

## **WORKINGPAPER**

No. 04, 2026

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# **Out of Bounds: Examining Policies on Housing Access and Secure Tenure of Internally Displaced Indigenous Peoples (IDIPs) in Davao City, Philippines**

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## **Abstract**

This working paper examines the policies on housing access and secure tenure of internally displaced indigenous peoples (IDIPs) in Davao City, Philippines. The Philippines has established several laws aimed at protecting the rights and welfare of indigenous peoples. When forced to leave their ancestral lands due to conflict, violence, or disasters, a gap in addressing the plight of IDIPs emerges. However, despite this legal recognition and consideration, laws in the field of human settlements, urban planning, and architectural laws in the Philippines do not explicitly address the relocation needs of IDIPs. This paper examines this gap and highlights a significant oversight in ensuring that displaced persons have access to safe, considered, and sustainable living environments after displacement.

## **Keywords**

Philippines, housing, indigenous, internally displaced, Southeast Asia

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## 1. Growing Cities, Growing Pains

In Southeast Asia, internal displacement remains underdiscussed and underrepresented. Within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), there is no relevant compact or regional cooperation that addresses internal displacement comparable to Africa's Kampala Convention and Great Lakes Protocol. The second edition of the ASEAN Migration Outlook mainly focused on migrant worker protection, reintegration policies, and climate-induced migration. Most of the issues addressed in the report involved crossing national borders. The displacement of indigenous peoples is barely discussed in contrast to numerous accounts and reports pointing out the continued rise and marginalisation of internally displaced indigenous peoples (IDIPs) in the region.

This glaring lack of discourse and attention is magnified when the annual reports of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre are dissected. Just by looking at the figures and summary of the past three Global Reports on Internal Displacement (2023 to 2025), Southeast Asia undoubtedly records millions of new displacements annually driven by a multitude of drivers that are often intertwining and colliding.

The region is often plagued by disasters as it lies along the Pacific Ring of Fire and the typhoon belt. Extreme weather events and other climate change impacts remain as top drivers for internal displacement in the region. With the world hitting the first climate tipping point (Stockholm Resilience Centre, 13 Oct 2025), the climate change and human mobility intersection cannot afford to be continually underestimated and underexamined.

In the last quarter of 2025, the Philippines faced widespread devastation and loss of life when two super typhoons hit the country days apart. Typhoon Kalmaegi a.k.a. Tino (Nov 04 2025) and Typhoon Fung-Wong a.k.a. Uwan (Nov 09 2025) – the 25th and 26th typhoons to hit the country in 2025, respectively – resulted in more than 230 deaths, more than 3 million Filipinos displaced combined in Visayas and Luzon, and significant property and economic devastation (Gutierrez, 06 Nov 2025; Nepomuceno, 06 Nov 2025; Sharman & Danaher, 10 Nov 2025; Rowlands et al, 11 Nov 2025). Climate scientists have pointed out that human-induced climate change led to the stronger wind speed and rainfall of the two typhoons (Taylor, 14 Nov 2025). It should be noted that the country was still recovering from widespread devastation and hundreds of casualties caused by multiple strong earthquakes (magnitudes ranging from 6.9 to 7.4) in October 2025 (Shankar, 10 Oct 2025). Often intermingling, the region regularly faces political turmoil, armed conflict, and civil unrest.

With all these adverse impacts and phenomena, the Philippines is also fast becoming more urban than ever, reflecting global urban trends and projections (UNESCAP, 2023). Urbanization, especially unchecked and unwarranted, may present various challenges both to its people and to the city. Economic, environmental, health and social, among many other things, may inevitably be adversely or positively impacted by urbanization (Carta & Bhugra, 2019; Aslam et al, 2025). It is also critical that cities – their spaces and processes – are inclusive and sustainable. Carmo (2025), in a UN article, argues that the key to improving urban life is to put its inhabitants (current and future) “at the heart of cities.”

It is therefore extremely essential to understand the Philippine's urban histories, processes, and growth to pursue and promote inclusive and sustainable cities. Insights from urban lived experiences and realities may inform relevant policymakers, stakeholders, and other actors in developing much-needed relevant, comprehensive, and context-specific policies and/or other legal interventions. Unfortunately, what remains understudied and underrepresented is the access to the city and the protection of internally displaced indigenous peoples (IDIPs).

A confluence of two states of vulnerability – displacement and indigeneity – IDIPs in Philippine cities remain invisible and ignored. Previous research and global reports have reiterated the need for policies crafted to the needs and issues of the displaced. This paper contributes to this ongoing global forum by examining the existing policies relevant to support the inclusion of IDIPs of Davao City, Philippines.

## 2. A Rapidly Urbanising Philippines

The *2020 Census of Population and Housing* of the Philippine Statistics Authority highlighted that 54% of the country's total population already lived in urban *barangays*, referring to the smallest administrative district in the Philippines (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2022). Following global urban growth projections of 66% - 70% by 2050 (UN-Habitat, 2022), Philippine cities are expected to experience various urban pressures and challenges (Earle, 2016; Miller & Ferris, 2015; Ragheb et al, 2016; Wilonoyudho et al, 2017). One of these intensifying urban pressures is the rising rural-to-urban movement and an increasing number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) finding refuge in cities (IDMC, 2023).

