

## Municipal Protection Profile conducted in Maguindanao

Rajah Buayan

# Municipality of Rajah Buayan



## **Overview**

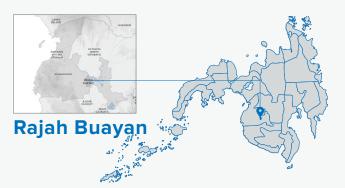
**Risk rating: High** 

#### **Quick facts**

History

Rajah Buayan, officially the Municipality of Rajah Buayan, is a municipality in the province of Maguindanao, Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Philippines. The municipality was created under Muslim Mindanao Autonomy Act No. 166 dated October 28, 2002 and was ratified through plebiscite on 4 September, 2004. It was carved out of the town of Sultan sa Barongis with 11 barangays, of which Barangay Zapakan is the municipal Poblacion where the municipal hall is located.

The municipality has a land area of 71.98 square kilometers or 27.79 square miles which constitutes 0.74 per cent of Maguindanao's total area. Its population as determined by the 2015 Census was 23,652. This represented 2.01 per cent of the total population of Maguindanao province, or 0.63 per cent of the overall population of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. Based on these figures, the population density is computed at 329 inhabitants per square kilometer or 851 inhabitants per square mile.



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#### Demographics

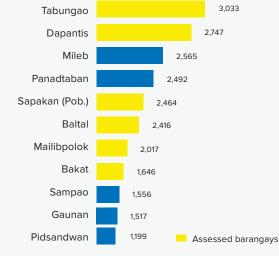
According to the 2015 Census, the age group with the highest population in Rajah Buayan is 5 to 9, with 3,839 individuals. Conversely, the age group with the lowest population is 80 and over, with 48 individuals. The population of Rajah Buayan fell from 24,973 in 2007 to 23,652 in 2015, a decrease of 1,321 people. The latest census figures in 2015 denote a positive growth rate of 5.99 per cent, or an increase of 6,229 people, from the previous population of 17,423 in 2010.

#### Distances

Based on the great-circle distance (the shortest distance between two points over the surface of the Earth), the cities closest to Rajah Buayan are Tacurong City, Cotabato City, Koronodal City, Digos City, and General Santos City. The nearest municipalities are Mamasapano, Sultan sa Barongis, Shariff Saydona Mustapha, Datu Salibo, Shariff Aguak, and Ampatuan.

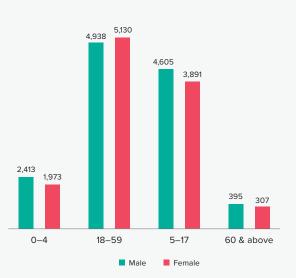


## Population<sup>1</sup> by barangay



2015 Census of Population, Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)

#### Population<sup>1</sup> by sex and age group



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## **Assessed Barangays**

The table below shows the population of barangays in Rajah Buayan that were assessed for the MPP.

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Barangay	No. of HH	No. of Families	No. of People	No. of Male	No. of Female	No. of Children	No. of Adults	No. of Elders
Baital	701	750	3,269	2,125	1,144	1,634	1,308	327
Bakat	330	412	2,060	927	1,133	721	927	412
Dapantis	406	427	2,747	1,469	1,278	889	1,122	736
Malibpolok	550	636	3,180	1,272	1,908	1,113	1,431	636
Sapakan (Pob.)	493	550	2,750	1,100	1,650	1,650	825	275
Tabungao	607	668	3,340	2,171	1,169	1,503	1,169	668
TOTAL	3,087	3,443	17,346	9,064	8,282	7,510	6,782	3,054

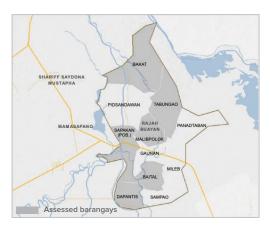
## Protection profile summary

The level of protection risks in the municipality is HIGH. This is due to recurring incidents of conflict resulting to high level of threats to safety and security of populations, thus increasing the vulnerability of people affected including IDPs, Persons with Special Needs (PWSNs) and children, while challenging the limited capacity and compliance of the duty-bearers to respond to the needs and protect the rights of the affected populations especially those from remote barangays and far-flung areas.

