

KALLUMAN



**A Preliminary Ethnographic Report
on the Sama Bangigi of Basilan
and the Sama Dilaut of Tawi-Tawi**



Foundational Ethnography and Conceptual Framework

Overview, Scope, and Context

This research has been initiated in response to the crucial need to conduct more ethnographic research in the Bangsamoro to uphold the meaningful participation of IP communities in governance, particularly in the island provinces of the region. The deficit in research and documentation relative to their cultural and sociopolitical perspectives and practices has been cited by many academic institutions and various organizations as the culprit for their further marginalization. The lack of knowledge of the national and the regional government relative to their contexts contributed to their continuous exclusion in laws and policies. Even worse, some legislative issuances could have also affected their indigenous identity in one way or another.

The report explores the social and political challenges faced by the maritime peoples of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), specifically the Sama Bangingi of Basilan and the Sama Dilaut of Tawi-Tawi. It aims to generate empirical and community-based knowledge regarding how historical and resource-based conflicts are experienced, remembered, and negotiated by the Sama communities in Pilas Island, Hadji Muhtamad and Sitangkai Island respectively. This analysis is crucial for understanding the dynamic relationship between indigenous identity, claims to justice, traditional governance structures, and access to vital resources.

The contemporary context of this report is defined by a multilayered legal environment. Before the imposition of systems introduced by Spanish and American colonial administrations, traditional justice and governance systems flourished and continue to persist today. These customary systems now exist alongside national laws, notably the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA)



of 1997, and the regional framework established by the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), as well as the recent Bangsamoro Indigenous Peoples' Act of 2024 (BIPA 64). The primary focus of this report is to analyze the underlying causes and changing patterns of conflicts centered on resources and land, and to detail the asymmetrical relationship between indigenous and exogenous governance models.

The Concept of *Kalluman*: The Nexus of *Tana* (Land) and *Karilautan* (Sea)

Central to the worldview of the maritime peoples of Tawi-Tawi and Basilan is the concept of *kalluman*, their comprehensive way of life. *Kalluman* intrinsically connects the *karilautan* (the totality of the sea-world) and *tana* (land); these spaces are never viewed as separate entities. Their ways of living are defined by the totality of this domain. This holistic worldview dictates that the relationship between peoples and their environment is interlocked, preventing one from being understood without the other.

The material manifestation of this interdependence is evident in technologies such as the traditional boat of the Sama Dilaut. The construction of the boat frame requires the manakayan tree, which is endemic to islands accessible from the saluran in Sitangkai. Accessing the sources of the manakayan trees relies on a network of relations with Sama Dilaut who maintain plots of land and other Sama groups who have lived on land for longer periods, demonstrating that maritime life is inextricably linked to land-based resources and social networks.

This understanding of kalluman provides a profound cultural critique of external analyses. Historical ethnographies often viewed the relationship of the Sama Dilaut to the karilautan purely through the lens of economic activity or usaha (livelihood). However, the reality is that their life, or kalluman, extends far beyond merely earning a living (magusaha) at sea.

Naming, Identity, and Ethno-Genesis

The assertion of identity among these groups is a negotiation between historical practices, colonial exonyms, and contemporary political realities:

Sama Bangingi: The Basilan Diaspora and the ‘Pusaka Kaomboan’

For the Sama Bangingi of Basilan, the name “Bangingi” acts as both a toponym and an autonym, referring to their origin in the Tongkil group of islands and distinguishing them from other Sama groups. Their identity is shaped by historical displacement: their migration to Pilas Island from Tawi-Tawi was necessitated by the fear for the safety of their women and children due to atrocities committed against them, potentially triggered by Spanish attacks around the 1840s. This dislocation and diaspora, rather than being mere consequences, became the driver for the formation and assertion of a distinct contemporary identity.

The Sama Bangingi now strongly declare that Pilas Island and adjacent smaller islands constitute their Pusaka Kaomboan (Ancestral Domain). This concept of ancestral domain, recognized by the NCIP prior to BIPA 64 is directly rooted in their history of conflict-driven resettlement. This collective domain claim grounds their identity in their new territory in Basilan.

