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# Lived Experiences of the Marawi Siege among Uniformed Service Personnel and Affected Families: A Case Study

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**ABSTRACT**

This study explored the lived experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and recovery-related insights of uniformed service personnel and families affected by the 2017 Marawi Siege. Using a qualitative case study design, ten purposively selected participants—five personnel from the PNP, AFP, BFP, and BJMP and five adult representatives of displaced families from Marawi City—were interviewed using validated open-ended guides. Interview transcripts were coded with Taguette and examined through thematic analysis. Personnel described dangerous combat and emergency duties, inadequate urban operations training and protective equipment, and tensions between service and family life; four of five reported continuing psychological distress. Families recounted sudden displacement, loss of homes and livelihoods, medical-access difficulties, financial insecurity, and added caregiving burdens. Faith and family support were common coping resources, complemented by peer and professional assistance among personnel and livelihood and community support among families. The findings indicate that the siege's consequences persisted across occupational, psychological, familial, and socioeconomic domains. The study recommends specialized interagency preparation, suitable protective equipment, sustained psychosocial care, faster compensation, targeted livelihood assistance, and accessible medical services. Its purposive ten-person sample and retrospective interviews limit transferability and preclude statistical generalization. By integrating responders' and displaced families' perspectives, this study provides context-specific evidence for recovery planning aligned with SDG 3 (health), SDG 8 (livelihoods), SDG 11 (resilient communities), and SDG 16 (inclusive institutions), supporting socially and institutionally sustainable post-conflict rehabilitation.

**Keywords:** *Armed Conflict, Coping Mechanisms, Displaced Families, Marawi Siege, Post-Conflict Recovery, Psychological Distress, Uniformed Personnel*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The 2017 Marawi Siege was a prolonged urban conflict that exposed uniformed service personnel to high-risk operations and displaced many residents of Marawi City, Lanao del Sur. Contemporary accounts of the battle identify complex urban terrain, evolving tactical requirements, and the difficulty of protecting civilians as major operational concerns (Spencer et al., 2024; Weissmann, 2023). Beyond the fighting, the siege disrupted homes, livelihoods, family relationships, and community life. Research involving internally displaced Maranao residents documents persistent concerns related to safety, displacement, psychosocial distress, and family well-being (Veloso, 2022; Wapaño & Dagalangit-Pundato, 2024). Post-conflict recovery remains an important public concern. The Philippine government enacted Republic Act No. 11696, or the Marawi Siege Victims Compensation Act of 2022, to provide compensation for qualifying losses of property and life (Republic of the Philippines, 2022). Nevertheless, the Commission on Human Rights (2024) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (2025) have reported continuing displacement, challenges in accessing compensation and basic services, and the need for durable recovery solutions. Simangan (2024) further emphasizes that sustainable peacebuilding in Marawi involves security, reconciliation, economic opportunities, and the everyday circumstances of affected communities. Against this background, the present qualitative case study examines the lived experiences of uniformed service personnel and affected families during and after the siege. It considers their experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and views on the responsibilities of the government and wider community. By bringing these two groups into a single inquiry, the study seeks to inform culturally responsive, participant-centered approaches to preparedness, rehabilitation, and long-term well-being.

### Research Problem

Although the military and humanitarian dimensions of the Marawi Siege have been documented, understanding the experiences of individuals who served during the crisis and families who endured displacement remains essential. Urban operations impose distinctive demands on security personnel, while conflict-related displacement may expose civilians to insecurity, social exclusion, loss of resources, and altered family responsibilities (Spencer et al., 2024; Veloso, 2022). Research specifically concerning Marawi survivors has described the interrelationship of traumatic experiences, religious coping, and resilience, as well as disruptions to family communication and relationships (Dagalangit-Pundato & Wapaño, 2023; Collado, 2024). These bodies of evidence illuminate important aspects of the siege but do not replace an examination of how uniformed personnel and affected families interpret their own experiences side by side. Moreover, continuing recovery concerns underscore the practical importance of listening to both groups when designing institutional and community responses (Commission on Human Rights, 2024; International Committee of the Red Cross, 2025). The central research problem, therefore, concerns the lived experiences of these participants during and after the Marawi Siege, the challenges they encountered, the coping mechanisms they used, and the insights they can offer concerning government and community support.

