



Municipal Protection Profile conducted in Basilan

Akbar



Municipality of Akbar

Province of Basilan | Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)

Overview

Risk rating: **Medium**

Quick facts

Akbar Municipality is one of the newly created municipalities in Basilan. It is composed of nine (9) barangays that were formerly part of Tuburan, including one (1) island barangay.

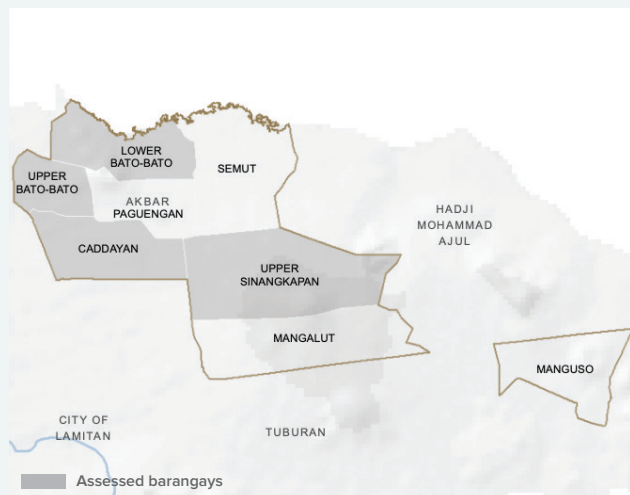
Akbar municipality was created by virtue of Muslim Mindanao Act. No. 193 (MMA No. 193) in December 2005. The municipality is named after Akbar Marani, a well-known Islamic preacher and descendant of Kudarat, who landed in Taguime in the 17th century and later migrated to Central Mindanao.

Akbar is generally an agricultural community. The total land devoted to farming is estimated at 98% of the total land area, with coconut as the major product, followed by rubber, banana, coffee and other fruit trees. The municipality also has a coastal area with rich fishing grounds.



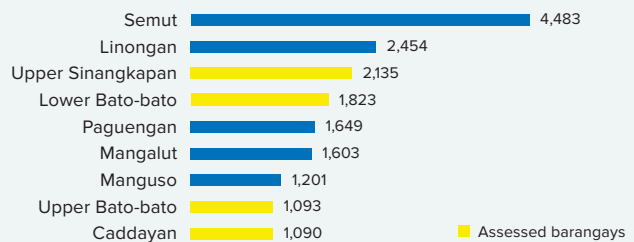
Population	Households	Income Class	Land Area	Barangays	Climate type	Native Dialect
17,531	2,820	5th Class	14.97 sq.mi.	9	Tropical	Yakan, Chavacano, Tagalog

Assessed barangays

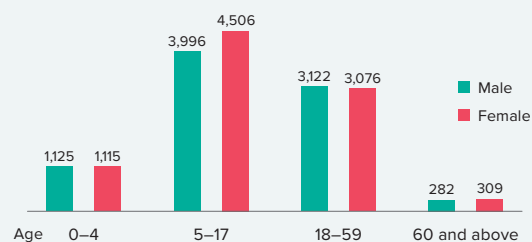


Assessed barangays in Akbar are: Caddayan, Upper Bato-Bato, Lower Bato-Bao and Upper Sinangkapan.

Population¹ by barangay






Population¹ by sex and age group



¹ 2015 Census of Population, Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)

Protection profile summary

Based on the analysis of the findings from the profiling activity, the protection risk rating for the Municipality of Akbar is MEDIUM due to the following considerations:

		
<p>The municipality is located in the rural part of Basilan province where residents experience difficulty due to limited transportation and communication networks.</p>	<p>The municipality of Akbar is an entry and exit point for members of armed groups into other municipalities, particularly Lamitan City, which is frequently a target of bombing incidents and other attacks.</p>	<p>The Local Government Unit (LGU) of Akbar has limited capacity in delivering basic social services, especially to communities located in remote parts of the municipality, due to lack of Internal Revenue Allocation resulting in poor delivery of assistance.</p>

Protection analysis data

Displacement


Based on the gathered information, the main cause of displacement of affected communities is due to armed encounters and violence. The municipality is particularly vulnerable to such incidents because the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) is believed to be based in the adjacent municipalities of Moh Ajul and Tuburan. Whenever the Philippine military conducts operations against ASG, the Municipality of Akbar acts as host to the displaced population until the situation in affected communities normalizes.


