

Municipal Protection Profile conducted in Maguindanao

Datu Hoffer Ampatuan



Municipality of Datu Hoffer Ampatuan

Province of Maguindanao | Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)

Overview

Risk rating: High ■ ■ ■

Quick facts

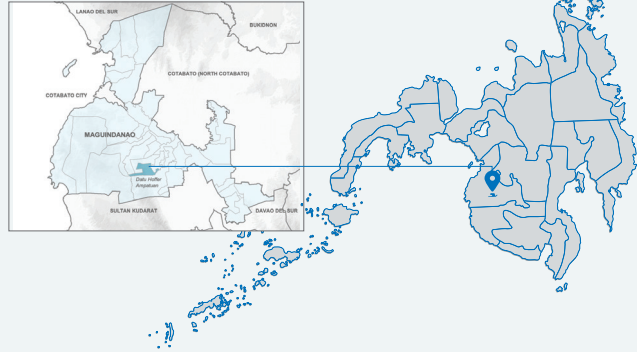
Datu Hoffer Ampatuan is bounded by the mountain ranges of Central Mindanao in the northwest, Datu Unsay Municipality in the northeast, Shariff Aguak in the southeast and Ampatuan Municipality in the Southwest. It is about sixty-five (65) kilometres from Cotabato City.

The municipality was created through the Muslim Mindanao Autonomy Act No. 220 of July 2009. The municipality does not have a regular share in the Internal Revenue Allotment from the Department of Budget and Management because the Supreme Court of the Philippines nullified the autonomy act creating it. The municipality receives subsidies from the Office of the Regional Treasury-ARMM (ORT-ARMM) to augment its expenses, but only for the salaries of key local government personnel and critical operations.

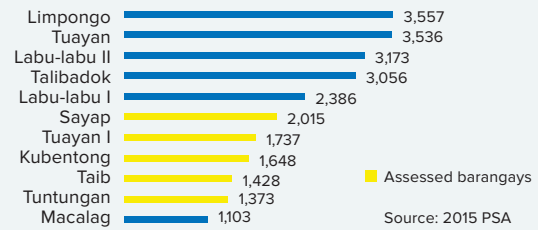
The main source of livelihood in Datu Hoffer Ampatuan is agriculture, with the major crop being corn, followed by coconut, and then rice. It also has a few mango and other fruit tree farms.

The municipality is composed of mixed communities of 'tri-people': Lumads/indigenous peoples, Moros and Settlers. Moros are people who belong to indigenous tribes that were Islamized in the 13th to 15th centuries; Settlers are those who originated from Luzon and Visayas and whose religion is Christianity, and Lumads refer to those who belong to the 23 indigenous ethno-linguistic tribes, irrespective of religion. Some of the indigenous tribes have embraced Islam, while others have accepted Christianity.

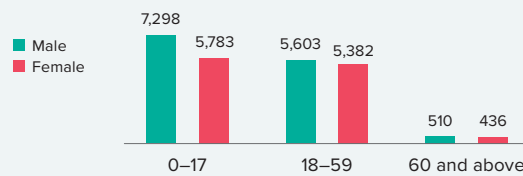
Datu Hoffer Ampatuan



Population¹ of assessed barangay



Population by sex and age group



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



Population

25,012



Households

5,002



Income Class

6th Class



Land Area

461.1sq.m.