### Assumptions of the Study

The study proceeds from the qualitative assumption that participants can provide meaningful accounts of their experiences and the interpretations they attach to those experiences. It assumes that the consequences of armed conflict differ across individuals and are shaped by exposure to danger, social roles, available resources, family relationships, cultural practices, and access to support. These assumptions are consistent with contemporary evidence that post-traumatic responses and resilience are varied rather than uniform (Bonanno & Westphal, 2024; Wapaño & Dagalangit-Pundato, 2024). The study further assumes that participants'

accounts of coping and recovery may reveal personal, interpersonal, and institutional dimensions, including family and community support (Grover et al., 2024; Collado, 2024). These are guiding assumptions, not predetermined findings. Participants' narratives are treated as contextual and retrospective; they are not presumed to establish clinical diagnoses, causal relationships, or experiences representative of every person affected by the siege.

**Objectives of the Study**

The study aims to explore and document the lived experiences of uniformed service personnel and affected families during and after the Marawi Siege. Specifically, it seeks to describe the participants' experiences throughout the conflict and its aftermath; identify the personal, occupational, psychological, social, and socioeconomic challenges they encountered; examine the coping mechanisms and sources of support they used; and synthesize their shared insights regarding the roles of government institutions and the general community in preparedness, assistance, rehabilitation, and recovery. The resulting understanding is intended to inform context-sensitive interventions and institutional responses without claiming statistical generalizability beyond the participants studied.

**Theoretical or Conceptual Basis**

The study retains four complementary theoretical lenses from the original thesis: Trauma Theory, Resilience Theory, Social Support Theory, and Family Systems Theory. These established perspectives provide an integrated framework for understanding the psychological, interpersonal, familial, and institutional dimensions of armed conflict. Recent literature published from 2022 onward supports their application to the study without implying that the theories themselves originated within this period. Trauma Theory provides a lens for examining the emotional and psychological consequences of perceived threats to life, exposure to violence, loss, and displacement. The American Psychiatric Association (2022) describes trauma-related clinical phenomena, while Wapaño and Dagalangit-Pundato (2024) illustrate how Meranao internally displaced persons interpreted the consequences of siege-related experiences. The study uses this lens to understand reported distress without diagnosing participants. Resilience Theory helps explain how people adapt over time under adverse conditions. Bonanno and Westphal (2024) characterize resilience as a heterogeneous process involving flexible self-regulation rather than a fixed personal trait. In the Marawi context, Dagalangit-Pundato and Wapaño (2023) demonstrate the significance of faith and culturally grounded meaning-making in accounts of recovery. Social Support Theory directs attention to assistance derived from family members, colleagues, peers, organizations, and communities. Grover et al. (2024) found that perceived social support was associated with more favorable psychosocial outcomes among combat-exposed military populations; such findings offer relevant, although contextually distinct, insight into the experiences of uniformed personnel in Marawi. Family Systems Theory, meanwhile, regards the family as an interconnected relational unit whose roles and interactions can change under stress. Research on Marawi internally displaced families documents disruptions in family communication, intimacy, and conflict, supporting a family-level analysis of the siege's consequences (Collado, 2024). Together, these four theoretical perspectives provide a comprehensive basis for interpreting the participants' experiences, coping mechanisms, family adjustments, and institutional and community support needs.

