



The victims of Typhoon Haiyan all struggle in the [aftermath](#) . However, women and girls are especially [vulnerable](#) , as they face an increased risk of violence, sexual exploitation and trafficking, say experts.

According to the latest US State Department Trafficking in Persons Report, there were 227 trafficking cases filed with the Philippine Department of Justice (DOJ) in 2012, but many more incidents go unreported.

“Even before Haiyan, the provinces of Leyte and Samar were identified as trafficking hotspots. Women and girls would be trafficked to Manila or abroad for domestic work,” said Devanna De La Puente, the coordinator of the gender-based violence sub-cluster for the Haiyan Relief Effort, to [IRIN News](#) .

The [2013 Global Slavery Index](#), compiled by Australian anti-trafficking organization Walk Free Foundation, estimates that there are more than 140,000 Filipinos around the world who were trafficked, or coerced into forced labour or child marriage.

Women and girls also experience increased dangers that are closer to home, for instance, in evacuation centres.

“You have a lot of people in a crowded place, without much to do. There is no electricity, so a lot of [common] places are not well-lit. These are all factors that put women and girls at increased risk for violence,” Nolibelyn Macabagdal, a social worker, told IRIN.

The United Nations Population Fund ( [UNFPA](#) ) estimates that 375,000 women and girls had experienced sexual violence before Haiyan.

The agency warns that without concrete efforts to improve security, and interventions focused on gender-based violence and trafficking specifically targeting women and girls, this number could increase by 75,000.

The International Organization for Migration ( [IOM](#) ), which is overseeing evacuation camps for the municipality of Guiuan in Eastern Samar province, has built separate bathing and toilet facilities for men, women and children.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), in partnership with UNFPA, has also begun setting up women-friendly spaces in selected evacuation centres and communities in areas with the highest number of cases of violence against women, based on police reports. In these spaces, usually in a separate part of the evacuation centre, they can receive counselling from DSWD-trained women.

But with overstretched resources, coverage of the typhoon-stricken regions - an area roughly the size of Portugal - remains [a challenge](#) .

## **Women and girls face increased risk of violence, trafficking and exploitation after Haiyan**

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