MILESTONES OF THE BANGSAMORO PEACE PROCESS

2016 TO PRESENT
The Government and Moro Islamic Liberation Front Peace Implementing Panels during a special meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia last December 2017.
he pursuit of just and lasting peace and the recognition of historical injustices committed against the Bangsamoro have been the cornerstone in the peace agenda of the Duterte administration.

In his inaugural speech, President Duterte committed to implement all signed peace agreements in step with constitutional and legal reforms. This includes the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) signed between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) on 27 March 2014 – a comprehensive political settlement which is the culmination of the 17 years of negotiations between the GPH and MILF aimed at providing a just and lasting solution to decades-old armed conflict in the Bangsamoro.
LAUNCH OF THE
IMPLEMENTATION PHASE
The peace process between the GPH and MILF took a significant shift from the negotiation phase to the implementation phase with the launch of the GPH and MILF Implementing Panels in Malaysia on 13 August 2016, underscoring that the negotiation phase is over and the implementation of the CAB will push through.

In view of the Parties’ firm resolve to build on the gains of the peace process so far, the Parties signed the following documents to further strengthen their partnership and cooperation in the Bangsamoro peace process:

- Terms of Reference of the GPH and MILF Implementing Panels (21 March 2017)
- Protocol of Cooperation on Anti-illegal Drug Operations and Related Activities in MILF Areas/Communities (signed on 30 June 2017)
- Joint Communications Plan of the GPH and MILF Implementing Panels: Phase 1 (17 July 2017)
- Terms of Reference for the Joint Peace and Security Committee (signed on 18 October 2017)
- Revised Implementing Guidelines on the Joint Communiqué of 6 May 2002 of the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (signed on 14 December 2017);
- Guidelines for the Operationalization of the Bangsamoro Normalization Trust Fund (14 December 2017);
- Terms of Reference of the GPH-MILF Joint Communications Committee (14 December 2017); and
- Renewal of mandate of the Civilian Protection Component (CPC) of the International Monitoring Team (14 December 2017);
- Renewal of mandate of the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (6 March 2018)
- Renewal of mandate of the International Monitoring Team (6 March 2018)
President Duterte signed Executive Order No. 8 on 7 November 2016 increasing the composition of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) from 15 to 21 members, underscoring the need for inclusivity of other groups such as the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Regional Government, indigenous peoples, women, sultanates, and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Eleven (11) of its members, including the Chairperson, came from the MILF and 10 from the Government. The BTC is mandated to craft the new Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) for submission to Congress and propose amendments to the Constitution necessary for the implementation of the CAB, among other functions.

The 21 members of the BTC were appointed by President Duterte on 10 February 2017 and the BTC formally launched on 24 February 2017 in Davao. Immediately thereafter, the BTC held marathon plenary and committee meetings and consultations, with the previous draft Basic Law transmitted to the 16th Congress on 10 September 2014 as its working draft. On 17 July 2017, the BTC transmitted the draft BBL to the President at the Malacañan Palace in the presence of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and Senate President.

By virtue of its mandate, the BTC convened the Bangsamoro Assembly as a consultative body of multi-stakeholders on the peace process to discuss the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) on 27 November 2017 at the Old Provincial Capitol Gym, Brgy. Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. The event which drew thousands of stakeholders was graced by President Duterte and was also attended by Cabinet members, representatives from...
the House of Representatives and Senate, LGU officials, diplomatic corps, donor agencies, CSOs, media, IPs, religious, academe, security sector, BIAF, and the Implementing Panels and various members of the peace process infrastructure. The Assembly served as a platform for the BTC (1) to endorse the proposed BBL to stakeholders, (2) to generate local support and ownership for the BBL through manifesto and resolution, and (3) to garner overwhelming popular support for the passage of the BBL.

In the 17th Congress, the BTC-drafted BBL was filed as House Bill No. 6475 and Senate Bill No. 1646 at the House of Representatives and Senate, respectively. Between December 2017 to March 2018, series of congressional deliberations and public hearings in Manila and Mindanao were conducted. Both the Senate and House of Representatives committed to pass the proposed BBL by May 2018.
NORMALIZATION
PROCESS

Based on the Annex on Normalization signed on 25 January 2014, normalization refers to the process whereby communities can achieve their desired quality of life, which includes the pursuit of sustainable livelihood and political participation within a peaceful, deliberative society. It aims to ensure human security in the Bangsamoro and build a society that is committed to basic human rights where individuals are free from fear of violence or crime and where long-held traditions and values continue to be honored.