The country reported more than 9 million IDPs in 2024, the majority of whom were affected by disasters (IDMC, 2025). With a projected population of 115.84 million in 2024, this is more than 7% of the country's population. Within this aggregated number, the number of indigenous peoples is not distinguished, yet we know that they are particularly vulnerable to displacement (Miranda et al., 2020) and many of them find themselves displaced in cities. Being new to the city and oftentimes having experienced a very sudden displacement, IDPs often have limited access to public resources and opportunities and thus resort to finding shelter in slums, informal settlements, and danger zones (IPCC WGII AR6, 2022; Dodman et al, 2017; Carrasco et al, 2016; Sovacool, 2018). The same can be said for IDIPs, whose state of indigeneity already exposes them to extreme poverty (The World Bank, 14 Nov 2019), discrimination and exposure to violence (UN-CHR, 1995; Ceron et al, 2016; Simporios, 2024), to name a few. Ultimately, displacements mean losing their land which negatively impacts their mental health (Ninomiya, et al 2023; Thom & Grimes, 2022). More importantly, it can also mean loss of life – symbolically and literally (Notess, 31 May 2018).

## 3. The [Un]welcome Existence of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in Urban Spaces

Globally, IPs reside in their ancestral domain or territories but globalisation, expanding urban territories, ancestral land-related conflict (Madrigal, Cuesta & Somerville, 2025), and displacement contribute to their increasing presence in urban centres (UNGA, 2021). Their actual numbers range from 10% - 20% of the Philippines' total urban population (De Vera, 2007; UNDP, 2013; IWGIA, 01 April 2022) with practically no data on IPs living in cities. Basically, precise numbers are almost impossible to find in the Philippines, with census data deemed unreliable, outdated, and aggregated geographically (Perez-Brito, 2021; The World Bank, 2024). As such, demographic numbers fail to reflect and consider the rich diversity of the more or less 110 ethnolinguistic groups in the country. Moreover, majority of indigenous communities are considered the poorest of the country (Hirai, 2015; Onsay, 2022; Onsay & Rabajante, 2025)

As determining the number of urban IDIPs borders on complete guesswork, their invisibility in cities is amplified as understanding their actual conditions and lived experiences are limited (Miranda et al, 2020; Ferrandez & Fung, 2021). This lack of understanding potentially fuels their continued urban exclusion.

The lives of the indigenous in the Philippines are without any legal protections. The Indigenous Peoples Rights Acts of 1997 (Republic Act No. 8371) is an overarching law that provides the legal framework on indigenous peoples' protection in the Philippines. This law also explicitly and inextricably ties them to their ancestral domain. Ancestral domains are presented as their original homeland although scholars would argue that this land allocation raises various issues especially in the case of Mindanao. Historical precedent shows that the Lumad (collective nomenclature for 15 upland ethnic tribes in Mindanao) were originally plain-settlers who were pushed out and displaced to the mountains to make way for settlers from the north, notably in the 1930s (Hayase, 1985).

This displacement is recognised and explicitly mentioned in the IPRA reflecting historical precedence of how IPs in the Philippines have and are continually being pushed out of their lands. Current displacement trends of IPs are tinged with politics made infamous during former President Duterte's drug war with a UN report highlighting the worrying indiscriminate killing of Lumads (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/07/562522>). Conflict, in the form of military harassment and red tagging, has displaced numerous indigenous communities from their ancestral domain. These indigenous communities often reside in areas with rich natural resources (e.g., mountains, forests, mineral-rich land). It has been studied and shown that resource-rich areas are rife with conflict and turmoil, and private entities often compete to extract these resources (Vesco et al, 2020; Morelli & Rohner, 2024). Additionally, IPs are extremely and disproportionately vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Extreme weather events like typhoons may lead to flash floods or landslides that ultimately wipe out their communities (IPCC, 2022). Post-displacement, return is often difficult and may be impossible. This disconnection to their lands can eventually lead to the dissolution of their indigenous knowledge and their roots (Ferrandez & Fung, 2021).

Although the specifics and exact numbers are difficult to obtain, majority of these internally displaced indigenous peoples (IDIPs) end up finding refuge in nearby towns or cities. This rural-to-urban movement is relatively common when examining human mobility. These host cities offer respite and a beacon of hope as they can provide better opportunities for social welfare, housing, livelihood, medical support, education, and the like.

Unfortunately, the presence of IDIPs in cities is seemingly perceived as a negative most of the time – indigenous peoples living in cities is seen as an anomaly (Porter, 05 Oct 2016; Fedina, 2025). Urban living also implies a specific standard of living that entails having the right resources, e.g., money to be able to access durable and safe housing. With most cities operating on profit and neoliberal urban frameworks, this puts IDIPs at a disadvantage. Often displaced with little to nothing on their backs, their presence in cities further exacerbates their exposure to risks and may expose them to more hazards and vulnerabilities that ultimately threaten their way of life (Stephens, 2015).

On the other hand, numerous scholars have emphasised the need to positively include them in cities (Weaver, 2012; James, 2013; Puketapu-Dentice et al, 2017). In order to make this a reality, one path is to develop legal frameworks and policies that allow indigenous peoples to be considered a key stakeholder of urban processes. Oftentimes, a critical discourse of their urban inclusion is their right-to-city (Weaver, 2012; James, 2013) dominated by their struggle to access housing and secure tenure (Quicke & Green, 2017). Although the United Nations has emphasised the need for adequate housing for IPs (UN-Habitat & OHCHR, 2005), homelessness is a common state for most indigenous populations in cities (Anderson & Collins, 2014; Bingham et al, 2018). It is important to add that research on understanding homelessness of indigenous peoples in Philippine cities is very limited. Consequently, this poses critical implications on how housing and urban policies respond to the needs of IDIPs.

On an international level, there is already an explicit recognition that indigenous peoples living in cities should not be seen as a peculiarity. In a General Assembly resolution in 2021, the United Nations has already recognised the growing presence of indigenous peoples in urban areas. Citing cases in North America, Africa, the report estimates roughly a quarter of the world's indigenous population lives in urban areas. Both voluntary migration and displacement are credited for this trend, which also parallels global predictions of a more urban world in the next decade. The report also highlighted the housing insecurity urban IDIPs face.

