



Republic of the Philippines  
**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**  
**NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MUSLIM FILIPINOS**

# **Muslim Filipinos:**

## Definition and Categorization, Nationally and BARMM

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## Outline:

- I. The National Commission on Muslim Filipinos
- II. The Muslim Filipinos Groups
- III. Census of Population of Muslim Filipinos: Status, Issues and Challenges
- IV. Recommendations



## **I. The National Commission on Muslim Filipinos**

By virtue of Republic Act No. 9997, “An Act Creating the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF)” mandated to preserve and develop the culture, traditions, institutions and well-being of Muslim Filipinos, in conformity with the country’s laws and in consonance with national unity and development.



## **I. Some Powers and Functions of NCMF (Sec. 8 of R.A. 9997):**

- Advise the President in the formulation, coordination, implementation, and monitoring of policies, plans, programs and projects affecting Muslim Filipino communities (a);
- Act as the primary government agency through which Muslim Filipinos could seek government assistance and redress, and serve as medium through which such assistance may be extended to Muslim Filipinos (c);
- Monitor and evaluate the performance of all existing policies and development programs of the government that seek to strengthen and uplift the socio-economic conditions of Muslim Filipinos and identify areas that need government intervention and support (j)
- Undertake studies, establishment and maintenance of ethnographic research centers and museums on the culture and institutions of Muslim Filipinos. This is for purposes of policy formulation and program implementation as well as for the purpose of preserving their historical heritage (m)
- Provide legal and technical services for the survey, adjudication, titling, and development of Muslim Filipino ancestral lands and settlements proclaimed by the government for the Muslim Filipinos and issue certificates of ancestral land/domain titles (o); and
- Assist the National Statistics Authority (NSO) now Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) in conducting census of population in the country (p)

