

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 3648



Introduced by **BAYAN MUNA**
Rep. NERI COLMENARES and Rep. CARLOS ISAGANI ZARATE

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING IN EVERY TWO TO THREE CONTIGUOUS
BARANGAYS AN EVACUATION CENTER THAT IS BIG ENOUGH
TO ACCOMMODATE THE TARGET POPULATION, STRONG
ENOUGH TO WITHSTAND NATURAL CALAMITIES AND
SITUATED AWAY FROM WATERS
AND LANDSLIDE-PRONE AREAS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is a fact we have to accept and live by that climate change has transformed natural calamities into more disastrous and more deadly types. Thus we have to start adjusting to this reality and take positive steps to mitigate, to the least possible, effects of disasters that might be even worse than we could imagine.

Nobody ever thought that the strong winds released by typhoon Yolanda would reach sustained winds of up to a record-breaking 315 kph. Before Yolanda, the world strongest recorded by far was Hurricane Camille in 1969 with 305 kph of sustained winds. Coupled by a storm surge that brought waters rising up to almost 20 feet high, nobody among the victims ever imagined that it would be like the more familiar tsunami that inundated everything and literally flattened their communities the moment it subsided.

Some school buildings which were made as evacuation centers during the pre-emptive evacuation in some areas in Visayas for typhoon Yolanda were also not spared because of the misinformation of a storm surge. Numerous evacuees actually died in the said school buildings.

Schools have always been used as evacuation centers. The problem is that schools are not made to accommodate families in distress because these are not usually equipped with enough facilities such as comfort rooms, kitchens, or sleeping areas to lessen the discomfort of families having to leave their homes so to save their lives.

In fact, schools must not be used as evacuation centers because the children's education are the most affected especially in situations when things should have started to get normal but families cannot yet vacate the school premises because their houses have not yet been repaired nor constructed. This practice of using schools as evacuation centers has to stop to cushion the impact of calamities and disasters especially on the children.

In the absence still of a comprehensive disaster reduction and risk plan, it is imperative that evacuation centers be constructed in a location, that serves as center to two or three contiguous barangays, strong enough to withstand typhoons like Yolanda and are climate change-adaptive.

As lesson learned from Yolanda and even from previous typhoons that had wrought almost the same damage to affected areas, evacuation centers should be constructed in areas at a distance safe from waters and landslide-prone areas.

Lives have been wasted because of the negligence on the part of the government to ensure that a program for the disaster preparedness and risk reduction would really lessen the impact of calamities on the lives of the people.

Meantime, the fact that the Philippines is a country often visited by typhoons yearly, the government has to undertake measures while waiting for the completion of a comprehensive program and its eventual implementation. We can save lives by ensuring that sturdy and typhoon-resilient, climate change-adaptive evacuation centers are located at a distance safe from waters and landslide-prone areas in every two to three contiguous barangays.

Based on the foregoing, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

Approved,


Rep. NERI J. COLMENARES
Bayan Muna Party-list


Rep. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Party-list

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Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Policy*— It is the policy of the State to uphold the people's constitutional rights to life and property by addressing the root causes of vulnerabilities to disasters, strengthening the country's institutional capacity for disaster risk reduction and management and building the resilience of local communities to disasters including climate change impacts;

SECTION 2. There shall be created an evacuation center located in the center of every two to three contiguous barangays nationwide to accommodate the population of the contiguous communities.

SECTION 3. The evacuation centers shall be designed by experts to withstand super typhoons or shall be calamity-resilient and built with sturdy materials. The NDRRMC shall be the lead agency in ensuring that the requirements for such an evacuation center are met. The lead agency shall coordinate with the Department of Science and Technology and the Department of Public Works and Highways in the planning and construction of such facilities.

SECTION 4. Each location for every evacuation center shall be chosen and prepared by the concerned Local Government Units in coordination with the Mines and Geosciences Bureau. The MGB shall be guided by appropriate studies in choosing the best location for the evacuation center.

SECTION 4. *Appropriations*. — The NDRRMC shall be the lead agency to ensure the planning and the implementation of this Act. Appropriation for the construction of evacuation centers shall come from the budget of the NDRRMC for the repair and reconstruction of permanent structures.

SECTION 5. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive and administrative orders or parts thereof, inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following the completion of its publication in the Official Gazette or in a national newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,