



Municipal Protection Profile conducted in Maguindanao

South Upi



Municipality of South Upi

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

Overview

Risk rating: Low

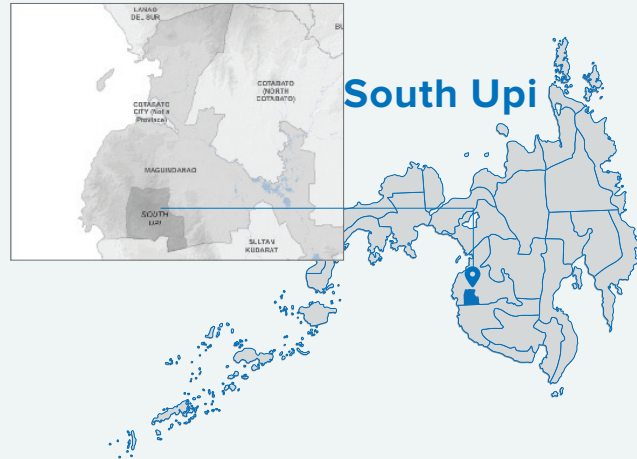
Quick facts

South Upi is a fourth-class landlocked municipality in the highlands Maguindanao, Philippines. It is politically subdivided into eleven barangays: Kuya, Biarong, Bongo, Itaw, Kigan, Lamud, Looy/Santa Fe, Pandan, Pilar, Romangaob (Poblacion) and San Jose.

With the recent physical or infrastructure development in the municipality, some of the barangays along highways may be traversed through all kinds of transportation. While some of the barangays located in the interior part of the municipality may be reached through motorcycles, cars with four wheeled drive, big trucks and horse.

The municipality has a land area of 318.95 square kilometers or 123.15 square miles which constitutes 3.20% of Maguindanao's total area. Its population as determined by the 2015 Census of the Philippine Statistics Authority was 40,178. This represented 3.42 per cent of the total population of Maguindanao province, or 1.06 per cent of the overall population of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Based on these figures, the population density is computed at 217 inhabitants per square kilometer or 563 inhabitants per square mile (PhilAtlas).

In terms of age distribution, the age group with the highest population is 5 to 9 while the age group with lowest population is 80 years old and over with only 79 individuals as per PSA Census in 2015. Young dependent population which includes infants/ babies, children and young adolescents/teenagers on the other hand made up an aggregate of 40.01 percent (16,075). The economically



active population and actual or potential members of the work force belonging to aged 15-64, constitute a total of 58.14 percent (23,358).

The neighboring areas of South Upi are North Upi in the north and west, Talayan and Ampatuan in the east and Lebak, Sultan Kudarat in the south.

The economy of South Upi is agricultural based. Its major products include corn, upland rice, coffee, rubber, vegetable, lumber, timber and livestock.



Population

40,178



Families

8,036



Income Class

4th Class



Land Area

184.80 sq.km.



