

American Foreign Policy Council

PHILIPPINES

QUICK FACTS

Population: 102,624,209 (estimated July 2016)

Area: 300,000 sq km

Ethnic Groups: Tagalog 28.1%, Cebuano 13.1%, Ilocano 9%, Bisaya/Binisaya 7.6%, Hiligaynon Ilonggo 7.5%, Bikol 6%, Waray 3.4%, other 25.3%

Religions: Catholic 82.9% (Roman Catholic 80.9%, Aglipayan 2%), Muslim 5%, Evangelical 2.8%, Iglesia ni Kristo 2.3%, other Christian 4.5%, other 1.8%, unspecified 0.6%, none 0.1%

Government Type: presidential republic

GDP (official exchange rate): \$311.7 billion (estimated 2015)

Map and Quick Facts courtesy of the CIA World Factbook (January 2017)

OVERVIEW

Since 1972, the overwhelmingly Catholic Philippines has confronted long-running Muslim secessionist insurgencies in the Southern islands of Mindanao and in the Sulu archipelago. Government corruption, crippling poverty and low levels of human development have fueled Muslim demands for an independent homeland. Yet the three primary groups engaged in insurgent activity in support of separation were themselves divided along tribal and ideological lines.

In the years since 2002, the United States has increased military assistance to the Philippine government and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). Furthermore, since 2004 the United States has deployed some 500 Special Forces personnel to the southern Philippines to provide intelligence support and training. Nonetheless, the AFP are hobbled by corruption, limited by outdated equipment, and often stretched too thin. The AFP found itself on better footing following the peace process with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 2014 but still faces ongoing

threats from other insurgent and radical groups. There are now questions regarding the continuation of U.S. security assistance and the Filipino state's approach to insurgencies following the 2016 election of Rodrigo Duterte as president. Nevertheless, positive political and social trends continue as they relate to the insurgencies in Mindanao and Sulu, and in turn have lessened incidents of violence..

ISLAMIST ACTIVITY

The Philippines lacks any truly broad-based Islamic movements. The Muslim Brotherhood is not strongly represented in the country, nor do the Philippines have any large Muslim civil society organizations, such as Indonesia's *Nadhalatul Ulama* or *Mohammadiyah*. There are three main organizations capable—to various degrees—of engaging in religious-inspired violence in the Philippines: The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). Each of these insurgent groups is riddled with factionalism, leadership contests, and disputes over tactics. Moreover, there is no Muslim or Islamist political party at the national level. Although the MNLF ostensibly acts like a political party, and will contest elections in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), it is weak and factionalized. Since 2006, it has not governed the ARMM.

Moro National Liberation Front

Nur Misuari, a Manila-based Muslim academic, founded the MNLF in the early 1970s, and for the next decade it served as the sole revolutionary organization for the indigenous Muslim population, known as the Moros. The MNLF was an ethno-nationalist movement, and predominantly secular, although it included Islamist elements. The group received considerable material and financial support from Libyan leader Col. Muammar Qadhafi, whose *Green Book* espoused leftist Muslim anti-colonialism.¹ The MNLF was closely allied with the communist New People's Army, which launched its own insurgency at the same time, prompting a declaration of martial law and the country's subsequent deterioration.

In 1976, Qadhafi attempted to broker a peace agreement, but the government showed little interest in implementing the proposed autonomy deal. After the failed talks, the MNLF became internally divided and suffered significant battlefield losses to the AFP. They never posed a serious military threat to the Republic of the Philippines again. In 1996, the MNLF and the government signed the Tripoli Accords, which established the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).² Nur Misuari became the governor of the region, which included only five provinces; the other eligible provinces having failed to pass plebiscites. Some two thousand MNLF combatants were integrated into the AFP and the national police.³ The ARMM

agreement was never fully implemented and the region never achieved the promised political and economic autonomy. Rampant corruption and inept leadership also hobbled the ARMM, and these problems remain prevalent to this day.