The study supports sustainable post-conflict recovery by addressing the psychological, socioeconomic, and institutional consequences of the Marawi Siege. It aligns with SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) through mental health and psychosocial support; SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) through livelihood restoration and economic rehabilitation; SDG 11

(Sustainable Cities and Communities) through community rebuilding and resilience; SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) through improved institutional preparedness, equitable assistance, and peacebuilding; and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) through collaboration among government agencies, humanitarian organizations, and affected communities. These alignments emphasize the importance of inclusive, culturally responsive, and coordinated recovery efforts (United Nations, 2024; Simangan, 2024; Commission on Human Rights, 2024; International Committee of the Red Cross, 2025). Overall, the study contributes evidence that may inform policies and interventions promoting public health, socioeconomic stability, community resilience, and sustainable peace in conflict-affected areas.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The study utilized a qualitative research approach employing a case study design to examine the lived experiences of uniformed service personnel and families affected by the Marawi Siege. According to Creswell and Poth (2024), a case study involves an in-depth investigation of a bounded system or multiple cases using different sources of information, including interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual materials. Creswell and Poth (2024) further emphasizes the importance of examining experiences within their actual contexts to develop comprehensive descriptions and meaningful themes. This design was appropriate for exploring the participants' experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and perspectives concerning recovery from the conflict.

### Research Locale or Study Setting

The study was conducted in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, Philippines, particularly in communities severely affected by the 2017 Marawi Siege. The identified study areas included Barangay Sabala Manao, Banggolo Poblacion, Datu Naga, Norhaya Village, and Tuca Marinaut, which were among the Main Affected Areas of the conflict. Families originally residing in these communities had been displaced and relocated to Area 2 of Barangay Sagonsongan. Coordination with the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) and concerned barangay officials facilitated the identification and selection of eligible participants. These locations were selected because of their direct exposure to the siege and the experiences of displacement and post-conflict recovery among their residents.

### Participants or Data Sources

The study involved ten participants comprising five uniformed service personnel and five adult representatives of families directly affected by the Marawi Siege. The uniformed personnel came from the Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), and Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP). Their participation was based on their direct involvement in siege-related operations. The affected-family participants represented households originally residing in the identified Main Affected Areas of Marawi City who had subsequently been relocated to Barangay Sagonsongan. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants with firsthand knowledge and relevant experiences of the conflict. Selection was based on direct involvement or exposure to the siege, willingness and availability to participate, and ability to communicate personal experiences. The affected families were identified through coordination with the CSWDO and barangay officials. This sampling approach enabled the researcher to obtain detailed accounts from individuals whose experiences were directly relevant to the objectives of the study.

**Research Instruments or Materials**

The primary research instrument was a researcher-developed interview guide containing open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed descriptions of the participants' experiences during and after the Marawi Siege. Two versions were prepared to address the distinct circumstances of uniformed service personnel and affected families. The guide for uniformed personnel focused on their operational experiences, challenges, emotional responses, coping mechanisms, and recommendations. The guide for affected families examined their experiences of displacement, difficulties encountered, emotional and social consequences, coping strategies, sources of assistance, and insights concerning government and community support. The interview guides underwent expert validation using the Content Validity Index (CVI) to assess the relevance and clarity of the questions. In Dalawi et al. (2023) discussion, content validity may be measured through the Item-Level Content Validity Index (I-CVI) and Scale-Level Content Validity Index (S-CVI). The I-CVI represents the proportion of experts rating an item as relevant, while the S-CVI evaluates the overall content validity of the instrument. The validation results indicated that all items obtained an I-CVI of 1.00, while the overall S-CVI/Ave was 1.00, exceeding the minimum criterion of 0.80 cited by Dalawi et al. (2023). These results indicated favorable expert assessments of the interview guides' content relevance.