Barangays

11



Climate type

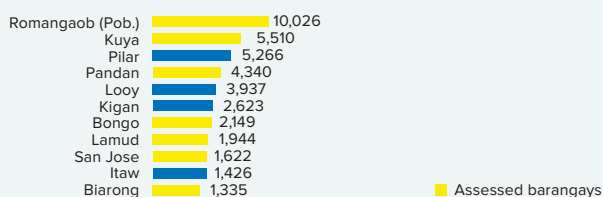
Tropical



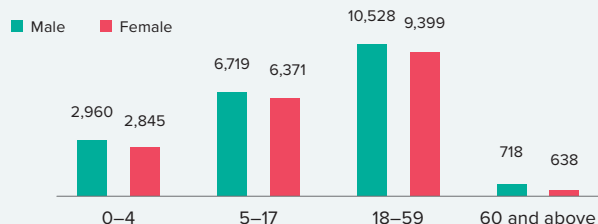
Languages spoken

Maguindanao, Tiruray, Tagalog

Population¹ by barangay



Population¹ by sex and age group



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

Assessed barangays

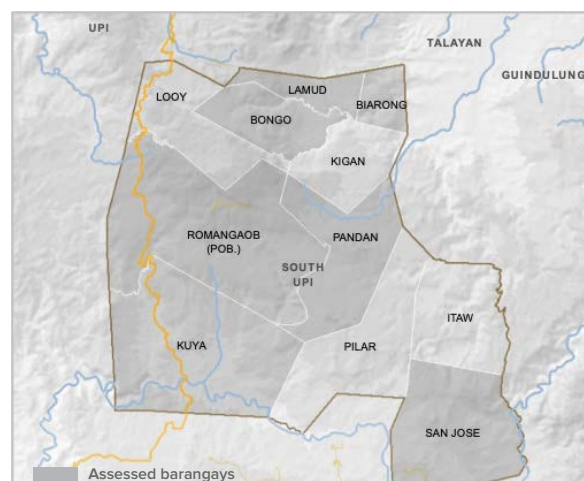
The table below shows the population of barangays in South Upi that were assessed for the MPP.

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
Biarong	364	519	1,822	893	929	783	935	104
Bongo	331	400	1,654	810	844	711	849	94
Kuya	1,277	3,613	6,647	3,242	3,405	2,717	3,580	350
Lamud	737	500	3,687	1,807	1,880	1,585	1,892	210
Pandan	1,102	830	5,367	2,520	2,847	2,147	2,845	375
Romangaob (Pob.)	1,725	2,053	10,350	5,072	5,278	4,451	5,309	590
San Jose	450	550	2,250	1,103	1,147	967	1,155	128
TOTAL	5,986	8,465	31,777	15,447	16,330	13,361	16,565	1,851

Protection Profile Summary

There are 5,986 households or 8,465 families (31,777 people) who are currently living in profiled barangays. Among the assessed population, 15,447 are male (49%) and 16,330 female (51%). The adult population comprises 52 percent of the population while children are 42 percent and elders are 6 percent.

Six out of seven respondent communities of South Upi, Maguindanao (excluding barangay Bongo) have been experiencing displacements and the main causes are criminal activities, violence, armed conflicts and natural disasters. Because of continuing presence and periodic armed conflicts between the government forces and non-state armed group, and existence of clan disputes as well as petty crimes, the safety and security of the communities are jeopardized.



The incidents of conflict in the affected communities that put people at high protection risks are worsened by weak implementation of protection mechanisms such as Barangay Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) Desk, Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) and Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (BDRRMC).

Five of the communities shared that women and children are safe in their communities, while Pandan and Lamud disclosed that women and children are not safe in their barangays.

As identified by the respondent communities, the vulnerable individuals who are mostly affected during conflict and displacement are persons with disabilities, single elderly, indigenous peoples, pregnant and lactating mothers, solo parents, elderly-headed households, unaccompanied and separated children and persons with physical chronic illness.

Of the total assessed population, there are 654 households who have no access to electricity, 955 households who have no access to safe drinking water and 795 households who do not have toilets.

Protection analysis

Data and information above are generated through clustered focus group discussion and interviews. A total of 162 participants attended the FGDs composed of 54 community leaders, 22 men, 70 women, 15 elderly people and 1 adolescent from the 7 barangays including barangay Kuya, Pandan, San Jose, Romanggaob, Biarong, Lamud and Bongo.

Displacement

Nature of Violations and Threats

Considering the local context and the threats, the possibility of conflict and displacement incidents is considered medium to high.

Out of the seven profiled barangays, six barangays (excluding barangay Bongo) have experienced displacement mainly due to crimes, violence, and natural disasters such as landslides, flashfloods, soil erosion and drought (El Niño). Additionally, incidents of family feud, election-related violence, and land conflict also cause tension and displacement. Communities shared that during displacement the affected population flee and seek refuge to nearby or safer places both within and outside of their respective communities, within and outside the municipality, or to their relatives residing whether within or outside the community or municipality.

Humanitarian assistance being provided during emergencies is oftentimes very limited and inadequate to serve the entire needs of the IDPs. Limited supply of food and non-food items, limited support to shelter assistance including health and medical assistance as well as education and livelihood programs are among common issues experienced during displacement. There is also a limited support for the livelihood or economic activities of IDPs upon returning to their places of origin. On positive note, vulnerable sectors of these assessed communities are able to express or raise their issues and concerns to the local authorities.