Sama Dilaut: Identity and the 'Amoleh Lahat'

The name "Sama Dilaut" is frequently used by non-members and refers to the historical practice of living in boathouses on coral reefs. The first reference to this group, as *Bajuu*, was made by a Portuguese navigator in 1512, cementing the perception of them as maritime peoples. However, Sinama leaders maintain that they are members of the *Bangsa Sama*. They contest the external naming, arguing that residing on the *laut* (sea) for *mag-usaha* (earning a living) is fundamentally temporary; once the livelihood activity, or *kaut*, ceases, they return to their respective houses (*lumah*) on land.



Captured in Sitangkai, a grave adorned with white cloth and a boat replica reflects identity enduring beyond death.

The profound connection to land is confirmed by the cultural imperative of Amoleh Lahat, which refers to both death and the act of coming back to one's home. Elders narrate that individuals nearing death experience a calling from their ancestors (*nihellah eh ka'omboan*) to return to the places of their birth. This return is to *tana*, not the sea, because it is in these places that their ancestors are buried in the *kakubulan* (burial sites). This practice highlights a non-negotiable ancestral claim to land. The burial site, therefore, functions as the ultimate tenure marker: the immutable cultural anchor for group identity and historical claim over land, existing independently of any temporary maritime livelihood.

The Importance of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (Pandoga)

The navigational and resource management practices of the Sama Bangingi and Sama Dilaut are governed by sophisticated Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKSPs), which are more cultural rather than economic or political in nature. These systems rely on *pandoga*—signs derived from the natural world. Traditional navigation across the ancient maritime world, extending from Johor to Manila, was made possible by observing fixed geological and astronomical markers: mountains, hills, rock formations, islands, and specific trees (*luma sahasa*) and corals (*sahasas*).

Daily activities, particularly fishing (*pissi*), depend on meteorological expertise. The Sama navigate daily using both their indigenous systems and mainstream knowledge. This expertise includes reading cloud formations and understanding the sources and patterns of winds, which are named descriptively (e.g., Uttara from the west, Satan from the east, Timul from the south, Habagat from the north). The Sama Bangingi, for instance, know that when the waters are still, a state referred to as *harok*, under a moonless sky (*Lendoman*), the ocean is abundant with life, guiding their fishing expeditions.



Fishing and preparing and repairing the nets take the time of families in Sitangkai. These activities are shared by both husbands and wives.

Table 1: Key Sinama Terminology and Ethnographic Concepts

Term	Meaning/Concept	Cultural Significance
<i>Kalluman</i>	Way of life, Totality of living	Holistic indigenous system connecting land, sea, and people
<i>Tana</i>	Land; Arable Land	Place of birth, burial (<i>kakubulan</i>), and permanent historical claims
<i>Tahik / Karilautan</i>	Sea; Totality of the sea-world	Primary source of livelihood (<i>usaha</i>); cultural knowledge system
<i>Addat</i>	Customary Law/ Tradition	Coexists with <i>agama</i> (Islam); basis for governance and social order
<i>Pusaka Kaomboan</i>	Ancestral Domain	Sama Bangingi collective domain claim in Basilan
<i>Pinda / Mag-Pinda</i>	Movement, Relocation/ Resettlement	Historical and contemporary strategy for survival and persistence
<i>Pandoga</i>	Signs and Symbols of Nature	Indigenous knowledge system used for navigation, forecasting, and resource access

Traditional Governance Systems (*Addat* and *Agama*)

The Hierarchy of Governance: From *Mata'an* to *Lahat*

Indigenous governance is structured across multiple levels, beginning with the family (*mata'an*) as the basic unit and the household as the basic territorial jurisdiction. These families come together to form the *kaum* or *kauman* (community), which maintains kinship ties and geographical proximity. The broader societal structure is referred to as the *lahat*.



In Sitangkai, rearing a child is shared among members of the multigenerational home of the Sama Dilaut family.

