



Municipal Protection Profile conducted in Maguindanao

Shariff Saydona Mustapha





Municipality of Shariff Saydona Mustapha

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

Overview

Risk rating: High ■ ■ ■

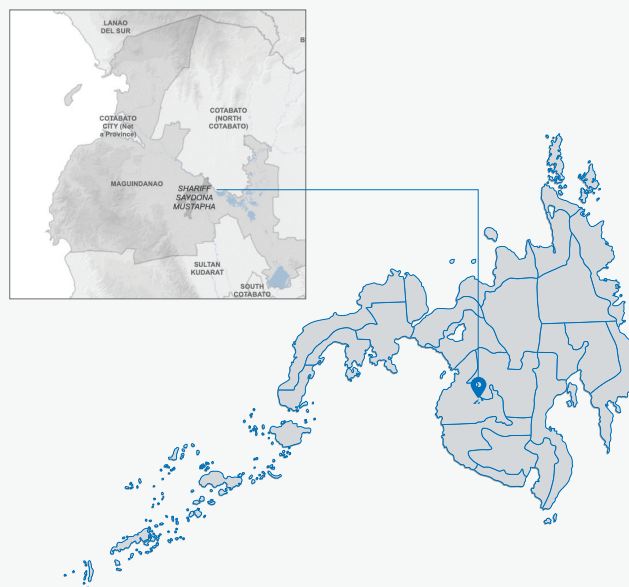
Quick facts

The Municipality of Shariff Saydona Mustapha was created by Muslim Mindanao Autonomy Act (MMA) No. 225 (as amended by MMA Act No. 252), which took effect on 18 August 2009. It was named in honor of the great grandfather of the former governor of Maguindanao Province, Datu Andal S. Ampatuan, Sr.

It is a landlocked municipality in the coastal province of Maguindanao. The municipality, however, is near to Liguasan Marsh to the North East.

According to the 2015 Census, the population of Shariff Saydona Mustapha is 19,855. It grew from 16, 442 in 2010. There is an increase of 3, 413 people.

The municipality has just started receiving Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) from the National Government starting 2018. Prior to that, it was among the newly created municipalities in the ARMM that were not qualified to receive IRA.



Shariff Saydona Mustapha



Population

25,012



Households

5,002



Income Class

6th Class



Land Area

461.1sq.m.



Barangays

11



Climate type

Tropical

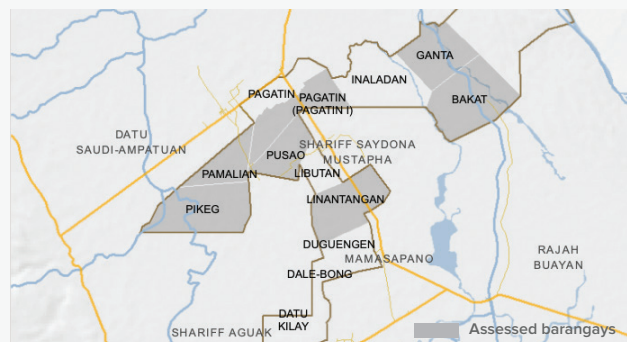
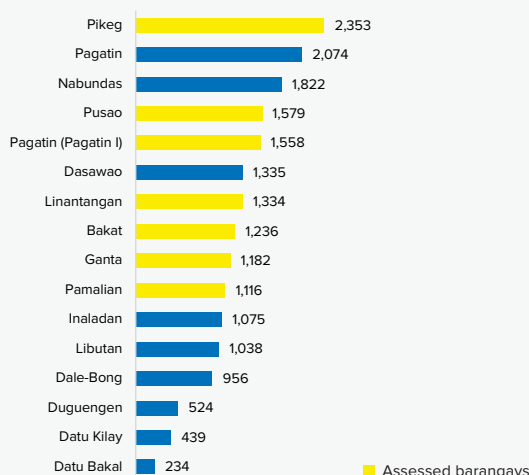


Language Spoken

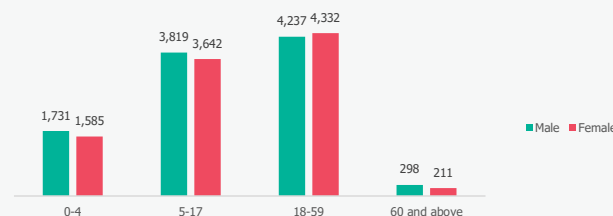
Maguindanaon, Teduray, Manobo

Assessed barangays

Population¹ of assessed barangay



Population¹ by sex and age group



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

Protection profile summary

The protection risk rating in Municipality of Shariff Saydona Mustapha is HIGH. This is due to the presence of criminal and terrorist groups that have taken refuge in remote and outlying areas of the municipality.

