



Southern Philippines: Fostering an Inclusive Bangsamoro

Asia Report N°322 | 18 February 2022

Headquarters

International Crisis Group

Avenue Louise 235 • 1050 Brussels, Belgium

Tel: +32 2 502 90 38 • brussels@crisisgroup.org

Preventing War. Shaping Peace.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	i
I. Introduction	1
II. From War to Peace	3
III. The Bangsamoro’s Diversity.....	6
A. Moro Muslims.....	6
B. Minorities.....	8
C. Women.....	9
IV. Reality Check	11
A. The Many Layers of Inclusion	11
B. Inclusive Laws and Institutions?	12
C. Uneven Development	16
D. Violence, Peacebuilding and Inclusion at the Local Level	18
E. The Challenges of Normalisation	21
V. Shaping an Inclusive BARMM	24
A. Promoting Inclusive Governance	24
B. Managing Conflict and Sustaining Peace	25
C. The Role of International Actors	27
VI. Conclusion	29
APPENDICES	
A. Map of Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)	30
B. About the International Crisis Group	31
C. Crisis Group Reports and Briefings on Asia since 2019	32
D. Crisis Group Board of Trustees	34

Principal Findings

What's new? Three years into the transition period in the newly autonomous Bangsamoro region, the peace process in the southern Philippines has made undeniable progress. But the interim government, led by the ex-rebels of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, needs to work on delivering a more inclusive peace.

Why does it matter? The Bangsamoro is an ethno-religious mosaic, comprising various Muslim Moro groups, Christians and indigenous peoples known as Lumads. Participation of minorities and women in the transition should be part of efforts to ensure long-term stability, as envisaged by the 2014 peace agreement.

What should be done? The Bangsamoro government should strengthen efforts to pass legislation protecting the Lumad, spread development projects more evenly across the region, and resolve local conflicts between Moro and indigenous communities. It should also work harder to broaden participation in the transition. Donors should encourage and support such endeavours.

Executive Summary

The creation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in 2019 renewed hopes for peaceful coexistence between communities after decades of war in the southern Philippines. The peace process promised to satisfy the aspirations of the region's majority-Muslim population, respect minority rights and ensure meaningful women's political representation. Three years into the transition, the ex-rebels of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) who head the region's interim government have made headway but are still struggling against the backdrop of a fractured region divided along ethnic, kinship and class lines. To further strengthen inclusive peace and development, the interim government needs to institutionalise participation of all Bangsamoro peoples, of all genders, in policymaking; promote equitable development across the region; and work to resolve conflicts affecting indigenous peoples. Donors should support the regional authorities and local civil society organisations in working toward these objectives and addressing existing development gaps.

Satisfying their cadres and supporters while governing a diverse and divided region presents a dilemma for the former insurgents. Launched in 2019, the transition is proceeding along two overlapping but separate tracks. The political track requires the ex-rebels to build institutions by crafting priority legislation, staffing a civil service and getting governance in shape. The so-called normalisation track foresees phased disarmament of guerrillas, in exchange for financial support, and transformation of rebel camps into "productive communities". From the rebel movement's perspective, the temptation is naturally to favour its base of supporters, which mostly lives in central Mindanao and has high expectations of peace dividends. But as leader of the transition authority, the MILF needs to look beyond its political-military identity.

The region's fragmentation along ethno-linguistic, kinship and class lines makes an inclusive approach both necessary and complicated. The BARMM's population includes thirteen distinct Islamised communities alongside ethno-religious minorities, such as non-Moro indigenous peoples (also known as Lumad) and Christians. Major fault lines lie between provinces in central Mindanao (Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur) and those in the Sulu archipelago (Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi), as well as within these socio-cultural clusters. Armed groups and powerful political clans also continue to shape the socio-political order in the BARMM's five provinces, two cities and one special administrative area that together are home to around 4.5 million people.

Overall, the Bangsamoro peace process has been making progress. The level of violence in the region is much lower today than it has been for decades, and as the transition gains momentum, peace dividends such as more efficient social or health services are slowly trickling down to the people. The region's nascent institutions, bureaucratic machinery and legislation are also getting into shape. And after more than a two-year lull, the normalisation process resumed with a third phase of decommissioning of MILF ex-combatants kicking off in late 2021. But lingering issues cast a shadow over these developments: the region's indigenous minority continues to experience displacement, people from the Sulu archipelago feel they are not getting the attention they deserve from the regional authorities and the ex-rebels' relationship

with influential clans is tumultuous. Bangsamoro women, who were disproportionately affected by the armed conflict, are now better represented but still far from having the “meaningful political participation” the 2014 peace agreement promised them.