The integrity of this governance system is maintained through a communal ethos characterized by generosity (*amuwan*) and established forms of mutual aid, such as *magtabang* or *pagtabang*. This mutual aid system extends to

communal support (*magluruk*) during times of sickness, death, weddings, and practical tasks like the construction of houses, boats, and footbridges. This reciprocal support system ensures social cohesion, which is critical given the structural deficiencies of traditional governance structures in confronting exogenous power.

The Synergy of Customary Law (*Addat*) and Islamic Principles (*Agama*)

The governance systems of the Sama Bangingi and Sama Dilaut are fundamentally guided by the coexistence of *addat* (customary law) and *agama* (Islamic religion). For the Sama Bangingi, who have fully embraced Islam, and the Sama Dilaut, who adopted Islam as early as the 14th century, the religious framework provides structure for social and political life.

Islamic principles govern key life events: *Pag Islam* (circumcision), *Pag Kawin* (wedding), and death rites. For instance, upon death, bodies are washed, wrapped in white cloth (symbolizing purity, *poteh*), prayed over, and must be buried within 24 hours. In judicial matters, the Sama Bangingi utilize *diyut* (compensation or blood money), a mechanism rooted in both custom and religion. *Diyut* serves to resolve severe conflicts, such as murder, by requiring compensation for damages and promoting reconciliation between families to restore peace and harmony, emphasizing unity over vengeance.

Comparative Traditional Political Structures and Leadership Roles

Traditional institutions across both groups persist, often serving as critical points of internal authority even as they stand in asymmetrical relation to the state apparatus:

Sama Bangingi Structure (*Basilan*)

The Sama Bangingi structure retains leadership titles reflective of the historical influence of the Sulu Sultanate. The hierarchy includes the *Datu*, who serves as the highest traditional authority (often holding the formal Provincial Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative or IPMR role); the *Maharaja*,

who operates at the municipal level; and the Panglima, who functions at the barangay level, primarily focused on mediating and resolving local conflicts. The current structure is highly adaptive, with the Datu and Maharajas engaging in provincial and municipal legislative processes, respectively, thereby translating customary authority (addat) into the exogenous legal sphere.

Sama Dilaut Structure (Tawi-Tawi)

The Sama Dilaut governance rests on the authority of the Botang-Matto'a (elders). The Panglima serves as the head of the community (kaum or kawman), requiring intelligence, a strong sense of justice, and spiritual wisdom. Conflict resolution is managed locally using the established body of laws known as Sara'.

A critical indicator of the structural power imbalance is observed when local conflict resolution fails. The process of dogsol refers to instances where cases are escalated and brought to the judicial branch of the exogenous government. When customary consensus, facilitated by the Panglima, is insufficient, the power is ceded to the government's interpretation and application of law, formally establishing the legal asymmetry between addat and state law.

Another manifestation of this governance strain is the traditional survival strategy of relocation, or pinda. The Sama Dilaut, described as peace-loving people, actively shun conflicts, often resorting to physically moving out of their communities and even migrating to neighboring Semporna, Malaysia, to avoid discord. While historically this free movement was a core component of their identity and adaptability, modern national boundaries severely limit this capacity. The necessity of resorting to external relocation rather than utilizing internal dispute mechanisms or defensive measures suggests that the traditional governance structure lacks the necessary authority or coercive capacity to effectively enforce peace or defend community boundaries against persistent, often structurally violent, external threats.