**Data Gathering Procedure**

Data collection was conducted through direct coordination with the concerned government agencies, local officials, and selected participants. For affected families, the researcher coordinated with the Marawi City Social Welfare and Development Office to identify eligible households from the severely affected barangays. Following the office's recommendations, arrangements were made with the respective barangay officials to contact displaced families residing in Area 2 of Barangay Sagonsongan. The researcher personally approached the prospective participants, explained the objectives of the study, and requested their voluntary participation. For uniformed service personnel, the researcher visited the concerned offices of the PNP, AFP, BFP, and BJMP to coordinate with agency representatives and identify individuals who participated in siege-related operations. Prospective participants were informed about the research objectives, interview procedures, and intended use of the information collected.

After obtaining informed consent, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews using the validated interview guides. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences openly, while follow-up questions were asked when clarification or additional information was necessary. With their permission, interviews were audio-recorded to ensure the accuracy of the narratives. The researcher maintained confidentiality and observed the participants' right to refuse or discontinue their participation without penalty. The collected interview recordings were subsequently transcribed for qualitative analysis.

**Data Analysis**

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis with the assistance of Taguette, an open-source qualitative data analysis software. The analytical procedure followed the six stages described by Braun and Clarke, comprising familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, identification of potential themes, review of themes, definition and naming of themes, and preparation of the findings. The researcher initially transcribed the recorded interviews verbatim and repeatedly reviewed the transcripts to understand the participants' narratives. Relevant excerpts were then uploaded to Taguette and assigned initial codes representing significant ideas, experiences, and recurring patterns. Similar codes were subsequently grouped into broader categories, while axial coding was used to identify relationships among the emerging concepts. The provisional themes were reviewed and refined to ensure that they accurately reflected the participants' accounts and remained consistent with the research questions. The

finalized themes were organized according to the participants' lived experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and shared insights concerning government and community responsibilities. Selected participant quotations were used to substantiate the interpretations and retain the meaning of their narratives. Taguette facilitated the organization and management of coded data, while thematic analysis provided the basis for identifying patterns and interpreting the participants' experiences. The trustworthiness of the findings was addressed through credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability. Credibility was supported through member checking and sustained engagement with participants, while confirmability was strengthened through reflexive journaling and peer debriefing. Transferability was addressed by providing detailed descriptions of the research setting and participants. Dependability was supported through an audit trail and peer auditing. Data triangulation was also employed to examine information from multiple perspectives and strengthen the interpretation of the findings.

**Ethical Consideration**

The study observed ethical principles governing research involving human participants, particularly voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and protection from harm. Before data collection, the researcher explained the study's objectives, procedures, possible risks and benefits, and the participants' rights. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed that they could refuse to answer questions or withdraw from the study at any time without adverse consequences. Confidentiality was maintained by protecting personal information, interview responses, audio recordings, and photographs collected during the research. The researcher ensured that the information obtained was used only for the stated research purposes and handled in accordance with applicable Philippine data privacy requirements. Considering the sensitive nature of the participants' experiences during the Marawi Siege, particular attention was given to their psychological and emotional welfare. Appropriate interventions were provided when participants experienced psychological distress while recounting traumatic events. The researcher also maintained a respectful and non-coercive interview environment, allowing participants to express their experiences without intimidation or pressure. These safeguards were observed throughout the research process to protect the participants' dignity, privacy, safety, and well-being.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Lived Experiences During and After the Marawi Siege

#### 3.1.1 Uniformed Personnel's Experiences in Combat and Emergency Operations

The uniformed personnel described experiences involving direct combat, tactical operations, inmate protection, emergency rescue, and conflicts between professional obligations and family responsibilities. Three participants (UP1, UP4, and UP5) participated in combat and related operations for 149 to 151 days. UP1 experienced an armed confrontation during an attempted arrest operation, while UP4 witnessed the death of a colleague and participated in rescuing a hostage family. UP2 managed inmate security and evacuation amid unrest at the Marawi City Jail, whereas UP3 performed rescue, emergency medical assistance, and body-recovery operations despite exposure to gunfire and debris. UP5, a Maranao soldier, continued military operations while his relatives remained trapped in the conflict area and his family home was destroyed. These experiences demonstrate the differing responsibilities and operational demands encountered by uniformed agencies during an urban conflict. The findings are consistent with Spencer et al. (2024), who identified the Marawi Siege as a complex urban operation requiring tactical adaptation, coordination, and specialized capabilities. Weissmann (2023) similarly

emphasized the distinct challenges of military operations in urban environments. The experiences of personnel assigned to combat, jail protection, and rescue operations indicate that preparedness must account for the responsibilities and potential exposure of different uniformed services.