Barangays

11



Climate type

Tropical

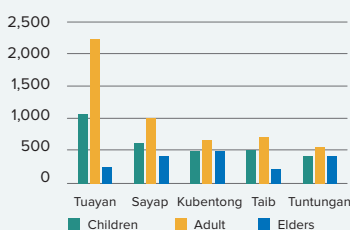


Language Spoken

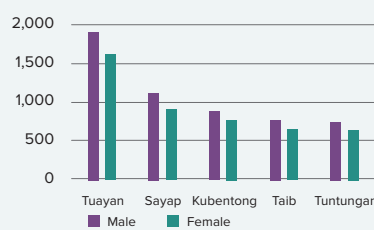
**Maguindanaon,
Teduray,
Manobo**

Protection profile summary

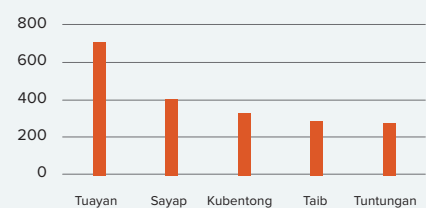
Age breakdown per barangay



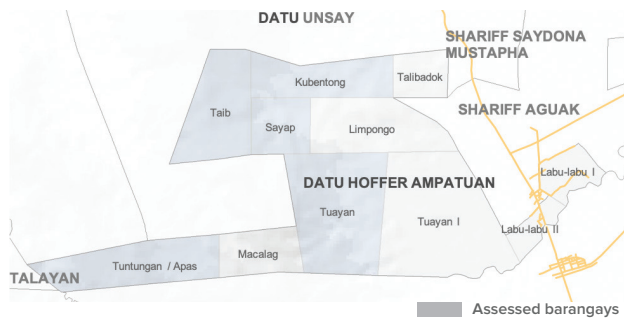
Sex breakdown per barangay







Number of families per barangay






Assessed barangays in Datu Hoffer Ampatuan are Kubentong, Sayap, Tuayan, Taib and Tuntungan/Aspas.







-  Datu Hoffer is part of the operations site of the Philippine Military, in coordination with other law enforcement agencies, as part of the implementation of the Law Enforcement Support Operation (LESO) in pursuing criminal and terrorist groups.
-  Large portions of the municipality form part of Camp Omar, a major stronghold of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).
-  Occurrence of frequent flooding hamper the daily lives of the residents. This is due to the municipality's proximity to Mt. Kaburot and the Kabulnan River. The municipality is currently hosting families who have been protractedly displaced from other municipalities.
-  Indigenous people's communities, which have limited capacity, and lack of access to basic services and resources, are more vulnerable to conflict

Protection analysis data

Displacement

-  The municipality is within the territory of Camp Omar, a major stronghold of the MILF and also the base of the 105th Based Command of the MILF Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (MILF-BIAF).
-  The residents have encountered repeated displacements since 1998 up to present. The major displacements were in year 2000 due to the armed-fighting between Philippine military and the MILF ("All-out-War"), in 2008 in the aftermath of the declaration of unconstitutionality of the Memorandum of Agreement for Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD), other military actions and "rido" or clan and family conflicts.
-  The municipality is proximate to the so-called SPMS Box, an area that experiences recurrent displacement due to the military operations against groups such as the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), Jamaatul Muhajireen Wal Ansar (JMWA) Fil Filibeen; other private armed groups are highly present.

-  The continuing implementation by the Philippine Military in coordination with other Law Enforcement Agencies of the Law Enforcement Support Operation (LESO), as part of the campaign to neutralize illegal drug related criminal and terrorist groups, affects the residents.
-  Displacement also occurs during rainy season where low-lying areas are submerged in floodwater. Meanwhile, houses in the mountainous areas experience landslides due to denuded forest.
-  IDPs experience restriction in movement, threats from host communities and denial of relief assistance, which further adds to their already traumatic experience.
-  All displacements resulted in loss of livelihood and destruction of property.


All five of the assessed barangays have had displacements due to armed conflict since 1990s:

- 1999**  The first displacement was during a battle in Camp Badar and portions of Camp Omar of the MILF in 1999.
- 2003** The second displacement was during the "All-Out-War" under President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 2003.
- 2008** The third displacement was from the end of the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) between the government and the MILF in 2008.
- 2013- Present** The fourth and most recent displacement was triggered by the continuing military Law Enforcement Operations (LEO) against BIFF and ISIS militants since 2013.


-  All of the five barangays assessed were affected by displacement
-  1 Barangay Tuavan is hosting internally displaced persons
-  **281** Families are still protractedly displaced

Protection of Women and Children


The common reported protection concerns affecting women and children are as follows:




Inadvertent falling of military artillery and stray bullets in school sites and near evacuation centers.




High dropout rate among students due to displacement.