In 2001, the MNLF executive committee voted to replace Misuari, who in turn staged a short-lived rebellion against the government. The rebellion was quickly put down and Misuari was captured, thereafter living under house arrest until 2007 (though he was never formally charged). He secured release from formal government monitoring in 2008. The MNLF lost control of the ARMM government in the 2006 elections, and the organization largely fell into disarray afterward. Though Muslimin Semma formally heads the Executive Council, Misuari and his loyalists do not recognize his authority. In 2007, certain MNLF units took up arms again, joining forces with the Abu Sayyaf.⁴ The organization has shed its secular image, now espousing a 'light' version of Islamism.⁵ Misuari continues to court controversy with public statements regarding relations between Manila and the Moro majority south, but by and large he has removed himself from most active efforts of the group he founded.

The MNLF remains deeply factionalized and largely ignores the fact that the political aspirations of the Moro have diversified considerably. The causes that inspired MNLF's formation remain the rallying call of the group, but greater political engagement among the Moros and a greater willingness to discuss Moro grievances by the government has slowly eroded MNLF's relevance. Among Moro extremist groups, it can be said that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) holds greater influence than MNLF today. Elements of the MNLF occupied parts of Zamboanga City in 2013, in an effort to derail a peace process between the Philippines government and MILF. Approximately 200 MNLF members fought AFP units, forcing the city to cease commerce, government services, transportation systems, and schools until the attack stopped. Since that time, MNLF has waded into and out of the peace process.

MNLF's supporters primarily come from the Tausig population in the Sulu area. MNLF's more concentrated support in the Sulu area brought the group into greater direct dispute with members of Abu Sayyaf (ASG). Specifically, ASG's kidnapping and banditry throughout the area drew greater attention from AFP forces that in turn further strained the local population and undercut MNLF's political operations. Following the election of Rodrigo Duterte in 2016, the administration has signaled its willingness to sit down with MNLF to discuss sources of the ongoing dispute. Concerns have been expressed throughout Mindanao that President Duterte's willingness to hold separate talks with the MNLF may lead to an intensification of the conflict.⁶

Moro Islamic Liberation Front

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) is the largest armed Islamist organization in the country. Salamat Hashim, a Muslim scholar educated at Egypt's Al Azhar university, broke away from the MNLF in 1978 and formally founded the MILF in

1984, basing its headquarters in the *Jamaat-I Islamiya's* compound in Lahore, Pakistan. The MILF saw itself as part of the global *jihad*, inspired by the influence of the *mujahideen* in Afghanistan.⁷ From the start, the MILF was far more Islamist than the secular, ethno-nationalist MNLF, and its avowed goal was to establish an Islamic homeland for the Moros.⁸ The MILF began as a small group, whose growth and popularity caught Philippine forces by surprise. The MILF rejected the 1996 MNLF-Government peace pact that established the ARMM and benefited from mass defections from MNLF ranks as a result of that agreement.⁹ By 1999, the MILF had over 11,000 men under arms and controlled vast swaths of central Mindanao. Yet it was never able to broaden that base of support throughout the Sulu archipelago, where the ethnic Tausig-dominated MNLF remained strong.

Starting in 1996, members of the nascent terrorist organization and regional al-Qaeda affiliate, *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI), began to conduct training for their members and MILF combatants in MILF camps.¹⁰ Al-Qaeda-affiliated individuals have long been rumored to assist JI with financing and operational assistance, but JI never became fully affiliated with al-Qaeda.¹¹ However, in 1997 the MILF and Philippine government under President Fidel Ramos, who had just concluded an autonomy agreement with the MNLF the previous year, began formal peace talks. The 2000 election of President Joseph Estrada, however, led the government to revert to a hardline stance. Estrada ordered the country's military to resume operations against the group, culminating in the capture of the MILF's main base camp. Peace talks resumed in 2001, following Estrada's ouster via a popular uprising. His successor, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, resumed peace talks with the MILF in 2002. Nonetheless, in 2003 peace talks broke down and wide-scale fighting erupted, with Philippine military personnel seizing several large MILF camps.

