

Presidential Communications Operations Office  
News and Information Bureau

**Press Briefing  
Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque  
Barangay Sagonsongan, Marawi City  
January 30, 2018**

**Moderator:** Ok we will start. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Magandang hapon, Pilipinas. Maayong hapon. Atong mga kasiguonan sa press dinhi sa Sagonsongan in the City of Marawi. We are here for our press briefing with Spokesperson Sec. Harry Roque and he is joined by Deputy Commander of the Joint Task Force Marawi, Col. Romeo Brawner.

Before we take questions from the press, we'll give time to the Secretary to give his opening statement. Mr. Secretary?

**Sec. Roque:** Welcome to the third Palace briefing here in Marawi 'no. We are currently in Sagonsongan where the President will be arriving in a few minutes to turn over the second batch of temporary housing for the Marawi bakwits. But before we proceed with your questions, let me give you an update from Task Force Bangon Marawi.

As of latest data, 67 out of 135 evacuation centers in Region 10, Northern Mindanao and ARMM remain open. 3,391 families or 17,011 individuals are staying in these evacuation centers.

Based on DSWD IDP monitoring report, there are 29,029 home-based families in 247 barangays in Region 10 alone, 20,752 of which are in the province of Lanao del Norte. Meanwhile, more than 10,000 individuals have been allowed to return to nine more barangays in Marawi on June 19 and 22.

On January 29, around a thousand families were also given permission to go back to their homes in certain areas of Barangays Lilod Saduc, Raya Saduc and Pangao Saduc. The total number returned barangays are now at 39.

Aside from the homecoming, an initial 150 families moved to areas 2 and 4 of the Biyaya ng Pagbabago Transitional Site in Barangay Sagonsongan on January 20, 2018. They are the first batch transferred among the 500 families who received temporary housing last December 27.

Note that in addition to 500 houses built by NHA, we have 300 more homes donated by PAGCOR.

Also on January 29, around 200 families also received the keys to their housing units in areas 3 and 4 of the said transitional sites.

To provide sustenance to these IDPs while they're sheltered in transitional sites, on January 25 the Office of Civil Defense initially distributed 98 boxes of non-food items containing kitchen wares, sleeping gears and hygiene kits. Task Force Bangon Marawi, with the support of Marawi local government, also conducted an onsite digital ID registration for Marawi residents in Barangay Sangonsongan on January 29.

More good news as the Mindanao State University held its first commencement exercises after the war in its Marawi campus on January 24. Around a thousand hundred students received their diplomas during the ceremony.

During the siege, MSU Marawi with the campus just 5 kilometers away from ground zero had to relocate its graduation sites outside the city.

Lastly, in a coordination meeting with Task Force Bangon Marawi member agencies, the Department of Public Works and Highways announced its plans to soon resume its suspended 2016 and 2017 infrastructures projects. These include rehabilitation and repair of roads, construction of water systems and line canals, completion of Marawi diversion roads, construction of school buildings and concreting of roads within the city. Infrastructure projects in the most affected area, however, remains, on hold.

Now before proceeding, let me proceed to three good news items:

First good news is ... okay, the Mactan-Cebu International Airport. We're pleased to announce that the new world-class passenger terminal building

at the Mactan-Cebu International Airport is now 89% complete and expected to open in June this year.

According to the Department of Transportation, the terminal building is expected to accommodate 13 million passengers annually and can operate for both domestic and international flights.

More good news on the livelihood training program for Mayon evacuees -- the government is concerned not only on the safety of our evacuees but to their livelihoods as well.

Yesterday, January 29, 25 selected evacuees were given five training sessions on face mask training program by TESDA conducted at the evacuation center in San Francisco Elementary School and Malilipot Elementary School in Albay.

In addition, TESDA is also offering other training programs including manicure, pedicure, massage and break making. This is to help the affected individuals earn a living despite ongoing calamity.

More good news, Investment Coordination Committee-Cabinet Committee of the National Economic and Development Authority gave its go signal for the Subic-Clark Railway Project which the Department of Transportation will implement.

The project will serve as connection between Subic Bay and Clark Freeport and other major economic centers in Central Luzon that will enable the region to become a new development center eventually helping ease population in Metro Manila.

