

Country/entity	Philippines Mindanao
Region	Asia and Pacific
Agreement name	Joint Press Statement
Date	2 Sep 1997
Agreement status	Multiparty signed/agreed
Interim arrangement	Yes

Agreement/conflict level Intrastate/intrastate conflict

Philippine Insurgencies (1968 -)

The Maoist Insurgencies (1968 -)

Philippines-NDF

The Philippines have been defined by a series of center-periphery and often ideologically Maoist, separatist insurgencies. The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), began its war against the central Philippine government in 1968 through their armed wing – the New People’s Army (NPA). Further legitimacy was gained through the establishment of the National Democratic Front (NDF) in 1973. Grievances were predominantly opposed to the corruption and repression under the authoritarian Marcos regime.

Philippines-Cordillera

With the overthrow of Marcos’ regime in 1986, the CPP factionalized further to take on more localized characteristics. The Cordillera Peoples Liberation Army (CPLA) broke away from the NDF in 1986 to focus on the protection of the Cordilleran people and land in northern Luzon. Hostilities were formally ended in July 2011, with an agreement signed between the central government, the CPLA and the Cordillera Bodong Administration (CBA) that allowed for the absorption of CPLA fighters into the Philippine Army and the re-working of the CBA-CPLA into a socio-development organisation.

Philippines-RPM-P

Meanwhile, purge among the CPP in the early 1990s, encouraged the formation of a parallel party, the Revolutionary Workers Party (RPM-P). Their armed wing, the Alex Boncayao Brigade (ABB) which had carried out a number of assassinations during the 1980s at the bequest of the CPP, followed suit and allied themselves with the RPM-P in 1997 forming the (RPM-P-RPA-ABB). Severely weakened by the split with the CPP and with the arrest of several key figures, the RPM-P-RPA-ABB signed a peace agreement in December 2000, which encouraged the RPM-P’s branch in Mindanao to break away in 2001.

The CPP-NPA has only participated in intermittent talks with the government. Talks halted in 2004 when Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo’s administration sought closer ties with the U.S. in the war on terror and added the CPP-NPA to the list of terrorist organisations, renewing violence. Following the launch of a counter-insurgency by the Philippine government, negotiations have been further delayed due to suspected internal differences between the CPP ‘old guard’ and younger members.

The Moro Insurgency (1968 -)

Philippines-Mindanao

The Moro Insurgency began in 1968, in Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago after the killing of Moro Commandos, the so-called Jabidah Massacre, by the Philippine Army following a plot to invade Sabah province in Malaysia. The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) captured a swath of territory in the mid-1970s. In an attempt to stem the violence, the constitution was reformed and Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was created 1990 granting a devolution of power to the provinces of Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. Following the establishment of the ARMM, the MNLF splintered into a range of smaller groups including Islamic factions such as the

Stage	Pre-negotiation/process
Conflict nature	Government/territory
Peace process	Philippines - Mindanao process
Parties	Maj. Gen. Joselin B. Nazareno, AFP, GRP Sub-Committee on Cessation of Hostilities Chairman; Atty. Omar B. Umbar, MILF Sub-Committee on Cessation of Hostilities Acting Chairman and MILF Legal Counsel
Third parties	-
Description	Joint Press Statement to inform on the meeting held by the GRP and MILF Sub-Committee on Cessation of Hostilities on September 2, 1997, in which the Sub-Committee recognized the need to encourage and hasten the return of evacuees, thus provided for repositioning of GRP forces and reassuring that MILF elements in the areas may return, so long as they do not establish military outposts nor display firearms.

Agreement document [PH_970902_Joint Press Statement.pdf \(opens in new tab\)](#) | [Download PDF](#)

Groups

Children/youth	No specific mention.
Disabled persons	No specific mention.
Elderly/age	No specific mention.
Migrant workers	No specific mention.
Racial/ethnic/ national group	No specific mention.
Religious groups	No specific mention.
Indigenous people	No specific mention.
Other groups	No specific mention.

Refugees/displaced persons Groups→Refugees/displaced persons→Rhetorical Preamble, Page 1
 [...] Recognizing the need to further give meaning and substance to the General Cessation of Hostilities by hastening the return of the evacuees in Pikit, North Cotabato and Pagalungan, Maguindanao, the GRP-MILF Sub-Committees on Cessation of Hostilities agreed on the following:
 Groups→Refugees/displaced persons→Substantive
 Page 1, 1. The GRP will gradually reposition its forces in Rajamuda and its environs to their original positions before June 16, 1997 and will continue to secure the Cotabato City -Davao City Highway to ensure the safety of travelers. The gradual repositioning of the GRP forces shall be completed within fifteen (15) days after the signing of this Agreement;

2. The GRP and MILF shall encourage the return of evacuees to their respective residences. MILF elements who are residents of the are shall be allowed to return to their homes immediately, however, they will not establish military outposts/positions nor display firearms.