The six barangays of Biarong, Kuya, Lamud, Pandan, San Jose, and Romangaob experienced hosting of displaced families from adjacent communities and municipalities primarily due to crime, violence, and natural calamity. As of the time of the profiling,

Biarong and Lamud are still hosting displaced families staying in their relatives who never have gone back to their respective places of origin (during the conduct of the assessment). These families decided not to return back to their places of origin because of fear, lack of better source of livelihood, and lack of support for the restoration of their houses which were totally destroyed.

Impact and Effects of Violations

Some of the key effects of the displacement include limitation of movement, limited access to their livelihood activities, and further exposure to risk due to lack of shelter, as public structures are limited.

The immediate protection needs of the vulnerable groups identified include access to basic humanitarian assistance such as food, shelter, safe drinking water, hygiene kits and WASH facilities. The long-term protection needs identified are mostly related to the social and economic aspects which include economic or livelihood support for recovery, social participation and collaboration among stakeholders, assistance for the education of children, and enhanced ability of the government or local authorities to respond or provide assistance. Addressing the root of conflict is also considered one of the important long-term protection supports to achieve lasting peace and to end recurring displacements.

Coping Mechanisms of Affected Population

Among the coping mechanisms of the assessed barangays include the regular patrolling of BPATs during the night and activation of the BHRAC, VAWC Desk and BCPC to ensure that IDPs are protected from different forms of abuses and violations. The strong inclination of population to their religious beliefs have also contributed to the overall community strength and resiliency. Moreover, the unity, inclusive communication, and active collaboration of the duty bearers or local authorities and the communities in terms of assessment and feedbacking, IDPs safety and security measures, as well as responding and providing assistance were also identified as effective community protection strategies or mechanisms to help the affected population cope with their crisis situations.

Several assessed barangays have specific coping mechanisms. Barangay Kuya provides income opportunities to the affected population especially those persons with specific needs through referral and linkages with the LGUs. For barangays of Pandan and San Jose, the local officials allot budget from their Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) that can be used during emergencies. This will help ensure that government programs and services such as feeding, prenatal, immunization, free medical consultation or medical check-up are properly being implemented. In the barangays of Biarong, Lamud, and Romanggaob trainings, seminars and workshops are being done to promote the rights and protection of PWSNs and prevent possible discrimination.

Recommendations

To better protect the rights of IDPs and enhance mechanisms in responding and providing assistance to affected populations and the communities, in general, the following actions are recommended.



Strengthen the operation of Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (BDRRMC) particularly establishing of community-based early warning system to facilitate the exchange of real-time information between the communities and local authorities, thus prevent or minimize the effects of conflict to the affected population.



Officers and members of the protection mechanism such as BCPC, VAWC Desk and BDRRMC must be trained on handling women and children protection cases in emergency situation or gender-based violence prevention and response in emergencies. To ensure effective actions, it is also recommended that vulnerable sectors especially women and children must also be trained and oriented of the existing protocols or mechanism in case they may experience certain abuses in the community particularly in times of displacements.



Local authorities must have an updated barangay profiles reflecting the detailed physical, social and demographic data to facilitate emergency program design and planning.



Enhance their knowledge on IDP rights and protection, both the community and local officials are needed to be trained or oriented on protection and IDP rights with emphasis on United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement to facilitate awareness and empowerment among IDPs.



Those communities with lacking protection mechanism structures must be supported to ensure that relevant structures are activated and functional.



There is a need to allocate budget for protection related activities.



Strengthening of local peace initiatives aimed to prevent the occurrence of violent conflicts between the government security forces and the armed groups, as well as parties to local family feuds will reduce the impacts of recurring displacements. Peace dialogues must be encouraged and initiated between and among parties to conflicts to prevent protection risks and find lasting solutions to these conflicts.



Enhancing capacities of protection mechanisms and BDRRMC as well as the other concerned line agencies requires capacity building activities. This will further strengthen the operations and performance of the protection mechanisms in the community. Additionally, communities should be considered as partners in all of these undertakings and their participation should be the foundation of these activities.

