

MINDANAO PEOPLES' PEACE MOVEMENT (MPPM)

Official Statement on the Zamboanga City Crisis

Wednesday 23 October 2013, by [MPPM](#) (Date first published: 18 September 2013).

The armed fighting between the government military forces and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) fighters loyal to Nur Misuari in Zamboanga City displaced more than a hundred thousand civilians, damaged millions of properties, and killed almost a hundred individuals, including civilians. More than a week has passed and the shattered lives of the affected families and individuals are far from being restored, as threats of another fighting continue to haunt the city.

The recent events in Zamboanga have shown us how vulnerable and volatile the peace situation in Mindanao is. The incident is only one of the many expressions of the questions and doubts of the 'inclusivity' of the Peace Talk between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The current crisis in Zamboanga is one of the manifestations of how some stakeholders showed their reaction.

The incident in Zamboanga demands that we have to examine and analyze the situation carefully and critically. It has proved us that inclusivity of any peace processes must by principle and in practice include all the stakeholders and actors in peacebuilding, especially the communities that has been constantly marginalized by the process and bear the consequences of its results.

Sincerity in solving the Bangsamoro problem and the Mindanao problem is measured by the satisfaction felt by the peoples and communities in the ground as a result of the processes. Any peace framework that divides peoples and communities is tantamount to failure and would eventually not satisfy and address the legitimate democratic demands and aspirations of these peoples and communities resulting to discontentment and resistance. As long as a group of people suffer injustice, another movement and struggle for liberation is bound to rise in the future.

The government and the Moro Revolutionary fronts should have learned their lessons. Military solution has never been the most effective solution in addressing the conflict in Mindanao. Diplomatic means should have been explored and pursued at its utmost best to prevent the bloodshed and humanitarian crisis that we are currently facing. Revolutionary groups' and government's interventions in the name of the masses should always reflect these in actions. Peace and Development framework for Mindanao should and must at all times and at all cost involve the majority Moro, Lumad and Migrant masses and communities. Any Party/Group/Leadership-centered peace process to resolve Mindanao conflict only invites more rebellions.

We do not condone this action of the MNLF and the response of the National Government, thus:

MPPM strongly condemns the attack against civilian population in Zamboanga City. Any attack against civilian populations does not justify any cause.

We demand for justice to all that became victims of human rights violations as a result of this stand-off. War is not a justification to commit human rights violations against civilians, prisoners of war,

and injured combatants. Both sides must be held liable of the violations they have committed.

We call for an independent fact finding mission to verify the facts about the armed confrontation. We demand for an in-depth and sincere investigation to the real reason of the stand-off.

Moreover, we call upon the government and aid agencies to immediately address the humanitarian and psychosocial needs of the internally displaced persons.

Further, we call upon other Civil Society Groups to let us be the voice of calm and sobriety in the midst of rising distrust and prejudices brought about this new onslaught of armed conflict in Mindanao.

Lastly, let us not let the events in Zamboanga cover equally important and critical issues that we must all face and continue to be vigilant of- - the misuse of public funds through the pork barrel scam.

(Sgd) RODELIO "YATS" AMBANGAN
Chairperson

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