Table 2: Comparative Traditional Governance Structures and Roles

Feature	Sama Bangingi (Basilan)	Sama Dilaut (Tawi-Tawi)	Significance/ Function
Indigenous Law	<i>Addat</i> and <i>Agama</i>	<i>Addat</i> and <i>Agama</i>	Customary and Islamic principles guide judicial and social conduct
Highest Traditional Authority	Datu (Provincial level)	<i>Botang-Matto'a</i> (Elders)	Datu structure shows linkage to historical Sultanate hierarchy; <i>Matto'a</i> signifies collective wisdom
Local Authority	Panglima (Barangay) and Maharaja (Municipal)	Panglima (Head of <i>Kaum</i>); <i>Anak Kurah</i> (Family Head)	Primary administrators and conflict mediators at the community level
Justice/ Resolution	<i>Diyat</i> (Compensation/ Blood Money)	<i>Sara'</i> (Body of Laws); <i>Dogsol</i> (Escalation to State courts)	<i>Diyat</i> focuses on restorative justice; <i>Dogsol</i> reveals the structural power imbalance
Domain Claim	<i>Pusaka Kaomboan</i> (Recognized by NCIP)	<i>Tahik</i> (Sea) ownership tied to <i>Lumah</i> (House/ Mooring)	Focus on land-based collective ancestral domain vs. localized sea tenure claims

Tenure Systems: Customary Law Over Land (*Tana*) and Sea (*Tahik*)

Land Ownership: From Communal Domain to Internal Delineation

For the Sama Bangingi, the land domain is conceived as the collective Pusaka Kaomboan. Although individual land titles issued by the State are generally absent in Pilas Island, boundaries and ownership over portions of tana are maintained through traditional mechanisms that are clearly understood and respected internally.

A key customary marker for land ownership in Pilas is the use of two coconut trees planted together, which signals a boundary marker. Approximately 40 families, considered the “old families” of Sama Bangingi in the island, possess and maintain these internally delineated lands. Even when these lands are privately held, they are still conceptually considered part of the larger Pusaka Kaomboan. For the Sama Dilaut, although they were historically sea-borne, land access remains vital for wood sourcing (manakayan tree) and, crucially, for spiritual fulfillment through the use of kakubulan (burial grounds).

Rules of Descent and Inheritance: Gender Differentiation in Property Flow

The customary rules of descent for the Sama Bangingi have significant implications for tenure security, particularly for women. Property (Pusaka or Tana) typically flows through the male line; traditionally, only sons are deemed to inherit the house and the land owned by the father.

The expectation is that women adhere to patrilocal residence rules, meaning the wife is expected to reside in the house and locality of the husband. Consequently, women are often accorded lesser shares from their parents’

natal lands, based on the assumption that they will receive security and property shares through their husband's family. The final decision regarding property distribution rests with the father, ensuring the land remains under the control of the ahli (family).

This traditional gender differentiation results in challenges in the security of tenure for women. In a context where the ancestral domain itself is vulnerable to loss from exogenous claims, the social safety net provided by land inheritance is weakened for women, making them disproportionately vulnerable to widespread tenure insecurity if the collective *Pusaka Kaomboan* is compromised.

The Customary Regulation of the Sea (*Tahik* and *Karilautan*)

Customary law also governs the *karilautan* and access to its resources. The Sama Dilaut maintains a system of exclusive sea tenure over certain portions of the shallow sea (*takot*). Ownership of a segment of the *tahik* is established by the individual who originally constructs and places a *lumah* (house) or mooring there. This right remains exclusive to the owner, even if they are absent for extended periods for livelihood activities.



Within the maritime world of Bangsa Sama, their economy and technologies center on fishing. Over the years, several tools have been added to enhance their catch and meet the demands of the local and neighboring (Basilan, Zamboanga, Pagadian) markets.

In contrast, the deep parts of the sea (*timbang*), identifiable by their dark blue hues, are considered communal property, open to all peoples on a “first-come, first-served” basis for large boat fishing. This delineation between exclusive, localized shallow-water rights (based on occupation) and communal deep-sea rights (based on access) defines maritime resource governance.

The Sama Bangingi’s traditional fishing territories are also locally enforced and recognized, in some cases, by the municipal government of Hadji Muhtamad. This co-management allows for the apprehension and confiscation of fishing boats from other islands that trespass onto their shallow waters, demonstrating a degree of institutional recognition of their customary maritime boundaries.