Moving forward, this paper examines policies or legal documents from the national, regional, and local (city) level that focuses on human settlements and urban development that may be relevant to IDIPs guided by the following queries:

- a. How are the current national and local (Davao City) urban and housing laws/policies relevant to IDIPs in providing housing and secure tenure?
- b. What are the interventions or recommendations that may contribute to the positive inclusion of IDIPs in urban and housing processes in Davao City?

The next part discusses the basic methodology and collection of the documents followed by the discussion on the initial findings through analysing the content of the documents. A synthesis follows that reframes and encapsulate how IDIPs need to reframe to allow existing laws to be relevant to their case. Moving forward, a set of policy recommendations that are divided into national, inter-regional, and local levels are established. A brief conclusion at the end aimed to succinctly summarise this paper.

#### **4. Finding the IDIPs in the Legal Documents**

In the country profile of the International Labour Organisation (September 2022) for the Philippines, it lists more than 85 legal instruments, policies, government issuances, and the like that are relevant to indigenous peoples. Most of the policies aim to protect the IPs' ancestral domain, their culture, and their language.

The main government body compelled to uphold the rights of IPs in the Philippines, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), released eighteen (18) administrative orders or advisories as of 2022. Almost all of these documents focus on the delineating and recognising ancestral domains and lands with a few examples shown the table below:

<b>Administrative Orders on Ancestral Lands and Domains of NCIP</b>	
<b>Administrative Order No. 2, series of 2002</b>	Guidelines for the Review and Verification of the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) and Certificates of Ancestral Land Title (CALT) Approved by the First Commission on Indigenous Peoples were not Registered with the Register or Deeds nor Released to the Claimants – Owners
<b>Administrative Order No. 01, series of 2008</b>	Omnibus Rules on Delineation and Recognition of Ancestral Lands and Domains of 2008
<b>Administrative Order No. 04, series of 2012</b>	Revised Omnibus Rules on Delineation and Recognition of Ancestral Domains and Lands of 2012
<b>Administrative Order No. 01, series of 2020</b>	Rules on Delineation and Recognition of Ancestral Domains and Ancestral Lands of 2020 and Other Processes

**Table 1.** Administrative Orders on Ancestral Lands and Domains of NCIP

A significant number of documents are from the Department of Education with the goal of preserving the diverse cultures and languages of these ethnolinguistic groups. For example, Department of Education Order No. 62, series of 2011 aims to establish the *National Indigenous Peoples Education Policy Framework*. In 2015, Order No. 32 introduced the Indigenous Peoples Education Curriculum Framework. Its implementation and the current state of indigenous peoples’ education in the Philippines is an entirely different and troubling issue which warrants its own separate reading and extensive discussion.

Some laws acknowledge IPs and their rights (e.g., Republic Act No. 7160 *Local Government Code*, Republic Act No. 7638 of 1992 *Department of Energy Act*). Unfortunately, none of these legal documents explicitly or in part address internal displacement of IPs into cities except for IPRA as discussed beforehand. Fortunately, Administrative Order No. 01 of 2009 and its revised version (Administrative Order No. 3 of 2018), compels local governments for the “mandatory representation of IPs in local legislative councils and policy-making bodies.” This implies that IPs may indeed have a role in developing housing and urban development policies.

Thus, it was pertinent to seek other legal instruments that are relevant to the case of IDIPs in urban spaces. This meant looking into policy and legal documents that involve housing, urban development, human settlements, and land use. From the national to the Davao City level, eighteen documents were included and then examined as listed in Table 2. No inter-regional/intra-regional legal documents were found that tackle housing or urban development, as such the analyses presented below focus on the national level and immediately jump to the local level. The selected documents were examined for inclusion of *indigenous people and displacement*. In the absence of these specific terms, policies and interventions for *vulnerable people and urban poor* were considered IDIPs fit within that demographic.

The following table summarised the eighteen (18) documents examined divided into four groups: *Housing and Urban Development Laws, Building and Construction Laws, Cultural Heritage and Architecture Laws, and Davao City Memorandum*.

Housing and Urban Development Laws			
1	Republic Act No. 11201	Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development Act (2019)	This act established the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) <sup>1</sup> becoming the “central housing authority in the Philippines”. This act compels DHSUD to ensure that poor dwellers in urban and rural areas shall not be evicted or have their dwellings demolished except in accordance with law, recognising “underprivileged and homeless citizens” and “underserved families” who are disadvantaged due to economic, social, ethnic, or geographic factors. Section 20 mentions “families displaced” as beneficiaries for resettlement of housing and programmes.
2	Republic Act No. 9653	Rent Control Act of 2009	Under the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) <sup>2</sup> , this act does not contain specific provisions for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). However, the law generally aims to protect low-income tenants from excessive rent increases and unjust eviction, which can indirectly benefit IDPs – especially those displaced by conflict, disasters, or demolition – if they fall under the category of renters covered by the Act.
3	Republic Act No. 7279	Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA) of 1992	This act compels local government units (cities and municipalities) to conduct an inventory and identify potential sites for socialised housing and resettlement. It does explicitly mention IDIPs, but they may fall within the category if they are underprivileged, the urban poor, and homeless. If IDIPs reside in informal settlements and danger zones (e.g., steep slopes, estuaries, riverside, coastlines, etc.), they can directly benefit from this act. The act outlines the standards and specifics of socialised housing and resettlement areas. The city, along with relevant agencies, is also compelled to provide opportunities to improve the living conditions of the beneficiaries. It also mentions the need for basic services in developing these areas such as potable water, power and electricity, proper drainage and sewage, and access to primary roads and transportation facilities. Another key section highlights the need for these areas to have access to employment and livelihood opportunities meeting the basic needs of the beneficiaries.
4	Presidential Decree No. 1517	Urban Land Reform Act (1978)	Under the jurisdiction of the Office of the President, this act “aims to address urbanisation issues, improve conditions for the urban poor, and promote planned development in the Philippines by introducing various mechanisms and protections for landowners and tenants” ( <a href="https://jur.ph/law/summary/urban-land-reform-act">https://jur.ph/law/summary/urban-land-reform-act</a> ). PD 1517 does not name IDPs specifically, it lays the legal foundation for protecting displaced urban poor residents, especially those at risk of forced eviction, by: a. declaring protections from unjust demolition; b. promoting tenure security, and; c. assigning government responsibility for resettlement. Section 2 highlights the goal of equitable land use which is relevant to IDIPs who often lack secure tenure post-displacement. Section 4 directs the National Housing Authority to facilitate relocation and resettlement. Section 6 directly protects urban poor communities (like IDIPs) from arbitrary eviction and recognises their right to secure tenure. Section 8 is relevant for IDIPs who resettled and occupied lands for ten years or more to be given the right to purchase or lease the land. Section 22 is relevant for IDIPs who may engage in farming.