The CFSI field teams, in consultation with the local government units (LGU), targeted the areas specified in the table below for this protection profiling. The selection of these areas was primarily based on the List of Representative Barangays identified by UNHCR through purposive sampling and the LGU List of Priority Barangays, as well as on-site assessment by CFSI team, including those not assigned to this project.

The areas selected were:

	Those at risk of displacement due to the continuing government Law Enforcement Operations against Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF)
	Those considered returned and mixed communities
	Those fragile areas but security is guaranteed by both the LGU and MILF
	Those in greater need of protection intervention, and reasonably accessible.

These areas are either within or proximate to the so-called SPMS box, where the extent of displacement impact has been very intensive. The SPMS box, a hot spot for conflict in Central Mindanao, refers to the adjoining towns of Datu Saudi Ampatuan (Salbo), Datu Salibo (Pagatin), Mamasapano, and Shariff Aguak.

Protection analysis data

Displacement

The primary driver of displacement in Shariff Saydona Mustapha is conflict, crime and violence. The secondary driver of displacement is flooding due to the low-lying terrain of its barangays. Since 2000, communities have experienced multiple displacements and the number of internally displaced persons has been constant as compared to other areas within the SPMS box. The communities have been struggling to return to normalcy, and continuously experiencing displacement. People are likely to repeatedly be displaced due to the continuing law enforcement operations (LEO) by the government against BIFF troops.

All seven (7) barangays expressed that they repeatedly experienced displacements due to armed conflict since 2000. The major displacement started during all-out war under President Estrada in 2000, followed by the “all-out war” declared by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 2003, then a massive displacement during abortion of the Memorandum of Agreement between the government and the MILF in 2008, and the new and current displacement caused by the continuing military LEO against different BIFF factions.

Some respondents also expressed that they experienced displacement due to seasonal flooding particularly in the low-lying areas, such as Pagatin, Bakat and Pusao.

About 80% of the land area of Shariff Saydona Mustapha is located inside the SPMS box where protection risk is **HIGH** due to the presence of different non-state armed groups, such as the 105th Base Command and the 118th Base Command of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the Karialan Faction, the Bungos Faction and the Abu Turaife Faction of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), and the Private Armed Group from the defunct Civilian Volunteer Organizations (CVOs) during the peak of Ampatuan Administration in Maguindanao in 1999-2009.

The increasing frequency of conflicts inside the SPMS box has exposed thousands of people to multiple and protracted displacements and had a devastating impact on civilians, communities, infrastructure and development.

Another factor to the fragility of the area is the lack of resources and capacities of the government in providing early interventions and measures to mitigate the effects of the insecurity and promote peace, inclusion, recovery and reconstruction.

Many respondents during the assessment expressed that there is a need to strengthen strategies to mitigate the risks of conflict which must include, but is not limited to, 1) increase understanding and respect for human rights and international laws 2) establish and maintain dialogue with parties to the conflict at all levels, and 3) advocate for warnings and precautions before launching any attacks.



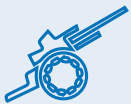
The municipality is within the territory of Camp Omar, a major stronghold of the MILF and also the base of the 105th Based Command of the MILF Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (MILF-BIAF).



The residents have historically encountered repeated displacements since 1998 to present. The displacement is due to armed conflict between Philippine Military and the MILF due to the government's declaration of All-Out-War against MILF, the declaration of unconstitutionality of the Memorandum of Agreement for Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) in 2008, and other military and "rido" family conflicts.



The municipality is proximate to the so-called SPMS Box, wherein criminal and IS-Inspired groups such as the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), Jamaatul Muhajireen Wal Ansar (JMWA) Fil Filibeen and other private armed groups are highly present.



The continuing military operation of 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 lowland areas are submerged with floodwaters. On the other hand, houses in the mountainous areas experience landslides due to denuded forests.



IDPs experience restriction in movement, threats from host communities and denial of relief assistance.