Since the mid-2003 death of Salamat Hashim, the MILF has been led by Chairman Ebrahim Murad and Vice Chairman Aleem Abdulaziz Mimbintas. Murad has *de facto* accepted a broader autonomy agreement, cognizant that the MILF could not win an independent homeland on the battlefield. Formal talks over autonomy began in 2003, and in November 2007 a draft autonomy agreement over the MILF's "ancestral domain" was finally concluded.¹² Nonetheless, Christian lawmakers in Mindanao, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and hardline members of the cabinet rejected the agreement in December 2007. The country's Supreme Court found it to be unconstitutional in August 2008.¹³ As a result, widespread fighting resumed. Although President Arroyo pledged to restart talks, formal talks did not resume before her term ended in May 2010. The breakdown of talks led to renewed fighting by the MILF and attacks on Christian villages in 2008-09, which left 400 dead and thousands displaced. The stalled peace process also saw the withdrawal of the small Malaysian-led contingent of peace monitors at the end of 2009. Formal talks faltered in 2010, as President Arroyo completed her lame-duck term in office.

The MILF remains the country's largest Muslim group, strongly represented among the Maguindanao and Maranao ethnic groups, though it has little following among Tausigs. The past decade has seen a weakening of the MILF relative to its peak strength in 1999-2000.

In February 2011, as the administration of President Benigno Aquino, Jr. prepared to resume formal negotiations with the MILF, a hard line commander left the MILF and vowed to resume offensive military operations.¹⁴ The MILF previously was known to receive funding from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf sources, although the scope of this aid is not publicly known. Much of money received from outside sources is thought to have dried up, with the group forced to look towards alternative sources of income from within the Philippine economy. The MILF engaged in criminality, such as extortion and a limited amount of kidnapping, as well as the production of marijuana for profit, throughout its existence.

In part because of its shrinking array of strategic options and limited financial resources, MILF's leadership proved to be open to negotiations with the Philippine government under President Benigno S. Aquino III. He used the MILF's weaknesses and growing public demand for a cessation of hostilities to successfully build consensus on both sides for a political settlement in 2012. The negotiated pact called for the creation of a semi-autonomous region called Bangsamoro that would have greater political and economic separation from Manila, thus alleviating Moro fears about domination by the Christian north, but remain a part of the Republic of the Philippines.¹⁵ Bangsamoro would replace the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao as the political unit covering the southern island, and the plan upon the agreement being reached in 2014 was to allow international aid organizations and development groups to begin economic development.¹⁶

Yet, like prior "breakthroughs" in negotiations between the disputing parties, discussions broke down in the summer of 2013. MILF representatives feared delay by government negotiators was in preparation of amendments to the initial pact, while the Philippine government became apprehensive that the Moro population would push for greater autonomy than initially agreed upon without necessary protections being worked in. The peace has held for the past several years, though tensions on both sides remain high. The election of Duterte has thus far been seen by many of the leaders in MILF as a positive development, because the new president is seen as being far more flexible in the pursuit of peace than his predecessor. The establishment of a tentative peace has allowed MILF segments to focus on internal issues that in turn have increased factionalism throughout the group's ranks and even led to incidents of violence.¹⁷

The MILF works very closely with the Islamic clergy across Mindanao, and has deputized many clergy to serve as Islamic judges in the shadow government that the MILF runs in the territory under its control. The MILF is the leading voice for

the Maranao and Maguindanao tribes, as well as a handful of smaller tribes such as the Yaccans on Basilan Island. The MILF has very little support amongst the Tausigs in Sulu or Tawi Tawi. It controls significant territory in Lanao del Sur, Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Sharif Kabungsan and Sarangani provinces, as well as territory in provinces in other parts of the southern Philippines.

Despite all this, the MILF should be in a much stronger position than it is currently. In the areas it controls, the group provides little in the way of social services. It has some *madrassas* and a small medical corps, but is not able to match—or compete with—the resources marshaled by the Philippine state. In some ways, the MILF actually alienates the very community it seeks to represent. The MILF is a largely horizontal organization, and individual base commanders often compete over turf; i.e., what villages they can tax. There is also growing concern about the peace process; while most Muslims in the region rejoiced over the agreed pact in late 2012, the government has dragged its feet in finalizing all the points and MILF commanders have become increasingly anxious to resume combat operations.

