

Philippines, Mindanao: Asserting the Indigenous Peoples (IP) Self-Determination in the Context of the Framework Agreement on Bangsamoro (FAB)

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Official Statement of the Timuay Justice and Governance (TJG)
November 4, 2012

We, the Baglalan (title holders) of the Timuay Justice and Governance (TJG) in the Province of Maguindanao, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) continue to assert our inherent and inalienable right to self-governance and determination in the context of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB) between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

This assertion is anchored on the historically-accepted covenants/agreements/treaties between native inhabitants of Mindanao that were traced by blood relationship or products of fraternal relationships and alliances among communities with common root but live separately with different beliefs and traditions. The most notable aspect of this relationship is the Recognition of and Respect for each other's Distinct Identity.

In Central Mindanao, famous among the pact and treaty holders were the brothers Mamalu and Tabunaway; the former is regarded by the Teduray, Lambangian and Dulangan Manobo in portions of the present Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat provinces as their line of descent. This pact was with defined territory where customary justice system and governance are implemented.

Those historical relationships were destroyed by the colonizers and carried over to the present government setting where relationships of the native inhabitants were based on imposed policies. The terms of relations had no more reference to the covenants/agreements and treaties. It was within this colonially-imposed political setting that historical injustices took place.

With the Framework Agreement on Bangsamoro, these historical injustices will hopefully be corrected and will give justice and meaning to those historical relationships if the terms of relationships be made provisions of the Basic Law governing the Bangsamoro Government.

Today, we re-affirm our 2005 commitment of support and full participation to the Mindanao peace processes based on the traditional pacts as follows:

That we accept and recognize the Bangsamoro as the new political entity in place of the ARMM;

That if the Bangsamoro is the collective identity of the constituents of the Bangsamoro Government,

then we shall be known as the Bangsa-Mamalu [1] to distinguish our distinct identity within the Bangsamoro entity;

That our domains shall also be accepted as distinct in accord with the ancient pacts between our ancestors;

That there will be sharing of powers and control and supervision in the management and development of resources within the Bangsa-Mamalu territorial domains;

That the political relationship be akin to autonomy within an autonomy where we can freely exercise self-governance in accordance with the customary practices;

Finally, those available laws for the Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines shall be the legal basis in formulating provisions of laws for the Bangsa-Mamalu in the Bangsamoro entity including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other UN charters and conventions.

The challenge now is how we can be represented in the Transition Commission and how all of these commitments be articulated into the Bangsamoro Basic Law.

Thank you and Muyag.

For the Baglalan (title holders) and soonomon (masses),

SANNIE S. BELLO

TJG, Timuay Labi

Footnotes

[1] Mamalu is the glal (title) given to Ado after the famous pact and covenant between his younger brother Amil also renamed Tabunaway after the pact. Mamalu vowed to take care of the traditional beliefs system while Tabunaway embraced the new belief system introduced by Sharif Kabungsuwan