

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 3015

Introduced by Representative MARLYN L. PRIMICIAS-AGABAS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines remains among the most disaster-prone countries in the world, consistently exposed to typhoons, floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and other natural calamities. Its location is within the Pacific Ring of Fire, and the typhoon belt makes it particularly vulnerable. Compounding this natural exposure is the worsening impact of climate change, which has increased the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, resulting in widespread loss of life, the displacement of entire communities, and billions in economic damage each year.

According to the *Global Climate Risk Index 2014* published by the Berlin-based environmental organization Germanwatch, the Philippines ranked among the top three countries most affected by climate-related catastrophes. Specifically, the country placed second—next only to Haiti—in terms of both the relative and absolute number of human casualties, as well as the economic damage brought by natural disasters. Further, the *World Bank's 2005 Natural Disaster Hotspots* report identified the Philippines as one of the countries with the highest percentage of its population living in disaster-prone areas. This was echoed in the *2011 World Risk Report* by the United Nations University and the Institute for Environment and Human Security, which ranked the Philippines third globally in terms of disaster risk based on exposure, susceptibility, coping, and adaptive capacity.

Despite this well-documented vulnerability, many cities and municipalities remain critically underprepared to support displaced populations during emergencies. In the absence of dedicated evacuation facilities, public schools, covered courts, and community halls are often used as temporary shelters. However, these makeshift sites are frequently overcrowded, structurally inadequate, and lack essential amenities such as clean water, sanitation, and healthcare. This practice not only compromises the safety and dignity of evacuees—particularly vulnerable groups such as the elderly, children, pregnant women, and persons with disabilities—but also disrupts essential public services, especially education.

The continued use of schools as evacuation centers gives rise to a second wave of displacement: the students. When evacuees are unable to vacate school premises due to the unavailability of alternative shelter or the destruction of their homes, classes are displaced to makeshift or outdoor learning environments. These conditions are far from conducive to effective learning and divert limited government resources from long-term, structural disaster solutions to temporary fixes.

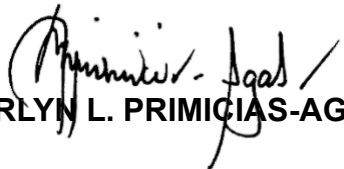
To address these challenges, this proposed measure, entitled the “**Evacuation Center Act**”, seeks to establish permanent, fully equipped, and disaster-resilient evacuation centers in every city and municipality across the country. These facilities shall provide a safe and accessible refuge for individuals and families displaced by natural or human-induced disasters, reducing the dependency on public schools and other ill-equipped structures.

The proposed legislation is grounded in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, particularly Article II, Section 5, which mandates the State to protect the life, liberty, and property of its citizens and to promote the general welfare of the people.

With over 1,488 municipalities and 146 cities across the country, the institutionalization of dedicated evacuation centers will provide a long-term and cost-effective solution to the recurring displacement caused by disasters. More importantly, it will safeguard both lives and learning by removing the unacceptable tradeoff between emergency shelter and continued education.

This measure was previously filed during the 18th Congress by Representatives Angelina “Helen” D.L. Tan, Romeo S. Momo, Sr., and Lucy Torres-Gomez. However, it has yet to be enacted into law. Given the increasing threats of climate change and the urgent need for preparedness infrastructure, it is imperative that this bill be passed without further delay.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


MARLYN L. PRIMICIAS-AGABAS

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AN ACT

**ESTABLISHING EVACUATION CENTERS IN EVERY CITY AND
MUNICIPALITY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SEC. 1. Declaration of Policy. — It shall be the policy of the State to uphold the constitutional right of the people for the protection of their life and property and the promotion of general welfare. Towards this end, the State, shall establish and maintain a fully equipped and fully operational evacuation center, responsive to environmental or climatic events, in recognition of the vulnerability of the Philippines to climate change, the occurrence of severe floods, typhoons, and other natural or human-induced disasters, illnesses, diseases and other factors that affect the environment

SEC. 2. Establishment of Evacuation Centers. — There shall be established an evacuation center in every city and municipality in the country which shall provide immediate and temporary accommodation for people who have been evacuated or displaced from their homes due to emergency events such as typhoons, floods, storm surges, drought and other severe climate disturbances, as well as fire, and the outbreak of illnesses and diseases that present imminent danger to life and property.

Existing structures that would meet the minimum requirements or could be upgraded to effectively serve as evacuation centers could be designated as such in compliance with the local government unit concerned.

SEC. 3. Requirements. — The following shall be the minimum requirements for every evacuation center that will be established under this Act:

a. **Location Designation-** Each location for every evacuation center shall be determined by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in close coordination with the LGUs concerned.

The location shall be determined based on the following criteria:

1. It must be centrally located in the community.

2. It must be at a safe distance from large trees, structures where hazardous materials are used and stored, or high-voltage power lines.
3. It must be near a health facility.
4. It must be located on geotechnically stable land to avoid risk of landslides or exposure to potential landslides of adjacent lands.
5. It must not be located near military base camps, camps of insurgent groups, power plants, factories, and other areas where the occurrence of human-induced disasters is very high.

