

In Central Luzon, Philippines police push for Muslim ID cards as counter-terrorism measure

Monday 10 July 2017, by [HOLMES Oliver](#) (Date first published: 18 July 2017).

Authorities in Central Luzon call for policy after Muslims blamed for failing to prevent Islamist conflict in the south.

Police from a region in the majority-Christian Philippines are considering issuing mandatory identification cards to thousands of Muslims living there – a proposal Human Rights Watch condemned as “collective punishment”.

Authorities in Central Luzon, a region north of the capital, were quoted in local media as saying the policy was a counter-terrorism measure after Islamist militants took over a city hundreds of kilometres to the south on the island of Mindanao.

The issue was discussed at a meeting between police, military and political figures and about 200 Muslim religious and community leaders at the provincial capitol building, according to news outlet Rappler [1].

Chief Superintendent Aaron Aquino said the ID cards would allow authorities to identify and weed out undesirable individuals and terrorists, Rappler reported.

He said the system had already been implemented in the town of Paniqui “and we want this to be replicated in all Muslim communities in the whole region for easy and efficient identification of our Muslim brothers and sisters”.

Government forces have been hammering the city of Marawi in the south for nearly two months after local militant factions, who claim allegiance to Isis, rampaged through and took control.

President Rodrigo Duterte has imposed martial law across Mindanao and had to apologise after blaming the residents of Marawi by saying they allowed Isis sympathisers to stay [2].

Human Rights Watch said authorities were threatening to “single out Muslims” with ID cards, violating the rights to equal protection of the law and freedom of movement.

“Requiring Muslim-only IDs in response to a perceived failure of Muslims to prevent Islamist fighters from entering Marawi City [3] is a form of collective punishment,” the New York-based advocacy group said in a statement.

It added that reports of some Muslim leaders present at the meeting not rejecting outright the compulsory ID cards were “irrelevant from a rights perspective” for the roughly 26,000 Muslims living in Central Luzon region. “ID requirements for Muslims should be rejected outright.”

P.S.

* “Philippines police push for Muslim ID cards as counter-terrorism measure”. The Guardian. Friday 7 July 2017 06.41 BST Last modified on Friday 7 July 2017 06.56 BST:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/07/philippines-police-muslim-id-cards-counter-terrorism-marawi>

Footnotes

[1] <http://www.rappler.com/nation/174673-central-luzon-proposal-id-system-muslims>

[2] <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/903484/duterte-chides-maranaos-for-letting-in-corrupt-ideology-of-is>

[3] <http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/07/17/duterte-hits-locals-who-backed-terrorists-in-marawi>