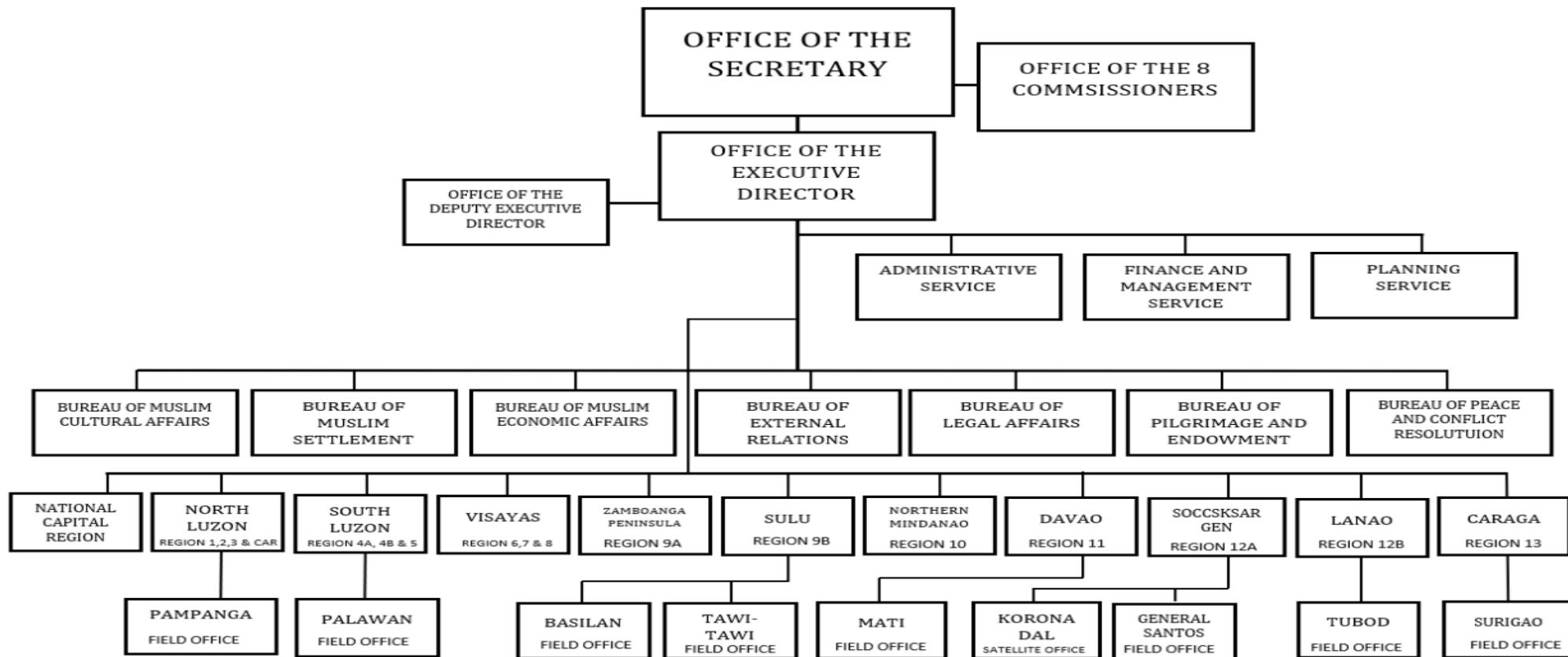


# Republic of the Philippines OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MUSLIM FILIPINOS

## I. The National Commission on Muslim Filipinos: Organizational Structure

*The NCMF has a total of 924 plantilla positions including:*

- 8 Commissioners
- 7 Bureaus
- 3 Staff Services
- 11 Regional Offices
- 9 Provincial/Field/Sattelite Offices



**Muslim Filipinos: Definition and categorization, nationally and BARMM**



## II. The Muslim Filipinos Groups:

### Muslim Filipinos

- "Muslim" in its legal definition, is a person who testifies to the oneness of God and the Prophethood of Muhammad and professes Islam. *[Article 7(g), PD 1083]*
- Muslim Filipinos are Filipino citizen who identify themselves as Muslim

### Bangsamoro people

- The Moro people or Bangsamoro people are the 13 Muslim-majority ethnolinguistic Austronesian groups, native of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan. *(Kamlia, Jamail A. (20 October 2012). "Who are the Moro people?" Retrieved at <https://opinion.inquirer.net/39098/who-are-the-moro-people>)*
- *Derived from the Old Malay word bangsa ("race" or "nation") and Moro (the collective term for the various predominantly Muslim ethnic groups in the Philippines, from Spanish moro, "Moor") Jamail A. Kamlian (October 20, 2012). "Who are the Moro people?". Philippine Daily Inquirer. Retrieved November 2, 2015.*





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## II. The List of Muslim Filipinos Groups: **Definition and Categorization**

The Bangsamoro People: 13 Moro Ethnolinguistic Groups / Islamized Ethnolinguistic Groups

1. Maranao
2. Maguindanaon
3. Iranun
4. Yakan
5. Tausug
6. Sama
7. Sama di Laut (Badjao)
8. Jama Mapun
9. Kagan/Kalagan
10. Kolibugan
11. Sangil
12. Molbog
13. Palawanon



(Retrieved at <https://bcpch.bangsamoro.gov.ph/bangsamoro-people>)



## II. The Muslim Filipinos Groups: Definition and Categorization

The term Muslim Filipinos are not exclusively for the Bangsamoro people or the known 13 Moro Ethnolinguistic Groups of MinSuPala Region. The definition and categorization are not focuses on the political and cultural identity of these groups, but more on religious characteristic.

There are other groups or individuals who are Muslim Filipinos but not member(s) of Bangsamoro people. For instance, the Balik-Islam Group.

**The Balik-Islam (Muslim converts/reverts) are the people who converted or reverted to Islam.** In its literal translation, balik, a Filipino word means “return”. Hence, Balik-Islam means Muslim Reverts. Only converts in the Philippines use the term “Balik-Islam,” negating the idea of abandoning their previous faiths but indicating rather a returning to the pure (fiṭrah) and original religion for all mankind. Thus, the term means “reverts to Islam,” and it started to evolve and gained acceptance from both the reverts and “born Muslims.” *(Morados, M. and A. Malayang. 2023. Balik-Islam in Some Selected Areas in Luzon and the National Capital Region: Motivations of Conversion and Challenges Encountered. UP-Center for Integrative and Development Studies)*





## II. The Muslim Filipinos Groups:

In the absence of legal basis defining and categorizing the list of Muslim Filipino groups or individuals, the NCMF as mandated by law to “certify, whenever appropriate, membership of persons in Muslim Filipino communities for purposes of establishing qualifications for specific requirements of government and private agencies or for benefits as may be provided by law [Section 8(n), RA 9997],” **the Commission issued En Banc Resolution No. 10 series of 2024 Acknowledging and Certifying the List of Groups of Muslim Filipinos on April 24, 2024.**

The NCMF defined and categorized the Muslim Groups in the following:

1. The 13 Ethnolinguistic Groups of Muslim Filipinos
2. The Balik-Islam
3. Other Muslim Groups



## II. The list of Muslim Filipino Groups

### A. List of ethnolinguistic groups of Muslim Filipinos

1. Tausug
2. Sama
3. Maguindanao
4. M'ranao
5. Iranun
6. Yakan
7. Kagan
8. Kolibugan
9. Molbog
10. Palawani/Palawanon
11. Jamma Mapun
12. Sangil
13. Badjao

### B. The Balik-Islam

The Balik-Islam people are those previously non-Muslims who are not mentioned in the major ethnic groups in the Southern Philippines and converted or reverted to the religion of Islam. They are entitled to be considered as constituents of the NCMF and have the right and privileges to enjoy the services and programs of this Commission.

