

# *Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society*

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## **STATEMENT OF UNITY AND SOLIDARITY: A CALL FOR PEACE, SOBRIETY AND RESTRAINT**

*Bismilahir Rahmanir Rahim.*

*Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Ta'ala Wabarakatuhu!*

When the Peace Talks was forged between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the peoples of Mindanao subsequently became hopeful that a just and lasting peace would finally reign in their land.

Bearing this common aspiration of the people in mind, both the GRP and the MILF peace panels strived hard to carry their respective mandates and missions to reach several milestones in the on-going peace process. Foremost among these is the Agreement on the General Cessation of Hostilities signed last July 18, 1997 at Cagayan De Oro City, which serves as the basic foundation of the peace talks. These milestones deserve appreciation.

When the Peace Talks experienced an impasse, both the government and the MILF peace panels had asserted and assured the people that the mechanisms which have been jointly established on the ground have remained and will continue to remain in full force and effect.

As stakeholders of peace, we have savored and treasured all the gains reached by the peace talks so far. As such, we have become morally and legally obligated to preserve these gains as our peace dividends and for the future generations.

Like others, we are also saddened by the armed confrontation between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the MILF Forces in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan on July 10, 2007. If only the military hierarchy had respected and abided by the Ceasefire Agreement, this painful, horrible and costly incident would never have taken place.

As we join others in extending our empathy and heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family of Ustadz Matarul Hakim Alkanul, who was beheaded an hour prior to the military operations, and also to the families of the Marines who were killed in that encounter, we also declare our collective abhorrence to any terrorist action perpetrated against innocent civilians, specifically those in Tipo-Tipo, and vehemently condemn those who are responsible for both incidents in the highest manner!

Like the Midsayap War in North Cotabato, the Tipo-Tipo Armed Encounter between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the MILF Forces must be regarded and treated as an isolated case and must not erode the gains painstakingly attained by the GRP-MILF Peace Negotiations. It must not cripple the growing chance for a resumption of the

GRP-MILF Peace Process and to eventually accomplish its mandate of seeking a viable solution to the centuries-old Mindanao conflict.

We, the undersigned leaders of the Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society, Inc., therefore, make the following assertions with the highest conviction:

1. First, we call on the government to suspend any military action in Basilan and other parts of Mindanao and instead allow the GRP and MILF Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) to immediately conduct an impartial probe on the incidents to identify the real perpetrators and bring them to the bar of justice, as per mandated by the GRP-MILF Ceasefire Agreement;
2. Second, to prevent the occurrence of this eventuality, we strongly urge HE Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in her dual capacity as “Civilian President” and “Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines” to order the immediate pull-out of pursuing military troops, who are about to undertake “punitive actions” against the alleged perpetrators to diffuse tension, pre-empt the possible eruption of war, and avert its escalation to other parts of Mindanao, as well as the subsequent perpetration of widespread human rights violations;
3. Third, we also enjoin all Moro and Non-Moro civil society organizations and networks, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, the Bishops-Ulama Conference, concerned LGUs, as well as all other sectors of society who have a common vision of a just and lasting peace in Mindanao to unite themselves in urging the government to settle the Basilan Crisis in a civilized and peaceful manner;
4. Fourth, we issue this heartfelt appeal to our brothers and sisters in Luzon, Visayas and the rest of Mindanao to objectively understand the Basilan Crisis and the kidnapping of Fr. Bossi. Let us not to be derailed or unduly influenced by the unnecessary “sensationalization” of this issue by some parties with questionable interests. The Bangsamoro and the Filipinos have suffered enough from centuries-old animosities. Let us continue to build peace together in the Philippines in general and in Mindanao in particular;
5. Finally, we urge the international community, through their local embassies, to make diplomatic pressure on both the government and the MILF to exercise maximum restraint in order to avoid military actions that will endanger the peace process and further displace the communities from their economic and social base.

***Enough is enough!*** We cannot afford to add more Internally Displaced People in our homeland. They are still suffering from the aftermath of seemingly unending wars. We cannot anymore afford to increase the number of children of war and widows of wars, whose hearts still bleed and are still waiting for justice for the death of loved ones.

Enough is enough! Onward with peace!

Adopted and signed in Pagadian City, this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of July 2007.

(Sgd.)

**NATHAN INSUNG**

Chairperson, Regional Mgmt Committee  
CBCS – Zambas Region

(Sgd.)

**SULTAN MAGUID A. MARUHOM**

Chairperson, Regional Mgmt Committee  
CBCS – Sibugay Region

(Sgd.)

**DATU AMENODIN T. CALI**

Chairperson, Regional Mgmt Committee  
CBCS – Ranaw Region

(Sgd.)

**TIMOJEN TULAWIE**

Chairperson, Regional Mgmt Committee  
CBCS – Sulu Region

(Sgd.)

**USTADZ RAHIB KUDTO**

Chairperson, Regional Mgmt Committee  
CBCS – Kutawato Region

(Sgd.)

**OSCAR SULAIMAN**

Chairperson, Regional Mgmt Committee  
CBCS – Rajah Buayan Region

(Sgd.)

**SAMMY BUAT**

Chairperson, Regional Mgmt Committee  
CBCS – Dabaw Region

(Sgd.)

**SAMMY P. MAULANA**

Acting Secretary-General/  
Human Right and Justice Officer  
CBCS Central Office

Pagadian City  
23 July 2007

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*The Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil society is a solidarity network of Bangsamoro NGOs and POs and other civil society organizations committed to a more sustained advocacy for Peace, Human Rights, Good Governance and Development. It is a network that engenders cooperation, collaboration and coordination among Moro civil society organizations in facing the challenges of creating a peaceful and just society.*