When completed, the proposed project will become part of the railway network which will be connectsd from Batangas to Subic to Metro Manila.

So... I have some questions from the Malacanang Press Corps but before I entertain questions from Manila, are there questions from here? From the local press corps and the press...?

**Moderator:** Yes, sir.

**Sec. Roque:** Members of the press who travelled to this site.

**Moderator:** Thank you, Mr. Secretary. The first question will come from the MindaNews, Mr. Froilan Gallardo.

**Gallardo:** Good morning, Sir.

**Sec. Roque:** Yes, Mr. Froilan?

**Gallardo:** Sir, with these all relocation sites construction, are we on schedule?

**Sec. Roque:** I think we are even ahead because we've already finished with 800 shelters and if I am not mistaken there will be more homes that will be finished because when we're here last year for the first turnover, there were additional 172 that were about to be turned over also by NHA. So, in fact, this is what we will be inaugurating now. This is the second phase. We are even ahead of schedule except that the actual residents could not transfer because they had to deal with potability of water, I understand but electricity is now on in the first phase where residents were allowed to come back. So, we are on track. We are even ahead of the schedule.

**Gallardo:** Sir, my second question, sir. There are so many residents complaining on social network that they haven't seen and they were not allowed to go to the main affected area and it could, it's very understandable after (them) not seeing for six months.

So, question will go also to Col. Brawner. How many, how much is the percentage now the clearing of IEDs in the main affected areas?

**Sec. Roque:** Let me first address the first question, which was addressed also to us in the second to the last press briefing that we had here and the answer is we are allowing residents to go back to the most affected areas but because of security considerations they have to go in batches and accompanied by soldiers, because of ongoing clearing operations for IEDs. So please bear with us, it's not always that we have soldiers to accompany but I'm sure Task Force Marawi under Col. Brawner will facilitate the process of entertaining more residents to return to their homes in the most affected area.

Col. Brawner, he has a follow up question.

**Col. Brawner:** Thank you, Sir. Actually the estimate of the engineers doing the clearing operations of the most affected area is that they have already completed 40%, Sir. 40% of the total land area of the most affected area. So far from the very start of the siege in May 23, the estimate of the recovery of IEDs and unexploded ordnance is more than 3,000 already. From October 24, ah, 23 was the declaration of the end of military operations up to this day, we have recovered already more than 700 unexploded ordnance and IEDs. So it's still very dangerous to go back inside the most affected area but as mentioned by the good Secretary, we are allowing organizations, agencies, and even residents to go back just to look at what happened perhaps to their houses but they cannot yet go inside their buildings because as we said, it's still very dangerous.

**Moderator:** Thank you Secretary and Colonel Brawner. Next question will come from Radyo Pilipinas. We have Zorayda (not clear).

**Sec. Roque:** Hi.

**Q:** Hi Sir, good afternoon po. Sir, we all know na hindi lang po ito ang ipatatayo ng gobyerno na temporary shelter para po sa mga IDPs. Ilan po ba lahat ang target natin, how many units at kailan din po ang start ng construction po para po doon sa next na ipatatayo nating temporary shelters and narinig ko na rin po sa National Housing Authority na mayroon din po'ng ipapatayong permanent shelters para sa mga IDPs. So kailan po din ang start nito, construction nito at ilan po lahat units sa permanent housing, sir?

**Sec. Roque:** From my memory, because we address this on our second press briefing here in Marawi, there are 6,700 temporary shelters to be built by NHA and another 2,800 permanent houses will be for those with Torrens Title to their land. In addition to that - for those with their own titles - the government will be giving them financial assistance to build their homes. So, with 6,700 temporary (shelters), we have seen, from the first batch 800.

I'm not quite sure now because unfortunately the rest of the NHA went to meet the President in the military camp. I just saw General Del Rosario leaving as I came in. So, I'm not quite sure how many houses are now going to be turned over today. In addition to the 800 that was turned over in the original schedule when the President was supposed to turn over the

homes. But, as you can see 6,700 we have clearly reached at least 10% of what we are aiming to build by the way of temporary shelters.

