

Self-presentation

Profile of the Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement (MPPM)

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Introduction

Historically, Mindanao has earned a name in the Philippines as the "Land of promise", due to the abundance of its natural resources. Since the early decades of the 20th century, it has been the magnet for in-migration of people from all over the archipelago in search of a better place to live, a place with promising economic opportunities. For this reason, many Christians have come to settle alongside the island's original residents- the Lumad and the Moro people. Thus, the tri-people character of Mindanao was born.

This rich land has not only attracted the lowly inhabitants of other islands, but has also been a magnet for big fortune seekers who want to dominate and control its vast resources. It has been the economic target of foreign capital and investment due to its rich mineral resources, soil fertility, abundance of power supply and cheap labor.

This intrusion has met with continuous resistance from its local inhabitants, especially the Moro and the Lumad, hence, in the past decades, it has earned another famous name: "*Mindanao, the Bleeding Land*", referring to the history of resistance.

Recently, Mindanao has caught the attention of the national and international community. The on-going war in Mindanao between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has been the focus of attention. The sound of mortars, bombs from fighter planes and the staccato of bullets have become the order of the day. Death in both camps has been a reality of the struggle.

Thousands of civilians have been physically and economically displaced, and many innocent civilians have been killed in the crossfire. Evacuations have escalated, and throngs of people (especially the

women, children and the elderly) along with their few working animals march to unprepared and inadequate evacuation centers to seek temporary refuge.

For the evacuees, life has been harder in the evacuation centers than the poor day-to-day living conditions they faced in their own communities. Lack of food or medical assistance, cramped shelter, unsanitary surroundings and constant fear and anxiety have made life miserable for these lowly victims of war.

A. Rationale

The general public has been caught off-guard by the senseless war and the continuing crisis in Mindanao. The effects of this war, such as the displacement of thousands of civilians, the destruction of properties, the slow-down of trading, production and economy and the deaths of both civilians and combatants have triggered a clamor for peace among the different sectors and groups. There has been a spontaneous call to all warring parties for cessation of hostilities and a stop to total war, but not public opinions and reactions have not been organized. Each group has its own way of attending to the Mindanao Crisis.

Several NGOs/Pos and individual peace advocates have launched various forums, consultations and peace summits to discuss the situation and form resolutions. These were launched separately but have resulted in the common findings and declarations:

1. War is not the solution to the Mindanao conflict. Instead, peaceful negotiation and dialogue should be seriously conducted, giving consideration to the basic social issues and particular characteristics of the people and the island of Mindanao.
2. War further aggravates the conflict and the situation of the people, causing many lost lives, dislocations, war-related trauma, animosities, and destruction of properties and production losses.
3. The Mindanao problem has its own historical roots that must be thoroughly traced. There must be serious efforts at awareness-raising, discussion and conflict resolution, giving emphasis to the fundamental problems on land, food, jobs and basic social services, and the issues of peoples' right to self-determination, peoples' right to genuine participation in governance, and cultural identity and identity and integrity, among others.
4. The resolution of the ongoing conflict should be placed in the context of the tri-people character of Mindanao as well as in the context of the preferential option of the poor, as embodied in the Christian, Lumad and Islamic traditions calling for a just and lasting peace and sustainable development.
5. To reach a comprehensive and final resolution to the Mindanao conflict, there must be active and committed participation by the grassroots peoples in the struggle for a just lasting peace and sustainable development in Mindanao.
6. Laying down of arms by the revolutionary groups in Mindanao is not the final solution to the Mindanao rebellion and the peace and order problem. Instead, social issues, as the government must address the root causes of the problem properly and seriously.
7. The nature of responses have been immediate, short term and spontaneous, therefore an effort to formulate, coordinate, and sustain a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding efforts with broader and wider participation is an immediate challenge to all peace-loving citizens and peace advocates

all over the island.

Along this premise, the MINDANAO PEOPLES' PEACE MOVEMENT was formally established during the Mindanao Grassroots' Peace Summit held July 26-28,2000 in Davao City.

B. OBJECTIVES

1. To help coordinate and unify the spontaneous efforts of all peace-loving groups in Mindanao, in order to attain a comprehensive resolution to the Mindanao Crisis.
2. To serve as a forum for grassroots organizations to actively participate in drawing out viable options and alternatives for a lasting peace and sustainable development in the island of Mindanao – “ A Comprehensive and Grassroots-based Peoples' Peace and Development Program for Mindanao.”
3. To establish and strengthen grassroots-based based peoples' unity, cooperation and collective action in the struggle for a just and lasting peace and sustainable development in Mindanao.

C. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE MINDANAO PEOPLES' PEACE MOVEMENT

1. Adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all other international instruments that promote and defend the life, dignity and development of peoples and persons.
2. Always uphold the civilian supremacy over the military in times of peace and war.
3. Respect cultural and traditional practices and differences among the Tri-people in Mindanao.
4. Show solidarity and support for the struggle of the Moro and Lumad peoples' right to self-determination.
5. Recognize and respect the independence, initiative and autonomy of affiliates according to the program and orientation of each.
6. Recognize the grassroots peoples' participation in peace building and economic development.