There are hard-core elements of the MILF who have never accepted the peace process and took action to discredit the moderate leadership of MILF chairman Ebrahim el Haj Murad. In July 2010, one of the most conservative religious commanders, Ustadz Ameril Umbra Kato, quit the organization, and has subsequently attracted the organization's more radical youth, unhappy with the stalled peace process, away from the fold.¹⁸ The longer the peace process drags on, the more likely the hardliners will feel vindicated. The MILF claims to be 12,000 to 15,000 members in size,¹⁹ although circumstantial evidence suggests the organization is significantly smaller and weaker today. The protracted peace process similarly has weakened the MILF's battle-field preparedness.

Abu Sayyaf

The third Islamist organization active in the Philippines is the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), an organization that vacillates between terrorism and criminality. The ASG was founded in 1991 by a veteran of the Afghan *mujahideen*, Abdurrajak Janjalani, apparently with seed money from al-Qaeda.²⁰ Concomitantly, Osama bin Laden's brother-in-law, Muhmmmed Jamal Khalifah, moved from Quetta, Pakistan—where he ran a branch of the Rabitat (Muslim World League—to the Philippines.²¹ From 1991 to late 1994, he ran branches of two Saudi charities, the Muslim World League and the Islamic International Relief Organization, in Mindanao and Sulu—organizations that Philippine security forces saw as conduits of aid for the various Moro secessionist organizations.

From 1991-1995, the Abu Sayyaf, which was mainly comprised of ethnic Tausig defectors from the larger and more secular Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), carried out a spate of bombings, assassinations and kidnappings against non-secular targets, including churches and Christian missionaries in Sulu province. Following a

loss of support from al-Qaeda in 1995, the group degenerated and became synonymous with bold kidnapping attacks, such as the April 2000 raid on the Malaysian island of Sipidan and the May 2001 assault on the Philippine resort island of Palawan. Together, these attacks netted the group some 50 foreigners, which it proceeded to hold for ransom.

Between 2000 and 2001, the ASG took some 140 hostages including schoolchildren, teachers, priests and western tourists, and was responsible for the death of 16 of these captives. Starting in 2003, the ASG all but ceased kidnapping and—in conjunction with members of the Indonesian-based JI—resumed a campaign of terrorist attacks, including the bombing of a ferry in February 2004 that killed 116 people. Between 2004 and 2007, the few kidnappings that the group did perpetrate resulted in executions, not ransoms. The shift had much to do with the consolidation of power carried out in 2003 by Khadaffy Janjalani, the younger brother of the organization's founder, who sought to return the group to its secessionist roots, as well as with the neutralization of several other leaders following the onset of U.S. training and assistance to the Philippine military in early 2002.

By early 2005, several top JI leaders were known to be in Jolo, protected by the ASG. An August 2006 campaign by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, supported by a contingent of U.S. Special Forces troops who provided training and intelligence, led to a sustained offensive against the ASG through mid-2007. In September 2006 and March 2007, respectively, Khadaffy Janjalani and Abu Solaiman were killed. Both were key leaders in the organization. The ASG was weakened as a result and from 2007 through 2010 returned to kidnapping schemes.²²

The current leadership of the ASG is more fragmented than in previous eras. Isnilon Totoni Hapilon, the group's hardline commander on Basilan, remains a prominent leader. The size of the ASG is estimated to be between 300–400 fighters at any given time. However, it is often supported and bolstered by disaffected MNLF combatants and gains members who have been radicalized elsewhere.²³ The ASG has increased kidnapping since 2007, and has frequently beheaded individuals for whom ransom is not paid.²⁴ Maritime attacks on private vessels near Sulu province have also become a common form of violence. Nonetheless, the ASG targets U.S. forces when possible, such as with the October 2009 IED attack in Jolo that killed two U.S. Special Forces soldiers. Abu Sayyaf's forces and leadership remain primary targets of AFP and U.S. forces, but remain at large by successfully avoiding raids. Hapilon made global headlines when he publicly issued a statement in August of 2014 swearing affiliation with ISIS and in turn, was recognized as ISIS' designated leader in the Philippines in early 2016 with the new name of Sheik Mujahid Abu Abdullah al-Filipini. The areas where ASG operates have become one of several hotspots in Southeast Asia for targeted ISIS recruitment.²⁵ There is ample speculation regarding how closely tied ASG and ISIS are, but the existence of ties at all is a troublesome development for the AFP.²⁶