To illustrate this finding, all six barangays profiled are conflict-affected. The nature of the conflict are Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) versus non-state armed groups, and crime and violence including fighting between persons associated with the armed groups. Since year 2000, the conflicts between AFP and nonstate armed groups such as MNLF, MILF, BIFF, local ISISaffiliated groups, and Private Armed Group (PAG) have been rampant in the six profiled barangays. As a result, displacements have been recurring particularly in the six barangays profiled.

In addition, there were many cases of violations concerning children. For instance, cases of attacks on school in barangays Baital, Bakat, Dapantis, Malibpolok, and Tabungao and other cases of maiming in Barangay Malibpolok. All these violations pertained to Grave Child Rights Violations (GCRVs). Cases of separated children in barangays Malibpolok, Tabungao and Zapakan were also reported. The cases of separated children were due to children moving to safer areas as a result of emergency.

The repeated displacements have affected the lives of IDPs and communities in many ways, such as loss of lives and properties, profound psychological stress



and anxiety, disrupted schooling leading to increased dropped out rates and out of school youth, disrupted livelihood activities leading to stretched out financial resources, and destroyed belongings/properties including houses, agricultural crops, poultry and livestock, thus increasing the vulnerability of the affected populations. In addition, recurring armed conflict have particularly affected PWSNs whose condition becomes worse in times of repeated displacement.

While the government is trying to maximize efforts and resources to address the threats and reduce the vulnerability of the affected population, its capability and compliance especially in times of emergency still needs improvement. Protective services seem to be lacking and addressing the needs of affected population, especially most vulnerable and PWSNs remains a gap.

## **Protection analysis data**

#### **Displacement**

Nature of Violations and Threats

In all the barangays profiled, displacement has been recurring due to armed conflict between government forces and non-state armed groups, fighting between rebel versus rebel groups, crime and violence, and family feuds (rido). The presence of several non-state armed groups in the municipality, such as MNLF, MILF, BIFF, local ISIS-inspired group, and PAG poses major threats to safety and security of the communities.

Prior to the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) between Government of the Philippines (GPH) and MILF, many armed clashes between government forces and Moro rebel groups occurred in the municipality. The first series of armed encounters was between AFP and MNLF troops in 1970's till early 1980's. The second series was between AFP and MILF troops, of which the major ones happened during all-out war in 2000 and in 2008, which was triggered by abortion of the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) by the Supreme Court. From 2013 to present, the series of armed clashes has been between AFP and BIFF, as well as local ISIS group beginning 2017.

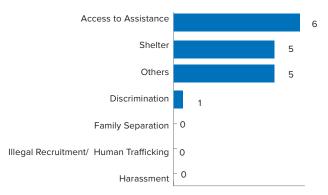
A series of armed fighting between two warring families also occurred in barangays Malibpolok and Tabungao, which caused repeated displacements of civilians within the two barangays as well as neighboring barangays.

In addition to armed conflict, natural disaster in the form of seasonal flooding often affected many parts of the municipality, particularly barangay Zapakan.

Most of the displacements experienced were usually from 30-60 days, 61-90 days or 91-100 days. The longest period of displacement was more than one year.

During displacement, common problems encountered by IDPs pertain to access to assistance, shelter and discrimination. The succeeding bar graph below shows the types of problems commonly encountered during the displacement. It presents that access to assistance seems to be the most common type of problem encountered, while shelter and others ranked second. In contrast, no problems/issues were mentioned in relation to family separation, illegal recruitment/human trafficking, and harassment.

#### Problems encountered during displacement



Note: Values represent frequency distribution of responses

#### Impact and Effects of Violations

Participants in the Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) expressed that displacements affected the lives of IDPs and communities in many ways, such as loss of lives and properties, profound psychological stress and anxiety, disrupted schooling leading to increased dropped out rates and out of school youth, disrupted livelihood activities leading to stretched out financial resources, and destroyed belongings/ properties including houses, agricultural crops, poultry and livestock.

The following were types of needs identified and expressed by the participants in the FGDs.

