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SAMA BAJAOS EARN STATEHOOD

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The Sama Bजाos of Sitio Vale Vista, Bgy. Kasanyangan, Zamboanga City have been identified by the Philippines as one of the five populations that may be at risk of statelessness due to their lack of documentation and itinerant way of life. Since 2016, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in support of the Philippine Government's efforts to address this issue, has conducted a series of Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) and teaching lessons with the tribe, numbering some 1,500 in Western Mindanao. These activities led to the recommendation that a pilot birth registration be conducted for the population in Zamboanga City.

In collaboration with the National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP), a preparation registration process was conducted for the late birth registration. Some 200 Sama Bजाos became the first recipients, receiving their birth certificates in a turn-over ceremony held at the Centro Latino Paseo del Mar in Zamboanga in December 2019.



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