ASG has social support within the Philippines, but it is not particularly strong. In the Sulu archipelago, and in particular Jolo Island, there is support for the group—albeit for no other reason than that it is a closely-knit society based on clan and kinship. The group itself is not wildly popular, nor does it have a positive message or social agenda. The ASG simply has a vehemently anti-Christian, anti-state, and anti-American identity. It relies on kidnappings for much of its funding. Almost all kidnapping victims occur against individuals who appear to be Christian. On the few occasions that the ASG has kidnapped Muslims, it has tended to execute them, because they were working on U.S.-funded projects. When the ASG receives foreign funds, kidnapping ceases and bombings resume. This cyclical pattern limits the group's appeal, attractive to only a small segment of ethnic Tausig society. By and large, the ASG is rejected by both Muslims and Christians because of its conduct, but clan-based loyalties and kinship ties sustain them. To date no authoritative polling has been done to quantify the level of support the ASG enjoys, either in the Sulu archipelago or in the Philippines at large.

ISLAMISM AND SOCIETY

Islam came to the Philippines via Yemeni traders who spread the religion throughout the Malay and Indonesian archipelagos beginning in the 14th Century. Spanish colonization led to brutal clashes, and the Muslims—known as Moros, a derivation of the Spanish word Moors—took great pride in their resistance to colonial domination. When the Philippines became an American colony, the Moros continued their fight for independence, and only after U.S. military intervention was the southern Philippines pacified.

At the end of World War II, when the U.S. was preparing Philippine independence, Moro leaders requested that the United States give them their own independent homeland. The U.S., however, never acknowledged this request, and the Muslim region was incorporated into the Republic of the Philippines. Decades of Christian migration fundamentally altered the ethnic balance, and in vast swaths of the region, Muslims became the minority. By almost every measure of human development, however, the Muslim region lags behind the rest of the country. Today, the Philippines are 82.9 percent Catholic, 5 percent Muslim, and 2.1 percent Evangelical Christian.²⁷

One of the most interesting trends in the Philippines is the spread of “Balik Islam”—literally, “return to Islam.” Balik Islam is a movement of Christian converts to Islam, which remains the fastest growing religion in the Philippines. Conversion takes place through two general processes. One is the conversion of workers while overseas in the Middle East,²⁸ often for financial reasons (since being a Muslim can lead to better job opportunities). The other, which takes place in the Philippines, is via the network of Balik Islam centers scattered throughout the archipelago, primarily in slum

areas of cities. For instance, of the 1,890 *madrassas* in the Philippines, only 1,000 or so are in Mindanao; the remainders are spread across the rest of the country. The center of Balik Islam is in the northern city of Baguio, on Luzon Island. Much of the funding for Balik Islam's *da'wa* work comes from the Gulf.²⁹ Balik Islam preaches a *Salafi* interpretation of Islam, and encourages its members to live in exclusive parallel communities.³⁰ A radical fringe of Balik Islam, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, has worked closely with the ASG and been implicated in a number of terrorist acts.

There are two major organizations that lead the Balik Islam movement: the Islamic Studies Call and Guidance (ISCAG) and Islamic Wisdom Worldwide Mission (IWWM). Both have been substantially funded from Middle East and Gulf sources. The IWWM is the successor organization of a front foundation used by Osama bin Laden's brother-in-law, Mohammed Jamal Khalifa, who was forced out of the Philippines in late 2004.³¹ The organization was thought to have been used in the planned terrorist operations of Ramzi Yousef and his uncle Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. ISCAG was established in the mid-1990s in Saudi Arabia by a group of primarily Balik Islam converts. ISCAG is a rapidly growing NGO and has been featured in the press, due to its rapid expansion of operations and sponsorship of mosque and *madrassa* construction. The organization has come under more scrutiny by state authorities after its original head, Humoud Mohammad Abdulaziz al-Lahim, was forced out of the Philippines in April 2002 on allegations of sponsoring terrorism. ISCAG remains a focus of the state's investigative agents to explore ties to violent extremism.

