

JOINT PRESS STATEMENT

The GRP and the MILF held its 20th Technical Committee Meeting on 14-15 February 2000 at the Estosan Garden Hotel, Cotabato City.

During the formal opening of the meeting, Lt. Gen. Edgardo E. Batenga AFP (Ret.), the newly appointed Chairman, GRP Panel for Peace Talks with the MILF, stated that his task is to negotiate for peace that will serve the best interest of and benefit the entire Filipino nation. He requested the Technical Committees of both Panels to limit its discussions to substantive issues of the peace process and find common grounds acceptable to both the GRP and the MILF. On the other hand, Mr. Mohagher Iqbal, Chairman, Committee on Information and Member, MILF Panel, representing Mr. Aleem Abdulaziz Mimbantas, MILF Panel Chairman, welcomed the appointment of Lt. Gen. Batenga. He emphasized the position of the MILF that in this era of globalization, the Bangsamoro problem can be resolved through dialogues. Mr. Iqbal further reiterated the commitment and sincerity of the MILF in negotiating with the GRP.

During the two-day meeting, both the GRP and the MILF Technical Committees agreed on the following:

1. Tasked the Quick Response Team (QRT), the Independent Fact-Finding Committee (IFFC) and Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) to look into the reported incidents in Carmen, Cotabato and Shariff Aguak, Datu Piang, and Talayan, all in Magulindanao;
2. Clustered the Agenda Items of the Formal Peace Talks into six (6) aggregations and the creation of technical working groups;
3. Elevated the MILF Proposed Drafts on Immunity and Security Guarantees (ISG) and Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect of Human Rights and Humanitarian Laws (CAR-HR-HL) to the GRP and the MILF Peace Panel for consideration and discussion; and,
4. Proposed agenda for the 2nd Round of the GRP and MILF Formal Peace Talks on 21-22 February 2000 at a venue to be determined later by the Panel Chairpersons.


ADG. ZENONIDA P. BROSAS
Acting Chairperson, GRP
Technical Committee


SHEIKH MONER M. BAJUNAID
Chairperson, MILF
Technical Committee