Table 3: Comparative Land and Sea Tenure Systems

Feature	Sama Bangingi (Basilan)	Sama Dilaut (Tawi-Tawi)	Comparison/ Challenges
Land Domain Concept	<i>Pusaka Kaomboan</i> (Collective Ancestral Domain)	Land plots, <i>Tana</i> (individual or family access)	Sama Bangingi focuses on formal collective recognition; Sama Dilaut focuses on temporary use and spiritual anchoring (<i>kakubulan</i>)
Internal Land Markers	Two coconut trees planted together	Not specified; burial sites (<i>kakubulan</i>) serve as anchors	Reliance on physical, perennial markers in the absence of titles
Sea Tenure Type	Primarily traditional fishing territories (recognized by LGU)	Mooring rights (tied to <i>lumah</i>); Communal deep sea access	Bangingi relies on defined LGU recognized fishing areas; Sama Dilaut system is fundamentally based on occupation/ mooring
Inheritance/ Descent	Patrilineal property flow; Women receive lesser shares	Not explicitly detailed for land; Social organization rooted in <i>mata’an</i>	Sama Bangingi descent rules exacerbate gendered tenure insecurity



Sama Dilaut transporting the dried agal-agal (seaweed).

Dynamics of Dispossession and Conflict

The Overarching Issue: Insecurity of Land and Sea Tenure

The report identifies the insecurity of land tenure and sea tenure as the core conflict driver confronting the Sinama community. This crisis stems directly from the supplanting of the traditional system with the exogenous system.

This systemic replacement has generated anxiety within the communities, driven by the observed trends and patterns indicating that their traditional ownership and access systems are being eroded and risk being lost forever. This insecurity threatens not only their livelihood but also their distinct identities and entire culture, which are deeply rooted in their ancestral land and waters.

Economic Drivers of Sea Tenure Dispossession

The most immediate and aggressive threat to Sama Dilaut sea tenure in Tawi-Tawi is the proliferation of *agal-agal* (seaweed) farming. The rapid expansion of this competing economic development model has led to significant encroachment of traditional moorings and sea tenure. This encroachment has had severe socioeconomic consequences, resulting in sustained internal displacement. Under these pressures, some Sama Dilaut families have sold their customary rights to community-recognized traditional houses for as little as PHP 5,000.00, starting in the late 1980s. This sale of mooring rights marks a crucial turning point, wherein the relational and customary nature of sea tenure has been supplanted by an alienable, monetary property right imposed by external market forces, indicating a collapse of the traditional system. Consequently, others have been compelled to relocate (*pinda*) to nearby channels (*saluran*), smaller islands, or diaspora externally to Semporna, Malaysia.

Land-Based Conflicts and Environmental Degradation as Contextualized Threats in the Broader Bangsamoro IP System

The environmental domains of the Indigenous Peoples are described as physically degraded and largely outside their effective control or access. In the case of other groups within the region, the introduction of exogenous economic models and policies has been devastating: logging concessions and national government resettlement programs led to radical changes in land use for the Teduray, resulting in problems like rat infestations. Similarly, the Dulangan Manobo saw their traditional farming areas altered forever due to logging and intensive agriculture requiring pesticides.

This systemic dispossession manifests in the crisis of internal displacement and political vulnerability. For instance, internal displacement and “targeted killings perceived to be rooted in current land ownership contests locally” are acknowledged as evidence that the erosion of governance systems has commenced. The Erumanen ne Menuvu have been forced to move their boundaries six times and report having “no longer territories they can move to when boundaries are to be shifted.”

Furthermore, both Sitangkai and Pilas Island face critical infrastructural failure, particularly the limited access to potable drinking water. Dense settlement patterns have cut off access to traditional areas where water was fetched for free, forcing reliance on commercial sources, such as bottled water sold by Tausug-owned shops in Sitangkai, costing PHP 70.00 per big canister.

The historical agency of the Sama Bangingi is visible in artifacts like the *Kuta Bullud* fort in Pilas, built on a hill as a defensive observation point against intruders during the Spanish period. This fortification represents a time when physical defense was a viable strategy. In stark contrast, the modern Sama Dilaut response to systemic structural threats (economic encroachment and legal insecurity) is avoidance, often choosing to migrate to Semporna. This transition from defensive fortification to flight indicates a fundamental loss of effectiveness for traditional defense mechanisms against non-military, structural threats imposed by the exogenous legal and market systems.