ISLAMISM AND THE STATE

The Philippine government has a mixed history with its Muslim citizens. There is ample suspicion of the Muslim minority by the Catholic majority, which has translated into structural discrimination within the national economy. Yet the emergence of a powerful Moro identity that in turn inspired more intense legitimate political advocacy and violent extremism has encouraged the state to pay closer attention to Moro concerns. The details of the 2014 agreement signed between the government and the MILF included guarantees of greater political access and stronger political autonomy. Islamic courts for family law are active in the country's south. Mosque and *madrassa* construction generally proceed unhindered. Overall, Islam is the fastest growing religion in the country, and as mentioned above, the Balik Islam movement is robust.

This has led to extensive contacts between the Philippines and the broader Muslim world. The country has observer status in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, or OIC (formerly the Organization of the Islamic Conference); has increased the number of pilgrims it sends on the *hajj* to Saudi Arabia; and has allowed foreign aid organizations, *da'wa* organizations and Islamist charities to have access to the coun-

try.³² The presidential administration in Manila likewise has an office of Muslim affairs, and Muslims are increasingly making political inroads as candidates beyond the southern provinces.

Muslims in Mindanao and Sulu have been angered at the loss of ancestral domain to Christian migration, heavy-handed government responses to Muslim secessionist movements, and the slow implementation of promises by the government as part of various peace pacts. There is also concern that the government's extensive counterterrorism cooperation with the United States since 9/11 has hardened government elements against any type of compromise with Moro groups. This is again where the election of Rodrigo Duterte may prove significant. Duterte hails from Mindanao and his primary base of support is concentrated there. Despite his reputation as a political wildcard, the Philippine population as a whole has found the start of Duterte's administration to be a success. His populist persona and a desire for quick government action has created concerns over the status of rule of law in Philippines. The administration's anti-drug campaign remains popular with the broader public but legal groups, opposition parties, and human rights organizations are growing concerned. Duterte's populism also is also popular among the Moro population. The hope in the south is that, as a local and as a politician less interested in appearances, he will push forward the peace process to greater stability.

The peace agreement between MILF and the government remains extremely popular throughout the country, especially among moderate Muslims in the south. The agreement has continued to largely dissuade MILF elements from engaging in conflict, while joint operations with the United States and improved operational capability have isolated Abu Sayyaf. This, of course, could change if the geopolitical orientation of the Philippine state shifts away from cooperation with the U.S. In that eventuality, joint operations with the United States may curtail or even cease, and new strategic partners for the Philippine state may arise. The government's footing has gradually improved over the past decade as they have used security assets in a more efficient manner, diversified the socio-economic tools used to assist development in the south, and used political dialogue to ease tensions with groups willing to negotiate. As such, insecurity will continue to define portions of the Philippines and terrorism, especially by ASG, will be a focus of AFP, but the state's positive steps over the past decade or so can be expected to deliver continued benefits to the entire country.

ENDNOTES

[1] On October 7, 1971, Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi stated that if “the genocide still went on against the Muslims in the Philippines,” he would assume responsibility” for protecting them. That year he established the Islamic Call Society (ICS) to support Islamic revolutions around the world. The ICS became a major force in Libyan foreign policy-making and had offices not just in Africa, but also in Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia. Khadhafi, through the ICS, became the major patron of the MNLF. See Saleh Jubair, *Bangsamoro: A Nation Under Endless Tyranny*, 3rd ed. (Kuala Lumpur: IQ Marin SON BHD, 1999), 150.

[2] The ARMM was established on November 6, 1990 by Republic Act 6734. It was legally possible to do so because of the promulgation of a new constitution in 1987 that allowed for the establishment of autonomous regions.

[3] Deidre Sheehan, “Swords into Ploughshares,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 20, 2001, 30-31. This USAID program is known as the Livelihood Enhancement and Peace Project. For more on this project, see Dan Murphy, “Filipinos Swap Guns for Rakes,” *Christian Science Monitor*, March 5, 2002.

[4] Veronica Uy, “Duereza to MNLF: Deal with Malik,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, April 16, 2007.

[5] Zachary Abuza interviews with MNLF leaders, Sulu, Zamboanga and Cotabatao, June 2007.

[6] Alexis Romero, “Duterte eyes separate talks with Nur Misuari,” *Philippine Star*, November 9, 2016, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/11/09/1642085/duterte-eyes-separate-talks-nur-misuari>.