### C. Other Muslim Filipino Groups

The other Muslim Filipino groups are those people who are not included in the thirteen Muslim Filipino ethnic groups but are recognized under Shariah (Islamic Law) as Muslim Filipinos, e.g. those who are offspring of Muslim foreigner father and non-Muslim Filipina mother.

*\*NCMF En Banc Resolution No. 10 series of 2024 Acknowledging and Certifying the list of Groups of Muslim Filipinos*



## II. The List of Muslim Filipinos Groups:

### Definition of Terms:

- **Muslim Filipino** - is a Filipino citizen, by birth or naturalization, who testifies to the oneness of God and the Prophethood of Muhammad, and professes Islam.
- **Tausug** - means "the people of the current", from the word tau which means "man" or "people" and sūg (alternatively spelled sulug) which means "(sea) currents", referring to the ethnic group native to Sulu Archipelago.
- **Sama** - referring to the dominant ethnic group of the islands of Tawi-Tawi.
- **Maguindanao** - means "people of the flood plain", referring to the ethnic group native in the former Empire Province of Cotabato which are now the provinces of North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Maguindanao del Norte, Maguindanao del Sur, Sultan Kudarat, and Sarangani..
- **M'ranao** - means "people of the lake", referring to the ethnic group native to the region around Lanao Lake in the island of Mindanao.
- **Iranun** - means people from the "Lake Lanao", referring to the ethnic group native to southwestern Mindanao.
- **Yakan** - means "Dayak Origin", referring to the ethnic group concentrated in the Island of Basilan.

*\*NCMF En Banc Resolution No. 10 series of 2024 Acknowledging and Certifying the List of Groups of Muslim Filipinos*



## II. The List of Muslim Filipinos Groups:

### Definition of Terms:

- **Kagan** - means “people of the light”, referring to the Islamized ethnic group in Eastern Mindanao particularly in Davao Region
- **Kolibugan** - means “mixed breed”, refers to the Subanun of the Philippines who have intermarried with the Tausug and Samal and inhabited in western Mindanao.
- **Molbog** - refers to the Muslim ethnic group native in the Balabac groups of islands in southern Palawan.
- **Palawani/Palawanon** - refers to the Muslim ethnic group native in the mainland island of Palawan. Their language is similar to people in Sabah.
- **Jamma Mapun** - derived from Jamma means “People, and Mapun means “Island or place”. They are the Sama-speaking people widely distributed in the area in the north Borneo and southwestern Philippines.
- **Sangil** - refers to the Muslim ethnic group concentrated in the islands of Balut and Sarangani as well as parts of the coastal region of South Cotabato and Davao del Sur provinces.
- **Badjao** - refers to the Muslim ethnic group who are nomadic seafaring people.

*\*NCMF En Banc Resolution No. 10 series of 2024 Acknowledging and Certifying the List of Groups of Muslim Filipinos*