Parent working abroad that leaves children without proper parental guidance.



Early marriages among teenagers.



Children drop out of school to help parents in earning money



Weak operation of mechanisms such as the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) and the Local Council Against Trafficking - Violence Against Women and Children (LCAT-VAWC).

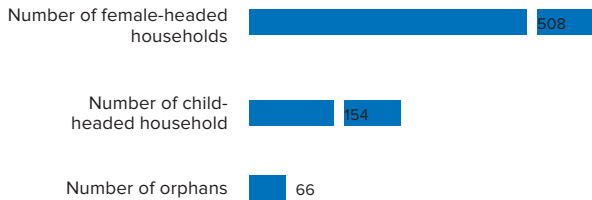
Protection services

Women and children are the most vulnerable and affected among the population from the conflicts and displacement. In evacuation centers, the conditions for women and children are inadequate in terms of food, water and hygiene.

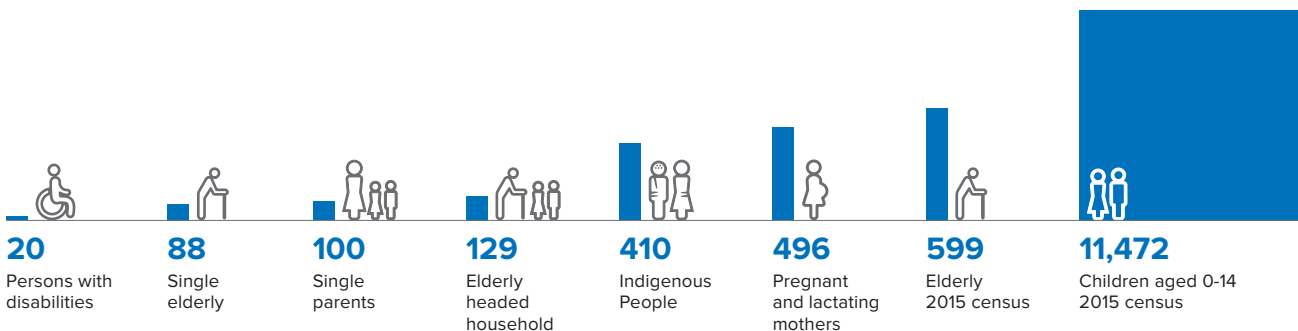
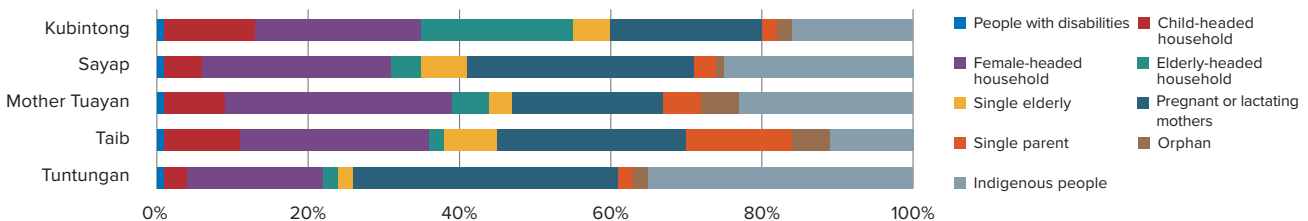
The common reported protection concerns affecting women and children include:

- Inadvertent military artillery and stray bullets in school sites and nearby evacuation centers
- High dropout rate among students due to displacement
- Parents, who leave children without proper parental guidance, to work abroad
- Early marriages among teenagers
- Children who are obligated to drop out of school to help parents in their livelihood
- Weak implementation of the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) and the Local Council Against Trafficking-Violence Against Women and Children (LCAT-VAWC).

Population of children disaggregated by age and gender



Persons with specific needs in the assessed barangays



Access to basic services

Social Protection



The Department of Social Welfare and Development's Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) offers some assistance.



The Social Pension for the Senior Citizens still needs more comprehensive data recording as in the municipality there are a number of senior citizens not yet registered.

Education



Out of the five (5) sampled barangays, four (4) have a need for additional educational facilities due to the absence of schools.