**Moderator:** Thank you Bai! Next is Dandee Macarambon

**Dandee:** Yes Sir, good afternoon. I am Dandee Macarambon of Radyo Pilipinas sir. Ah, on the (---) component po after this pagre-relocate po doon sa mga displaced IDPs natin. Ano po yung specific instructions from the President para po mabigyan sila ng livelihood assistance at saka may mga humihingi rin po ng tulong na mga kapatid nating IDPs na naririnig nila na marami po'ng nagdaratingan na mga donasyon galing po sa labas.

Ano daw po ang maitutulong ng pamahalaan na ito ay ma-monitor at mabahaginan po talaga sila dahil...yun na nga, they are donations coming from outside at sana po mapakinabangan nila?

'Yun lang po, sir. Thank you.

**Sec. Roque:** Task Force Bangon Marawi po is based here in Marawi. We have a permanent office here in Marawi and it is the lead agency. The President was very clear, isa lang talaga ang mananagot, isa lang ang mayroong responsibilidad in and all line agencies. They're supposed to coordinate, that's General Del Rosario and he has an office here in Marawi. So, all concerns should be addressed to Task Force Bangon Marawi office here in Marawi itself.

Now, as far as livelihood, again, in the last press briefing, I have all the line agencies with me. The Department of Agriculture said that they have not only grants but also loans. BFAR said that they also have grants and loans for fisherfolks in Lanao. The DTI said that they also have both grants and loans to start small industries and that they're in the process also of coordinating with Task Force Bangon Marawi to build markets because, markets really will provide livelihood for many and they're in the process of also encouraging residents to produce commodities immediately for sale in livelihood center to be built here in Marawi.

So, all the line agencies are doing what they could.

Now, DOLE also said they will be expanded here in Marawi and that is actually yung temporary work up to six months for displaced residents. And, the DSWD also has a work program for the residents of Marawi.

**Moderator:** Thank you. Will have a Roxan Arevalo from ABS-CBN and please standby Patrick Tablon of Bombo Radyo.

**Roxan:** Good afternoon sir. Yung first question ko sir, by May po kasi mag-iisang taon na mula ng nangyari yung siege. By that time po ba sir nalipat na lahat ng mga evacuees natin dito and, ano yung foresight natin sir doon sa main battle area? By that time po ba nai-clear na po yun? Ano din po ang mangyayari sa mga residents na walang title sa lupa nila?

My second question sir is, kasi bago lang nag-conduct ng sub-committee hearing sa Bangsamoro Basic Law dito sir. If mauna pong ma-implement of let's say maibigay yung BBL dito, ano po yung mangyayari sa mga projects na ginagagawa and rehabilitation na ginagawa natin dito sir? Thank you.

**Sec. Roque:** (unclear) hinihingi po ng Pangulo yung one year period. Record naman from the time of liberation, huwag naman record from the time of outbreak of the war. But as you can see, ilang months na ba tayo since liberation? Mga three months noh? We're now three months since liberation of Marawi.

**Roxan:** Three months.

**Sec. Roque:** Three months na and we have turned over ten percent, minimum of the relocation shelters. I think the speed will increase but the more conservative is in May which is how many months from now? Four months. We should easily have 25 percent of the 6,700. So, unfortunately yung pagdating ng May, mga 25-30 pa lang yan pero give it another three months, baka more than 50 percent na ang mayroon, temporary shelters.

Judging from how fast we're able to build these homes so, mukhang bibilis pa kasi karamihan naman ng mga bahay, nakikita niyo mga pre-fab so, tingin ko mapapabilis. Ang problema lang talaga yung mga potable water dahil kinakailangan ilagay ang mga linya diyan pero yung kuryente mukhang hindi naman problema yan. So, tubig talaga yung...pero dito sa mga temporary shelter communities, four and five, okay na. So, doon na lang sa mga iba.

So, we're looking at after one year of liberation baka naman majority would already be settled in temporary shelters. Now, second question mo is....