- b. **Structural and Building Capacity**— The evacuation centers shall be constructed and designed to withstand super typhoons or wind speeds of at least three hundred kilometers per hour (300 kph) and seismic activity of at least 8.0 magnitude. The structure must be calamity- resilient, built with sturdy materials, and in accordance with the specifications of Republic Act No. 6541, otherwise known as the ‘National Building Code of the Philippines’ or shall be at par with the standards set by the International Building Code.

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) shall oversee the construction of evacuation centers, including the formulation of building specifications and shall ensure that the same are based on standards, issuances, and other guidelines set by the DPWH, and are compliant with the provisions of the National Building Code. The DPWH shall also ensure that the construction of such evacuation centers is in accordance with the abovementioned requirements during its construction phase.

The specifications of the evacuation centers shall be periodically reviewed and, if necessary, revised by the DPWH every three (3) years.

The evacuation center must at least meet the following parameters:

1. The structure must be elevated, in such a manner that it is safely above the reach of a high tide storm surge level of at least ten (10) meters.
2. The structure must be a minimum of one (1) meter above the average flood level in the area where the same shall be built; and
3. The structure shall not be less than nine (9) meters in height and shall be designed in accordance with earthquake load standards.

- c. **Amenities and Accessibility.** — The evacuation centers shall be well-ventilated and shall have the capacity to accommodate many evacuees. The evacuation center shall have the following minimum amenities:

Sleeping quarters for the evacuees.

1. Separate shower and toilet facilities designated for males and females, with one (1) facility for every twenty (20) persons.
2. Amenities to enable access thereto by people with disabilities.
3. Emergency exit doors.
4. Food preparation areas with adequate ventilation.
5. Trash and waste segregation and collection areas.
6. Health care areas which shall include an isolation or quarantine area for potentially infectious persons.
7. Rainwater harvesting and collection facilities; and
8. Other facilities may be prescribed by the appropriate authorities.

SEC. 4. Operation and Management. - The LGUs concerned shall be primarily responsible for the operation, supervision, and management of evacuation centers established under this Act. They are also hereby authorized to issue rules and regulations on their proper use and maintenance.

The local *sanggunian* shall promulgate guidelines and procedures for the use and operation of the evacuation center under its jurisdiction. The guidelines shall prescribe rules on the utilization of the evacuation center when it is not used as such: **Provided**, That the evacuation center may only be used for such other activities or purposes that involve the use of collapsible amenities only and those that shall not in any way compromise the serviceability of the evacuation center or impede the use thereof when a disaster occurs: **Provided further**, That the LGU shall impose such penalties as may be deemed proper on the organizers of authorized activities when the evacuation center suffers any damage, defacement, or loss during or as a result of such activities.

The mandatory audit of infrastructures used as evacuation centers shall be conducted by the City or Municipality at least once every year and immediately after the occurrence of a hazard or disaster.

SEC. 5. Role of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC). — The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) shall be the lead implementing agency of this Act. It should give utmost priority to those areas of the country that (a) are identified as disaster prone; (b) are financially incapable of establishing their own evacuation centers; and (c) do not have existing evacuation centers of their own.

It shall enter into memoranda of agreement (MOA) with the concerned LGUs for the maintenance, operation, and management of a permanent evacuation center in their respective areas of jurisdiction. It shall provide technical assistance and support services to these LGUs in the management of the facility.

Local chief executives concerned shall evaluate and provide suitable sites for evacuation centers to determine their geographical stability, and public accessibility in times of disasters. They shall provide for the maintenance, operation, and management of the facility taking into consideration the goal of life preservation and meeting the basic subsistence needs of affected population based on acceptable standards during or immediately after a disaster.

SEC. 6. Coordination Among Agencies. — The NDRRMC shall coordinate with the DPWH and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) with regard to the design specifications, cost estimates, and construction details of the evacuation centers that will be constructed pursuant to this Act.

Concerned, government agencies and instrumentalities, when necessary, shall provide assistance to the NDRRMC to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of this Act.

SEC. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations. — Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the NDRRMC shall, in consultation with the DPWH, DOST, League of Cities of the Philippines, League of Municipalities of the Philippines, and other concerned government and private agencies, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 8. Appropriations. — The amount necessary for the initial implementation to fund the construction and maintenance of multi-purpose gyms to serve as evacuation centers shall be charged against the budget provided for this purpose under the DPWH. Thereafter, such amounts necessary for the construction of multipurpose gyms as evacuation centers shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. The LGU concerned shall provide the continued maintenance, operation and management of the facility.

SEC. 9. Separability Clause. — If any provision or part thereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provisions not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SEC. 10. Repealing Clause. — Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to, or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 11. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the **Official Gazette** or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,