Of the assessed barangays, only Tuayan has an elementary school.



Two (2) other elementary schools are available in barangays in the municipality that were not included in this assessment: one in Limpongo, and the other in Labu-labu 2.

Among the five (5) barangays assessed, Tuayan has the fewest households with electricity at only 40 percent of the 707 households.

As a response, UNHCR and CFSI distributed 161 solar lanterns to households that are protractedly displaced in the barangay.

Health stations



Three (3) health stations are accessible in the municipality. One of these is in the assessed barangay of Tuayan, while the others are in Limpongo, and Labu-labu 2.

PhilHealth (insurance)



Most residents are 4Ps members and most also have PhilHealth membership. PhilHealth medical benefits are honoured in local medical facilities.



Existing Municipal Health Units and Barangay Health Stations are not equipped with medical facilities due to the non-IRA status of the municipality.



The nearest and most accessible medical facility is the Provincial Hospital of Maguindanao, which is nearby in distance from Datu Hoffer, but the poor road conditions and low availability of medical expertise and supplies pose life-threatening risks for people needing medical treatment.

Major sources of income from the government

Since the municipality has no regular share in the IRA from the DBM, the major source of income for the LGU is its personnel and other expenses is subsidy/financial assistance from the Office of the Regional Treasury-ARMM.

Safety and security



The lead agency for civilian protection is the Philippine National Police (PNP). In each Barangay LGU, the Barangay Peacekeeping Action Team (BPAT) is organized to complement the maintenance of peace and order mandate of the PNP.



The Barangay Peace and Order Council plays a vital role in resolving conflicts at the community level.



The standing ceasefire agreement between the Philippine Government and the MILF under the monitoring of the Joint Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) contributed to the reduction and immediate resolution of conflicts.

Community coping mechanisms and protection strategies

The Municipality of Datu Hoffer has the record of long-term exposure to armed conflicts for various reasons and the population has developed resiliency in dealing with displacement situations.

As coping mechanisms to mitigate risks of conflict, respondents said that their communities, particularly leaders, have initiated advocacy with parties to the conflict for any early warnings and precautions before launching any military operations, in order to prepare for possible evacuations as needed. The leaders of tri-people have established and maintained dialogue among their ranks to discuss emerging issues, differences and disputes. Some participants further expressed that tribal leaders are planning to engage with parties to the conflict (military and non-state armed groups) and advocate for respecting the human rights of vulnerable communities including indigenous populations and those families with weak and lack of capacity and resources.

The respondents have also cited seeking guidance from the teachings of Islam in seeking protection of women and children, which is frequently discussed in the Madrasah and Mosques.

The respondents also mentioned the efforts of the LGU in working collaboratively with different sectors to uphold peace and maintenance of law and order in view of the objective to protect the people. They have cited that the external assistance from non-government organizations and humanitarian aid agencies is visible in the area, which contributes to enhancing of protection in the municipality.

Civil Documentation

About 25 percent of respondents from the focus group discussion mentioned that more than 50 percent of the population do not have birth certificates, while 76 percent do not have marriage certificates. This has resulted in disqualification of 4P applications because of the absence of these documents.

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

-  They never needed one
-  Cannot write, read, and apply
-  Place of birth is different from current municipality of residence
-  Prefer not to have identification for security purposes
-  Cannot afford one
-  They do not know about it
-  Cannot secure all the supporting documents
-  They do not know how to get one
-  Difficult access to civil registrar's office

People who do not have birth certificates face difficulties accessing other basic services and are unable to register in programmes, to register as voters, or to enrol their children in schools.

Internally displaced persons and others without supporting documents can include farmers, elderly, severely sick, people with disabilities, illiterate people, and members of armed groups. The LGU faces challenges in reaching out the families who live in remote areas. Despite LGU's willingness to provide for the needs for civil documentation, the fact that it does not have a share in the IRA from the Department of Budget and Management poses budget difficulties.