Despite the situation, the people in the Municipality of Akbar readily accept internally displaced people as part of their moral responsibility to assist the affected population.

As shared by the respondents in the assessed barangays, there were no reported abuses or human rights violations in their barangays.

Three of the four assessed barangays host internally displaced people. Most are from incidents in other areas of Basilan, particularly in the municipalities of Tuburan and Mohammed Ajul.

 **68** families
Total displaced population

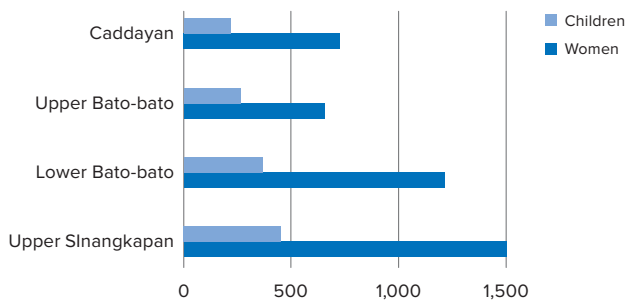
 **18** families
Total internally displaced population returned

 **50** families
Total internally displaced population resettled

Note: Values only cover the assessed barangays.

Protection services

Table 1
Number of children and women in the assessed barangays in Akbar



Almost all of the interviewed people expressed that women and children are generally safe in their community and have access to information. Information is largely shared through community gathering and discussions.

There is a small number of cases of children being separated from their parents. The cause for separation is usually due to economic circumstances that cause parents to go abroad to find work in order to sustain their family's needs.

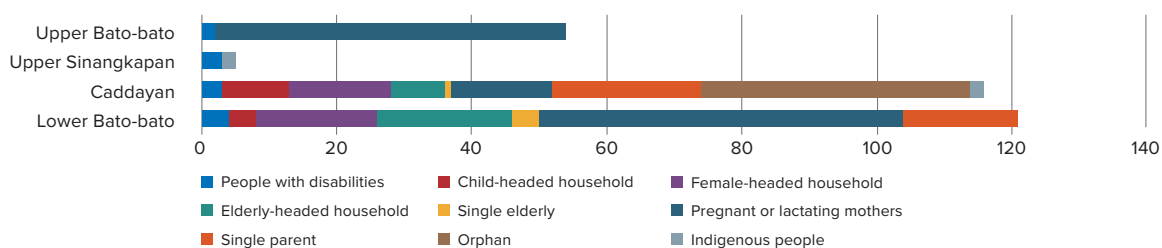
All the barangays assessed have existing desks that address Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) incidents and Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children (BCPC). The presence of the Women and Child Protection Desks has reduced the fear and trauma among women and children caused by the security incidents and fighting in their area. Traditional leaders mediate disputes involving women and children or violations committed against them.

Women have access to security services and are given the opportunity to express their opinions. Although they generally do not take leadership roles in the community, they affirmed that their voices are heard and they are able to participate in activities.

People with special needs

Table 2

Number of people with special needs in the assessed barangays











For addressing special needs, the municipality is chiefly dependent on resources for social services from government agencies. The Non-Internal Revenue Allotment status of the municipality results in the LGU’s difficulty in providing all the requirements of people with special needs.

Although only a few people with special needs are evident in the area, the need for medical devices or assistance is the most urgent in remote areas that do not have barangay health stations, particularly needed for pregnant and lactating women.