#### 3.1.2 Sudden Displacement and Family Protection

The affected families described the outbreak of violence as an immediate threat to their safety, forcing them to abandon their homes and possessions. Participants AF1, AF2, and AF5 recalled urgently gathering their children and escaping after hearing gunfire. AF1 described fleeing toward Lake Lanao before traveling to Saguiaran, while AF2 prioritized the safety of her four children without attempting to recover household belongings. AF5 similarly described gathering his children during the emergency. These accounts showed that protecting family members became the immediate priority, particularly for participants managing substantial caregiving responsibilities during the evacuation. The experiences illustrate how armed conflict disrupts residential security, family routines, and established sources of support. Veloso (2022) documented safety concerns, displacement-related vulnerabilities, and difficulties accessing essential services among Marawi internally displaced persons. Wapaño and Dagalangit-Pundato (2024) likewise identified displacement, economic hardship, and psychological distress in the narratives of Meranao survivors. These findings support the interpretation that forced displacement represents not only physical relocation but also disruption of family stability, social relationships, and community belonging.

#### 3.1.3 Post-Siege Changes in Personal and Family Life

After the siege, the participants described changes in their personal circumstances and family relationships. UP1 reported becoming more cautious in his professional duties, although prolonged separation and changes in his behavior affected his family life. UP2 described rebuilding her personal life while continuing to recall distressing experiences, and UP5 returned to a situation in which his own family had become displaced. Among affected families, AF1 reported living in temporary shelter and depending on assistance from government agencies and nongovernmental organizations. AF2 and AF5 described heightened family responsibilities following the loss of their spouses before the siege and the difficulties associated with displacement. These experiences indicate that the consequences of armed conflict continued beyond the cessation of hostilities. Collado (2024) documented the importance of family relationships and therapeutic support in the recovery of war-displaced families. Similarly, Siton Nanaman and Estrada (2023) found that internally displaced Marawi residents continued to experience difficulties accessing livelihoods and essential services while living in transitional shelters. The findings suggest that post-conflict recovery involves adjustments in personal responsibilities, family relationships, living conditions, and access to social and economic resources.

### 3.2 Challenges Encountered During and After the Siege

#### 3.2.1 Operational Preparedness, Equipment, and Safety Challenges

Uniformed personnel reported operational difficulties involving unfamiliar urban-warfare conditions, inadequate protective equipment, and responsibilities beyond their conventional training. UP1 explained that police personnel accustomed to anti-drug and anti-kidnapping operations encountered threats from buildings, concealed positions, and confined urban

spaces. UP3 reported that BFP protective equipment was designed for firefighting rather than exposure to bullets and shrapnel, while UP4 described operating without adequate night-vision equipment. UP2 experienced difficulties managing prisoners who attempted to escape or seize weapons during the attack. These accounts identified deficiencies in operational preparation, equipment suitability, and emergency response capabilities. The findings emphasize the importance of specialized preparation for urban conflict and interagency emergency operations. Spencer et al. (2024) highlighted the tactical and operational challenges encountered during the Battle of Marawi, particularly the need to adapt conventional military approaches to densely built environments. Weissmann (2023) also identified urban terrain, operational complexity, and technological requirements as important considerations in contemporary warfare. The participants' accounts indicate that operational preparedness must extend beyond conventional training to include appropriate protective equipment, specialized response capabilities, and coordination among agencies assigned different responsibilities.