Manila’s decision to extend the interim government’s term for three years past its original deadline, until mid-2025, provides a welcome opportunity for the transitional authority to work with local and outside actors toward more inclusive peace and governance. The interim government should redouble efforts to ensure that the benefits of development projects are well distributed geographically. In the Sulu archipelago, it should establish ministerial sub-offices to strengthen its presence and better engage at the local level. To advance the “meaningful participation” of women and girls in civic and political life, it should pass legislation that requires gender sensitivity in government programming. It should also pass the indigenous peoples’ code, to safeguard indigenous rights and make clear that the government is attentive to Lumad concerns even as the parties continue to work through difficult issues relating to land claims. Interim authorities should also consult more widely with both women and indigenous peoples about how government can meet their needs through legislation and policy implementation.

In addition, the interim government should exert stronger efforts to resolve conflict affecting indigenous peoples in Maguindanao. The MILF should encourage its local commanders to refrain from violence and to use their kinship networks to persuade other armed actors to stand down as well. Relevant interim government ministries will also need to take more concerted action to bring fighting to an end. A good place to start might be to map out the competing land claims that are often the source of tension, rank them in order of complexity and begin working through the most straightforward first.

Finally, both the Philippine government and international donors can support the Bangsamoro on its path to more inclusive institutions and governance. The prolongation of the transition period means that Manila has the opportunity to appoint new parliament officials in the Bangsamoro Transitional Authority for the next three years. Should it do so, it should work together with the MILF leadership to increase the proportion of female and indigenous representatives and nominate parliamentarians from smaller Moro ethno-linguistic groups. Meanwhile, international donors backing the peace process should join hands to identify gaps in development across the region in order to better coordinate their support and ensure better coverage. Stronger engagement with, and funding for, local organisations could reinforce efforts to strengthen Bangsamoro institutions and governance.

Manila/Brussels, 18 February 2022

Southern Philippines: Fostering an Inclusive Bangsamoro

I. Introduction

March 2022 marks the third anniversary of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), a self-governing entity spread across the southernmost Philippine island of Mindanao and the adjacent Sulu archipelago.¹ The autonomous region is the product of nearly six decades of armed struggle between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Mindanao's largest rebel group.² In 2018, four years after the parties concluded the second of two landmark peace agreements, the Philippine Congress passed legislation known as the Bangsamoro Organic Law. Described as inclusive in "spirit and intent", the law outlined the contours of Moro autonomy and led to the BARMM's inauguration in 2019.³ The ex-rebels of the MILF head an interim government, known as the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), that has both legislative and executive functions. In October 2021, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte extended the interim government's term for three years, postponing the first Bangsamoro regional parliamentary polls to 2025.⁴

The term "Bangsamoro" has different meanings. It refers to territory, for one, namely the autonomous region comprising two provinces in central Mindanao (Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur), three provinces in the Sulu archipelago (Sulu, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi), two cities (Cotabato and Marawi) and one so-called Special Geographic Area (encompassing 63 villages). It also applies to people, namely the Muslims of the southern Philippines, comprising thirteen different ethno-linguistic groups that converted to Islam before Spanish colonisation.⁵ The label can also refer to Islamised members of the autonomous region's indigenous communities, though some indigenous groups have either maintained their traditional customs and religion, or

¹ For background on the peace process, see Crisis Group Asia Reports N°s 313, *Southern Philippines: Keeping Normalisation on Track in the Bangsamoro*, 15 April 2021; 306, *Southern Philippines: Tackling Clan Politics in the Bangsamoro*, 14 April 2020; and 301, *The Philippines: Militancy and the New Bangsamoro*, 27 June 2019.

² The MILF is a splinter group of the first Moro rebel movement in Mindanao, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). For an overview of the conflict, see Marites Vitug and Glenda Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon: Rebellion in Mindanao* (Quezon City, 2000); and Eric Gutierrez, *Rebels, Warlords and Ulama: A Reader on Muslim Separatism and the War in Southern Philippines* (Quezon City, 2000).

³ Crisis Group interview, senior BARMM bureaucrat, 29 November 2021.

⁴ Georgi Engelbrecht, "The Philippines: Three More Years for the Bangsamoro Transition", Crisis Group Commentary, 29 October 2021. In theory, Duterte could appoint new members of parliament before his term finishes in June 2022. If he chooses not to do so, his successor will have the option of extending some (or all) of the present officials' terms or appointing new ones.