Needs of the municipality based on the community profile:

For displaced people with special needs, the immediate and long-term needs:

-  **Elderly/Elderly-headed Household**
Assistive devices, beddings, vitamins, livelihood
-  **Single Elderly-headed Household**
Livelihood training, food and cash assistance and hygiene kits
-  **People with disabilities**
Assistive devices and financial assistance
-  **Single parent**
Livelihood training
-  **Pregnant or lactating mothers**
Medical assistance, food
-  **Orphans**
Financial and educational supplies
-  **Chronic illness**
Medicine, cash assistance, hospitalization care and bedding

-  **Elderly**
Food and shelter, clothes, hygiene kits, Pension inclusion and education
-  **Elderly headed household**
Food, kitchen utensils, shelter, cash assistance and pension
-  **People with disabilities**
Assistive devices, livelihood training, beddings and shelter
-  **Single/Solo parents**
Food, clothing for children, hygiene kits, kitchen utensils and shelter
-  **Orphans**
Shelter, food, educational supplies, kitchen utensils and clothing
-  **Child headed households**
Shelter, food, hygiene kits, clothing and educational supplies
-  **Pregnant and lactating mothers**
Vitamins and cash assistance
-  **Chronically ill**
Medicine and medical care

Access to basic services

Basic services available in the municipality:

- Four (4) elementary schools within the assessed barangays
- Day care schools in all barangays
- Municipal Hall with covered court
- Municipal port
- Barangay Halls in each barangay
- One (1) Police Station in Upper Bato-bato
- Barangay Peacekeeping Action Team (BPAT) outposts are provided in each barangay, as mandated
- Health Centre in each barangay and Rural Health Unit in the municipality
- Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) under the Department of Social Welfare and Development
- PhilHealth (Social pensions and 4Ps beneficiaries are automatically enrolled as PhilHealth members)
- Free Birth Registration (in 2017, LGU provided free registration)

The lack of financial resources to provide basic social services affects the immediate response of the LGU in addressing the urgent needs of the population.

Based on the information gathered, it was assessed that the most affected population in relation to lack of access to protection and social services are the elderly, people with disabilities, women, and children.

Safety and security

The primary cause of displacement is armed conflict between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).

From the adjoining municipalities of Tuburan and Mohammed Ajul, all types of land transportation regularly pass through the Municipality of Akbar. This makes Akbar a strategic transit point for any armed element seeking to carry out attacks, causing conflicts in Akbar should the fighting escalate.

With the presence of the Barangay Peacekeeping Action Teams (BPAT) and other security forces, the threat from armed conflict is minimized.

Community protection strategies

The following are practices identified by the respondents in settling disputes and other community concerns:

- Despite the situation that internally displaced people had experienced, host communities have openly sheltered them and made them feel secure in their new environment. In this way, they support the livelihood activity within their community. A common example is sharing or cooperation in finding means of livelihood for their daily needs (fishing and farming). Another form of coping is by providing moral support to each other, especially among family members and relatives.
- Recognizing the role of the elders in the community in settling disputes in the community.
- One hundred forty-four (144) members, including police, BPAT, ARMY/CAFGU and barangay watchmen (Tanod), are active in maintaining peace and order in the municipality

Civil Documentation

Of the four (4) barangays assessed with a combined total of 1,483 households:

25% do not have birth registration

10% of the total population does not have marriage registration

The reasons for not being able to secure civil documentation are as follows:

- Lack of knowledge about the importance of Birth and Marriage Registration
- Difficulty in completing the required documents for securing civil documentation, as some parents do not bother to acquire civil documents for their children
- Lack of financial resources for transportation and fees required in acquiring civil documents
- Illiteracy, even in basic reading and writing
- Accessibility, transportation and distance, especially for those in the far-flung areas
- Some prefer not to have identification for security reasons.