Protection of women and children

Nature of Violations and Threats

While five of the respondent barangays expressed that women and children are generally safe in their communities, two barangays (Pandan and Lamud) admitted that women and children are not safe in the community.

A majority of respondent barangays disclosed that there were a number of violations either recorded or recalled by the communities being committed against women and children, such as domestic violence against women, rape and sexual abuse of women and minors, child abuse and exploitation, as well as child and women trafficking.

There was also an information shared by the community that minors are used as part of the auxiliary armed forces (not recruited but arms are entrusted to them), which is a grave child rights violation particularly in Kuya and Pandan. This puts children at risk of being targeted by the other conflict actors.

Some of the cases such as domestic violence and child abuse and exploitation are not usually reported through the authorities as the communities treat it as private and matters which should be confined within the family or be resolved locally using traditional means.

Despite the knowledge of the communities about their rights and are being able to exercise these rights, still, more and various types of violations have been committed against women.

In terms of the awareness about the law on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC), two barangays admitted they are not fully aware of the law. All except Biarong shared that parents and children are aware of their rights and are being able to exercise such rights.

Five communities communities have no existing reporting and referral mechanisms in place for women and children.

In Bongo and Biarong, women and children are not willing to report cases of violence or protection issues committed against women and children. These two barangays also admitted having no facility for child protection.

Coping Mechanism of Affected Population

Among the strategies of the communities is conducting campaign and advocacy to promote the rights of children and women and community awareness for their protection. Communities believed that empowering women and girls by making them aware and promoting their rights and protection can make a difference in their lives especially for those living in the vulnerable communities with poor protection mechanism.

Another strategy is the activation of the BCPC, VAWC and GAD Council, which support the protection of women and children.

The communities also disclosed that during the actual emergency, they provide immediate action and response to survivors, which includes reporting to the proper authorities, giving immediate medical attention (if needed). Local authorities also ensure that protection programs and services are implemented to better provide the children and women the protection they need.

Protective Capability and Compliance

Communities revealed that there is still lack of awareness and/or knowledge on child and women rights and protection among local authorities and the community; inability of local authorities to respond to or provide the needs of those survivors of violence; lack of measures to prevent violence against women and children; lack of resource on the part of duty bearer to properly respond; and lack of community efforts to support survivors of violence to cope positively with their condition. These are just among the reasons expressed by the communities that signify the need for the enhancement of the capacity of local authorities, so that violence committed against women and children are better prevented and properly addressed.

The communities disclosed that in order to better protect women and children, more community awareness sessions must be conducted, to include women and child’s rights, child protection, GBV, reporting and referrals of women and children protection issues. Family orientation and/or family development sessions (FDS) as well as family counselling, must also be conducted. Prioritization of the needs of women and children in terms of their safety and protection must be considered. Increased advocacy on bullying and its effects to the children. Local authorities to facilitate functionality of protection facilities for women and children as well as to increase capacity to respond children and women survivors of violence.

Protection services from VAWC Desk, Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC), and Gender and Development (GaD) Council are said to have been existing and functioning in four barangays while the other three barangays admitted that protection services from VAWC Desk and BCPC, though existing, are not functional, and hence were not responsive to the needs of the affected population.

Recommendations

To provide better protection services to women and children in the community, the following recommendations were identified:

- Institutionalize and strengthen protection mechanisms (Barangay VAWC Desk, BCPC, LCPC, MCAT-VAWC) including establishment of GBV and child protection facilities;
- Train protection mechanism members on handling VAWC cases and /or gender responsive case management training including data protection;
- Continue community awareness sessions on women and child’s rights and protection to cover more sectors in the community;
- Conduct trainings on establishment of safe spaces for children and women especially in times of emergencies, reporting and referral mechanisms;
- Hold community training and awareness sessions on monitoring, reporting and referral mechanisms of protection issues for women and children;
- Strongly implement and enforce the Republic Act 9262, or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children (VAWC) Act of 2014 so that survivors be responded properly and should be provided with needed assistance;
- As identified by the community, the immediate protection needs of women and children who have experienced violations of their basic human rights include culturally sensitive and responsive assistance on food, medical, hygiene supplies, education and trainings, protection and response including psychosocial support and care, participation and livelihood support;
- All sectors of the populations must be enjoined to respect women and children’ rights and combat unacceptable cultural and societal norms that endanger and jeopardize the future of women and children to be developed and become active members of the community.

