

# Philippines: Statement on the postponement of the ARMM election

Tuesday 7 June 2011, by [MPPM](#) (Date first published: 30 March 2011).

The Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement a coalition of different human rights and peace organizations and individuals in Mindanao resolved to work for the recognition of the Rights to Self Determination of the Tri-People (Bangsamoro, Katawhang Lumad, Katawhang Migrante) and to uphold JustPeace in the entire island of Mindanao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-tawi, and Palawan strongly opposes the postponement of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Election on August 2011.

The creation of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao is a landmark of the agreement between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). It is a product of the aspiration of the Bangsamoro People for self governance practice in the Bangsamoro areas. Unfortunately, this aspiration has been continuously challenged since after the ARMM creation there had been no concrete realization for the Bangsamoro people to determine the outcome and governance of the ARMM. Instead, it is Malacanang who dictates ARMM even in its governance.

In this context, there had been proposal to postpone the ARMM election to pave way for reforms. Thus giving again the power to Malacanang to appoint an Officer-in-Charge (OIC) or caretaker to ARMM. But the contention in this matter is that, even with the election to push through, reforms can follow, reform can be made possible if only political will is present among those popularly elected by the people. Pursuing the election in August 2011 will also lessen the occurrence of criminalities since the focus on the monitoring will be solely for ARMM.

Respect and promote the fundamental democratic rights of the people as embedded in the constitution and as inherent in them such as suffrage, the right to be informed, and the right for political participation especially in the coming ARMM election wherein the people of ARMM shall hold the mandate of the elected leadership of the ARMM. Furthermore, MPPM calls for a clean and honest ARMM election wherein elements of criminalities, electoral fraud, harassments, political killings and threats should no longer be present and should never be tolerated. Thus, all agencies including the civil society groups should work hand in hand to safeguard this very decisive moment of ARMM.

Moreover, the ARMM election should not be used as a determining variable to the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (GPH-MILF) peace talks. The peace talks can go on, same with the ARMM election. If reforms would be done as a product of the GPH and MILF peace agreement it can be incorporated afterwards.

MPPM had long been supporting all of the peace processes and had long been calling for genuine recognition and participation of the grassroots stakeholders. The postponement of the election is like depriving the rights of the people to participate in a very decisive moment of the peoples of ARMM. In this context, the Mindanao Peoples Peace Movement during its Council of Peoples' Representative Meeting is calling for the following:

- No to Postponement of the ARMM Election
- Full implementation of the GRP-MNLF 1996 Final Peace Agreement
- Yes to ARMM Reforms
- Fast Track the ongoing GPH-MILF peace talks
- Genuine recognition of the Peoples' Participation in ARMM

**Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement**

Council of Peoples' Representative

March 30, 2011

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