Disadvantages of not having civil documentation are as follows:

- Inability to travel, both within the country or internationally
- Hindrance in enrolling in schools
- Will not be able to register as voter
- Will not be able to enroll in government social service
- Will not be able to acquire employment, either in private or government workplaces

In the absence of civil documentation, residents acquire Community Tax Certificates (CEDULA) issued by the Municipal Registry or Barangay Certificates as alternative identification papers.

Communication and Information

Poor cellphone signal is experienced in the municipality. There is no internet connection in the entire municipality. The usual mode of communication in areas without cellphone signal is through friends and relatives living in Lamitan City who have the chance to visit the municipality of Akbar.

The municipal and barangay local governments regularly issue announcements related to the following:

- Security alerts
- Barangay programs (4Ps)
- Community awareness/trainings
- New barangay ordinances/policies
- Barangay events and social activities
- National Government Programs

The above information is usually received through Barangay staff, or announcements are relayed during Jumaah or Muslim Friday Prayer in mosques.

Housing, Land and Property

Table below shows the number of population with land titles or other HLP documentation (refers to land titles, last will and testament/proof of inheritance, deed of donation or sale)

Area	Estimate % of Population with Land Title or Property Deeds	Estimate % of Population Who Work as Tenants	Estimate % of Families Considered Illegal Settlers
Caddayan	25%	25%	0
Upper Bato-Bato	26%	25%	0
Lower Bato-Bato	25%	50%	0
Upper Sinangkapan	25%	25%	0

Regarding the inheritance issues, some respondents lack the awareness and understanding regarding the rule of Shariah on inheritance.

The identified ways of acquiring the properties are as follows:

- Inheritance
- Ancestral claim
- Right to use

Peace Process

Majority of the respondents are informed and updated about the status of the peace agreement between the Philippine Government and the MILF concerning the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL). As of the time of data collection, which was in 2018, before the plebiscite on the ratification of the said law, residents in the assessed barangays had mixed views. Some are supportive of the BBL, while other residents believe that the BBL will have negative effects on their communities.

Community Protection Strategies

Despite the challenging situations IDPs are currently experiencing, the host community exerts significant efforts to make them feel safe and secured in their new environment. The IDPs, together with the host families, have developed various coping mechanisms to support livelihood activities within their community, such as joining other IDPs in fishing and farming. Providing moral support to family members/relatives has been a continuing practice in the community, especially during calamities and armed conflicts.

Protection capability, intent and compliance aptitude

The municipal/barangay personnel gives priority to supporting the needs of the IDPs, particularly their basic needs upon displacement as well as other concerns after return or local integration. Despite limited financial resources, the host LGU tries to inform IDPs of available opportunities and resources in the host municipality.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the profiling and field-based data gathering through conducting focus group discussion and key informant interviews, the following are recommended:

1

For the Government (LGU/BLGU and other line agencies)

- Enhance and mobilize more BPAT teams/ personnel to do regular monitoring and patrolling in their respective barangays
- Strengthen the reporting mechanisms in order to regularly inform the communities about programs that will benefit the residents
- Ensure close participation of communities in the development of safety and security strategies
- Install street lamps in dark areas to ensure safety and security of the residents especially PWSN, women, and children
- Strengthen awareness campaigns on the Anti-Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) Law in every barangay
- Strengthen and sustain communication and coordination between the MLGU and BLGU
- Mainstream protection at the barangay level and institutionalize protection mechanisms in the local government unit as part of the prevention and mitigation strategies and emergency response capacities

2

For NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies and other humanitarian agencies

- Assist the LGU in developing contingency plan to address both natural disaster and armed conflict
- Provide training to or enhance effective conflict resolution and leadership skills among community leaders/BLGU, traditional leaders and LGU officials

SOURCES / REFERENCES:

Focus Group Discussions (FGD)
Key Informant Interviews (KII)
Secondary Data Review



Australian Aid (DFAT) UNDP
HANDOVER
Construction of Municipal Office Building
03 Dec 2020



Quick Impact Project (QIP) handover in Akbar Municipality, Basilan Province
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