<sup>1</sup> Under DHSUD, there are key shelter agencies that provide specific services related to housing. There are the National Housing Authority (NHA), PAG-IBIG Fund, Social Housing Finance Corporation, National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation, and the Human Settlement Adjudication Commission. The department also partners with Designing Resilience, UN-HABITAT, IOM, and CRS (<https://dhsud.gov.ph/#>)

<sup>2</sup> The HUDCC is “the government agency under the Office of the President created by virtue of Executive Order No. 90 (s. 1986), which serves as the oversight, the overall coordinator, initiator and facilitator of all government policies, plans and programs for the housing sector; sets the overall direction and targets for the sector; and determines strategies, formulates appropriate policies, monitors, and evaluates the programs, projects and performance of the implementing shelter agencies” (<https://www.foi.gov.ph/agencies/hudcc/>).

5	<b>Batas Pambansa Blg. 220 (BP 220)</b>	<b>Economic and Socialised Housing Projects Law (2008)</b>	Under the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB), this law details the “different levels of standards and technical requirements for the development of economic and socialised housing projects”. This includes minimum design requirements, approval of subdivision plans and building designs, registration of related housing projects, and other construction specifics and details. This act does not explicitly mention IDIPs, but the standards stated may prove relevant in providing compliant and safe shelters.
6	<b>Republic Act No. 6657</b>	<b>Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (1988)</b>	Republic Act No. 6657, known as the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) of 1988, does not explicitly mention IDIPs. However, its provisions are pertinent to landless farmers and rural poor, many of whom may be displaced due to landlessness, conflict, or development projects. This broad coverage includes lands that could be allocated to displaced individuals engaged in agriculture. It should be noted that during various field works, most IPs engage in farming/agriculture.
7	<b>Republic Act No. 7160</b>	<b>Local Government Code of 1991</b>	Although this Act does not explicitly mention IDIPs, this compels and provides local autonomy of cities and municipalities in order “to attain their fullest development as self-reliant communities”, contributing towards attaining national goals. It is meant to decentralise power, authority, responsibilities, and resources. Section 12 may be relevant to IDIPs or internal displacement, as it allows cities to establish local offices, agencies, or branches of national agencies. The Act further enumerates the basic services and facilities a local government unit (LGU) is bound to provide for its people with the possibility of the abolition of the LGU if certain minimum standards are unmet.
8	<b>Bangsamoro Autonomy Act No 62</b>	<b>Rights of Internally Displaced of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region Act of 2024</b>	This crucial legal framework – a first for the country and the Southeast Asian region – is relatively new and mainly applies to the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) <sup>3</sup> , a predominantly Moro/Muslim region in Mindanao. Conflict, development, and disasters are stated as common drivers of displacement in the document. Chapter II is particularly relevant to IDIPs as it outlines how to protect and promote the rights of IDPs. Post-displacement is recognised in Section 6 with specific mandate for the rights of children and women. Section 6.g highlights the right of IDPs “to safeguard and sustain their cultural heritage, identity, language, religion, and cultural expression without discrimination.” Section 6.o aims to protect the housing, land, and property left behind by the IDPs. Section 10 is crucial as it addresses issues on return, local integration into the host community, and the possibility of the IDP settling elsewhere. In Chapter III, it compels the region to establish intergovernmental relations, the Bangsamoro Internal Displacement Coordinating Council (BIDCC), the Bangsamoro Internal Displacement Management and Monitoring Division, among many other relevant structure and mechanism to implement the law.
<b>Building and Construction Laws</b>			
9	<b>Presidential Decree No. 1096</b>	<b>National Building Code of the Philippines (1977)</b>	This decree establishes uniform standards for building design, construction, use, and occupancy to safeguard life, health, property, and public welfare. However, it does not explicitly mention IDIPs or their relocation needs. It classifies buildings by occupancy, including residential dwellings and multi-unit housing, but without specific provisions for displaced persons or their settlements. Numerous amendments and revisions have been introduced up to the present to reflect the changing needs of the country, the fast-paced development of building technologies, changing international standards, and so on.
10	<b>Presidential Decree No. 1185</b>	<b>Fire Code of the Philippines (1977)</b>	This decree focuses on fire prevention, fire safety, and fire suppression standards for buildings and structures to protect lives and property. It mandates uniform fire safety standards but does not specifically address IDIPs or their relocation or shelter needs

<sup>3</sup> BARMM is an administrative region in Mindanao covering five (5) provinces: Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao del Norte, Maguindanao del Sur, and Tawi-Tawi. Sulu was part of the region until September 09 2024. It’s regional capital is Cotabato City. With a population of 4.4 million (2020 census), it is considered as one of the poorest regions of the Philippines (<https://www.philAtlas.com/mindanao/barmm.html>). Spearheaded during the Aquino III administration in 2012, the region was envisioned to have its own autonomy to finally address issues of armed conflict. This armed conflict is often between the Philippine government and Moro rebel groups like the MILF and MNLF. It will take another seven years for the inauguration of the Bangsamoro government with 80 members of the Parliament leading the region. This means that the region has its own ministries distinct and separate from the Philippine government. (<https://parliament.bangsamoro.gov.ph/historical-development-of-the-bangsamoro-transition-authority-parliament/>)

