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ESCAPE FROM MARAWI: Foreign Correspondent

Airs Tuesday August 1

Thousands of people have been caught up in a brutal new ISIS battleground on Australia's doorstep. One of them was ABC correspondent Adam Harvey, who took a bullet to the neck. This is his story, and theirs.

Suddenly, somehow, a country loses an entire city. ISIS militants swarm through Marawi, in the Philippines island of Mindanao, all but emptying it of more than 200,000 people.

Two months later ISIS hangs on inside Marawi, fuelling its dream of a caliphate in south east Asia. A humiliated Philippines military repeatedly misses deadlines to retake the city.

You could say we were a bit surprised by the resistance we got – military spokesman

Snipers are everywhere – Filipino photojournalist

Among the many casualties in Marawi is ABC correspondent Adam Harvey

It felt like I got hit with a rock, but I guess it wasn't a rock – Adam Harvey, seconds after being shot

For Harvey, this story is personal. There's the hurried patch-up by brave medical staff as a gun battle rages metres away; the dash to safety; the delicate surgery to remove a deeply embedded M16 bullet; and the emotional reunion with family.

Don't go back to Marawi – Harvey's wife Eliza's bedside entreaty at the Manila hospital

Harvey duly avoids Marawi – but he does return to the story. For *Foreign Correspondent*, he now gives the full account of his own dramatic escape alongside producer Geoff Thompson and cameraman Phil Hemingway, and of the plight of the thousands fleeing ISIS in Marawi.

He meets heroic Muslim policemen who could have run to safety but chose instead to shield Christian building workers stuck inside the city...

If we left them I knew it would be pitiful. They'd be killed – policeman

... the band of crazy-brave civilians calling themselves the "Suicide Squad" ...

We risk our lives to save the lives of people still trapped inside the city. So far we've had calls from more than 60 people – Abdul, Suicide Squad member

...and some of the estimated 250,000 Muslim and Christian refugees who struggle to eat, with no idea when or if they can go home.

Please stop the war. A lot of people are dying, especially the little children – refugee's plea to President Duterte

Marawi's fall stunned Philippine authorities and neighbouring countries. So how did it happen? Harvey traces how rival groups of extremist secessionists teamed under the ISIS banner and the spell of two charismatic local brothers. Their planning and execution were meticulous.

The fear now is that Marawi may become a beacon for extremists, like Syria and Iraq, where fighters are blooded to spread terror abroad.

It's changed the perception of the threat in Australia but more so in the immediate neighbours of Indonesia, the Philippines and Singapore – terrorism expert Sidney Jones

Adam Harvey's *Escape from Marawi* airs on Foreign Correspondent Tuesday August 1 at 9.20 pm, then at 10.30 am Thursday August 3 on ABC TV and 6.30 pm Sunday August 6 on ABC TV News. Also on iView.

*This extended edition of Foreign Correspondent will be the last in the current season. The program will return on Mondays at 8.30 pm from November 27 until the end of January 2018.