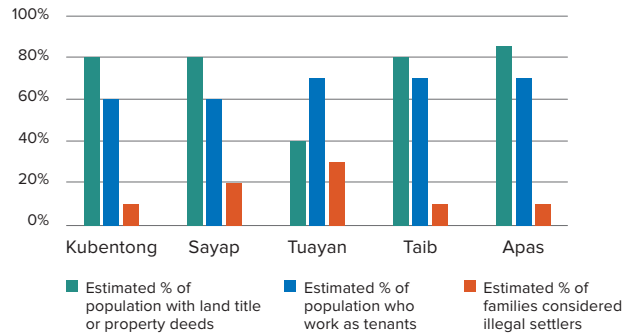
Does the LGU have assistance or services to acquire civil documentation?




The LGU does not have budget allocations, annual investment plans or policies to address the needs for civil documentation since it does not have share in the IRA. It relies subsidy/ financial assistance from the office of the regional treasury-ARMM, which is often insufficient.

Despite this, the birth registration certificate is offered free of cost by the LGU, though the lack of information among the residents about this still results in a low number of applications.

Housing, land and property

Self-reported by the respondents during the assessment



-  **26–50%** of the population have acquired certificate of land titles and/ or their land property are assessed by the Municipal Assessors office.
-  **30%** are farm tenants
-  **0–20%** are farmers cultivating public lands which yet to be declared as alienable and disposable lands.

The identified ways of acquiring the properties are as follows:

-  Inheritance
-  Purchase
-  Dowry
-  Ancestral claim
-  Right to use
-  Loan

Mount Firis Complex

Issues related to a land conflict covering the sacred ground for indigenous population include the Mount Firis Complex. The conflict was triggered when individuals who are influential gained titled portions of Mt. Firis, which several municipalities including Datu Hoffer, have carved out of the area. As a result, conflicting families were engaged in a rido/family feud, which destroys livelihoods, houses and properties.

Information

All the respondents said that all their barangays have strong access to Globe and Touch Mobile (TM), but they have weak access to SMART, Talk n Text (TNT) and Sun Cellular. In communication, two-way radios, cell phones and radio ICOMs are the commonly used equipment of the LGU/BLGU.

The most common form of communication is through public announcement in the mosques, while announcement in the local radio station run by the local government in the nearby also plays a vital role in information dissemination. The most common information received are about barangay programmes, Pantawid Pamilyang Filipino programme updates, other social services activities, and some protection alerts. Updates related to progress of the Peace Process are also a frequently received and shared in many forms, such as symposia and forums, and through the announcement in the mosques. However, among the indigenous population, information-sharing is received mostly through the head of their communities.

Respondents identified possible danger and exclusion in receiving humanitarian and development assistance as effects of not receiving information. To address this concern, leaders have initiated advocacy for timely information dissemination, early warnings and precautions before launching any attacks especially in places of civilians.

Information are most commonly disseminated through:

Most common information received from the barangay:

-  Public announcement in the mosques
-  Mobile call and short messaging services (SMART, TALK n TEXT and SUN Cellular, and GLOBE and TOUCH MOBILE networks are available).
-  Local radio station
-  Indigenous population, information is received mostly through the head of their communities.

-  Barangay's programs
-  Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program updates
-  Protection alerts
-  Social services activities
-  Updates on the progress of the peace process

The effect of not receiving information is that there is a possible danger and exclusion in receiving humanitarian and development assistance.

To address this, leaders have initiated advocacy with conflict-affected population for timely information dissemination, early warnings and precautions before launch of any attacks, especially in places where there are civilians.

Peace Process

The Peace Process between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front are believed to have brought positive impact in the municipality. According to most respondents, the positive impacts are in the area where both the Philippine Law Enforcement Agencies and MILF jointly conducted peacekeeping activities.

With a peaceful situation, livelihood activities are not hampered. Despite the displacement experienced due to the conduct of LESO by the Philippine Military, in coordination with the MILF Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces against members of the BIFF, the affected population have managed to return to their residences after a few days.