⁵ Most of the Bangsamoro Muslim population is Sunni. There is also a small number of Shia Muslims, mostly living in the cities of Cotabato, Marawi and Zamboanga (the last of which is outside BARMM). Crisis Group interviews, mediators, Zamboanga City, 22 December 2019.

embraced Christianity, and prefer to be called “non-Moro indigenous peoples”. Descendants of Catholic and Protestant settlers who migrated to Mindanao from other Philippine islands in previous centuries make up another minority.⁶

Given the Bangsamoro’s ethno-linguistic diversity and the myriad ways conflict has affected people living in the southern Philippines, the peace process aims to deliver durable peace and development to all the region’s residents, irrespective of ethno-religious identity and gender. The MILF, as the party in the driver’s seat of the transition process, is well aware of the need to foster an inclusive transition. As a high-ranking rebel commander told Crisis Group: “BARMM is not for the MILF. ... It is for everyone: Muslims, Christians and indigenous peoples”.⁷ The interim government’s concept of “moral governance”, which is meant to combine good governance with Islamic principles, has the potential to help shape inclusive policies.⁸

Building on Crisis Group’s previous reporting on Mindanao, this report examines the interim government’s efforts in achieving inclusivity.⁹ Research, conducted between November 2021 and January 2022, included fieldwork in Mindanao and interviews with interim regional and national government officials, MILF commanders and combatants, indigenous leaders, local politicians, development officials, international observers, non-governmental organisation employees, and female civil society leaders and activists. Research also drew on various documents and records issued by the interim government, as well as recent academic literature and important contributions from a local researcher.

⁶ Some of these Christians eventually converted to Islam but remain distinct from indigenous Moro Muslims.

⁷ Crisis Group telephone interview, 25 February 2021.

⁸ For a nuanced elaboration of the moral governance framework as detailed by a senior member of BARMM’s bureaucracy, see Nassef Manabilang Adiong and Potre Dirampatan Diampuan, “Principles and Practice of Moral Governance in the Bangsamoro”, in Urooj S. Malik (ed.), *Development for Peace: In Pursuit of Sustainable Peace through Inclusive Development – The Case of the Bangsamoro* (Mindanao, 2021).

⁹ In this report, inclusivity (or inclusion) is defined as the transition authority’s commitment to deliver peace dividends to all Bangsamoro people and address concerns of various groups in the autonomous region, including Moros, ethno-religious minorities and women.

II. From War to Peace

In its first three years, the interim government, led by Chief Minister and MILF Chairman Ahod Balawag “Al-Haj Murad” Ebrahim, may have had an imperfect record, but it has undeniably made headway in leading the war-scarred region toward a more peaceful era. Its ministries and agencies are in place, and the parliament has passed three of the seven legal codes called for in the Organic Law and prioritised in the transition plan that the MILF prepared shortly before the BARMM was created – those dealing with education, administration and the civil service.¹⁰ The ex-rebels demonstrated their capacity to govern effectively by undertaking COVID-19 relief operations across the region with reasonable success.¹¹ They have also pursued a series of governance reforms, such as allocating funding to several municipalities in the region that had never received state subsidies before.¹² Although the region remains the Philippines’ poorest, its poverty incidence dropped by 16.5 per cent in 2021, with particular improvements in Basilan, Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao.¹³

In other respects, however, progress appears to have stalled. To begin with, the BARMM’s ministries and agencies remain understaffed, though the slow pace of recruitment is partly due to the pandemic slowing down the already complicated procedure.¹⁴ Perhaps worse, implementation of development projects has fallen behind schedule. While COVID-19 is again partly responsible, critics also blame the interim government’s conflicting policy priorities and a tendency to improvise rather than plan long-term.¹⁵ A mayor from Basilan province said: “[The interim authorities] have been there for more than two years but still have no tangible impact”.¹⁶ Meanwhile, BARMM’s new parliamentary system, while clearly an improvement over its precursor in terms of legislative output, remains unfamiliar to locals. An observer lamented that “the farther you are away [from Cotabato City, BARMM’s seat] the more con-

¹⁰ In terms of the inclusivity agenda, the BARMM has a ministry of indigenous peoples’ affairs, the Bangsamoro Women Commission and an office for settler affairs. A Christian, a former army general named Dickson Hermoso, heads the transportation ministry. There are two women ministers, in charge of social services and science, respectively. The chief minister’s top legal counsel is also a woman.

¹¹ Crisis Group online interview, UN official, 13 July 2021. Critics, however, point out that the interim government’s response was disproportionately focused on central Mindanao, neglecting the island provinces. Crisis Group correspondence, humanitarian worker, 9 January 2022.

