

Philippines - Lifting Mindanao martial law: What Duterte, Lorenzana have said so far

Tuesday 31 October 2017, by [GAVILAN Jodesz](#) (Date first published: 16 October 2017).

After two of the top leaders of local terrorists are killed in Marawi City, is the lifting of martial law in Mindanao coming anytime soon? Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana says they will make an assessment first before sending recommendations to President Rodrigo Duterte.

MANILA, Philippines – After Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana confirmed on Monday, October 16, that Abu Sayyaf subleader Isnilon Hapilon and Maute Group leader Omar Maute were killed by government troops past midnight, the next question from the public was inevitably, would martial law in Mindanao be lifted now?

President Rodrigo Duterte placed the entire Mindanao under the martial law on May 23, the night the Marawi siege started. The Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the declaration, while Congress voted to extend it to December on July 22. (TIMELINE: Marawi clashes prompt martial law in all of Mindanao)

To date, about 400,000 residents of Marawi and neighboring areas have been displaced, while a total of 1,009 have been killed: 160 from government forces, 802 from the armed groups, and at least 47 civilians.

Here are what Lorenzana, the administrator of martial law, and President Duterte have said on the matter.

Lorenzana: Let's assess

In a press conference following the announcement of the terrorist leaders' death, Lorenzana said the government is "not talking about lifting martial law yet."

He explained that there is a need to assess the situation in the whole Mindanao and how the deaths will affect the current state of things.

"We may be announcing the cessation of hostilities in Marawi City within this week and then after that, we'll find out, we'll assess the entire Mindanao, if there is a need to recommend to the President the lifting of martial law," he added.

Less than a month ago, on September 27, Lorenzana said the same thing – that they would make recommendations to Duterte by the end of October whether martial law should be lifted. But that was before the Maute and Hapilon were killed.

The defense secretary wasn't always keen on military rule. According to senators on May 29, Lorenzana admitted that the military can control the situation in Marawi City without the need of declaring martial law in the whole of Mindanao.

Duterte: Stability first

While the military has yet to make recommendations to Duterte, the President himself has said in the past that he would first look for a semblance of stability and an assurance that there is no “spillage” of violence across the island region. (READ: Martial law in Mindanao: Duterte’s warning fulfilled)

On September 21, Duterte said martial law could be lifted anytime “after things are all ready.”

“There’s a clean up, It doesn’t end with the physical fighting,” he said during his 5th visit to Marawi. “There’s much to be done [like] getting rid of the remaining explosives which are planted along the way.”

Duterte, however, emphasized that “the catch word is when it’s safe here in Mindanao there is no spillage of men.”

“As long as it remains manageable and the police can take care of it,” he said.

In July, when he was urging Congress to extend his original 60-day martial law, Duterte said he would wait for “stability” in Mindanao before he lifts his declaration.

“The earlier we attain the equanimity of the community, the stability, I’d be the first to clamor for the lifting of martial law,” he said on July 1, without specifying the definition of a “stable” Mindanao.

On July 18, Duterte requested Congress for a 5-month extension as the conflict wasn’t likely to be resolved anytime soon.

In-between the statements of assurance that he would eventually lift martial law in Mindanao are his statements about placing the entire country under military rule.

A day after declaring martial law in Mindanao, Duterte said he would extend it to cover the whole Philippines if he thinks “that the ISIS has already taken foothold also in Luzon, and terrorism is not really far behind.”

Two months after, on July 4, however, he said he will not place the entire country under martial law because he would “look stupid in the eyes of the public. I am not ready to be called stupid.”

Duterte has also repeatedly said his martial law would be like Ferdinand Marcos’.

“Martial law is martial law. It will not be any different from what President Marcos did. I’d be harsh,” he said on May 24.

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P.S.

* Rappler.com. Published 9:50 PM, October 16, 2017. Updated 10:14 PM, October 16, 2017:
<https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/185490-duterte-lorenzana-statements-lifting-martial-law-min>

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