### 3.2.2 Psychological Distress and Family Relationship Strain

Four of the five uniformed personnel (UP1, UP2, UP3, and UP5) reported continuing psychological difficulties after the siege. UP1 described hypervigilance, fear triggered by sudden sounds, and increased irritability that affected his marriage. UP2 reported receiving a post-traumatic stress disorder diagnosis and experiencing panic attacks, including an incident triggered by a loud sound in a shopping mall. UP3 described prolonged depressive symptoms and thoughts of leaving his profession, while UP5 reported persistent alertness and fear associated with sounds resembling gunfire. These accounts showed that some psychological difficulties continued after participants had returned to environments away from active combat. The findings correspond with contemporary research linking conflict-related exposure to psychological distress and difficulties in post-deployment adjustment. Carmona et al. (2024), in a systematic review and meta-analysis involving peacekeepers, identified traumatic exposure and limitations in protective resources as factors associated with post-traumatic stress disorder. Weber et al. (2025) similarly emphasized the importance of individual, interpersonal, and systemic protective factors in the well-being of trauma-exposed military personnel. Although these studies involved populations and operational contexts different from Marawi, they provide relevant evidence for understanding the participants' reported psychological difficulties. The findings also highlight the importance of recognizing how occupational trauma may affect personal functioning and family relationships without assuming that all reported symptoms constitute independently verified clinical diagnoses.

### 3.2.3 Health Risks, Livelihood Loss, and Solo Parenthood

Affected families reported difficulties involving medical needs, loss of income, and increased caregiving responsibilities. AF4, who had a heart condition, experienced difficulties escaping and left her maintenance medication behind. She subsequently became weak while staying in an evacuation center but received medical assistance. AF1 lost the sari-sari store that supported the family's daily expenses and lacked sufficient capital to reopen a business. AF5 experienced unemployment and subsequently accepted low-paying construction work, while AF2 supported her children through laundry and cooking activities. Participants with substantial parenting responsibilities described additional pressure to secure income, food, and other household necessities. These accounts show that displacement-related vulnerability involves interconnected health, economic, and family concerns. Opdyke et al. (2026) found that

displacement, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to essential services contributed to persistent vulnerabilities among conflict-affected households in Marawi. Siton Nanaman and Estrada (2023) similarly reported that displaced families experienced difficulties accessing employment, markets, health facilities, and other services from transitional settlements. The findings also correspond with Lumna (2024), who identified livelihood limitations, housing concerns, psychological difficulties, and administrative barriers as obstacles to the return of displaced Marawi residents. Together, these studies support the importance of integrated recovery assistance that responds to the differing circumstances of affected households.

### 3.3 Coping Mechanisms of Uniformed Personnel and Affected Families

#### 3.3.1 Spiritual, Family, Peer, and Professional Coping Among Uniformed Personnel

Uniformed personnel described several coping mechanisms, including prayer, support from family members and colleagues, professional assistance, continued service, and encouragement from organizational leaders. UP2 and UP3 identified religious faith as a source of strength, while UP1 and UP2 reported support from colleagues through shared conversations, prayer, and debriefing. UP1, UP2, and UP3 emphasized the importance of supportive spouses and children. Two participants, UP1 and UP2, reported receiving counseling and medication, while UP4 and UP5 described continued professional service as a means of moving forward. UP5 additionally identified encouragement from his commander as an important source of motivation. These findings illustrate how coping may involve personal beliefs, social relationships, formal assistance, and organizational resources. Grover et al. (2024) found that perceived social support was associated with psychological and social outcomes among combat-exposed military personnel. Weber et al. (2025) further identified social support and other protective resources as relevant to post-traumatic well-being. The importance of faith also corresponds with Dagalangit-Pundato and Wapaño (2023), who documented religious belief and meaning-making as significant coping resources among Marawi survivors. The combination of personal, relational, and institutional support observed in the participants' accounts indicates that recovery cannot be understood through individual coping strategies alone.