¹² Under the so-called Internal Revenue Allotment, every local government unit (a village, town or province) is to receive a share of its annual budget from Manila. Manila refused, however, to make the payments to eleven Bangsamoro towns (seven in Maguindanao and four in Basilan), claiming that the population was too small, until after the BARMM was inaugurated.

¹³ According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, the BARMM’s poverty rate fell from 55.9 per cent in 2018 to 39.4 per cent in 2021. Ana Tirona, “3.87m more Filipinos become poor”, *Business World*, 17 December 2021.

¹⁴ Some MILF members have lamented what they perceive as “relativism” in hiring practices. Crisis Group online interview, 2 January 2022.

¹⁵ Portions of the budget remain unused, implying that funding does not equate to project implementation. Crisis Group online interview, governance expert, 20 November 2021.

¹⁶ Rambo Talabong, “Maluso: Poor Basilan town struggles to meet vaccine needs”, *Rappler.com*, 5 February 2021.

fused you are” about what the interim government’s responsibilities and modus operandi are.¹⁷

Bangsamoro’s broader war-to-peace transition, commonly referred to as the “normalisation process”, has also been a mixed bag.¹⁸ Before the pandemic, the third-party Independent Decommissioning Body disarmed over 12,000 MILF guerrillas in two phases.¹⁹ From March 2020 onward, however, the process stalled, due to COVID-19 but also because of the MILF’s hesitancy to disarm, given the uncertainty regarding an extension of the transition period at the time and doubts about the central government’s capacity to deliver the socio-economic package it promised to demobilised combatants.²⁰ The third phase of decommissioning finally resumed in November 2021, once the extension had been announced; it aims to disarm as many as 14,000 more guerrillas in the coming months.²¹

Several issues, however, continue to threaten the process. First, funding constraints still affect the government’s ability to deliver the promised socio-economic packages for ex-combatants.²² Secondly, a vital component of normalisation, the transformation of former MILF camps into “peaceful and productive communities”, has run into difficulties as some programs failed to take off despite an existing funding mechanism.²³ Thirdly, other normalisation components, such as the disarmament of warlords’ private armies and transitional justice, are lagging.²⁴ National government officials are optimistic that normalisation will speed up in 2022, but critics from civil society are more cautious, given the history of delays and the forthcoming presidential election.²⁵

Flare-ups of violence also continue to occur, notwithstanding the overall decline of armed conflict in the region. Two types of organised violence remain prevalent in the Bangsamoro. For one, skirmishes between government forces and militant groups

¹⁷ Crisis Group online interview, political consultant, 22 December 2021.

¹⁸ Normalisation, as laid out in the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, refers to the “process whereby communities can achieve their desired quality of life within a peaceful and deliberative society”.

¹⁹ The MILF’s military wing comprises 40,000 fighters, including women auxiliaries, known as the Bangsamoro Women’s Auxiliary Brigade. Most fighters live in the BARMM, but there is a significant number outside the autonomous region.

²⁰ Crisis Group online interview, 11 January 2021.

²¹ At the time of writing, 6,125 fighters have undergone decommissioning in the third phase, bringing the total to 18,270. Officials estimate that 7,200 more combatants will disarm in the third phase, up to mid-March, but the timeline for the remaining 6,800 fighters in the phase is not yet clear. Crisis Group online interviews, peace process officials, January 2022, 16 February 2022.

²² Combatants are well aware of implementation delays but leave advocacy to the MILF leadership. Crisis Group interviews, MILF members, Camp Omar, 27 November 2021.

²³ Locals perceive existing donor-supported projects as having varying degrees of success. The Bangsamoro Normalisation Trust Fund, which should henceforth ensure better coordinated financing of normalisation activities, was set up in May 2021, but programs appear to still be at the planning stage. Crisis Group interviews, residents, MILF Camps Omar and Badre, 27-28 November 2021; Crisis Group online interview, international expert, 29 November 2021.

²⁴ Crisis Group interviews, MILF members, Guindulungan, Maguindanao, 27 November 2021.

²⁵ Crisis Group telephone interviews, normalisation officials, 29 December 2021, 27 January 2022; Crisis Group online interviews, international expert, 29 November 2021; activists, November 2021. The presidential election is due on 9 May 2022.

that continue to operate across the region periodically cause havoc, repeatedly displacing many residents.²⁶ Then there are recurrent local conflicts, which take on three major forms: first, clan feuds between and among families, also known as *rido* or *pagbanta*; secondly, political disputes, often caused by electoral competition; and thirdly, fighting between Moros and indigenous groups.²⁷

This last category is particularly concerning in the Teduray-Lambangian and Manobo areas of Maguindanao.²⁸ Not uncommon before the transition, violence often revolves around Moro encroachment on indigenous ancestral domain, including land grabs, and premeditated killings of tribal leaders.²⁹ Other incidents include clashes between Moro Maguindanaons (sometimes reinforced by individual MILF members or other armed groups) on one side and Tedurays (in particular) on the other. The latter have in places organised themselves to fight back, sometimes calling on the government to mobilise local paramilitary support.³⁰

²⁶ At present, militant groups comprise just a few hundred fighters scattered across the region.