Persons with specific needs

Nature of Violations and Threats

The common types of persons with specific needs in the seven assessed communities include persons with disabilities, single elderly, indigenous people, pregnant and lactating mothers, solo parents, elderly-headed households, and unaccompanied and separated children, persons with specific legal and physical chronic illness.

The expressed needs of the PWSNs include mobility devices for persons with disabilities, care mechanism for children and older persons, humanitarian assistance for vulnerable persons, medical care for persons with chronic illnesses, medical treatment for survivors of sexual violence as well as psychosocial support.

During emergencies, IDPs who belonged to PWSNs generally need a better access to safety and security. Humanitarian assistance such as food, shelter, clothing, access to safe water, toilets, hygiene, medicine and livelihood assistance to support their economic activities were identified as immediate needs of the persons with specific needs.

Five out of seven barangays shared that local governments have no budget allocation for PWSNs (Pandán, San Jose, Biarong, Lamud and Bongo) while the other two barangays Kuya and Romangaob shared that there is budget allocated for PWSNs in their communities. Only Kuya has specific programs for PWSNs.

Four barangays admitted they have no projects for indigenous peoples, namely Kuya, San Jose, Romangaob, and Bongo. The projects are aimed to target the whole population and not necessarily specific to the indigenous population. Respondents revealed that in Biarong, women are not provided with avenues to be heard in the community decision making.

Basic social services

Nature of Violations and Threats

Out of 5,986 total number of households of the seven respondent communities, there are 654 households without access to electricity. There are 955 households that do not have access to safe drinking water and 795 households have no toilet facilities.

More specifically, data revealed that among the 7 barangays, Kuya has the most number of household who do not have access to electricity with a total 218 households while Bongo has 120.

In terms of accessing portable drinking water, the households with not access are concentrated in Kuya (510) and Kuya and Romangaob (120).






For households without latrines (toilet), Romangaob has 411 household and Kuya has 140.

According to the concerned communities with less access to abovementioned basic social services, they are financially constrained to get good access.

Communities identified some problems on the delivery of development and humanitarian assistance such as the difficult access to delivery site, lack of information about the delivery schedule. Sometimes, beneficiaries are fighting over the goods or services, and insufficiency of assistance.

Recommendations

To improve the capacity of both the duty bearers and communities on the protection of persons with special needs in the community, the following actions are recommended:

	Develop and implement a social protection plans as well as programs and services for PWSNs in close collaboration with local government unit through the office of social welfare and development office;
	The BLGU must design and implement sustainable livelihood program to ensure food security of the persons with special needs.
	Community awareness sessions must be done to reach wider community members of their rights as well as government services available to support the needs of persons with special needs.
	Communities suggest that PWSNs be given proper attention during emergencies, and be responded accordingly. They should be prioritized and be given assistance which is sensitive and responsive to their conditions.
	Education assistance to children and family members of PWSNs who are going to school

Safety and security

Nature of Violations and Threats

Past history of conflicts and displacements (between armed actors), continuing presence of and sporadic armed conflicts between armed civilians due to land related conflicts and political violence, existence of clan disputes as well as petty crimes were among the reasons that threaten and which contribute to the vulnerability of the seven barangays profiled. Thus, these communities were considered as vulnerable areas in the municipality of South Upi. These communities have experienced recurring displacements and a majority (four barangays) expressed that the affected populations do not feel safe and secure.

With this complexity of conflict, safety and security is a big challenge to the people of the respondent barangays. Communities highlight the destruction of properties perpetrated during the displacements. Rido or family feuds as well as presence of crimes were stressed out which make people unsafe and insecure in their communities.