- 1. IDP-friendly ECs with toilet facilities and water support,
- 2. food packs and cash assistance,
- 3. medicine and medical support for sick,
- non-food items (e.g. used clothing, kitchen sets, water containers, blankets, tarpaulins, solar lamps),
- 5. family support kits,
- 6. immediate pay out from DSWD for 4Ps members and senior citizen beneficiaries during displacement,
- housing support project for those civilians whose houses were partially or totally damaged due to stray bullets, air strikes and mortar shelling,
- 8. quick impact livelihood and income-generating projects,
- 9. scholarship programs and Alternative Learning System (ALS) education for out of school youth and orphans,
- 10. skills enhancement training for IDP women, youth and mothers with concerned government line agencies,
- construction of potable water systems, toilet facilities, farm implement tools, such as plow, harrow and planters, and
- 12. provision of farm inputs (seeds, fertilizer etc..) and farm machinery tractors, and running water.

Barangay	Due to Armed Conflict	Due to Natural Disaster	Due to Crime and Violence
Tabungao	120		
Zapakan	150	350	
Malibpolok	500		
Dapantis	400		
Baital	1,750		
Bakat	1,650		850
Total	4,570	350	850

Table below shows the reported number of displaced persons of barangays in Rajah Buayan that were assessed for the MPP.

In ECs, some IDPs had sold their working animals at a lower price just to sustain daily basic needs, while home-based IDPs have stretched out their financial resources with their relatives whose resources have also been exhausted to support the IDPs. Worst, IDPs were worried about their situation. In fact, many of them still anticipated another possible displacement in the future due to the continuing military operations against rebel groups in their areas.

#### Coping Mechanisms of Affected Population

The IDPs are able to raise their concerns and protection needs to the concerned agencies. Whenever they foresee possible threats and risks to their security, they immediately report them to purok leaders or barangay officials. The barangay officials, then, report these concerns to the LGU through the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (MDRRMO) and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO), as well as to partner NGOs. In fact, some IDPs were able to build access and links to NGOs to share information about their situation and needs of civilians affected disasters.

The IDPs also cited that communities had retained the value of "Bayanihan System" especially in emergency situation and that IDPs and host families had learned about sharing of resources such as foods, drinking water, and shelters, as well as financial supports. Further, communities affected by both conflict and flooding learned about prioritizing PWSNs in searching, rescuing and evacuation process in times of emergencies. Asked if they know their rights, IDPs said that they knew their rights and such rights include receiving assistance that would address their basic needs e.g. food, water, medicine, shelter, financial supports, non-food items, and other supports. Further, IDPs expressed that they were open to sharing information regarding their situation and conditions.

#### Protection of women and children

#### Nature of Violations and Threats

The participants in the FGDs and Klls cited that the common violations reported were concerning violations of children's rights. For instance, cases of attacks on school in barangays Bakat, Baital, Dapantis, Malibpolok, and Tabungao were reported and other cases of maiming in Barangay Malibpolok. All these violations pertained to Grave Child Rights Violations (GCRVs). Cases of separated children in barangays Tabungao, Malibpolok and Zapakan were also reported, but no cases of unaccompanied children were reported in all the barangays profiled. The cases of separated children were due to children moving to safer areas as a result of emergency.

Despite these violations, however, women and children in all the barangays profiled except Barangay Bakat still felt safe and received information and/or training on the protection of women and children. Women and children in Barangay Bakat were insecure and worried about the recurring military aerial strike and mortar shelling targeting the BIFF troops and local ISIS-affiliated groups believed to be hiding in the remote areas within the barangay.

As to the protection of women, most of the women who participated in the FGDs expressed they feel safe in the community and have access to security services, and able to understand and exercise their rights. In fact, women were provided with avenues to be heard in the community. In addition, some women have received information and/or training on the protection of women and children such as child right and violence against women-related trainings previously conducted by NGOs including CFSI. Hence, they were willing to share information about violations of their rights.

#### **Recommendations**

Based on the above findings, CFSI makes the following recommendations:



Establish and/or identify evacuation centers with complete facilities such as toilets and water sources in barangays often affected by cyclical conflict and seasonal flooding;



Increase access of the IDPs and affected population to humanitarian assistance and increase community participation in the management of the relief assistance; and



#### Coping Mechanisms of Affected Population

The pie chart below illustrates the percentage of familiarity of the community with the VAWC law.