Social class No specific mention.

Gender

Women, girls and gender No specific mention.

Men and boys No specific mention.

LGBTI No specific mention.

Family No specific mention.

State definition

Nature of state (general) No specific mention.

State configuration No specific mention.

Self determination No specific mention.

Referendum No specific mention.

State symbols No specific mention.

**Independence/
secession** No specific mention.

**Accession/
unification** No specific mention.

Border delimitation No specific mention.

**Cross-border
provision** No specific mention.

Governance

**Political
institutions (new or
reformed)** No specific mention.

Elections No specific mention.

**Electoral
commission** No specific mention.

**Political parties
reform** No specific mention.

Civil society No specific mention.

**Traditional/
religious leaders** No specific mention.

**Public
administration** No specific mention.

Constitution No specific mention.

Power sharing

Political power sharing No specific mention.

Territorial power sharing No specific mention.

Economic power sharing No specific mention.

Military power sharing No specific mention.

Human rights and equality

Human rights/RoL general No specific mention.

Bill of rights/similar No specific mention.

Treaty incorporation No specific mention.

Civil and political rights No specific mention.

Socio-economic rights No specific mention.

Rights related issues

Citizenship	No specific mention.
Democracy	No specific mention.
Detention procedures	No specific mention.
Media and communication	No specific mention.
Mobility/access	No specific mention.
Protection measures	No specific mention.
Other	No specific mention.

Rights institutions

NHRI	No specific mention.
Regional or international human rights institutions	No specific mention.

Justice sector reform

Criminal justice and emergency law	No specific mention.
State of emergency provisions	No specific mention.
Judiciary and courts	No specific mention.
Prisons and detention	No specific mention.
Traditional Laws	No specific mention.

Socio-economic reconstruction

Development or socio-economic reconstruction No specific mention.

National economic plan No specific mention.

Natural resources No specific mention.

International funds No specific mention.

Business No specific mention.

Taxation No specific mention.

Banks No specific mention.

Land, property and environment

Land reform/rights No specific mention.

Pastoralist/nomadism rights No specific mention.

Cultural heritage No specific mention.

Environment No specific mention.

Water or riparian rights or access No specific mention.

Security sector

Security Guarantees

No specific mention.

Ceasefire

Security sector→Ceasefire→Ceasefire provision

The GRP and MILF Sub-Committee on Cessation of Hostilities convened at the Notre Dame University in Cotabato City on September 2, 1997 to resume the peace negotiation pursuant to the Agreement on the General Cessation of Hostilities signed by the GRP and MILF Peace Panels on July 18, 1997 in Cagayan De Oro City.

Recognizing the need to further give meaning and substance to the General Cessation of Hostilities by hastening the return of the evacuees in Pikit, North Cotabato and Pagalungan, Maguindanao, the GRP-MILF Sub-Committees on Cessation of Hostilities agreed on the following:

1. The GRP will gradually reposition its forces in Rajamuda and its environs to their original positions before June 16, 1997 and will continue to secure the Cotabato City - Davao City Highway to ensure the safety of travelers. The gradual repositioning of the GRP forces shall be completed within fifteen (15) days after the signing of this Agreement;

Police

3. Law enforcement in the aforementioned areas shall be primarily undertaken by the GRP authorities, provided, however, that before the conduct thereof, prior coordination/consultation shall be made with the nearest MILF designated liaison in the area.

Armed forces

No specific mention.

DDR

Security sector→DDR→Demilitarisation provisions

2. The GRP and MILF shall encourage the return of evacuees to their respective residences. MILF elements who are residents of the area shall be allowed to return to their homes immediately, however, they will not establish military outposts/positions nor display firearms.

Intelligence services

No specific mention.

Parastatal/rebel and opposition group forces

2. The GRP and MILF shall encourage the return of evacuees to their respective residences. MILF elements who are residents of the area shall be allowed to return to their homes immediately, however, they will not establish military outposts/positions nor display firearms.

Withdrawal of foreign forces

No specific mention.

Corruption

No specific mention.

Crime/organised crime

No specific mention.

Drugs No specific mention.

Terrorism No specific mention.

Transitional justice

Transitional justice general No specific mention.

Amnesty/pardon No specific mention.

Courts No specific mention.

Mechanism No specific mention.

Prisoner release No specific mention.

Vetting No specific mention.

Victims No specific mention.

Missing persons No specific mention.

Reparations No specific mention.

Reconciliation No specific mention.

Implementation

UN signatory No specific mention.

Other international signatory No specific mention.

Referendum for agreement No specific mention.

International mission/force/similar No specific mention.

Enforcement mechanism No specific mention.

Related cases No specific mention.

Source GRP-MILF Peace Process: Compilation of Signed Agreements & other related Documents (1997-2010); (MILF Peace Panel/Asia Foundation, 2010), p. 20.