²⁷ For more on this topic, see Crisis Group Report, *Tackling Clan Politics in the Bangsamoro*, op. cit. According to Crisis Group data, clan feuds increased from 2019 to 2020, but diminished in 2021, partially on account of the pandemic.

²⁸ Outside Maguindanao and adjacent areas (such as Sultan Kudarat province, which lies outside the BARMM) relations are more peaceful even if not wholly harmonious.

²⁹ Ancestral domain refers to collective ownership of lands by indigenous peoples in the Philippines. Indigenous leaders cited an incident in Guindulungan town as an example of efforts by individual MILF commanders, and Moro strongmen more broadly, to forcibly acquire land. Crisis Group interviews, indigenous women community leaders, 26 November 2021.

³⁰ The Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Unit, an auxiliary force of the Philippine military with detachments in various places, also recruits ethnic Tedurays. On occasion, these units clash with armed Moro Maguindanaons once conflict escalates.

III. The Bangsamoro's Diversity

From the start, Mindanao's peace process was rather innovative in emphasising the need for inclusivity, be it in terms of respecting ethnic and religious minorities' rights or ensuring women's active participation.³¹ Observers have lauded the 2014 peace agreement as being generally sensitive to gender issues: women were present at the negotiation table and the final texts promised Bangsamoro women a stronger voice in regional politics and economic development.³² The Organic Law, which enabled the region's autonomy, then defined Bangsamoro identity broadly, encompassing both Islamised ethno-linguistic groups and those who are not Muslim but still identify as Bangsamoro.³³ It also gave indigenous peoples the freedom to "retain their distinct indigenous and ethnic identity" and aimed to "ensure" the rights of Bangsamoro's Christians, reflecting the region's demographic complexity.³⁴

A. Moro Muslims

The region's thirteen Islamised ethno-linguistic groups distinguish themselves from one another through customs, traditions and languages. There are three broad clusters of Moro Muslims, spread over three different geographic areas. First, several major groups live in central Mindanao, namely the Maguindanaons, Maranaos and Iranun, with the former two making up most of the BARMM's population.³⁵ Secondly, the Tausug, Yakan and Sama live in the Sulu archipelago, south west of Mindanao Island.³⁶ Thirdly, other ethno-linguistic Moro groups live outside the BARMM, such as the Sangil and Kalagan in the Davao region and Sarangani province, the Kalibugan in the Zamboanga peninsula, and the Jama Mapun, Molbog and Palawani people in the northern part of the Sulu archipelago and neighbouring Palawan province.³⁷ Many Moros, of all ethnic origins, also live in Philippine metropolitan centres such as Manila, Cebu and Davao.³⁸

³¹ Crisis Group Asia Report N°281, *The Philippines: Renewing Prospects for Peace in Mindanao*, 6 July 2016, pp. ii, 5.

³² "Assessing Gender Perspectives in Peace Processes with Application to the Cases of Colombia and Mindanao", Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, November 2018.

³³ The Organic Law defines Bangsamoro people as "those who at the advent of the Spanish colonisation were considered native or original inhabitants of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago and its adjacent islands, whether of mixed or of full blood", as well as "their spouses and descendants". Bangsamoro Organic Law, Article II, Section 1.

³⁴ Bangsamoro Organic Law, Article IV, Section 10, and Article IX, Section 15.

³⁵ Maguindanaons are the majority ethnic group in Maguindanao province and the 63 villages of the Special Geographic Area in former Cotabato province. Maranaos live in Lanao del Sur. The Iranun live at the boundary of the two provinces.

³⁶ The Tausug are the dominant group in Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. The Yakan people live in Basilan. The Sama, an umbrella term for several sea-dwelling communities, both sedentary and nomadic, live mostly in Tawi-Tawi but are spread across the whole Sulu archipelago, even reaching Malaysia.

³⁷ At the height of the war in the 1970s, Palawan also saw combat, primarily in its Muslim-dominated south. A few MILF and MNLF members still live there. Crisis Group analyst's interviews in a previous capacity, 13 April 2018.