11	<b>Presidential Decree No. 957</b>	<b>Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board [HLURB] (1976)</b>	This decree aims to ensure decent human settlements by regulating subdivision and condominium sales, requiring developers to provide essential infrastructure like roads, drainage, and water systems. While it promotes safe and adequate housing, it does not explicitly mention IDPs or their rights to relocation or housing
12	<b>Batas Pambansa Bilang 344</b>	<b>Accessibility Law of the Philippines (1982)</b>	It assures that all buildings in the country must be accessible and fully usable by persons with disabilities, ensuring physical access and usability of housing units and related facilities. A minimum of 10% of government-owned buildings is required.
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>			
13	<b>Republic Act No. 10066</b>	<b>National Cultural Heritage Act (2009)</b>	Strengthening the functions of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), this Act aims to “conserve, develop, promote and popularise the nation’s historical and cultural heritage and resources, as well as artistic creations.” It states that cultural preservation is a strategy to maintain the Filipino identity. It briefly mentions indigenous peoples in Section 21, with the NCCA consulting the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), in assisting IPs to preserve their cultural and historical properties. Research into indigenous culture and arts, especially by the IPs themselves, is encouraged in Section 30.a3. A mention of their ancestral lands as cultural sanctuaries is found in Section 32.g with NCIP and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).
14	<b>Presidential Decree No. 374</b>	<b>Cultural Properties Preservation and Protection Act (1974)</b>	Mainly under the National Museum of the Philippines, the act aims to preserve and protect the cultural properties of the nation. It fails to provide explicit and specific instructions relevant to indigenous culture and heritage.
15	<b>Article XIV of 1987 Constitution</b>	<b>Education, Science and Technology, Arts, Culture and Sports</b>	Sections 14 to 18 of the Philippines constitution ensure the “preservation, enrichment, and dynamic evolution of a Filipino national culture”. Section 17 highlights the recognition, respect, and protection of the rights of the IPs to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions, and institutions.
<b>Davao City Memorandum</b>			
16	<b>Executive Order No. 2, Series 2024C</b>	<b>Creation of the Housing Appraisal Committee</b>	<p>Issued on February 5, 2024, this executive order established the Housing Appraisal Committee to assist transferee residents of the Slum Improvement and Resettlement (SIR) project and the Urban Land Reform Programme in legally transferring land titles to their names. Although IDIPs are not explicitly given mention in the executive order, they may potentially be part of slum and informal communities.</p> <p>The committee is responsible for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determining settlement fees for qualified transferees</li> <li>2. Validating claims and documents presented by residents</li> <li>3. Conducting site inspections and appraisals</li> <li>4. Recommending recognised transferees to the Sangguniang Panlungsod</li> <li>5. Evaluating applications for recognition of transferees</li> <li>6. Upon approval and payment of the required settlement fee, the Davao City Housing Office issues a Certificate of Recognition to qualified transferees as proof of their recognition.</li> </ol>
17	-	<b>Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance of Davao City (2013-2022)</b>	The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance of Davao City designates specific zones for various land uses. Notably, the Forest Zone includes provisions for the resettlement of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) communities, allowing for existing ethnic and cultural settlements. This ordinance ensures that land use planning accommodates the needs of IP communities and supports sustainable development.

<b>18</b>	-	<b>Regulations on Ancestral Lands under the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA)</b>	<p>A city advisory, The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) has emphasised that ancestral lands cannot be sold to non-members of IP communities. While leases are permitted with the consent of the indigenous political structure, ownership remains with the IP community. Structures built on these lands revert to the community upon lease expiration. Violations of the IPRA can result in penalties, including imprisonment and fines (<a href="https://mindanews.com/top-stories/2024/02/ncip-to-buyers-of-ancestral-lands-you-cant-own-the-lands-structures/">https://mindanews.com/top-stories/2024/02/ncip-to-buyers-of-ancestral-lands-you-cant-own-the-lands-structures/</a>). These advisory aims to enforce the IPRA, especially with the growing issues of land grabbing and dispossession of IPs.</p>
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**Table 2.** Laws Related to Housing, Urban Development, and Land Use

It is immediately glaring that the explicit and/or specific inclusion of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and indigenous peoples within urban housing and development is extremely limited. Thus, it requires framing IDIPs within urban poor or vulnerable people in order for the existing laws or policies to be applicable and relevant to their conditions. This framing allows legalistic justification on their inclusion. Also, as citizens themselves, their human rights and wellbeing should immediately be protected under any circumstances.

In Doc. 1, IDIPs in cities should not be unlawfully “evicted or have their dwelling demolished” due to their ethnic and economic disadvantages. The terms “underprivileged”, “homeless” and “undeserved” all point to the condition of urban IDIPs. This gives them the right to be resettled when evicted from areas for urban development. Additionally, Section 20 explicitly mentions “families displaced” which is often the risk IDIPs faced when residing in informal settlements and danger zones. With these conditions in mind, IDIPs may become beneficiaries of resettlement and housing programmes.

In Doc. 2 (RA 9653), IDIPs as low-income tenants, are protected from “excessive rent increases and unjust eviction...as long as they fall within the category of renters”. Doc. 3 (RA 7279) gives the local government unit (LGU) the mandate to find suitable sites for socialised housing and resettlement. It also specifies and outlines the requirements for just relocation, including continued education of the children. It should be highlighted that the local government is compelled to “provide opportunities to improve their living conditions” in coordination with other relevant agencies, as well as NGOs or CSOs.