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 the five barangays assessed were affected by displacement



1 Barangay, hosting IDPs - Mother Tuavan



281 Families are still protractedly displaced

Protection of Women and Children

In terms of violations to the rights of children and women, the following are commonly reported protection-related concerns:



14 Children who were recruited or used as child soldiers but are now already disengaged by the MILF in compliance to the UN-MILF Action Plan



4 Cases of attack on schools particularly in Barangay Pagatin 1, Barangay Pikeg, Barangay Pusao, and Barangay Pamalian

Despite this, most respondents said that women and children feel safe, they receive information about their protection (except those from remote areas with access and security concerns), they are provided with avenues and opportunities to be heard in the community and in community decision-making, and they know their rights through regular community meetings, seminar, symposia, advocacies, and other informal learning gatherings conducted by the LGU, MILF Political Committee, MILF Shari'ah Personnel, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

The respondents identified the following protection concerns related to women and children:



Observed incidences of malnutrition among children below five years old



Observed number of children dropping out of school due to displacement



Lack of proper parenting guidance



Observed incidents of child abuse and violence and early marriage



Children being forced to work abroad in order to help their parents provide livelihood for their family



Profound psychological stress and depression



Loss of hope and trust for future progress and development

People with special needs

The number and types of Persons with Specific Needs (PWSN) per barangay is sourced from the Barangay Profile and based on estimate by the participants.





The number of PWSN, particularly female-headed family, is relatively high. Respondents said that many of the husbands were already dead or injured as a result of decade-long armed encounters between government forces and various non-state armed groups, such as MILF, BIFF and other private armed groups. Thus, wives are left at home to solely provide for the needs of the family.

Many of the PWSN have no access to assistance such as assistive devices for PWDs, care mechanisms for children, care mechanisms for older persons, humanitarian assistance for vulnerable persons, medical care for persons with chronic illness, medical treatment for survivors of sexual abuse, and psychosocial treatment.


Access to Basic Services

The following basic services are accessible to both residents and IDPs in the seven (7) barangays:

Education

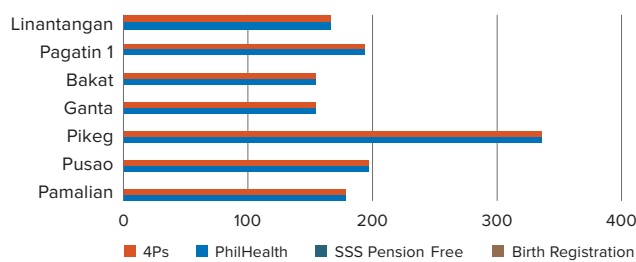
-  Five (5) elementary schools
-  Five (5) madrasahs or Arabic schools
-  One (1) primary school
-  One (1) BRAC learning center

Health

 Five (5) barangay health centers, but only two (2) are functional with Barangay Health Workers (BHWs) assigned






Social protection

Number of households with access to the following programmes



Other functional basic services

-  One (1) municipal hall
-  Seven (7) barangay halls
-  Nine (9) solar dryers
-  One (1) training center (Pamalian)
-  Two (2) day care centers

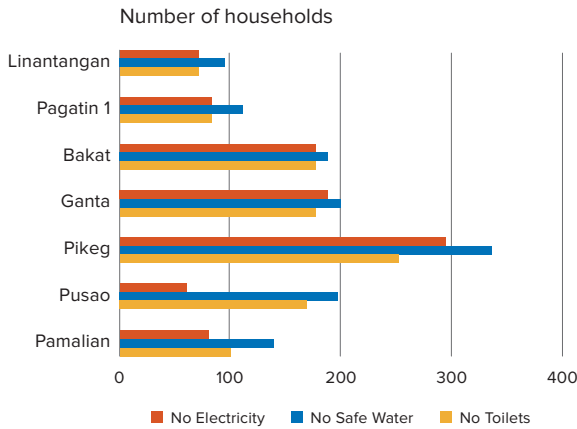
-  One (1) PAMANA building
-  Two (2) warehouses
-  One (1) police station
-  One (1) gymnasium
-  Five (5) mosques

While there are existing and functional structures listed above, many respondents expressed these are insufficient to provide the needs of the population, and they believe that there is a need to improve the capacity of the duty bearers to respond to the needs of the constituents, particularly in worst-affected areas like Pusao, Pamalian and Pikeg.

On livelihood, the participants identified the following as source of major income:

-  Farming
-  Running a small-scale business, such as sari-sari store, buy and selling, retailing etc.
-  Driving habal-habal (tricycle), commuter multi-cab and townace (van)
-  Mat and nipa weaving
-  Working abroad as OFW
-  Tailoring
-  Doing carpentry

On the other hand, all the respondents said that availability of electricity, safe water and toilets in the entire municipality is insufficient. Below is the number of household without electricity, safe water and toilets.



Another concern raised by the respondents is that there were not enough development and humanitarian assistance for those entitled and the assistance was not fairly or evenly distributed among the recipients.

Safety and security

The municipality of Shariff Saydona Mustapha is conflict-prone due to the continuing government’s Law Enforcement Operations (LEO) against the BIFF, series of conflicts between MILF and BIFF, internal disputes between the rival 105th Base Command and 118th Base Command of the MILF and rido/family feuds that are usually due to land conflict. In addition, the increased frequency and scale of conflicts within the municipality has exposed thousands of people to high level of security and safety risks.