³⁸ Article VI, Section 12 of the Organic Law envisioned an office (yet to be created) that would deal with areas outside the BARMM's core territory.

In a region as diverse and fractured as the Bangsamoro, building institutions that properly represent and cater equally to all these groups is bound to be difficult. Historically, liberation movements in the region emphasised “Morohood” by invoking a common past shaped by resistance to colonial conquest, with Islam as the unifier.³⁹ But regional fissures lingered from the Moro self-determination struggle’s beginnings in the colonial era to the present.⁴⁰ The protracted and meandering violence in Mindanao that escalated to a full-blown separatist insurgency in the early 1970s has exacerbated political fragmentation by shaking up traditional sources of authority and diffusing power among the national government, local politicians and insurgents.

Differences between the Bangsamoro sub-regions continue to shape the region’s political life. One fault line lies between central Mindanao – now home to the regional capital – and the Sulu archipelago, on the BARMM’s western’s fringes. The Tausug people have a strong historical identification with Sulu province’s political ancestor, the Sulu Sultanate.⁴¹ Although locals on the islands may belong to different ethnicities and even speak different languages, they often highlight their “common predicament” of dealing with the Cotabato-based regional government run by Maguindanaons or Maranaos.⁴² Meanwhile, the provinces of Lanao and Maguindanao, although next to each other, also developed along different trajectories with distinct languages, political cultures and social norms.⁴³ Regional fissures have also fed into the Moro separatist movements. The MILF, which is strongest in central Mindanao, mostly comprises Iranun, Maguindanaon and Maranao fighters.⁴⁴ The Tausug, on the other hand, dominate the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the first Moro rebel movement, which has a strong presence in the islands.⁴⁵

Kinship and class further feed into the Bangsamoro’s social complexity. Family ties are a staple of Bangsamoro governance, with clans exerting power by dominating entire towns or provinces and the local governments.⁴⁶ Loyalties to both political leaders and armed groups are often bred at home.⁴⁷ Class relations also matter: a

³⁹ Moro intellectuals, for example, talked about “a nation under endless tyranny”. Salah Jubair, *Bangsamoro: A Nation under Endless Tyranny* (Kuala Lumpur, 1999).

⁴⁰ The core areas of the Bangsamoro’s three largest ethno-linguistic groups, the Maguindanaons, Tausug and Maranaos, roughly correspond to the three major sultanates of the pre-colonial and colonial eras, namely the Maguindanao and Sulu Sultanates and the Lanao Confederation. Crisis Group interview, historian, 4 November 2019.

⁴¹ Crisis Group interview, Tausug scholar and historian, 4 November 2019.

⁴² Crisis Group interviews, civil society representatives, Zamboanga City, 22 December 2019. Prominent Tausug have often expressed dissatisfaction with the concept of “Bangsamoro”, preferring the term “Bangsa Sug” (“land of the current”) as a marker of Tausug identity.

⁴³ At times, Moro political leaders have used identity narratives for their own agendas. Crisis Group online interview, former peace process official, 20 November 2021.

⁴⁴ Maguindanaons make up the majority of the MILF’s Central Committee and most of its military leadership.

⁴⁵ The MNLF has undergone a series of splits and now consists of two factions. The Front’s founder, Nur Misuari, a Tausug, heads one. A Maguindanaon, Muslimin Sema, leads the other. Only the Sema faction is represented in the Bangsamoro parliament. Misuari and his followers are directly engaged by the Duterte government via political outreach and development interventions.

⁴⁶ Crisis Group Report, *Tackling Clan Politics in the Bangsamoro*, op. cit.

⁴⁷ Crisis Group interview, member of local government and clan, Maguindanao, 25 November 2019.

handful of actors dominate each province's political economy.⁴⁸ Smaller Moro communities such as the Sama Badjao, living around the Sulu archipelago, are often economically and politically on the fringe.⁴⁹ Meanwhile, members of Bangsamoro's aristocratic class, men and women alike, still have prestige with the population. While most members of this traditional aristocracy do not wield power per se, they can still be important in resolving local conflicts or subtly influencing politics.⁵⁰

B. Minorities

Apart from the Muslim ethno-linguistic groups, two other communities live in Bangsamoro territory.