[7] Salamat Hashim, *The Bangsamoro Mujahid: His Objectives and Responsibilities* (Mindanao, Bangsamoro: Bangsamoro Publications, 1985), 18-19.

[8] Derived from the MILF’s old webpage, <http://morojihad.stcom.net/milf.html>.

[9] Rasmia Alonto, “Interview: We Assert our Legitimate Rights to Self-Determination, That Is, Independence,” in Salamat Hashim, *Referendum: Peaceful Civilized, Diplomatic and Democratic Means of Solving the Mindanao Conflict* (Camp Abu Bakre As-Siddique: MILF Agency for Youth Affairs, 2002), 45; Rigoberto Tiglao, “Hidden Strength: Muslim Insurgents Shun Publicity and Grow in Power,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 23, 1995.

[10] Indonesian National Police (INP), “Interrogation of Mohammad Nasir bin Abbas,” Jakarta, Indonesia, April 18, 2003.

[11] Preeti Bhattacharji, “CFR Backgrounder: Philippines,” Council on Foreign Relations, June 1, 2009.

[12] In addition to the five provinces of the ARMM, the MILF demanded an addition 1,478 villages, while the government contended that only 618 villages were majority-Muslim. Ultimately the two sides agreed on 712 villages. See “Philippines in ‘Separatist Deal,’ ” BBC, November 15, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7096069.stm>.

[13] Manny Mogato, “MILF: Peace Talks now in ‘Purgatory,’” Reuters, August 31, 2008.

[14] MILF Admits Major Split Ahead of Talks,” Agence France Presse, February 5, 2011.

[15] For an overall account of the pact see Whaley’s “Philippine Government Signs Pact with Muslim Rebels,” from the New York Times, October 15, 2012.

[16] See the World Bank’s plans for FASTRAC (Facility for Advisory Support for Transition Capacities) in the Philippines at www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2013/04/29/moro-islamic-liberation-front.

[17] Noel Tarrazona, “How Philippine militants internal conflict affects peace,” Asia Times, November 16, 2016.

[18] MILF Admits Major Split Ahead of Talks,” Agence France Presse, February 5, 2011.

[19] Rigoberto Tiglao, “MILF Boasts Bigger, Better Army,” Philippine Daily Inquirer, June 9, 2000.

[20] For the history of the Abu Sayyaf, see Zachary Abuza, *Balik Terrorism: The Return of the Abu Sayyaf* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College, September 2005).

[21] National Intelligence Coordinating Agency, “Mohammad Khalifa’s Network in the Philippines,” n.d., 2.

[22] Zachary Abuza, “The Demise of the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Southern Philippines,” CTC Sentinel, June 15, 2008.

[23] Veronica Uy, “Duereza to MNLF: Deal with Malik,” Philippine Daily Inquirer, April 16, 2007.

[24] “Philippine Abu Sayyaf jihadists behead German hostage in video,” BBC, February 27, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-39102762>.

[25] Per Liljas, “ISIS Is Making Inroads in the Southern Philippines and the Implications for Asia Are Alarming,” Time, April 14, 2016, <http://time.com/4293395/isis-zamboanga-mindanao-moro-islamist-terrorist-asia-philippines-abu-sayyaf/>

[26] IBID.

[27] “Philippines,” The CIA World Factbook, December 2016, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rp.html>.

[28] Overseas foreign workers are the backbone of the Philippine economy. Although, they only comprise six percent of the population, their share of the country’s GDP is 11 percent. There are over one million OFWs from the Philippines in the Middle East.

[29] Though dated, the best study of the Balik Islam phenomenon is Luis Q. Lacar, "Balik Islam: Christian Converts to Islam in the Philippines, c. 1970-98," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 12, no. 1 (January 2001), 39-60, esp. n4, 57.

[30] Simon Montlake, "In Philippines, A Watchful Eye on Converts," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 28, 2005.

[31] Abuza, Zachary, "Balik-Terrorism: The Return of the Abu Sayyaf", Strategic Studies Institute, September 2005.

[32] Hilman Latief, "Gulf Charitable Organizations in Southeast Asia," Middle East Institute, December 24, 2014, <http://www.mei.edu/content/map/gulf-charitable-organizations-southeast-asia>