D. NATURE OF THE MINDANAO PEOPLES' PEACE MOVEMENT

It is a Mindanao-wide, Grassroots-based and Tri-People Coalition.

Mindanao-wide because it includes the participation of representatives coming from many different provinces and several cities in Mindanao.

Grassroots-based because it is mainly composed of grassroots peoples whose active participation is considered the key in effecting and achieving lasting peace and sustainable development in Mindanao.

Tri-People is a recognition of the varied composition of the people in Mindanao- the Lumad, Moro and Settlers and their Descendants, whose diverse cultures, traditions, beliefs and aspirations should be respected.

In so many peace gatherings that have been launched, people at the top level always discuss the

agenda for peace and development. The grassroots people were just left as spectators and their voices were least heard, when in fact they are the most affected ones when peace efforts go awry.

E. MISSION

MPPM is a tri-people, grassroots , multi-sectoral, peace alliance/coalition that:

1. Commits to work for justpeace* and sustainable development through various initiatives using peaceful means in Mindanao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan (MinSuBaTaPa)".
2. Builds trust and confidence between and among the tri-people;
3. Works to attain the right to self-determination of the tri-people; and
4. Mobilizes the broadest number of people from the grassroots and all sectors to participate in peacebuilding processes.

F. ORGANIZATION

Although this is a peace Coalition, it needs to install an organizational system to ensure the implementation of agreed plans and objectives of the movement. It will therefore create:

1. The Mindanao Peoples' Peace Summit (MPPS)

The General Assembly of the MPPM is the Mindanao Peoples' Peace Summit. The MPPS shall be composed of the delegates of organizational members of MPPM as well as individual and honorary members.

2. Mindanao Council of Peoples' Representatives (MCPR)

This is composed of fifteen (15) representatives from the Bangsamoro; fifteen (15) representatives from the Katawhang Lumad; and fifteen (15) representatives from the Mindanao Migrants and their Descendants. These representatives are elected or chosen by consensus during the Peoples' Caucus during the biennial summit of the Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement (MPPM).

3. The Peoples' Executive Committee (PEC)

The Peoples' Executive Committee are chosen by the MCPRs from among themselves. It shall be composed of one (1) Chairperson; three (3) Vice-Chairpersons [one (1) from the Katawhang Lumad; one (1) from the Bangsamoro; and one (1) from the Mindanao Migrants and their Descendants)]; one (1) Secretary General; three (3) Deputy Secretary Generals [one (1) from the Katawhang Lumad; one (1) from the Bangsamoro; and one (1) from the Mindanao Migrants and their Descendants)]; one (1) Treasurer; three (3) Assistant Treasurers [one (1) from the; one Katawhang Lumad (1) from the Bangsamoro; and one (1) from the Mindanao Migrants and their Descendants)]; one (1) Auditor; and two (2) Business Managers.

4. The Cluster of Peoples' Representatives (CPRs)

The Cluster of Peoples' Representatives (CPRs) are nominated by the members of the clusters where they belong. The composition of the CPRs are five (5) Bangsamoro; five (5) Katawhang Lumad; and five (5) Mindanao Migrants and their Descendants.

The clusters are composed of the following:

- a) Maguindanao-Cotabato City (MAGCOT) Cluster
- b) Cotabato-Kidapawan City- Bukidnon (COKIBU) Cluster
- c) South Cotabato- Sultan Kudarat-Sarangani-General Santos City (SOCSKSARGEN) Cluster
- d) Greater Davao Area (GDA): Davao City-Davao del Sur-Davao del Norte Davao Oriental-Compostela Valley (GDA) Cluster
- e) Lanao Norte-Iligan-Misamis Oriental/Occidental-Camiguin (LANIMOOC) Cluster
- f) Lanao Sur-Marawi (LASMA) Cluster
- g) Zamboanga Peninsula-Basilan (ZAMBA)Cluster
- h) Sulu-Tawi-tawi-Palawan (SULTAWIPA) Cluster
- i) Agusan and Surigao (CARAGA) Cluster

5. The Working Committees

Members of the Mindanao Council of Peoples' Representatives sit in any one of following working committees:

- a. Education and Advocacy Committee
- b. Research Committee
- c. Media and Information Committee
- d. Finance Committee
- e. International Relations Committee
- f. Membership Committee
- g. Resource Generation Committee, and
- h. Panel of Negotiators

Each committee is composed of six (6) representatives with two representatives coming from each people, except that of the Panel of Peace Negotiators which is composed of nine (9) MCPRs, with three (3) representatives per people.

It is important to note that the composition is representatives of the tri-people of Mindanao who are duly endorsed by their respective people and are capable of articulating the issues and aspirations of those peoples.

Modified during the Council of Peoples' Representatives meeting on December 16, 2005 at Science Building, Midsayap, North Cotabato.

View online : [MPPM website](#)