Table 4: Manifestations of Tenure Insecurity and Displacement in BARMM IP Communities

Indigenous Group	Domain Affected	Specific Threat/ Driver	Resulting Impact/ Displacement
Sama Bangingi	Land Tenure (<i>Pusaka Kaomboan</i>)	Tausug resettlement (MNLF surrenderees)	Alteration of community social organization and internal tenure dynamics
Sama Dilaut	Sea Tenure (<i>Tahik/ Moorings</i>)	Rapid expansion of <i>agal-agal</i> farming	Encroachment, sale of customary rights for P5,000, internal/external relocation (<i>pinda</i>)
Sama Bangingi & Sama Dilaut	Vital Resources (<i>Bohe'</i>)	Dense settlement and urbanization	Limited access to potable drinking water; reliance on commercial bottled water
Teduray/ Menuvu (Contextual)	Land Domain (<i>Fusaka Inged/Uwang Menuwa</i>)	Logging/ Intensive Agriculture/ Armed Conflict	Physical environmental degradation, movement of boundaries (6 times), lack of remaining territory



Asymmetries in Governance and the Legal Landscape

The Exogenous System: Power Dynamics and Structural Asymmetry

The relationship between Indigenous Governance Systems (IGS) and the exogenous systems (national and BARMM regional government) is fundamentally asymmetrical. The State apparatus commands ample monetary resources, the coercive power of the military institution, and the judicial authority of courts to interpret laws. Traditional institutions, conversely, possess none of these powers, rendering them structurally weak in defending their domain boundaries against State-backed or State-tolerated economic interests. This structural asymmetry is layered. Traditional systems exist in unequal relationships with BARMM Agencies and Units, and BARMM itself operates in an asymmetrical relation with the National Government. Despite the recognition of Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs) in the 1987 Philippine Constitution and through IPRA in 1997, as well as the BIPA in 2024, IP communities continue to face marginalization and disinclusion in both national and local legal discourse, plans, and programming.

Status of Ancestral Domain Claims and Legal Recognition

The formal legal recognition process required under IPRA is fraught with systemic challenges that enforce tenure insecurity:

The NCIP-LRA Registration Crisis: The Context of Sama Bangingi

A critical legal hurdle is the gap between NCIP recognition and registration with the Land Registration Administration (LRA). For the Sama Bangingi, their

Pusaka Kaomboan claim, covering 2,673.2682 hectares and encompassing four barangays in Pilas Island, was recognized by the NCIP on February 9, 2006, identifying 3,482 rightsholders. However, the claim remains unregistered with the LRA. This persistent legal limbo is not merely an administrative bottleneck; it constitutes a systemic form of legal insecurity.

NCIP recognition confirms the cultural and historical basis of the claim, but LRA registration is the final step that confers legal enforceability and the issuance of a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT). By stalling the LRA registration, the State effectively preserves its *de jure* sovereignty over the domain, preventing the ancestral claim from becoming legally impermeable to competing external claims. Furthermore, this legal vulnerability is compounded by incomplete internal management planning, as seen in the Sama Bangingi's Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development Protection Plan (ADSDPP) remaining only 80% complete.

The Bangsamoro Indigenous Peoples' Act of 2024 (BIPA 64) and its Implications

The Bangsamoro Indigenous Peoples' Act of 2024 (BIPA 64, Bangsamoro Autonomy Act No. 64), signed in December 2024, with Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) promulgated in June 2025, represents a landmark legislation intended to recognize, develop, and protect the rights of all IPs within BARMM. BIPA explicitly recognizes the Sama Bangingi and the Sama Dilaut as official IPs within the region.

BIPA defines IPs' ownership over their domains, referred to as *fusaka ingëd*. It grants regulatory powers to the Ministry for Indigenous Peoples' Affair (MIPA) to control activities adversely affecting IPs' land, water, and airspace, and sanctions violations of environmental laws according to customary laws.