Common identified security threats are mortar shelling and destruction of civilian properties. Since 2017, 231 houses have been burned and destroyed, according to the municipal government. Suspected BIFF members and their relatives owned most of these houses.

Many respondents said that majority of the population expressed fear and concern their safety and security due to the presence of different non-state armed groups and frequent armed encounters, mortar shelling, bombings, IEDs, and military operations particularly in barangays of Pagatin 1, Pusao, Pamalian and Pikeg. Further, there is a lack of security personnel being deployed in these areas. The only security personnel available in the areas are BPATs, which more often, are not capable of securing and protecting the civilians from threats.

In line with the high level of insecurity in the areas, the most affected groups are those especially vulnerable, such as elders, PWSN, women, and children. According to respondents, there are lack of initiatives to respond to and address the insecurity concerns of the civilian populations. The LGU is perceived to be actively engaging in peace communications with the parties in order to advocate for early warning and precautions before any attacks and mortar shelling.

Community Coping Mechanisms

Despite this, the communities have initiated common ways to settle any disputes among themselves and through the following. The top common way to settle civil, criminal and land disputes is through shariah court and military disciplinary board of the MILF.

- Through dialogue and conflict resolution
- Through shari’ah
- Through religious leaders and MILF political committees
- Through barangay councils
- At times through women leaders and Social Welfare Committee of the MILF

Civil Documentation


Civil documentation is another concern raised by the respondents. According to them, the estimated number of people without a birth certificate is 4,100, while the estimated percentage of couples without a marriage contract is 41%.

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
- Difficult access to civil registrar’s office
- Cannot afford one
- They do not know about it
- Cannot secure all the supporting documents
- They do not know how to get one

On the other hand, the common effects of not having the civil documentation are as follows:


- Inability to travel
- Inability to go to school
- Inability to claim pension or government support
- Inability to access other social protection assistance



Inability to claim 4Ps



Inability to work (but others claim that some can work even without birth certificate)



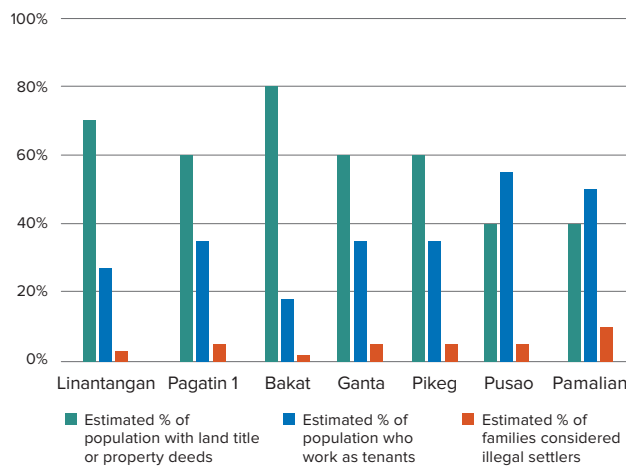
Inability to vote (but some say they were able to register without them being required of their birth certificate)

What are the sectors or groups in the community which do not have civil documentation?


The sectors or groups in the community which do not have civil documents are elders, poor fisher folks/farmers and members of the non-state armed groups. As a result, they cannot obtain government documents such as a passport or National Bureau of Investigation clearance, which are required for pilgrimage or the performance of Hajj, and cannot avail and benefit from government assistance.

Housing, Land and Property


The table below shows estimated percentage of population with land title, property deeds, those who work as tenants, and families considered illegal settlers per barangay:




The identified ways in which the families acquired the land in their barangay are as follows:




Inheritance




Purchase




Dowry




Ancestral claim



Right to use



Loan



Rented

Information

All the respondents said that their barangays have easy access to mobile networks like Globe and TM but have difficult access to SMART and TNT, and they have no access to telephone lines. Internet connection in different areas are also unavailable. For the LGU and BLGU, the common communication equipment used are cellphones, two-way radio icom and transistor radio.

The following are identified types of protection information received by the community from barangay officials:



Barangay's programs (4Ps)



New barangay ordinances/policies



Barangay events and social activities



Security alerts



Community awareness/trainings




National Government Programs




Disaster alerts


For the community, the best way to inform them of protection-related information is through the following:




Community meetings



Purok leaders




Women leaders



Religious leader



SMS



Bulletin board



MILF political committees and Social Welfare Committee (SWC)

Some initiatives undertaken to ensure wide reach of information dissemination include announcement in the masjid (mosques) during congregational prayers and announcement through the local radio stations.