The city is also compelled to actively find or earmark relocation sites for the underprivileged, the poor, and homeless in urban areas. Most IDIPs fall into one, if not all, of these three conditions. This act also outlines the need to provide basic services (e.g., potable water, power & electricity, access, sewage and sanitation) to resettled families. Eviction or demolition is not allowed without proper consultation with the affected families/community. Majority of IDIPs who find shelter in cities often end up in danger zones, informal settlements, and slum areas (Nunez-Ferrera et al, 2020; Earle et al, 2021; Robert & Lawanson, 2023). The act explicitly states that families within these zones should be properly and lawfully relocated and resettled. A key section also highlights the importance of access to employment and livelihood opportunities when selecting these sites. Through field work, it was noted that most of Davao City’s relocation sites are far from the urban centre with public transportation and its cost significantly burdening resettled IDIPs.

The Doc. 4 (PD 1517) echoes the previous act by laying legal foundations for protecting displaced urban poor residents. It directly states that the State (Davao City, in this context), “to liberate the urban poor from the blight of poverty through the provision of an orderly, adequate and livable environment. Often lacking access to secure tenure and durable housing in cities, this decree promotes equitable land use (Section 2). As part of the urban poor, IDIPs are protected from arbitrary eviction and recognises their right to secure tenure (Section 6). It should be noted that the law also states that if an idle land occupied by landless residents e.g., IDIPs, they are given the right and opportunity to purchase and lease the land (Section 8). This is especially relevant to IDIPs in protracted displacement who are unable or might have lost their ancestral domain. IDIPs who may engage in farming may be given the right to own land under Section 22.

Unfortunately, Doc. 5 (BP 220) does not explicitly mention IDIPs but the standards laid out in this law should also be followed when providing economic and socialised housing for IDIPs. This implies that shelter, even if it is transitory or temporary, should not be substandard and endanger the welfare of IDIPs. Doc. 6, on the other hand, is more relevant for landless farmers or farm workers. This can only be applicable to IDIPs who have decided to work in the farming industry post-displacement or may have found livelihood opportunities in farms.

The Local Government Code, although not explicitly for internal displacement or IPs, is particularly relevant as it compels and empowers cities and municipalities to self-regulate their own territories and constituents. This means that cities have an innate power and autonomy to develop their own policies, actions, services, etc that they deem fit for their needs. The city has the authority to also establish local offices, agencies, or branches of national agencies (Section 12). This has potential for Davao City to develop a specific local government office that tackles IDIPs.

A groundbreaking document for the country, Doc. 8 is the first legal instrument that tackles internal displacement in the country. It is possible that this is the first for the Southeast Asian region. This Act has limit as this is mainly enacted and implemented within the Bangsamoro Region which Davao City is not part of. Section 6 highlights the need to address post-displacement with specific attention to women and children. Section 6.0 is definitely relevant to IDIPs as it protects their right to safeguard and sustain their cultural heritage, identity, language, religion, and cultural expression without discrimination.” It implies that the practice and proliferation of their indigenous identity and culture should not be impeded. Section 10 takes into account the protection the housing, land, and property left behind. This reinforces and circles back to IPRA which protects the ancestral lands of IDIPs.

It is notable to highlight what is stated in Section 10 when the internally displaced decides to resettle outside of the Bangsamoro region post-displacement: it states that the Bangsamoro Local Government (origin) should coordinate with the national government and the host city (destination) to ensure that the IDPs “receive the necessary support and assistance to successfully integrate into their new communities.” This is particularly relevant as it implies the need for coordination with other cities and having mutual understanding to address internal displacement. As this act is relatively new, its implementation and effectivity need to be observed and examined to provide relevant revisions or amendments in the future. This seminal act can provide the framework for other regions or cities to develop their own internal displacement code.

The next group of documents under *Building and Construction Laws* (Doc. 9 to Doc. 12), does not provide any specific allocations or sections for the internally displaced or indigenous peoples. These are still relevant as they outline national standards for housing and construction that should not be overlooked when providing shelter for IDIPs.

The third set, *Cultural Heritage and Architecture Laws*, does not explicitly mention displacement in the documents. In this section, the framing is shifted towards the need to “preserve their cultural and historical properties”. It reinforces the ideal of linking cultural preservation to the Filipino identity. In essence, indigenous heritage preservation maintains the indigenous identity of IDIPs. Although lacking specifics, these documents (especially Doc. 13 and Doc. 14) provide legal foundations to provide shelter and refuge in cities to protect IDIPs. It can be argued that protecting the IDIPs, consequently means protecting, preserving, and developing indigenous cultures, traditions, and institutions,

The last three documents within the local level also fail to explicitly address urban displacements of IPs. Doc. 16 may be relevant as it allows for legally transferring land ownership of resettled slum dwellers. IDIPs who happen to reside in informal settlements may be able to have this opportunity. Doc. 17, on the other hand, remarks Forest Zones for the resettlement of IPs. This zoning ordinance already recognises the needs of IP communities. The last document simply echoes IPRA 1997 and emphasises that the ancestral lands of IPs should not be sold to non-members of these IP communities although it allows for leasing, under a legal contract, for a specific period of time.

## 5. Reframing IDIPs for Secure Tenure in Cities

Without an overarching national bill that promotes and protects the welfare of internally displaced people, a cohesive and comprehensive approach to address this human mobility phenomenon remains elusive. There are ongoing efforts to establish a law in the Congress level with the recent third reading of House Bill 8269 and counterpart versions in the Senate of the Philippines. This may explain why the Philippines continue to record high numbers of new displacements annually. This rapid and sudden population movement can of course put unnecessary pressures and stress its cities. Additionally, this lack of legal framework often leads to ad hoc and reactive solutions that may not be sustainable for both origin and host cities in the long run. This is not endemic to the country though as IDMC has repeatedly highlighted this chasm worldwide.

