

JOINT STATEMENT

The Peace Panels of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) concluded today the 18th round of Exploratory Talks under the auspices of facilitation of the Malaysian Third Party Facilitator in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. They were joined by representatives of the International Contact Group (ICG) during the two day session.

Since the resumption of Formal Talks on 08-09 December 2009, the representatives of the GRP and the MILF Peace Panels have successfully resumed the peace process after the devastating fighting that displaced 600,000 persons in Mindanao. They have steadily strengthened the peace process through effectively suspending hostilities, helping return of over 500,000 IDPs out of which approximately 100,000 are still in evacuation centers, introducing additional international and local bodies to bolster the talks and improve security on the ground and most critically initiated talks on a final Comprehensive Compact and the steps towards achieving it.

In Kuala Lumpur, the two parties met to review drafts on arrangements transitioning towards a Comprehensive Compact as well as to discuss the return of remaining IDPs, terms of reference for the Civilian Protection Component, Implementing Guidelines on the clearing of landmines and unexploded ordnance, support for the Bangsamoro Leadership Management Institute (BLMI) and administrative support for the Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) and Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (AHJAG).

Both Parties agree to work together for the swift return of the remaining internally displaced persons (IDPs) in conflict- affected areas in Mindanao. To this end, the Parties tasked the CCCH to help ensure the safety and security of returning evacuees by accompanying them to their respective areas of origin, in close coordination with concerned local government units, the International Monitoring Team (IMT), and other concerned agencies. The Parties also call on other civil society groups and NGOs to assist.

The Parties also agreed to refer to the IMT Head of Mission the proposed terms of reference to govern the operations of the Civilian Protection Component (CPC) of the IMT in consultation with the four members of the CPC, and the representatives of GRP and MILF Peace Panels and in coordination with their respective CCCH for later submission to the Facilitator and approval of the Parties. The Parties also reiterated their invitation to the Royal Norwegian Government to join the IMT with a specific coordinating role of the CPC.

The Parties discussed the implementing guidelines of the project on the clearing of landmines and unexploded ordnance in conflict affected areas to be undertaken jointly by the GRP and MILF CCCH and the Philippine Campaign to Ban Landmines (PCBL) and Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD).

The Parties agreed to mobilize technical and administrative resources including a facility for the Bangsamoro Leadership and Management Institute (BLMI) to fulfill its role as a capacity building center for emerging Bangsamoro leaders and professionals.

The Parties reached a consensus to enhance operational support arrangements for the Joint CCCH and the AHJAG.

The Parties formally exchanged amended draft proposals and matrices and discussed their proposals and agreed on areas of common ground, subject to endorsement by the Parties to their respective principals. This will be the basis of crafting the interim document in early May.

The Parties expressed their gratitude to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and to Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Sri Mohd. Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak for his generous and steadfast support and assistance to the pursuit of these goals.

Done this 21st day in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

FOR THE GRP:

FOR THE MILF:

AMB. RAFAEL E. SEGUIS
GRP Panel Chairman

MOHAGHER IQBAL
MILF Panel Chairman

SIGNED IN THE PRESENCE OF:

DATUK OTHMAN BIN ABDUL RAZAK
Third Party Facilitator