**Roxan:** Title po.

**Sec. Roque:** Title. Again, in the press briefing that we have here, it was explained that the President already tasked DENR to hasten the process of serving for purposes of determining what lands of the public domain can be classified as alienable and disposable and the Armed Forces of the Philippines was also tasked to evaluate how much land they need because bulk of Marawi actually is a military reservation. 'Yun po, kaya naman po pinapa-imbentaryo natin yung mga lupa dahil alam natin na karamihan ng mga bakwits walang titulo.

So, ang nais pong mangyari ni Presidente ay yung mga walang titulo to begin with ay magkaroon ng sariling titulo kaya po iniimbentaryo natin kung gaano karaming lupa ang puwede na nating ibigay sa ating mga kababayan.

**Roxan:** Sa BBL sir.

**Sec. Roque:** Sa BBL. Well, sinabi naman po ni Presidente prayoridad niya pareho ang BBL at ang Charter Change. Hindi po malinaw kasi yung sinabi niya sa Davao Airport. Maraming nag-report na sabi ni Presidente daw eh mas gusto niyang mauna yung Federalism. Pero yung mga naunang binitawang salita po ni Presidente, malinaw na malinaw siya at narinig ko siya at least three times noh including the one on one interview with Minda News na talagang sinabi niya kailangang mauna ang BBL.

Kasi kung hindi mauna ang BBL baka hindi na mangyari yung nais mangyari sa BBL Kapag nagkaroon na ng Charter Change to Federalism. So, I heard him say that three times but I think, people where somehow not sure what he said in Davao Airport during the arrival ceremony in India because he did not directly answer it. But my understanding is, he hasn't changed his mind and that he's still wants BBL before Federalism.

**Roxan:** Sir, kung mauuna po ba yung BBL (inaudible), what will happen to other programs (inaudible) specifically sa rehabilitation?

**Sec. Roque:** Wala pong apeкто yan, tuloy pa rin po yan dahil National Government naman po talaga ang nag... taking the lead in the rebuilding of Marawi. This is a promise of the President, he said before he leaves office Marawi will be back on its feet. Babangon muli po ang Marawi bago matapos ang termino ni Presidente Duterte.

**Moderator:** Thank you Roxan, thank you Mister Secretary. We'll have Mr. Patrick Tablon from Bombo Radyo.

**Sec. Roque:** After Patrick, I'll read the question from Manila, huh.

**Patrick:** Mr. Secretary, Sir, magandang hapon po. Patrick Tablon of Bombo Radyo Philippines. Sir, kanina nasabi niyo po na, we are ahead of time sa pagtapos dito sa mga temporary shelters, ibig sabihin ba nu'n na minadali ang pagpapatayo ng mga bahay dito or durable ba ito na aabot hanggang ma-renovate or ma-rehabilitate ang Marawi City?

**Sec. Roque:** Alam niyo po, nakikita niyo naman yan, kaya nga natin dito ginagawa ang press briefing para makita niyo, noh. Ito po ay temporary shelters pero ang tingin ko pwede nang permanent yan eh. 'di ba?

Kaya lang tinatawag nating temporary, may option yung iba na kapag nabuksan na yung most affected area baka gusto nilang bumalik sa most affected area.

Pero ang tingin ko po dito ay permanent na 'yan. Nasa sa opsyon na 'yan ng titira kung lilipat sila sa most affected area pero kung ako ang tatanungin, parang mas mabuti pa dito 'no kaysa doon sa most affected area. Kailangan lang talaga ng mga palengke, mga eskwelahan at 'yung mga community centers dito na gagawan naman, okay? Pero ang tanong mo, durable ba 'yan? Eh, ang sagot ko po, mukha ngang hindi temporary, mukhang permanent shelters nga po ang ginawa natin at hindi lamang temporary shelters.

**Patrick:** Okay. Ito po, Mr. Secretary maiba naman tayo. May pahintulot ba ni Presidente Rodrigo Duterte 'yung panunumpa ng mga pulitiko especially 'yung lumipat sa PDP-Laban? And then, ano po 'yung mangyayari sa mga government officials ng PDP-Laban na members subalit may mga kasong kurapsyon like in Cagayan de Oro City and others are in alleged drug syndicate (---)?

