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Philippines: VERA FILES FACT CHECK: BARMM official DID NOT say ‘Christians are unwelcome in Marawi’

Friday 8 December 2023, by [Vera Files](#) (Date first published: 7 December 2023).

Netizens are circulating a fake quote card of Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) Interior and Local Government Minister Atty. Naguib Sinarimbo supposedly saying Christians do not have a place in Marawi.

It is a fabricated statement that spread on Dec. 3, the day a [bomb exploded](#) inside the [Mindanao State University’s](#) (MSU) Dimaporo Gym.

BARMM’s official statement on the incident condemned the bombing “while our peace-loving Christian brothers and sisters were attending Sunday Mass.”

The fake posts shared on Facebook (FB) and TikTok bore a quote card of Sinarimbo supposedly published by the Bangsamoro Government. Sinarimbo was quoted saying:

“Walang lugar ang mga kristyano sa MARAWI CITY BARMM kaya siguro nagkaroon ng ganyan insidente. Ang marawi city noon binansagan Islamic city pero dahil sa kagagawan ni Duterte nasira at napasok ang Marawi City ng iilan Grupo (Christians do not have a place in MARAWI CITY BARMM maybe that is why an incident like that happened. Marawi city was used to be called the Islamic city but due to Duterte’s actions some groups destroyed and entered Marawi City).”

The BARMM Ministry of Interior and Local Government’s FB page released a [statement](#) on Dec. 3 disowning the graphic and calling it “fake.”

“For the record, neither this Ministry nor any Bangsamoro Government official ever said these heinous things about our Christian brothers and sisters,” a part of the statement read.

The Ministry also denounced the bombing in their [official statement](#).

“We condemn in the strongest possible terms the inhumane bombing inside the Mindanao State University – Marawi City Dimaporo Gymnasium while our peace-loving Christian brothers and sisters were attending Sunday Mass,” the Ministry said.

The circulating post altered an actual quote card released by the Bangsamoro Government FB page on Dec. 4, 2020. Sinarimbo’s statement on participating in the 2022 elections was changed.

The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for the incident but the Armed Forces of the

Philippines is still validating the claim. The Philippine National Police is looking into at least two suspects behind the blast that left four people dead and 50 injured.

In his [statement](#), President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos promised to bring the perpetrators to justice.

“I condemn in the strongest possible terms the senseless and most heinous acts perpetrated by foreign terrorists upon the Mindanao State University (MSU) and Marawi communities early this Sunday morning. Extremists who wield violence against the innocent will always be regarded as enemies to our society,” he said.

FB users and pages such as *Fahima Salik tv* (created on June 17, 2023) and *Lion of Judah* (created as *Philippines for Israel* on Oct. 22, 2023) circulated the quote card. A TikTok user *mike_spider77* also uploaded the graphic that has drawn 202 reactions, 261 comments, 24 shares and 44,600 views as of writing.

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