body that can supplement existing national government efforts.

Conclusion

Overall, the humanitarian action and response to the human-induced disaster caused by the 2017 Marawi Conflict present three key insights. Firstly, understanding, respecting, and working through the military, socio-cultural, and religious factors at play in a human-induced disaster are key to securing safe access when providing assistance and relief to conflict-affected communities. Secondly, governance systems for managing disasters need to be revisited and adapted to the transforming urban environments, digital landscape, and evolving threats. Thirdly, overlaps as well as contrasts between structures, mechanisms, and arrangements for dealing with natural and human-induced disasters need to be resolved. More work needs to be done to balance civil-military relations in disaster governance, and to facilitate more equitable participation of women in security-related matters.

Policy Recommendations

The following policy recommendations could enhance the governance of human-induced disasters in Southeast Asia, particularly in the Philippines.

National Level

- Strengthen disaster preparedness capacity of religious leaders: Provide culturally-relevant human-induced disaster emergency and recovery preparedness training for religious leaders in high-risk areas, including essential knowledge on International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law.
- Adapt current practices to the transforming humanitarian landscape: Increase investment in building search and rescue capacities for urban operations based on the standards set by the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), and improve capabilities to address cyber-related operational challenges (e.g., controlling narratives during and after disasters).
- Align frameworks for addressing human-induced hazards: Re-assess the NSC 5P Crisis Management and NDRRMC DRRM frameworks to reduce overlaps, close gaps, reinforce strengths, and complement weaknesses that will create immediate practical benefits for both bodies and the people they serve.
- Facilitate bottom-up and participatory disaster governance approaches: Examine civil-military relationships in DRM. Revisit policies and plans to identify top-down bottlenecks and pathways for further strengthening sub-national human-induced disaster management capacity.
- Deepen gender inclusivity: Use existing community-based DRM networks such as the purok system to empower and mobilise local actors, especially women, in assessing and mitigating human-induced disaster risks as well as natural and climate-related disaster risks.

Regional Level

- Align existing efforts to reduce human-induced disaster risks among vulnerable groups: AHA Centre to work with the Institute for Peace and Reconciliation, Ministerial Meeting on Women (AMMW), and ASEAN University Network (AUN) in improving information sharing and intra-organisation coordination.
- Create a guidance note for requesting regional assistance in times of armed conflict: AHA Centre to lead in identifying the general needs of conflict-

affected communities, defining the work scope of the AHA Centre, and evaluating the relevant disaster management capacities of member states.

- Develop holistic risk-informed policies that strengthen links between ASEAN bodies: Utilise network science to locate the intersection points on issues relating to sustainable development, disaster management, climate adaptation, and peacebuilding, and the ways to address them proactively.
- Take the opportunity to deepen relations with other regional institutions: Africa has a high prevalence of violent conflict. ASEAN should start a dialogue with the African Union to share common challenges and learn from each other's experiences on dealing with human-induced disasters.

About the Authors

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