Perhaps the seminal legal document for internal displacement in the country, the Bangsamoro Autonomy Act No. 62 is a silver lining as it spearheads and promotes recognition of the rights of IDPs. This legal framework highlights various challenges of protecting IDPs. It mandates the need to coordinate with the national government and host cities in resettling IDPs. This implies the need to develop intergovernmental cooperation and/or regional agreements especially for IDPs that eventually decide to move out of the Bangsamoro region. Entirely separate governance-wise from the Philippines, this strategy may prove difficult to implement outside of Bangsamoro since the Philippines lack similar legal frameworks. There is potential in utilising the autonomy and self-reliance of cities and municipalities with the Local Government Code as basis. In the meantime, we argue that a reframing of how IDIPs are perceived and a logical reinterpretation of existing housing and urban planning laws may prove useful in letting seemingly indirect/unrelated policies work for their welfare and protection.

Information and relevant knowledge-building often drive policies and legal frameworks. Previous literature scanning and scoping reveals the lack of understanding of the plight of urban IDIPs. This points to a limited recognition of their displacement story and lived experiences. Oftentimes, the default assumption or expectation is that the IDIPs must return to their ancestral domain post-displacement as the IPRA supposedly protects and allocates these lands for them. It is thus assumed that their tenure in cities is temporary. This preconceived notion of IDIPs being transitory dismisses cases of protracted displacement, instances wherein the IDIP fully loses their ancestral lands, or are unwilling to return. Previous field works in Davao City shows that majority of IDIPs choose not to return immediately as they lack the finances to sustainably do so. They believe the city offers better opportunities to build their lives which can take years especially when cities continue to systematically exclude them. Some choose to never return due to risks and threats currently dominating their ancestral land. Their precarious state in cities may lead to insecurity and exposure to various pressures that push them to further displacement.

From the discussion of the eighteen (18) legal documents, it is proposed that their relevance and applicability to address the shelter and tenure needs of IDIPs with the following reframing:

a. **The IDIPs as urban poor and underprivileged.** A report of the World Bank Group on the indigenous peoples of the Philippines recognises that the poverty incidence of IPs globally is dependent on various factors (historical context, location, policies, land tenure security, and access to resources and basic services). Yet, IPs and other ethnic minorities often face disproportionately high poverty rates (even in developed nations), poor living conditions, and limited access to basic services. In the Philippine context, this intertwine between indigeneity and inequality is understudied. Furthermore, the report raises the issue of the lack of relevant data and information on IPs in the country thus their continued invisibility. Framing IDIPs as part of the urban poor and underprivileged provides opportunities for socialised housing and resettlement programmes. A significant barrier though for most IPs is the lack of relevant documents that many of these programmes or systems require. Majority of IDIPs do not or might have lost their citizenship documents. Language and cultural barriers, as well as lack of any information and knowledge on these civil and urban processes may lead to their exclusion. It is recommended that special conditions and protocols be afforded IDIPs for a smoother transition and inclusion into the city's registry.

b. **The IDIPs as homeless, residing in slum areas, informal settlements, and danger zones.** At the beginning of this paper, it was shown that majority of the displaced often find shelter in these unsafe zones. These areas are often dominated by various adverse impacts, a myriad of vulnerabilities, and wide range of exposure to risks. These states allow for IDIPs to access various shelter services although bureaucracy often greatly limits their access. In one of the field work interviews, a respondent shared that the only reason their family was able to benefit from resettlement and socialise housing was due to a heavy flooding that garnered national attention. In most cases, IDIPs living in these conditions remain invisible.

c. **The IDIP facing eviction, demolition, and implementation of development projects.** This implies cyclical displacement which in turn lowers the quality of living of the IDIPs with each movement. This is also a consequence of the former point as most of these areas are often cleared by the city government. When they are facing eviction risks, agencies often come into profile and survey the families affected. This may allow some IDIPs to gain access to some basic services and shelter provisions.

d. **Protecting IDIPs is preserving and protecting indigenous culture and heritage thus reinforcing the Filipino identity.** In response to Article XIV of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, it should be emphasised that the protection of IDIPs means the preservation of indigenous culture and arts. IDIPs who remain excluded and invisible in cities may result in the dissolution of their indigenous identity and culture as survival is at the forefront of their lives. Providing shelter and secure tenure for IDIPs may contribute to a quicker recovery from the crisis and prevent further displacement.

These reframing brings to light the invisible lives of IDIPs in cities. If concrete policies and mandated services/programmes have already been established beforehand, IDIPs displaced into the Davao City would have immediately been life-saving services, shelter, and secure tenure.

Similar to how the laws were being discussed, trying to make sense of existing policies by reframing or repositioning IDIPs run the risk of misinterpretation or misrepresentation. Without a solid legal framework to address IDIPs, these ad hoc and piecemeal approaches in addressing the urban shelter and secure tenure of IDIPs may lead to inconsistent and disconnected responses. Without specific standards or measures, any city or town can interpret or craft their own understanding that ultimately may exclude IDIPs. With this in mind, it is possible to assume that more and more IDIPs are moving or being displaced into the highly urbanised areas of Davao City. Thus, resistance against their presence in urban spaces potentially contributes to their continued urban exclusion and invisibility.

## 6. Paths Moving Forward for Urban IDIPs

Six key recommendations are listed below promoting secure tenure and positive inclusion for IDIPs in Davao City. Ideally, these are replicable and relevant to other Philippine cities.