The indigenous peoples (also known as Lumads). There are five non-Moro indigenous groups in the BARMM, the largest of which is the Teduray-Lambangian in Maguindanao.⁵¹ Some of these groups, which insist on a unique political identity, have a fraught history with Moro Muslims.⁵² Supportive of the peace process, as they felt caught in the crossfire between Moro rebels and the state, several indigenous groups expressed fear of being ostracised once Moro autonomy became a reality, leading them to lobby hard for recognition as a distinct group. While the Organic Law officially acceded to that demand, many indigenous communities, such as the Teduray, are still concerned about their future in the BARMM, demanding recognition of non-Moro indigenous identity that goes beyond formal assurances, including through legisla-

⁴⁸ Crisis Group online interviews, long-time peace process observers, 20 and 23 November 2021.

⁴⁹ Crisis Group telephone interview, civil society leader from Tawi-Tawi, 10 November 2021. Tausug elites run the majority of Tawi-Tawi towns, while the Sama control only a handful of municipalities.

⁵⁰ But traditional power can also be ambiguous. For example, in its zeal to stay politically relevant during Manila's negotiations with the Maguindanaon-dominated MILF, one of the claimants to the Sulu Sultanate's throne, Jamalul Kiram III, contributed to conflict. In 2013, his followers raised a Royal Army of Sulu and launched a starry-eyed incursion into Lahad Datu town in Malaysia, causing a six-week standoff with Malaysian security forces that ended in the group's defeat. The incursion reverberated years later, as allegations emerged in late 2021 that Sulu politicians would stage a similar operation in March 2022. Crisis Group telephone interviews, Philippine and Malaysian sources, 9-11 December 2021.

⁵¹ The others are the Dulangan-Manobo (Maguindanao), B'laan (Maguindanao), Higaonon (Lanao) and Erumanen Manobo (Special Geographic Area). Their total population is estimated at around 130,000. Some Moro groups are also considered indigenous peoples, such as the Yakan (Basilan) or Sama (Sulu archipelago) who also practice Islam.

⁵² The best illustration is the case of Maguindanao, where Moro traditional elites, known as *datus*, exerted political control for centuries over the population, including the Teduray. Interpretations of this era differ, with some indigenous historians looking back at communal life as cohabitation, while others feel that power relations were highly unequal. During the armed conflict in the 1960s and 1970s, some indigenous villagers joined Moro self-defence militias and rebel fronts. Others, however, including some Tedurays in Maguindanao, joined Christian militias and paramilitaries. These divisions have led to varying understandings of the Moro-indigenous relationship. Some Moro leaders and rebels considered the indigenous to be collaborators with the Christian state. Some Tedurays, however, justified violence as self-defence, arguing that Maguindanao politicians and rebels had a history of exploiting non-Muslim indigenous peoples. Nevertheless, in some villages Moros and Tedurays lived in peace throughout the conflict. For more information, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°213, *The Philippines: Indigenous Rights and the MILF Peace Process*, 22 November 2011.

tion.⁵³ Another central demand focuses on the need to respect the practice of collective ownership of land known as ancestral domain.⁵⁴

The Christians. Also called “settlers”, most of the Bangsamoro’s Christians live in Cotabato City and nearby towns.⁵⁵ While intercommunal conflict pitting them against Moros was common in the past, particularly over land-related disputes, the peace process has eased tensions.⁵⁶ Discussions about the peace agreement in Christian and mixed communities in the lead-up to the BARMM’s creation, the trust between Moro and Christian elites, and the inclusion in the BARMM of 63 Moro-majority villages carved out of Cotabato province, a former hotspot of inter-ethnic conflict, all contributed to the equilibrium.⁵⁷ Former political adversaries in majority-Christian areas adjacent to the BARMM now support the transition, and local flashpoints for communal strife, such as Pikit, Midsayap or Aleosan towns, have calmed.⁵⁸

C. *Women*

In addition to realising the aspirations of the majority-Muslim population while respecting the rights of religious and ethnic minorities, the Bangsamoro peace process set out to ensure women’s “meaningful” participation in political life and to protect women from violence.⁵⁹ The peace agreements and their implementing legislation, the Organic Law, introduced three goals for the peace process in this regard: first,

⁵³ Crisis Group interviews, indigenous community leader, South Upi, 28 November 2021; Crisis Group online interview, indigenous official, 6 December 2021. Interlocutors highlight, for example, the need for legislation to safeguard indigenous rights through the indigenous peoples’ code, and the need to respect customs and traditions, including “indigenous political structures” that lie outside the formal government system. The desire to live in peace permeates all demands.

⁵⁴ Crisis Group interview, indigenous community leader, South Upi, 28 November 2021. Both the Bangsamoro Organic Law and the (national) Indigenous Peoples Rights Act formally guarantee indigenous rights. The law came into force on 22 January 1997. Enforcement has been erratic, however.

