

# **Mindanao: Declare a humanitarian ceasefire in Zamboanga City now!**

Thursday 12 September 2013, by [Petition / Sign-on Letter](#) (Date first published: 11 September 2013).

## **DECLARE A HUMANITARIAN CEASEFIRE IN ZAMBOANGA CITY, NOW!**

### **A Petition Campaign in Support for Dialogue, Humanitarian Action and Ceasefire**

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED PEACE ADVOCATES, CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS AND CONCERNED CITIZENS, SERIOUSLY APPEAL IN CALLING FOR DIALOGUE and THE IMMEDIATE DECLARATION OF HUMANITARIAN CEASEFIRE in the conflict-affected barangays in Zamboanga City to address the standoff since September 9, 2013.

Specifically, we urge H.E. Benigno Simeon Aquino III, MNLF Chair Nur Misuari, Mayor Isabelle Climaco, Sec Teresita Deles, and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) to heed the following calls :

1. We call for an immediate stop to the firefight and a prompt and orderly redeployment of forces – both the MNLF and the AFP to address the alarming evacuee situation;
2. We call on both parties to immediately delineate a humanitarian corridor where civilians and injured combatants may be safely assisted with their humanitarian needs;
3. Generate public support towards broad humanitarian action by allowing full access and the entry of humanitarian groups to complement existing efforts of the local government, DSWD, and civil society in Zamboanga City;
4. We call for both parties to dialogue and allow for sufficient space for peaceful negotiations to take place;
5. We strongly recommend that those who are responsible for the deaths, destruction of properties and other human rights violations will be held fully accountable;
6. We appeal to the Philippine Government and its Office on the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) to translate its policy in addressing the fate of the MNLF peace process and their legitimate issues;
7. Lastly, we call for the intervention of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in resolving this issue, sustaining the role they have long-fulfilled in ensuring the hopes for peace in Mindanao.

We hope and pray that this matter is resolved quickly, justly and peaceably, and that equanimity prevails in the restoration of peace and order in Zamboanga City and its surrounds.

Declare a Zamboanga City-wide ceasefire now! Spare the civilians from armed hostilities! No to armed action and militarization in Zamboanga City!

### **INITIAL SIGNATORIES :**

## **NATIONAL:**

MINDANAO PEACEWEAVERS (MPW)  
Agri-Aqua Development Coalition (AADC)  
Akbayan Partylist  
Alliance of Progressive Labor - Davao Region  
Coalition of Social Development Organizations - South Cotabato (CSDO-SC)  
Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society (CBCS)  
GZO Peace Institute  
Kahugpungan-Mindanao (KAMI)  
Mindanao Alliance of Self-Help Societies – Southern Phils Educational Cooperative Center (MASS-SPECC)  
Makabayan Pilipinas -Mindanao  
Mindanao Coalition of Development NGO Networks (MINCODE)  
Mindanao Congress of NGOs and NGIs (MINCON)  
Mindanao Peoples Caucus (MPC)  
Mindanao Peoples Peace Movement (MPPM)  
Pambansang Kilusang Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA-Mindanao)  
Partido Lakas Masa (PLM-Mindanao)  
Peacebuilders Community  
PhilDHRRA-Mindanao  
Philippine Misereor Partnership Inc. (PMPI)  
PhilSSA-Mindanao  
SIMCARRD INC  
SUCCEED, INC  
Waging Peace-Philippines

## **GLOBAL /REGIONAL:**

Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID)  
Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC-SEA)  
Karen Women Empowerment Group (KWEG-Myanmar)  
Network for Transformative Social Protection (NTSP-Asia)  
The Life Skills Development Foundation (Thailand)  
Women's Initiatives Network for Peace (WIN PEACE-Myanmar)  
Women's Organizations Network (WON-Myanmar)  
World without WARs and without Violence

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## **Mindanao CSOs Statement**

Zamboanga Stand-off

September 9, 2013

CALL FOR SOBRIETY, DIALOGUE, NOT ARMED ACTION

We, the undersigned civil society groups, express our deepest expressions of concern, prayers and support for the innocent civilians caught in the ongoing crossfire between elements associated with

the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and government security forces in Zamboanga City that unfolded before us this Monday, September 9. We also likewise extend our deep condolences to the families of the armed actors themselves - the police, military authorities, and MNLF fighters felled during the incident.

WE HOPE AND PRAY that this matter is resolved quickly, justly and peaceably, and that equanimity prevails in the restoration of peace and order in Zamboanga City and its surrounds. We express pity for the growing thousands of displaced evacuees now streaming into safe havens in Zamboanga, wherever they can find them. We call on all concerned to avoid knee-jerk reactions that only feed into the distrust and discord we all want to avoid. We encourage all involved to explore dialogue in resolving whatever differences and grievances they may bear.

WE ARE SADDENED that such a provocative event happened on the eve of the slated and historic 10-day talks between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This will be the longest ever continuous meeting in the history of these talks and deserves our utmost support. Nevertheless we also expect that there will always be those displeased with the promising progress of these talks who will try to stop or derail such gains for their own aims and ends. We challenge all stakeholders not to be drawn into such diversions. Instead, let us learn from such events and stay our course of peace, strong and resolute in our shared vision of a more united and progressing Bangsamoro benefiting all.

WE APPEAL to all involved in making peace work in our beleaguered region to patiently and consistently find ways in establishing structured opportunities towards meaningful inclusion of other stakeholders in the peace process. The ongoing standoff in Zamboanga City between the MNLF and the government forces may indicate “imperfections” in the peace process, but there are legitimate issues that need to be addressed with a sense of just finality in the seemingly complicated peace process of the MNLF with the government. But we still denounce the very act of resorting to an armed action just to send its message across at the risk of lives, limbs, and security of innocent citizens.

WE REMAIN ENCOURAGED that despite this event, both the GPH and the MILF have expressed trust, confidence and support heading into the 40<sup>th</sup> round of these exploratory talks. This is the spirit that we believe should be engendered not only in the nascent Bangsamoro but through-out the country as well. Let us continue to support dialogue as a primary tool for peace building. Let us not allow the guns to drown out the voices we need to hear, the ones who call for peace. These are the voices that truly speak for us, driving our singular struggle, quest and vision for true and lasting peace in Mindanao.

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**To sign:**

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