However, the implementation of BIPA introduces a new layer of complexity regarding governance asymmetry. Tensions have been emerging because indigenous land claims overlap with core development projects aligned with the Normalization Annex of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB), such as the transformation of former MILF camps (Omar and Badre). This situation means the MIPA and the BARMM government must demonstrate the political will to enforce IP rights and customary laws against competing Bangsamoro interests.

Policy Synthesis, Imperatives, and Recommendations

General Synthesis of Findings on Governance and Tenure Dynamics

The ethnographic data collected reveals a systemic crisis of security of tenure rooted in the collision between the indigenous, holistic worldview of kalluman and the fragmented, monetized exogenous legal and economic systems. The kalluman (holistic tenure) of the Sama Bangingi and Sama Dilaut has been fractured by exogenous systems that promote profit-driven economic models (agal-agal expansion) and legal systems that fail to fully validate customary claims (the LRA registration gap).

While the persistence of traditional governance structures (addat led by Panglima, Datu, and Matto'a) offers community resilience, these structures are unable to prevent large-scale dispossession due to a lack of power and resources compared to the State. The security of tenure over Pusaka Kaomboan and tahik is, therefore, not merely an economic concern but an existential necessity for the preservation of their cultural identity.

Ensuring Formal Registration and Legal Protection of Ancestral Domains

The most urgent structural impediment to securing tenure is the failure of the exogenous system to formalize native titles, therefore, it is vital to:

- **Resolve the LRA Gap.** The BARMM government, leveraging the MIPA and BIPA 64, must prioritize the immediate LRA registration of all NCIP-recognized ancestral domains, specifically issuing the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) for the Sama Bangingi *Pusaka*

Kaomboan. The issuance and registration of the CADT is mandated as essential for preserving their distinct identities.

- **Define and Protect Sea Tenure Rights.** Given the unique maritime *kalluman* of the Sama Dilaut, policy must define and protect sea tenure rights, including traditional mooring rights (tied to the *lumah* placement) and traditional fishing territories, with the same legal rigor applied to land. This requires utilizing the regulatory powers granted under BIPA 64 to formalize these rights and protect them from external encroachment.

Regulating Exogenous Economic Activities and Restoring Equitable Access

Findings from this ethnographic report reveals that the continued insecurity of tenure is driven by competing economic development models, based on this context, the following policy imperatives are presented:

- **FPIC Enforcement and Accountability.** Strict adherence to the FPIC must be mandated for all development projects, including Integrated Forest Management Agreements (IFMAs), camp rehabilitation projects, and commercial fishing within ancestral waters and lands. Clear measures must be established for alleged violations where consent was not genuinely sought.
- **Protection against Encroachment.** Localized, enforceable regulations are required to restrict the uncontrolled expansion of economic models such as *agal-agal* farming, which directly cause the encroachment and displacement of the Sama Dilaut from their traditional moorings and sea tenure. Furthermore, policy must promote equitable access and benefit-sharing of resources derived from the domains, mitigating the economic drivers of conflict and displacement.

Inclusion and Cultural Resilience

The pursuit of security of tenure must be accompanied by measures to strengthen cultural resilience and inclusion:

- **Integration of and support to IKSPs.** BARMM environmental and resource management policies should support and formally integrate IKSPs, such as pandoga (signs for navigation and weather) and traditional ecological mapping, into planning and operations.
- **Address Gender Disparities.** Customary law frameworks must be reviewed in accordance with BIPA 64 to ensure that while addat is respected, the rule of descent and property flow, particularly the patrilineal property disposition of the Sama Bangingi, does not systematically undermine the tenure security and inheritance rights of women, especially in the context of widespread domain loss.
- **Support Restorative Strategies.** The State must recognize and actively support local capacities for conflict transformation and resilience, leveraging indigenous restorative justice mechanisms like *Diyat* to address internal conflicts and promote lasting peacebuilding.

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