#### 3.3.2 Faith, Family Unity, Livelihood, and Community Assistance Among Affected Families

Affected families relied on religious faith, family relationships, livelihood activities, assistance from organizations, and community support. AF1 and AF2 described prayer and faith in Allah as sources of strength, while AF1 and AF5 emphasized family unity and assistance from relatives. AF5 received financial support from an employed son, and AF1 obtained livelihood assistance and starter capital from supporting organizations. AF4 benefited from medical assistance during displacement, while AF1 and AF2 pursued labor, laundry, and cooking activities to obtain income. Community members and organizations also provided food, school supplies, and other necessities. Unlike the uniformed personnel, the affected-family participants did not report receiving formal psychological counseling in their accounts. These findings highlight the importance of culturally meaningful and practical coping mechanisms among displaced households. Dagalangit-Pundato and Wapaño (2023) found that faith, family relationships, and resilience were closely connected in the recovery experiences of Marawi Siege survivors. Collado (2024) also emphasized the significance of family relationships in supporting recovery among internally displaced families. Meanwhile, Siton Nanaman and Estrada (2023) identified livelihood access and other material circumstances as important dimensions of the coping experiences of

displaced Marawi residents. The participants' experiences indicate that coping strategies were shaped by their available family, cultural, economic, and community resources.

### 3.4 Shared Insights Concerning Government and Community Responsibilities

#### 3.4.1 Improved Preparedness, Mental Health Services, and Institutional Recognition

Uniformed personnel recommended improved training, appropriate protective equipment, sustained mental health services, and recognition of all agencies involved in emergency operations. UP1 emphasized specialized urban-warfare and hostage-rescue training, improved body armor, night-vision equipment, and reliable communication systems. UP3 recommended protective equipment and specialized rescue training for BFP personnel, while UP2 advocated gender-sensitive training and appropriately fitted equipment for female responders. UP3 and UP5 emphasized regular counseling, psychiatric assessment, and confidential support systems instead of relying exclusively on one-time debriefing. Participants from the BJMP and BFP also requested greater recognition of their contributions during the siege. These recommendations reflect the operational and psychological concerns identified by the participants. Spencer et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of examining the Battle of Marawi to strengthen preparedness for future urban operations. Carmona et al. (2024) highlighted the relevance of organizational and social resources in understanding psychological outcomes among deployed personnel, while Weber et al. (2025) identified the importance of protective factors and system-level support for trauma-exposed military populations. The findings indicate that institutional responses to armed conflict should consider operational readiness, appropriate equipment, psychosocial services, gender-responsive requirements, and the differing responsibilities of participating agencies.

#### 3.4.2 Compensation, Livelihood Rehabilitation, and Medical Assistance

The affected-family representatives identified financial recovery, livelihood opportunities, and accessible medical services as priorities for government assistance. AF1 requested faster processing of compensation claims under Republic Act No. 11696 and emphasized the need for livelihood support beyond temporary food assistance. AF2 recommended livelihood programs specifically addressing the circumstances of widows and solo parents, while AF3 requested financial capital and opportunities for women to establish small businesses. AF4 emphasized regular medical examinations, medical missions, and access to maintenance medication for displaced individuals with chronic illnesses. Their recommendations reflected the economic and health difficulties experienced by their respective households. The participants' recommendations are consistent with the objectives of the Marawi Siege Victims Compensation Act of 2022, which provides a legal framework for compensating qualifying conflict-related losses (Republic of the Philippines, 2022). Lumna (2024) identified financial limitations, housing insecurity, and administrative difficulties as barriers to the return of displaced residents. Similarly, Opdyke et al. (2026) emphasized the importance of infrastructure, service accessibility, and inclusive recovery planning among Marawi households affected by prolonged displacement. Simangan (2024) further demonstrated that livelihood opportunities, equitable assistance, and the restoration of everyday community life are closely connected with peacebuilding in post-siege Marawi. These sources support the participants' emphasis on sustained and accessible assistance responsive to household needs.

