

Mindanao (Philippines) peace process: Indigenous groups tasked to draft new Bangsamoro Basic Law

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INDIGENOUS groups will soon be represented in the body tasked to draft the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) as part of President Rodrigo Duterte administration's commitment to ending decades-old conflict in Mindanao, a Cabinet official said Wednesday, October 26.

Presidential Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza told reporters that the Bangsamoro Transition Commission will have 21 members with 11 coming from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

The rest of the seats will go to indigenous peoples (IP) communities, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and other stakeholders in the peace talks.

Dureza said he expects President Duterte to issue the revised executive order on the BTC, which was formed during the Aquino administration soon.

"The Office of Executive Secretary is working on finalizing it," Dureza said.

Dureza said an IP Advisory Council will also be formed to ensure the interests of national minorities like the Lumad in the ongoing peace negotiations between the government and communist rebels.

Under the government's road map for peace, the new enabling law will take into account the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, Final Peace Agreement with the MNLF signed in 1996 as well as the relevant provisions of the Republic Act 9054 or the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Law and the Indigenous People's Rights Acts.

Also to be integrated into the proposed measure that aims to create a new political entity to replace the Armm are the key results of the 10-year-old Government of the Philippines-Organization of Islamic Cooperation-MNLF Tripartite Review Process.

The BBL failed to take off in the 16th Congress amid questions on its constitutionality and suspicions that MILF members were involved in the bloody Mamasapano anti-terror operation in January 2015, which resulted in the deaths of 67 people, including 44 PNP-Special Action Force commandos. (PR)

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<http://www.sunstar.com.ph/davao/local-news/2016/10/28/indigenous-groups-tasked-draft-new-bbl-506171>