1. **Push for a national legal framework on internal displacement with specific sections or allocations for indigenous peoples and climate risks.** To reiterate, a national legal framework provides a more solid foundation to address the needs of internally displaced persons. Consequently, this may also provide long-term solutions to the rising incidence of displacement in the country. This can potentially reduce the number of new displacements annually. A specific section that addresses the contextual and nuanced needs and issues faced by IDIPs should be included. It also follows that other relevant laws, policies, and legal instruments be revisited to reflect the proposed national act. If possible, a governing body (e.g., agency or commission) may be established that will focus on internal displacement. This way, the proposed office is solely responsible in coordinating IDPs between cities and regions thus offering faster response and quicker recovery. Focus on climate risks should also be considered as previous literature search showed significant gaps in understanding the intertwine of climate change and displacement/migration.

2. **Davao City, with the Bangsamoro Autonomy Act No. 62 as a springboard, to develop its own internal displacement ordinance or policy.** Empowered by the Local Government Code of 1991, Davao City can initiate and craft its own internal displacement policy or city ordinance. This may encourage adjacent cities, municipalities, and regions to craft the same policy. Similar to the first point, sections should be allotted to address indigenous people and climate risks. Davao City celebrates its diverse ethnic groups. Thus, it is logical to protect their welfare in times of displacement. Although historical precedence showed less exposure to climate risks, the unpredictability of the climate and extreme weather events warrants attention in policies to anticipate its impacts to the city.

3. **Utilising existing capacities and resources, Davao City can develop specialised protocols and strategies that cater to the needs of IDIPs.** While crafting an internal displacement policy, the city can immediately scope its resources and capacity. The city can utilise existing offices and manpower to develop protocols, strategies, and services that address the IDIPs in the city. This can also be in coordination with the NCIP and other non-governmental organizations or civil society organizations (NGOs/CSOs). Private stakeholders, especially in allocating land and providing shelter, may prove useful. This path offers least resistance as it capitalises on the existing strengths of the city. International resources are readily available to inform and guide developing these policies. The UN HABITAT crafted two policy guides that recognise the presence and inclusion of indigenous peoples in cities: *Housing Indigenous Peoples in Cities – Policy Guide to Housing Indigenous Peoples in Cities* (2009) and *Securing Land Rights for Indigenous Peoples in Cities – Policy Guide to Secure Land Rights for Indigenous Peoples in Cities* (2011).

**4. Develop intra-city or intra-regional cooperation and coordination that tackles internal displacement.** As internal displacement affects the source and host communities, it is logical for Davao City to coordinate with adjacent cities or municipalities. This echoes Agreements or cooperation documents may be drafted between cities to foster ease of movement between them. This can also foster resource sharing to minimise adverse impacts of sudden population shifts in the communities. On a wider scope, a regional agreement or intergovernmental cooperation may prove useful to address internal displacement recognising the extent and breadth of effect of this human mobility phenomenon.

**5. Include the IDIPs in the process by considering them as stakeholders.** This is without precedence as local government units like Davao City are compelled to have an indigenous peoples' representative in their local legislative councils (Administrative Order No. 01 Series of 2009 and Administrative Order No. 3 Series of 2018 of NCIP). In fact, Davao City allocates one seat in the Sangguniang Panlungsod for an IP representative. This can extend into developing policies and strategies for IDIPs.

**6. Improve knowledge-building, research, and popularization of the lived experiences of IDIPs and other vulnerable groups to fuel informed and context-specific policies.** Beyond crafting relevant policies, the process should be driven with the correct and comprehensive data and information. Thus, the city can encourage knowledge-building and research by collaborating with universities and other agencies to examine and fully understand the intricacies and nuances of IDIPs in urban spaces. It would also Popularization of their stories, especially to the public, in promoting better understanding and acceptance of their presence in cities This may curb social exclusion and discrimination often faced by indigenous peoples in cities. This implies strengthening partnerships with academic institutions, knowledge-sharing with other cities and communities, and crafting effective communication tools to transfer the knowledge to the people and the IDIPs.

## **7. Turning Cities as a Refuge for IDIPs**

The Philippines has established several laws aimed at protecting the rights and welfare of indigenous peoples. When forced to leave their ancestral lands due to conflict, violence, or disasters, a gap in addressing the plight of IDIPs emerges. However, despite this legal recognition and consideration, laws in the field of human settlements, urban planning, and architectural laws in the Philippines do not explicitly address the relocation needs of IDIPs. This gap highlights a significant oversight in ensuring that displaced persons have access to safe, considered, and sustainable living environments after displacement. Ultimately, key legislation and policies can open up avenues for the national and Davao City to protect their welfare. Moreover, proper implementation is necessary for these policies to turn into action. Better data and information are essential to inform these policies.

While Philippine laws provide strong protection for indigenous peoples as vulnerable populations under robust legal frameworks, indirectly, the examination of urban development and architecture laws collectively reveals an absence of explicit reference to IDIPs regarding their needs for relocation and shelter. To achieve an equitable consideration for the IDIPs, reframing is necessary to make existing laws work to their benefit. These existing laws can also be expanded further and serve as useful interventions to be integrated into future laws for addressing the needs of the IDIPs. Addressing this gap is crucial to ensure that future planning frameworks incorporate the unique requirements of displaced communities, promoting their safety, dignity, and long-term well-being.

Perceptions that the presence and existence of IDIPs in cities are anomalous should continually be challenged. The United Nations, in its document *A/76/202*, has explicitly recognised the rising trend of indigenous peoples finding refuge in cities. Although most examples were of Western and developed nations, it is safe to assume that this trend is present in the Philippines context. Developing policies for IDIPs is one way in promoting their right to the city, creating safe urban spaces and refuge for IDIPs, and fostering a sense of belonging into the urban fabric of Davao City and consequently, the Philippines.

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Orendain, Dan Jezreel A. Out of Bounds: Examining Policies on Housing Access and Secure Tenure of Internally Displaced Indigenous Peoples (IDIPs) in Davao City, Philippines. UNU-CRIS Working Paper #4 2026

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**Publisher:** United Nations University Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS), Bruges, Belgium

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