### 3.4.3 Community Vigilance, Non-Discrimination, and Collective Recovery

Participants also provided recommendations concerning community responsibilities. UP1 emphasized cooperation with authorities through responsible reporting of suspicious activities while discouraging discrimination against Muslim communities, noting that Muslim residents had assisted security personnel during the siege. UP2 advocated respect and recognition for women serving in law enforcement and public safety agencies. Among affected families, AF3 recommended anti-bullying initiatives in schools to protect displaced children experiencing psychological and social difficulties. AF5 emphasized mutual assistance and community solidarity, while other participants acknowledged the importance of support from neighbors, relatives, and humanitarian organizations. These insights indicate that recovery extends beyond the provision of government assistance and involves respectful social relationships, community cooperation, and protection against discrimination. Simangan (2024) emphasized that post-conflict peacebuilding in Marawi involves social relationships, security, equitable opportunities, and the restoration of normal community life. Collado (2024) likewise identified the importance of strengthening relationships among families affected by conflict. The International Committee of the Red Cross (2025) highlighted unresolved displacement and humanitarian concerns years after the siege, reinforcing the continuing need for coordinated recovery efforts. The findings suggest that institutional assistance and community solidarity are complementary dimensions of rehabilitation, particularly in addressing the long-term social and psychological consequences of armed conflict.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings indicate that the Marawi Siege affected uniformed service personnel and displaced families in distinct but interconnected ways. Personnel encountered life-threatening combat, unfamiliar operational demands, inadequate protective equipment, and conflicts between duty and family responsibilities; some continued to report psychological distress and strained relationships after the siege. Affected families experienced sudden evacuation, loss of homes and livelihoods, health-related difficulties, financial insecurity, and intensified caregiving burdens, particularly among solo parents. Across both groups, faith and family relationships were central coping resources, supplemented by peer and organizational support for personnel and by work, humanitarian assistance, and community solidarity for families. Participants' recommendations reflected these experiences: personnel emphasized preparedness and sustained psychosocial care, whereas families prioritized compensation, medical services, and livelihood recovery. Collectively, the findings show that the siege's consequences extended beyond immediate physical danger into professional, psychological, familial, and socioeconomic life, underscoring the value of hearing both groups in post-conflict planning.

Uniformed agencies should strengthen training in urban conflict, emergency rescue, inmate management, and casualty care while providing appropriate protective equipment, reliable communications, and properly fitted gear for female personnel. Continuing mental health assessments, confidential counseling, referrals, and peer-support programs should be established, with consideration for family relationships and recognition of contributions from the PNP, AFP, BJMP, and BFP. Government agencies responsible for Marawi rehabilitation should accelerate compensation processing under Republic Act No. 11696 and strengthen livelihood training, employment opportunities, and small-business assistance, particularly for widows, solo parents, and women. Local government units, social welfare offices, and health providers should identify vulnerable displaced residents and facilitate medical examinations, maintenance medications, and culturally responsive psychosocial services. Schools should

strengthen anti-bullying programs for displaced children, while religious leaders and communities should promote mutual assistance, religious tolerance, and inclusive participation. These interventions should prioritize the participants' identified needs and support sustainable recovery beyond temporary humanitarian assistance.

This qualitative case study involved ten purposively selected participants, comprising five uniformed personnel and five adult representatives of affected families. Consequently, the findings provide contextual insights but cannot be generalized to all personnel and families affected by the Marawi Siege. Each family's experiences were represented by one adult, excluding other household members' perspectives. The study was geographically limited to selected affected communities in Marawi and displaced households in Sagonsongan. It did not independently evaluate rehabilitation programs or include government and humanitarian representatives. Retrospective accounts and potential language and cultural interpretation difficulties may also affect the findings. Future research may include larger, more diverse samples and multiple family perspectives.

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