**Sec. Roque:** Okay, ganito po 'yan. Ako po ay nanumpa na bilang miyembro ng PDP-Laban pero I am the spokesperson of the President and the President is chairman of PDP-Laban. Pero I believe I will not be in the position to speak for PDP-Laban because I do not have the mandate. Natanong lang po ako sa Iloilo about two particular candidates. Na ang alam ko naman dumaan sa proseso kasi ikinuwento sa akin kung ano 'yung prosesong pinagdaanan.

So, anything about PDP-Laban please address it either to Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez or Senate President Pimentel kasi I'm only spokesperson for the President, I've no authority to speak for the party although I'm already a card-bearing member of PDP-Laban.

**Moderator:** Thank you, Patrick. Sir, after your question from MPC we'll have two more here. Ina—

**Sec. Roque:** Si Ina muna kasi after all, Ina is here. Hindi nagbiyahe ang mga kasama niya sa MPC

**Ina:** (inaudible)

**Sec. Roque:** Sige, another topic. Yes, let's move on.

**Moderator:** May Bangon Marawi question ba si Sheryl?

**Sec. Roque:** Mayroon bang Bangon Marawi?

**Moderator:** Okay, let's have Sheryl first, Radyo ng Bayan.

**Sec. Roque:** Bangon Marawi muna tapos let's move on to other topics.

**Q:** Yes, sir. Isang Bangon Marawi question tapos outside from Bangon Marawi. My question is for Col. Brawner: How safe is the Marawi perimeters in terms of insurgency, terroristic act or anything else in beyond?

**Col. Brawner:** Well, for the Armed Forces of the Philippines, we can confidently say that Marawi City is safe but we are conducting operations now around the lake particularly in the municipalities in Lanao del Sur. So,

if you might have learned about the encounter in Masiu last week. And then there was another encounter the following day in Pagayawan and then the following day our government forces operated in Piagapo. These are indicators that your Armed Forces is working doubly hard to make sure Lanao del Sur is safe as well.

**Q:** Thank you, Col. Brawner. Another question for the Secretary. Sir, how do you stand and where do you stand in the crossfire in the Senate and the House?

**Sec. Roque:** There's no crossfire, they're both our allies. And as I said, I suppose this question is about whether or not Congress should vote jointly or separately. As I've said, we leave it to them to resolve this matter. I doubt of even the Supreme Court will exercise jurisdiction in resolving this issue but ultimately if there's a stalemate then the Supreme Court will have no choice.

I've personally conferred with the President and he has also said that both positions are legally --- and he leaves it to the Supreme Court. Primarily to Congress to resolve and if it cannot be resolved by the Congress itself then he leaves it to the Supreme Court.

**Q:** Alright. Thank you, Secretary.

**Moderator:** Thank you. We'll have Ina Andolong from CNN Philippines.

**Ina:** Hi, sir. Sir, this is about the suspension of Overall Deputy Ombudsman Carandang. What is the status now considering sir that you mentioned yesterday that you will be revisiting the Supreme Court ruling in 2014 and mayroon pa po siyang ten days to file an appeal. Are you expecting him to step down already?

**Sec. Roque:** It's immediately executory. That is subject to, of course his decision whether he wants to run to court; but without the TRO from the court, that's immediately executory.

**Ina:** Sir, when you say you will revisit the SC decision, what do you mean by that?

**Sec. Roque:** That's actually up to him. We will implement the order. If he wants to go to court - because I understand he's saying it's unconstitutional - let him but we will not go to court because our reading is the Office of the President has a power to discipline him.

**Ina:** Sir, hindi po ba klaro doon sa 2014 decision that the President cannot discipline even Deputy Ombudsman?

**Sec. Roque:** The decision is 8-7, walang hindi klaro.

**Ina:** Okay.

**Sec. Roque:** It's a highly dissented decision.

**Ina:** Another issue, sir. Doon po sa paglipat—

**Sec. Roque:** And take note that that's on record. On the original decision it was an overwhelming decision in favor of the jurisdiction of the Office of the President.

**Ina:** But when you said sir that you believe that this could be overturned? Paano po mangyayari 'yun? Are you going to move—

**Sec. Roque:** He has to be the one to go to court because as far as we're concerned, it's immediately executory.

**Ina:** Okay. And Malacanang will not file anything to the Supreme Court to question this or—?

**Sec. Roque:** No. It's up to him.

**Ina:** Okay. Sir, on the transfer of Nicanor Faeldon to the Pasay City Jail. How do you expect him to perform his duties as appointed Assistant Secretary of OCD while he's there?