#### Community's Familiarity with VAWC



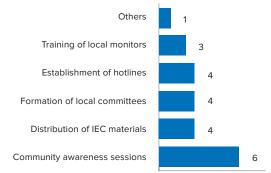
It shows that the proportion of the community who are familiar with the VAWC law is much greater than the portion who are unfamiliar with the law. Specifically, 83 percent of the community said they were familiar with the law compared to only 17 per cent who said they are unfamiliar with the law.

All in all, it seems that protection of women in the municipality is less problematic, since all women know and are able to exercise their rights, such as right to be heard and participate in building the community, right to consulted before engaging in marriage, right to access protection services, etc., and have access to security services of the local government. In addition, all women are willing to report information related to their protection. However, child protection as well as psychosocial interventions should be better supported for children because of the reported several cases of violations of children.

#### Protective Capability and Compliance

In terms of protective capability and compliance of the government in responding to the needs and protecting the rights of women and children, the succeeding bar chart shows the measures in place to prevent the abuse of women and children.

## What measures are in place to prevent the abuse of women and children?



Note: Values represent frequency distribution of responses

While there are measures in place to prevent the abuse of women and children, facilities for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) survivors and child protection are still lacking.

#### **Recommendations**

Based on the information gathered on the protection of women and children, CFSI makes the following recommendations:



Conduct massive awareness raising on GCRVs and child rights and protection at the barangay level;

Ensure that facilities for both GBV survivors and child protection are in place in every barangay;

Evaluate the functionality of the barangay-based women and children protection mechanisms, and conduct capacity building activities to enhance knowledge, skills and attitude if deemed necessary;

The LGU should devise a contextspecific referral and reporting mechanism in each barangay, and ensure people and community including women and children are aware of the mechanisms.



Provide both the immediate and longterm protection needs of women and children

#### Persons with specific needs

Nature of Violations and Threats

Table below shows the number of PWSNs of barangays in Rajah Buayan that were assessed for the MPP.

Barangay	PWD	Single/ Solo Parent	Single/ Solo Elderly	Elderly- headed household	Unaccompanied child	Separated child	Pregnant or lactating	Chronic Illness
Tabungao	25	30	12	15	0	12	89	10
Zapakan (Pob.)	10	20	10	10	0	5	50	5
Malibpolok	31	31	32	31	0	32	32	32
Dapantis	15	12	17	80	0	0	90	8
Baital	4	20	2	4	0	0	60	5
Bakat	12	21	8	9	0	0	75	5
Total	97	134	81	149	0	49	396	65

#### Impact and Effects of Violations

While 83 per cent of the participants in the FGDs said there were budget allocations for PWSNs and projects implemented by the government, the budget and projects were focused only to senior citizens and health support services for lactating mothers, pregnant women and infants. So far, no specific projects were intended for solo parents, the single elderly, or other PWSNs.

Worst, PWSNs were even more invisible during emergency, thus leading to denial of vital assistance to them. This condition of the PWSNs may increase their vulnerability. Hence, it is important that they are taken into account in all aspects of disaster risks reduction and humanitarian assistance to ensure that their needs and capacities are understood and included in disaster planning and response.

The condition and needs of vulnerable individuals and PWSNs in the barangays became worse because of the repeated displacements. As a result, PWSNs do not usually enjoy their rights and, in some cases, they are burdened to carry out tasks for their families.

The repeated displacements have impacted the lives and well-being of the PWSNs, especially those extremely vulnerable. Participants in the FGDs and KIIs cited their concerns on responding to the pressing needs of PWSN as follows:

- 1. assistive devices for PWDs,
- 2. care mechanisms for children,
- 3. care mechanisms for older persons,
- 4. humanitarian assistance for the vulnerable persons,
- 5. medical care for persons with chronic illness,
- 6. psychosocial treatment,
- 7. family reunification for separated children, and
- 8. livelihood, financial and scholarship assistance.