1 ON SECURITY COMPONENTS

• To ensure efficiency and effectiveness in coordinating the implementation of the Program for Normalization, the Joint Normalization Committee (JNC) conducted a series of workshops to draft and finalize the Protocol on Reporting, Coordination and Monitoring of the Normalization Program.

• The Joint Peace and Security Committee (JPSC) reviewed and updated the operations manual of the Joint Peace and Security Teams (JPSTs), and the JPST training course curriculum. In early 2018, the JNC and JPSC conducted site visits and assessed the viability of proposed deployment sites of the JPSTs especially in view of the intensification of the implementation of the normalization program.

• On 18 October 2017, the Terms of Reference of the Joint Peace and Security Committee (JPSC) was signed by the JPSC and JNC
members of the GPH and MILF Parties in Davao City. The JPSC TOR outlines the mandate, composition and functions of the JPSC to coordinate the security arrangements for activities related to the implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro and its annexes.

- On 16 June 2015, the Independent Decommissioning Body (IDB) oversaw the ceremonial decommissioning of 145 MILF combatants and 75 high-powered and crew-served weapons of the MILF held at the Old Provincial Capitol of Maguindanao.
• The seven-member IDB also maintains and secures the turned in weapons that are currently housed at the Secured Arms Storage Area (SASA) in Camp Iranun (Abubakar) in Barira, Maguindanao. A three-member Verification Assistance and Monitoring Team (VMAT) composed of AFP/PNP, BIAF-MILF and an international expert currently secures the storage facility.

• With the anticipated passage of the proposed BBL in 2018 and consistent with the phased implementation of the normalization process, the IDB has intensified its preparatory work for the second phase of decommissioning of MILF forces and weapons. This includes conduct of:

  > Planning workshops on the concept of operations and identification of possible sites for verification process based on security and accessibility consideration
  > Consultation meetings with MILF Front and Base Commands to discuss IDB’s mandate and verification and decommissioning process
  > Site surveys of proposed verification sites in different base commands
  > Continuous coordination with GPH-MILF peace process mechanisms (e.g., Joint Normalization Committee, Task Force for Decommissioned Combatants and their Communities, CCCH) in preparation for the 2nd phase of decommissioning process
  > Engagement with various key stakeholders to help support the normalization process
  > Capacity-development and training of IDB staff in preparation for the next phases of decommissioning processes

• In September 2015, the National Task Force on the Disbandment of Private Armed Groups (NTF-DPAGs) was created by virtue of Memorandum Circular No. 83. The Task Force shall focus its operations in the proposed areas of the Bangsamoro and the adjacent Regions 9 to 12. Led by the Department of the Interior and Local Government, the NTF-DPAGs is in the process of finalizing its implementing rules and operational guidelines and drawing up an action plan.
In keeping with the objective of capacitating former combatants to live productive civilian lives as part of the normalization process, the Task Force for Decommissioned Combatants and their Communities (TFDCC) held several activities such as values transformation trainings, remedial literary classes under DepEd, and skills training under TESDA for decommissioned combatants of the MILF. In April 2016, 133 of 145 decommissioned combatants graduated from their TESDA training.

Other socioeconomic programs for decommissioned combatants and their communities include distribution of farming and fishery assistance by DA, installation of water systems, and facilitation of delayed birth registration for decommissioned combatants in cooperation with PSA, cattle dispersal awarded to the Iranun Women’s Association in Brgy. Tugaig, Barira, Maguindanao, among others.

Alternative Learning System (ALS) program was also made available to decommissioned combatants and civilian members of their communities, 70 of whom were able to complete the program.
Other projects turned over to peoples’ organizations in MILF areas include solar dryers and mobile corn shellers in Brgy. Saniag, Ampatuan, Maguindanao on 23 February 2017. Infrastructure projects such as tire paths were also turned over at Camp Rajamuda in North Cotabato and Camp Bushra in Butig, Lanao del Sur in March 2017. On 14-17 March 2017, training orientation and delivery of socio-economic package for 127 decommissioned combatants based in Maguindanao and North Cotabato were also conducted in Camp Darapanan, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. Livelihood assistance such as farm inputs was delivered for the remaining 18 decommissioned combatants based in Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte in April 2017.

3,001 solar-powered units were installed with 2,724 units for households and 278 for communal facilities such as schools, madaris, daycare centers, etc., located in the six (6) previously-acknowledged MILF camps. Members of peoples’ organizations who were identified to help maintain the solar units have undergone social preparations and technical training on 12-18 March 2017.