## II. The List of Muslim Filipinos Groups:

### Definition of Terms:

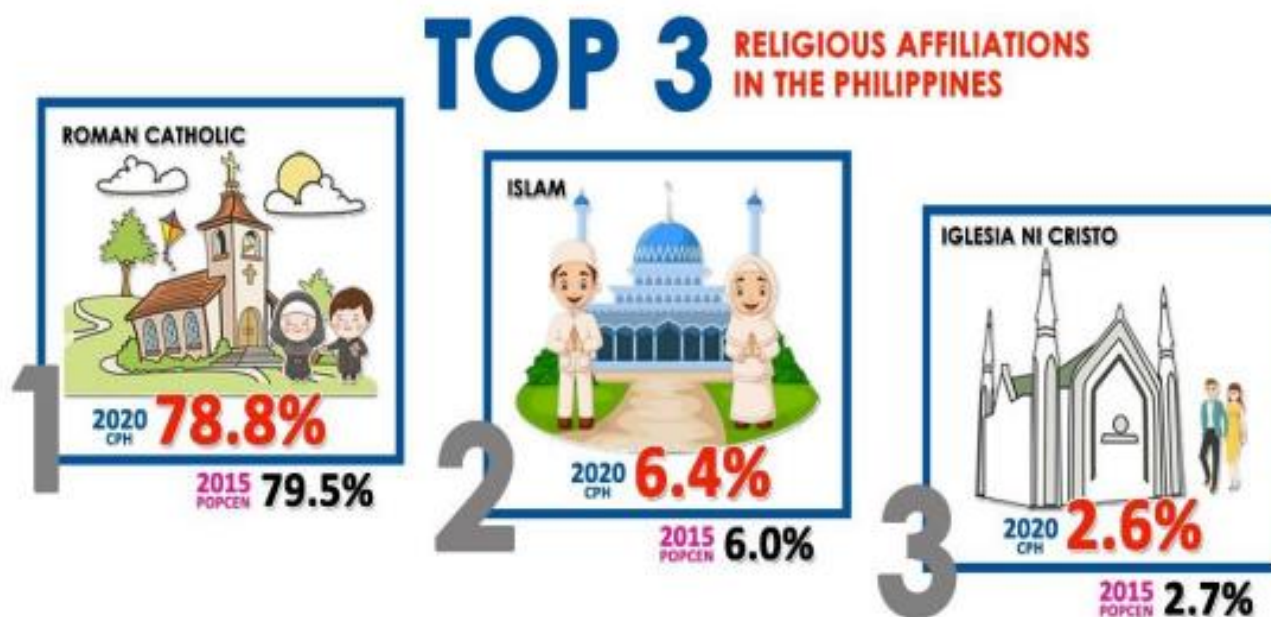
- **Balik-Islam** - are those people who converted/reverted to the religion of Islam.
- **Other Muslim Filipino groups** - referring to other Muslim groups who are not included in the major thirteen Muslim ethno-linguistic groups but are recognized under Shariah (Islamic Law) as Muslim Filipinos, e.g. those who are offspring of Muslim foreigner father and Non-Muslim Filipina mother.

*\*NCMF En Banc Resolution No. 10 series of 2024 Acknowledging and Certifying the List of Groups of Muslim Filipinos*



### III. Census of Population of Muslim Filipinos:

Figure 1. Top Three Religious Affiliations in the Philippines: 2015 and 2020



Sources: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020 Census of Population and Housing and 2015 Census of Population





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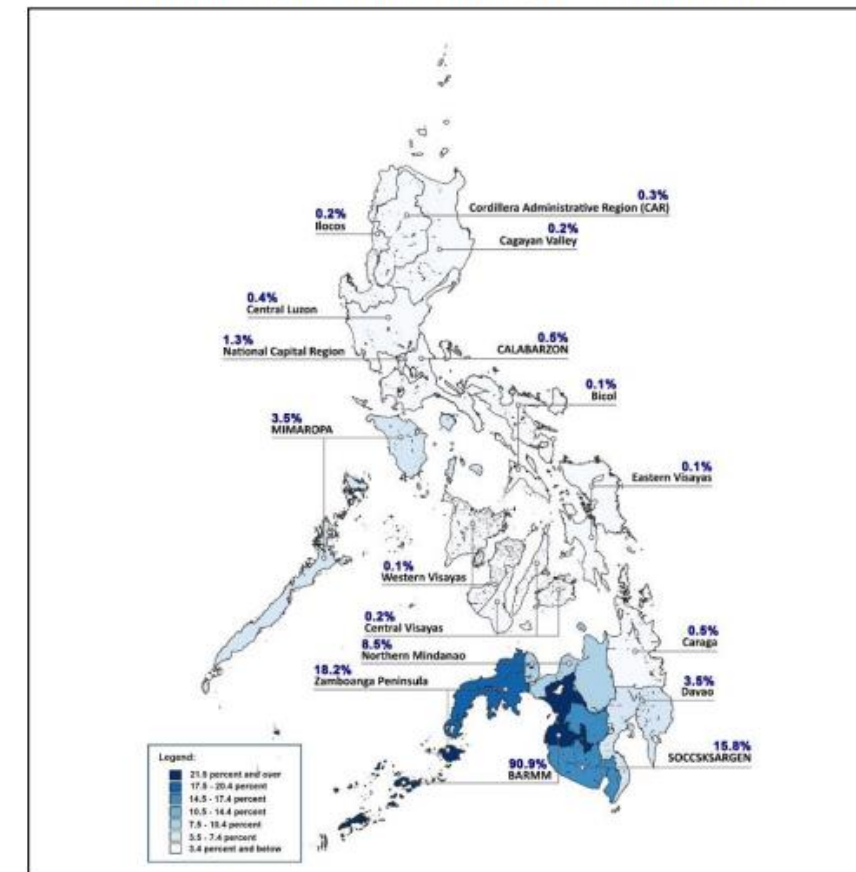
### III. Census of Population of Muslim Filipinos:

Table 5. Number and Proportion of the Household Population Who Reported Islam as Their Religious Affiliation by Region: Philippines, 2020

Region	Household Population	Islam	
		Number	Percent
Philippines	108,667,043	6,981,710	6.4
National Capital Region (NCR)	13,403,551	173,346	1.3
Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR)	1,791,121	5,817	0.3
I – Ilocos Region	5,292,297	12,475	0.2
II - Cagayan Valley	3,679,748	7,249	0.2
III - Central Luzon	12,387,811	46,588	0.4
IV-A - CALABARZON	16,139,770	80,057	0.5
MIMAROPA Region	3,212,287	113,288	3.5
V – Bicol Region	6,067,290	9,090	0.1
VI - Western Visayas	7,935,531	9,784	0.1
VII - Central Visayas	8,046,285	16,412	0.2
VIII - Eastern Visayas	4,531,512	5,568	0.1
IX - Zamboanga Peninsula	3,862,588	703,823	18.2
X - Northern Mindanao	5,007,798	423,317	8.5
XI - Davao Region	5,223,802	185,248	3.5
XII - SOCCSKSARGEN	4,351,773	685,702	15.8
XIII - Caraga	2,795,340	12,777	0.5
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)	4,938,539	4,491,169	90.9

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020 Census of Population and Housing

Figure 2. Proportion of the Household Population Who Reported Islam as Their Religious Affiliation by Region: Philippines, 2020



Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020 Census of Population and Housing

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### III. Census of Population of Muslim Filipinos:

Table 6. Provinces with Double-Digit Proportion of Household Population Who Reported Islam as Their Religious Affiliation: 2020

Rank	Province	Household Population	Islam	
			Number	Percent
1	Tawi-Tawi	438,545	426,403	97.2
2	Interim Province <sup>1</sup>	215,348	207,464	96.3
3	Sulu	998,675	951,127	95.2
4	Lanao del Sur	1,194,507	1,131,726	94.7
5	Basilan <sup>2</sup>	425,111	382,242	89.9
6	Maguindanao <sup>3</sup>	1,666,353	1,392,207	83.5
7	Lanao del Norte	721,716	328,468	45.5
8	Sultan Kudarat	851,554	257,723	30.3
9	Cotabato (North Cotabato)	1,273,594	246,006	19.3
10	Zamboanga Sibugay	668,648	106,587	15.9
11	Sarangani	558,069	61,529	11.0
12	Palawan <sup>4</sup>	934,669	101,235	10.8

Notes:

<sup>1</sup>A Special Geographic Area in BARMM formed as an Interim Province, composed of 63 barangays, which were previously from six municipalities in the province of Cotabato in Region XII -SOCCSKSARGEN

<sup>2</sup>Excluding the City of Isabela, which is under the administrative supervision of Region IX-Zamboanga Peninsula

<sup>3</sup>Including the City of Cotabato

<sup>4</sup>Excluding the City of Puerto Princesa

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020 Census of Population and Housing



### **III. Status, Issues, and Challenges on the census of population for the Muslim Filipinos:**

- **Issues on census of population:**
  - Itinerant nature of Muslim Filipinos
  - Refusal to cooperate and participate in the survey
  - Some enumerators are somewhat hesitant or may be afraid to conduct surveys in some Muslim areas
  - Language barrier
  
- **Inconsistency of number of Muslim population between NCMF and PSA**



### **III. Status, Issues, and Challenges (Muslim Registration)**

- Registration commonly only occurs if the family registers the event;
- Civil registration is done only if needed especially on death registration;
- Common Issues to civil registration:
  - Cost of registration
  - Lack of proximity to places to register
  - Long waiting times or inefficient process of registration
  - Socio-cultural barriers
  - Due to unstable peace and order condition especially in conflict affected areas
  - Lack of appreciation to register or ignorance about civil registration





### **III. Recommendation to improve the Muslim Filipino registrations**

- Promotional campaign to increase awareness on the importance on the participation to the census of population and the significance of civil registration
- Mobile registration in Muslim communities
- Reducing the cost of registration
- Linking birth registration directly to schooling and health care
- Providing assistance in the filling up of form for easier registration
- Partnering with DILG for the issuance of Memorandum to LGUs and/or BLGU to submit monthly reports on civil registration in their respective barangays
- Greater engagement of community and religious leaders
- Memorandum of Agreement between NCMF and PSA to strengthen the partnership programs/services to be covered for Muslim Filipinos
- Conduct of Inter-Regional Office Forum between PSA and NCMF officials
- Conduct of Muslim Enumerators' Training per region



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# Shukran and WasSalam!

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