Sectors like men, women, girls, boys, older persons, and persons with special needs are said to be the affected populations by the conflicts and for lack of access to safety and security services. The communities such as Pandan and Lamud expressed that they are not free to move in and out of the barangay due to curfew being strictly implemented as well as due to difficult access from and to the community.

Impact and Effects of Violations

The most presented effects of the conflicts are fear and restriction of freedom of movement. People are afraid of becoming a target during conflict. They cannot move and hardly access their livelihood activities (farming) due to the tensions caused by the conflicts.

Further, communities shared that this situation affects the economic condition of the people, which leads to lack of employment opportunity, loss of livelihood, damage or loss of properties thus eventually leads to high vulnerability of affected population, poverty, hunger, illness and children's education were disturbed (others stop from going to school).

Respondent barangays identified the humanitarian assistance that is sensitive and responsive to the needs of the community as the immediate protection needs. Sustainable livelihood support and education assistance, as well as durable solutions to violent conflicts and issues of IDPs are the long-term protection needs of the affected populations.

Coping Mechanisms of Affected Population

The communities recognized the trainings conducted by NGOs in collaboration with the LGUs, which increased their awareness on safety, security and rights of IDPs, women and children.

The activation of the protection structures in the communities such as BCPC, VAWC Desk and GAD Council is among the common strategies done by the communities.

During displacement, feeding program is implemented including community mobilization to avoid tensions and disputes within the evacuation centers.

The Barangay Protection Action Team is activated during evacuation to assist the IDPs. They also assist in the establishment of evacuation camps in the communities. They also impose curfews at night to protect the IDPs.

Recommendations

To provide better services and responding to issues on safety and security, the points below are recommended.

	Strengthen local authorities and mechanisms such as barangay disaster risk reduction and management council (BDRRMC) with emphasis on early warning system, preparedness and response, Barangay Peace and Order Council (BPOC), Barangay Protection Action Team (BPATs);
	Train local officials on conflict management and resolution as well as dialogue facilitation;
	Provide capacity building to community members, which includes drill for identified hazards, reporting and referral of protection issues and rights of the IDPs;
	Allocate budget to improve services of the BLGUs;

Documentation

Nature of Violations and Threats

Assessment revealed that all the seven barangays have challenges in the registration of births. There are 1,277 individuals that do not have birth certificates mostly from Kuya, Romangaob, Lamud, Biarong and Biarong. The number of individuals who do not secure marriage contracts is still high in these communities.

Several reasons were disclosed by the respondent communities for their challenges in the civil registration. Generally, people are unaware on the importance of these documents. Limited understanding of the registration process, long distance of the Civil Registry Office, unavailability of registration requirements, and financial constraints are among the main causes of non-registration.

Housing, land and property (HLP)

Barangay	No. of Landowners	No. of Land Tenants
Biarong	100	100
Bongo	10	15
Kuya	100	80
Lamud	20	100
Pandan	55	80
Romanagob	80	100
San Jose	100	100
Total	465	575

Communities identified several issues related to land and property such as destruction of crops, secondary occupant, squatting, lack of documentation, destruction/theft/fraud related to land records, and land related conflicts/disputes or grievances as well as financial constraints related to application for land registration.

Information

Nature of Violations and Threats

Communities expressed their positive perception of peace process between the MILF and GRP. They are very optimistic about the new Bangsamoro government in terms of governance and improving the economic conditions, the peace and development efforts and in the lives of the people in general. Communities likewise believe that the new BARMM will be able to resolve and end the recurring conflict, and address the problems and issues of IDPs.

Peace processes

Recommendations



Support communities to have access to electrification. For remote and hard to reach areas, alternative source of power must be explored (solar powered).



Improve the communities' access to safe drinking water and safe sanitation practices (inclusion in the ZOD program);



Provide assistance for the civil registration such as birth and marriage. Due to the issue of distance and lack of knowledge on the importance and process, the LCR and or LGU must extend services to the remote communities.



Improve the mechanisms to prevent conflicts on issues related to land ownership

SOURCES / REFERENCES:

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



Barangay Development Planning-Workshop of the 11 selected barangays of South Upi, Maguindanao Province. ©MMI