Coping Mechanisms of Affected Population

Despite PWSNs' increased vulnerability in the repeated disasters, they also have capacities, abilities and opportunities to help them overcome challenges. In the FGDs and KIls, participants expressed that many PWSNs, were already empowered and skillful in finding ways and means to cope with their situations. Some women, for example, have skill with sewing, dressmaking, mat weaving, gardening, and running a small-scale enterprise, while men and the elderly can do fishing, carpentry, farming, and other house chores and income-generating activities.

In addition, the community and barangay officials always demonstrated a great sense of support for the PWSNs, especially during crisis and emergency. The community always considered the PWSNs in their disaster preparedness and early warning system and prioritized the needs of the most vulnerable groups during emergency and displacement. For instance, the participants of the FGDs and KIIs cited that the LGU had conducted orientation on disaster search, rescue and evacuation processes for PWDs and other vulnerable groups. Furthermore, the communities' early warning system for both conflict and natural disaster includes alerts and advisories shared through announcements in mosques, which always emphasizes the prioritization of PWSNs.

#### <u>Recommendations</u>

Based from the above findings, CFSI makes the following recommendations:



Provide the pressing needs of PWSNs identified and expressed in the FGDs and KIIs;

Implement projects, programs and policies exclusive for PWSNs and ensure these will address both the immediate and long-term needs of PWSNs.



For all interventions intended for PWSNs, always consult and involve them and their families to ensure that their needs are met, especially during emergencies.

Raise awareness of PWSN-inclusive interventions with authorities, NGOs/ INGOs, UN agencies, and other private organizations;

Provide core relief items that will address the humanitarian needs of the PWSNs during emergencies

#### **Basic social services**

Nature of Violations and Threats

What is the estimated number of households without the following services :



Note: Values only cover the assessed barangays.

Barangay	No. of HH without Electricity	No. of HH without Safe Water	No. of HH without Toilets
Tabungao	100	567	434
Zapakan	80	1	100
Malibpolok	32	509	509
Dapantis	171	342	64
Baital	70	175	350
Bakat	198	264	165
Total	651	1,858	1,622

In addition, the following structures and programs are existing and functional in the barangays profiled:

- 1. six health centers (one in each barangay profiled),
- 2. six schools (one in each barangay profiled),
- 3. 4Ps program,
- 4. PhilHealth,
- 5. senior citizen pensions,
- 6. free birth registration, and
- 7. programs and services to assist the displaced populations, i.e. training, on-site feeding, birth registration programs for senior citizens, relief distribution through MSWDO and MDRRMO.

With regard to the delivery of development and humanitarian assistance, the community cited that the barriers to implementation of these services include insufficient assistance, unfair distribution of assistance, lack of information on the distribution site, and political dynamics between leaders and beneficiaries.

#### **Recommendations**



Provide supports for electricity, toilet services and safe water to barangays Bakat, Tabungao and Malibpolok, respectively;

Implement reconstruction and development projects to address the post-conflict and disaster needs of the communities, such as WASH facilities, farm to market roads, solar dryers, farm tools, inputs and implements, smallscale business enterprises, agricultural production, etc.

#### Safety and security

#### Nature of Violations and Threats

All six barangays profiled are conflict-affected. The nature of the conflict are AFP versus non-state armed groups, and crime and violence, including fighting between persons that are affiliated with armed groups. The conflict between AFP and non-state armed groups such as MNLF, MILF, BIFF, and local ISIS-affiliated groups are rampant in the six barangays profiled, while the conflict between persons affiliated with the MILF and Private Armed Groups (PAG) usually occurred in barangays Tabungao and Bakat. Other conflicts caused by political violence usually occurred in Barangay Baital, which common causes were military operations against the rebel groups, political dispute, land dispute, and criminal-related.

#### Impact and Effects of Violations

Of the six barangays profiled, only residents of Barangay Bakat expressed that they did not feel safe due to violence in the area. These groups and other residents cannot move freely in and out of the barangay because of military activities, curfew and the military accused they were supporting and sympathizing with the BIFF and local ISIS-affiliated groups and vice versa.