**Sec. Roque:** Again, he's appointed to OCD which is a policy making body, so our position is he can perform his task wherever he may be.

**Ina:** Even in the Pasay City Jail?

**Sec. Roque:** Even in jail.

**Ina:** There will be no intervention from Malacanang too?

**Sec. Roque:** We have never intervened in the legislative process. I don't think the President will begin now.

**Ina:** Thank you, sir.

**Moderator:** Thank you very much, Ina. Any more follow up questions before we go to the questions from Malacanang Press Corps?

**Sec. Roque:** We have a follow up question from Inquirer, Leila. Ang question niya is statement on Sen. Trillanes' allegation that the decision on the Deputy Ombudsman is impeachable?

Palace reaction: Go ahead, file the impeachment. Do it as soon as possible and we will see you in the House. That I think is the question of Leila Salaverria.

**Q:** Okay. Secretary, good afternoon. There are groups in Marawi City of Maranaos talking about reparations of properties damaged during the battles, during the war. What is the position of the government on this particular matter?

**Sec. Roque:** So far, what we have promised is that those with titles the government will give them financial assistance so that they can rebuild their homes.

Right now, there is no legal obligation to provide reparations to everyone because the IDP Law of which I'm the author when I was in the House of Representatives has not been enacted into law. But under my proposed law, there would've been a mechanism to provide reparations to all bakwits, but since it hasn't been enacted into law, the financial contribution would have to be voluntarily given by the national government.

**Moderator:** Any other follow up questions? Can we proceed now sir to MPC questions if they still have any?

**Sec. Roque:** I do not know if we are live 'no kaya wala lang akong—

**Moderator:** Radyo Pilipinas.

**Sec. Roque:** Okay. Let me see. Wala na akong ibang question kasi iyon lang ang question ni Leila.

**Q:** Sir, the Ombudsman is saying that it will study the decision. Are you anticipating that the Ombudsman will comply with it considering it's not very friendly relations with the President?

**Sec. Roque:** No. I mean, we are not asking anything from the Ombudsman but we are according her the presumption of good faith, that if the controversy is who will discipline the Deputy Ombudsman, then we welcome any move on the part of the Ombudsman to voluntarily look into the case of the Overall Deputy Ombudsman.

I am of the position that in fact the Ombudsman should know exactly what happened and if the allegations of the complaint are true, then, whether not the President has acted on the matter, the Ombudsman should also look into the matter and should probably also consider disciplinary measures. That's outside of whatever we do because no one can dictate on the Ombudsman if she wants to do anything.

**Q:** Sir, just to be clear. What is your position on the SC ruling in 2014 saying unconstitutional that the President can sanction a Deputy Ombudsman?

**Sec. Roque:** The position of the Office of the President is it has the power, it has the jurisdiction to discipline Deputy Ombudsman and this is pursuant to the principle that the President exercises supervision over all members of the Executive.

**Q:** Thank you, sir.

**Q:** (inaudible)

**Sec. Roque:** We're not impeachable officers.

**Q:** (inaudible)

**Sec. Roque:** If there no further questions, again, nagagalak po ako na nakabalik po tayo dito sa Marawi muli. Gaya ng sinabi ko kanina, ito po ay pangatlong beses na ang Palace briefing sa panahon ng tatlong buwan ay naganap ho dito sa Marawi. Ginaganap namin itong Palace briefing para iparating ang mensahe sa lahat ng mga taga-Marawi na naririto po kasama ninyo sa inyong piling dito sa Marawi ang Palasyo mismo at hindi po kayo makakalimutan ni Presidente Duterte.

Gaya ng sinabi ko po sa mga naunang press briefing bilang mga huling salita: huwag po kayong mag-alala, sisiguraduhin po ni Presidente Duterte na babangon muli ang Marawi at sagot po kayo ni Presidente Duterte.

Maraming salamat po.

**Moderator:** Thank you very much.