Peace Process

The communities are part of the MILF Camp Omar under the jurisdiction of two of the MILF's Base Commands, such as the 105th Base Command and the 118th Base Command. These Base Commands, together with the MILF Political Committees and Social Welfare Committee (SWC), have been conducting a massive sensitization campaigns and advocacies on the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) in order to further raise the awareness of the people on the contents and the essence of the law, as well as gain their support and approval of the law during plebiscite that was scheduled in January 2018. Additionally, information on the BOL has also been rigidly discussed in mosques during prayers and often integrated in the sermons (khutbah) of ulama during Friday congregational prayer.

The seven barangays expressed their full support of the BOL and the incoming Bangsamoro Government as they believe these could address their long years of suffering, their aspirations for genuine peace and sustainable development, as well as these answer their quest for right to self-determination. They further expressed they want both the government and the MILF to implement a law that is compliant to the already agreed Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) and Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB).

Community Protection Strategies

The livelihood adaptation mechanisms of individuals and households in the barangays as stated by the interviewees are as follows:

	<p>Selling of assets such as land, livestock and agricultural products for savings and start-up business capitals</p>		<p>Leave the areas of protracted conflict/ violence and find somewhere safer for new livelihood opportunities</p>
	<p>Many female and wives choose to work abroad to support their families</p>		<p>Some IDPs choose to join in informal, small-scale business networks and self-employment</p>
	<p>Those households that returned to their places of origin after the conflict/ violence tend to resort to subsistence farming and cultivation of low-risk and low-return crops that can feed their families.</p>		<p>Others tend to engage in petty trading and in some cases illegal and criminal activities, especially those who move to urban areas like cities in Metro Manila</p>

Protection Capability, Intent and Compliance Aptitude

According to many interviews, the protective capability, intent and compliance aptitude of the local government need improvement. As mentioned earlier, Shariff Saydona Mustapha has only started receiving regular IRA from the DBM for 2018. Prior to that, the municipality has been receiving local funds in the form of financial assistance from the ARMM through the Office of the Regional Treasurer, although this assistance is not on a regular basis. It was also a recipient of funds from other ARMM agencies or Local Government Unit (LGU) for the implementation of various projects or what is commonly known as the Trust Fund. With the new regular IRA, the municipal government will begin to improve its protective capability, intent and compliance aptitude.

As observed, the local government is also facing challenges in carrying out its formal function in the areas controlled by non-state armed groups. According to many respondents, the MILF and other non-state armed groups, which have gained wide control over much of the areas of the municipality, have historical dispute with the family of the current administration and thus, the LGU has limited access to these communities to provide humanitarian assistance.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the profiling and the observations of the field team during the conduct of focus group discussions and key informant interviews, CFSI makes the following recommendations:

1

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

The municipality can be referred to as ‘fragile’ considering limitation on funds and lack of capacity to provide both immediate and long-term interventions to manage and mitigate the risks faced by the constituents. As such, effective steps towards peace must rely on promoting inclusion, enhancing the LGU capacity and peace building. The specific recommendations are as follows:

- Strengthen the LGU capacity in governance, especially conflict and fragility resolution, disaster risk reduction management and contingency planning;
- Establish and maintain dialogue with non-state armed groups at all levels to promote peace;
- Focus on early interventions to mitigate tensions and insecurity;
- Promote peace and inclusion, and request assistance for recovery and reconstruction;
- Advocate for early warnings and precautions before attacks;
- Strengthen capacities of the Municipal and Barangay Peace and Order Councils;
- Ensure effective, functional, and operational reporting mechanisms are in place and communities are aware of these mechanisms;
- Ensure participation of communities in the development of safety and security strategies; and
- Develop annual investment plan and contingency plans and integrate in these plans the projects and programs for people with special needs, women and children.

2

For NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies and other humanitarian agencies

- Initiate efforts to increase understanding of all parties in respecting for human rights and international laws;
- Advocate for government policy and legislation, as well as community actions for the protection of internally displaced persons, especially vulnerable groups and others affected by the conflict and violence;
- Facilitate conflict resolution and reconciliation across different groups to help protect internally displaced persons and establish the relations and conditions conducive for durable solutions for internally displaced persons;
- Encourage the restoration of communal links and promote peaceful co-existence between internally displaced persons and host families to enhance their security by means of quicker impact projects and local-based peace building and community-based protection efforts; and
- Support and enhance long-term local capacity in disaster preparedness and mitigation.

SOURCES / REFERENCES:

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



Quick Impact Project (QIP) handover in Shariff Saydona Mustapha, Maguindanao Province. ©UNHCR/Tanghal