Since 2017, members of the GPH and MILF Joint Task Forces on Camps Transformation (JTFCTs) together with different community organizations also underwent capacity-building trainings on program management, participatory area development, values transformation, monitoring and evaluation, and conflict-sensitivity and peace promotion to better strengthen their managerial and technical capabilities.
In preparation for the Phase 2 of the Normalization Process, the TFDCC together with partner agencies also conducted series of workshops to review and enhance the program of interventions for the decommissioned combatants to enable them to transition to peaceful and productive civilian lives. This includes enhancement of tools and mechanisms on profiling, home visitation, assessment, coordination, and process framework to ensure that interventions for the decommissioned combatants are implementable in workable timelines, appropriate, case-specific, and holistic.

To better assist the TFDCC in assessing the progress and impact of interventions for the decommissioned combatants, the Parties are also firming-up its implementation mechanisms through enhancement of individual development planning with the decommissioned combatants and their families. The TFDCC is also developing an integrated database system on the profiling, monitoring and referral system of the decommissioned combatants.

3 **ON TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION**

After submitting to the Panels its report in December 2015 which was subsequently released to the public in March 2016, the Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) submitted its supplementary reports:
(1) Listening Process Report, (2) Land Report “Dealing with the Past and Land Dispossession”, and (3) its technical report with the World Bank and International Organization for Migration entitled “Land: Territory, domain, and Identity”. These were handed over to the GPH and MILF Implementing Panels in February 2017.

**GPH-MILF Peace Corridor**

The GPH and MILF established the GPH-MILF Peace Corridor immediately after the outbreak of the armed conflict in Marawi on 23 May 2017. This is prompted by the need to provide humanitarian assistance to those trapped...
within the areas of conflict as discussed between President Duterte and the GPH and MILF Implementing Panels, and MILF leadership led by Al Haj Murad Ebrahim in Davao City.

The GPH-MILF Peace Corridor is intended to provide a safe and secure corridor for the rescue of stranded or trapped individuals inside the conflict zone in Marawi, and to provide a reliable space for humanitarian assistance to pass through affected municipalities in the Province of Lanao del Sur.

On 4 June 2017, the GPH-MILF Peace Corridor was set-up with the establishment of the Joint Coordination, Monitoring and Assistance Center (JCMAC) at the
Lanao del Sur Provincial Capitol and in Malabang, Lanao del Sur. Manned by the personnel of CCCH, AHJAG, Local Monitoring Teams (LMTs) and Joint Ceasefire and Monitoring Posts (JCMPS) of both parties, the GPH-MILF Peace Corridor through its JCMACs were able to achieve the following:

1. Rescued/retrieved 255 civilians from the conflict zone in Marawi;
2. Secured and coordinated the passage of 165 humanitarian and relief assistance through the Malabang peace corridor; and
3. Contributed to the successful rescue of Fr. Rey Teresito “Fr. Chito” Larroza Soganub (57 years old) and Lordbin Noblesa Acopio (29 years old) by the elements of 4SRB in Marawi on 16 September 2017.

Since its inception, the JCMAC held coordination meetings with the security forces, ARMM, Lanao del Sur provincial government, and concerned agencies for the retrieval of the trapped civilians in Marawi City. JCMAC also provided briefings to the media and other agencies on the security situation and humanitarian assistance.
WAYS FORWARD

- The Parties commit to work together with stakeholders and partners for the widest dissemination of information on the BBL and even towards preparation for the plebiscite, e.g., voters’ education campaign.

- The different normalization bodies under the GPH-MILF Peace Process continue to discuss ways to strengthen existing peace mechanisms and reaffirm their commitment to the peace process. They discussed key activities they can jointly carry out, particularly in preparation for the passage and ratification of the BBL.

- The Parties further commit to maintain and strengthen the ceasefire agreement.
We would like to see an early entrenchment and organization of the Bangsamoro before the federalism. The federal state for the Bangsamoro will actually form part with other federal states of other areas to compose one federal republic later on.

SECRETARY JESUS DUREZA
Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
Delivered during the Signing of EO No. 8 constituting the BTC
Malacañan Palace | 7 November 2016

The Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro and its translation into a law is not the franchise of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The benefit of the law will redound to the benefit of everyone and the country in general. It is the law that will translate the aspiration of everyone for lasting peace and development. It is not owned by anyone but everyone owns it.

MURAD EBRAHIM
Chairman of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front
Delivered during the Signing of EO No. 8 constituting the BTC
Malacañan Palace | 7 November 2016

About the cover photo: The photo was taken during the House Public Consultation Hearing on the Proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law held at Mindanao State University in Marawi City last 17 March 2018.