Community Protection Strategies

The coping mechanism to mitigate risks of conflict:

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Leaders have initiated advocacy with parties to the conflict for early warnings and precautions before launching any military operations in their places so that they could prepare for possible evacuations just in case needed.
- 

Established and maintained dialogue among their ranks to discuss about emerging issues, differences and disputes that they are engaged with.
- 

Some participants further expressed that tribal leaders are planning to engage with parties to the conflict (military and non-state armed groups) and advocate for respecting the human rights of vulnerable communities such as IPs and those families with weak and lack of capacity and resources.
- 

Seeking guidance from the teachings of Islam in seeking protection for women and children. These guidelines are frequently discussed in the Madrasah and Mosques.
- 

LGU working collaboratively with different sectors to uphold peace and maintain law and order
- 

External assistance from Non-Government Organizations, Humanitarian Agencies whose presence is always visible in the area, further enhancing protection aspect in the Municipality.

Protection Capability, Intent and Compliance Aptitude

- Community perceives that the LGU, military and other political actors provide sufficient and appropriate protection particularly for vulnerable sectors of the community.
- The LGU, with the contribution of the local traditional leaders, ground commanders of the BIAF-MILF, and Religious leaders, act as mediator in resolving the conflicts that involves family clan conflicts.
- The Regional Reconciliation and Unification Commission (RRUC), 105th Base Command of MILF, the 57th IB, PA, and the Maguindanao Police Office, in coordination with the LGU, have established the Municipality of Datu Hoffer Ampatuan Coordinating Council to closely monitor peace and security in the area and to strengthen protection of communities, particularly IPs and as part of stakeholders protection initiative to protect residents of Datu Hoffer Ampatuan,
- Part of the agreed interventions is the creation of an Area Peace Coordinating Center, formation of Peace Monitoring Center led by the Local Chief Executive with the AFP and other representatives from different groups in the area, such as RRUC-ARMM, CCCH-GPH, 105th Base Command of MILF and CSOs.

SOURCES / REFERENCES:

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

Recommendations

For Local Government Unit

- Strengthen the visibility of LGU in the area and link more closely with the people.
- Allocate funds for programs like Gender and Development, 20% Development Fund, LDRRMF, Local Councils for the Protection of the Children (1% of IRA), and the similar programmes. Therefore, the LGU cannot carry out its function as an effective partner in the attainment of national goals. As such, there is no functional MDRRMC, and the municipality has no annual investment plan or contingency plan in place.
- Strengthen protection activities, such as monitoring and documentation of protection issues.
- Establish a comprehensive and functional reporting mechanism.
- Take seriously the concern on lack of school facilities in remote barangays.
- Give consideration to the health stations in each barangay.
- Explore giving basic education for all populations in the municipality.

For MILF

The presence of MILF's Camp Omar means that ground commanders must continuously take part in the advancement of community-level interests for development and peace.

For UNHCR, NGOs and other humanitarian actors

Considering that the municipality is a non-IRA, the delivery of the basic services needs support from other sources that may include:

- Enabling early warning system e.g., forecasting, public alerts and timely information
- Securing public commitment to address protection risks, such as through the formulation of local policies, resolutions and ordinances, community mobilization, organizational development, (e.g., establishment of people's organizations, women groups, and youth associations)
- Raising awareness and knowledge of protection and United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (UNGPID), managing disaster risks, and human rights and international humanitarian laws.

It is stipulated in the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) that Datu Hoffer Ampatuan, including other non-IRA municipalities in Maguindanao Province, would be receiving IRA after the BOL is approved through a plebiscite in January 2019. In anticipation, the LGU must now be capacitated to develop policies and ordinances, proper budget allocations, programming including formulation of Annual Investment Plan (AIP) and contingency plans.

Other recommendation for community strengthening

- Create strategies to bring the tri-people populace closer together, such as conducting inter-tribe dialogue, celebrating the festivities of each tribe, etc.
- Strengthen the capability of the Peace and Order forces (BPAT) in each barangay to better understand its essential needs for the progression of protection of the most vulnerable sectors of the barangay, such as women, children, senior citizens and people with disabilities.



Core Relief Item (CRI) distribution in Brgy. Tuayan, Datu Hoffer Ampatuan, Maguindanao Province. ©UNHCR/Clamonte