#### Coping Mechanisms of Affected Population

Identified coping mechanisms and protection strategies of the affected communities include the following:

 The community, in coordination with barangay officials, MILF, and government authorities, established an Early Warning System that includes timely sharing of security/protection alerts and implementation of curfew hours particularly during the height of skirmishes and military operations. The early warning signs of possible conflict and displacement of the civilians are re-positioning of MILF troops in the areas, frequent presence of military troops within the community and military aircraft in the area.

- Local authorities respond to the security-related incidents and threats to the safety and security of the community through reporting to higher authorities, conducting search operations and reporting to municipal authorities.
- The means of the community to report and raise their concerns when there are security threats is through reporting to community leaders personally or via call and text.
- Foreseeing the coming threats, communities learned about preemptive displacement and moving to safer places (evacuation centers, or relatives) ahead of time.

Further, the community identified the following community leaders who would help settle disputes and other security concerns:

1. barangay officials,

- 2. religious leaders,
- 3. traditional leaders,
- 4. women leaders, and
- 5. Shari'ah courts.
- Recommendations

Based on the above findings, CFSI makes the following recommendations:



Hold a training on International Humanitarian Law and other related international laws and guiding principles with LGU officials and security actors including MILF military and political committees;



Conduct regular coordination meetings or Municipal Peace and Order Council (MPOC) meetings with concerned security stakeholders to address and mitigate the effects of the safety and security-related threats in every affected barangay

#### Documentation

#### Nature of Violations and Threats

Barangay	No. of Individuals without Birth Certificates	No. of Individuals without Marriage Contracts
Tabungao	1,650	1,169
Zapakan	50	30
Malibpolok	159	382
Dapantis	961	384
Baital	1,634	600
Bakat	1,030	371
Total	5,484	2,936

Most commonly, the reasons for not having the birth certificate are lack of awareness of the importance of the birth certificate and lack of financial resources, whereas the difficulties encountered by the residents who have no birth certificates include obstacles to freedom of movement, access to education, access to assistance, and access to 4Ps and other government programs, pension claims.

#### **Recommendations**

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Increase awareness of residents on the importance of birth certificates and marriage contracts and facilitate access of residents to civil documentation

#### Housing, land and property (HLP)

#### Nature of Violations and Threats

Barangay	No. of Landowners	No. of Land Tenants
Tabungao	80	100
Zapakan	75	60
Malibpolok	66	95
Dapantis	85	86
Baital	100	90
Bakat	41	100
Total	447	531

The participants identified the following means of acquiring the lands and properties:

1. inheritance

- 2. ancestral claim
- 3. purchase
- 4. right to use
- 5. dowry, and
- 6. rental

#### **Recommendations**



Facilitate access of residents to HLP-related interventions

#### Information

#### Nature of Violations and Threats

In terms of access to information, the types of protection information that the community received include the following:

- 1. security alerts/updates
- 2. disaster alerts
- 3. barangay ordinances/policies
- 4. barangay programs
- 5. barangay events/social activities, and
- 6. community awareness/trainings

The community wants to be informed of the protection-related information through the following:

- 1. community meetings
- 2. barangay/purok leaders
- 3. women leaders
- 4. religious leaders
- 5. MILF commanders and political committee leaders
- 6. text messages
- 7. social media, e.g. Facebook
- 8. TV and radio
- 9. bulletin boards, and
- 10. others e.g. two-way radio ICOM

Recommendations



Conduct regular meetings to provide protection related information to communities to include those from the far-flung areas



Devise mechanisms to include protection related information in the early warning system to persons with disability as well as those extremely vulnerable members of the community

#### Peace processes

#### Nature of Violations and Threats

On the peace process, 100 per cent of the community said that they were updated on the status of the peace process between the government and the MILF, and they have no issues related to the peace process.

Recommendations



The LGU should provide updates on the status of the peace process and emphasize the importance of achieving lasting peace in Mindanao, especially but not exclusively in areas of the Bangsamoro.

#### SOURCES / REFERENCES:

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

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Handover ceremony of Quick Impact Project (QIP) in Barangay Tabungao, Rajah Buayan Municipality, Maguindanao Province. © CFSI/Rohana Guialal