⁵⁵ For example, Upi and South Upi towns in Maguindanao. Christians also constitute the majority of Wao town in Lanao del Sur and a sizeable part of Lamitan in Basilan. Many also live in smaller villages in Maguindanao and the Special Geographic Area. Their total population in the BARMM, according to Crisis Group estimates, is at least 200,000.

⁵⁶ There are occasional glimpses of the Mindanao conflict’s past sectarian undertones. In early 2021, for example, unknown perpetrators beheaded Catholic statues in Lamitan City in Basilan province. David Santos, “Basilan governor slams vandalism on Catholic churches in the province”, CNN Philippines, 18 February 2021. Most Christians in the BARMM, however, feel safer than they did at the war’s height. Crisis Group analyst’s interviews in previous capacity, Maguindanao and Cotabato, 2017-2019.

⁵⁷ The 63 villages joined the autonomous region following a plebiscite in February 2019.

⁵⁸ Simmering disputes in Cotabato City between the MILF-led interim government and the mayor, Cynthia Guiani-Sayadi, who is popular among Christians, are more about political power than about religion. Crisis Group interview, Christian representative, Cotabato City, 29 November 2021.

⁵⁹ These provisions were included as early as 2012 in a first roadmap for negotiations, the GPH-MILF Decision Points on Principles. The term “meaningful” came up during discussions about rights in the new political entity that would be established. This qualifier was not fully defined, as the Philippine government and the MILF had different interpretations of it. For more details, see remarks by Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, “Reverend Dr. Richard L. Pearson Lecture”, The Pearson Institute (webinar), 22 April 2021. The MILF peace process also stands in contrast to the 1996 peace agreement between government and its predecessor group that for the most part lacked gender considerations.

women's participation in the Bangsamoro parliament and government; secondly, an interim government that would "uphold and protect" women's fundamental rights; and thirdly, women's participation in development, including the normalisation program.⁶⁰ While the 2014 peace treaty itself was abstract regarding these objectives, the Organic Law was more concrete, for example contemplating that at least one woman would sit in the Bangsamoro cabinet and one woman in the parliament. Other provisions remained more general, however, leaving room for interpretation as to the exact scope of women's participation.

The backdrop to these promises is that Moro and indigenous women have not only borne much of the human cost of conflict in Mindanao, including violence, displacement and economic hardship, but also actively participated in conflict in varied ways, be it as part of rebel forces, as members of civil society organisations or as part of the region's past bureaucracies.⁶¹ As the Mindanao fighting went on, women took up different roles, including as community leaders in areas affected by militant attacks, local officials dealing with clan conflict or advocates for indigenous rights.

Bangsamoro's cultural and religious diversity means that there is no single, homogeneous set of expectations as to women's roles. Overall, however, prevailing patriarchal norms have traditionally limited women's political participation in the region.⁶² While violent conflict and the peace processes set up in response have at times run counter to or even undermined existing gender roles, the norms have on the whole endured.⁶³

What women's "meaningful political participation" means in practice is still subject to debate in the Bangsamoro. While many educated women are aware of the peace deal's intricacies and the possibilities it opens up for women, others appear to be less optimistic given the "realities on the ground".⁶⁴ An activist who works closely with MILF women said: "For most, peace means food on the table, security on the street and access to public health".⁶⁵

⁶⁰ For the respective provisions, see: 1) Annex on Power-Sharing, Part 2, Section 2, and Organic Law, Art. 7, Sections 7 c, 9 and 11; 2) Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro, Art. 6 g, Organic Law, Art. 9, Section 12, and Annex on Power-Sharing, Part 3, Art. 56; and 3) Annex on Normalisation, Section G, and Organic Law, Art. 13, Section 5.

⁶¹ See Eliseo Huesca Jr., "Brokering 'Women, Peace, and Security' in Mindanao, Philippines", *Peace Review*, vol. 33, no. 3 (2021).

⁶² Women who play a role in the Bangsamoro's traditional political class, as mayors and governors, are almost all part of influential political families. On many occasions, women take up political offices occupied by male relatives when terms expire, as term limits are common throughout the Philippines. Crisis Group telephone interview, female clan member from Maguindanao, 24 November 2021.

⁶³ Both women and men repeatedly told Crisis Group that culture and religion in Moro society, while separated by a "thin line", are not synonymous, resulting in different understandings of gender relations and varying perceptions of women's roles. Crisis Group online interview, civil society organiser, 20 December 2021; Crisis Group interview, source close to MILF, Cotabato City, 9 December 2021.

⁶⁴ Crisis Group telephone interview, Lanao-based activist, 20 November 2021; Crisis Group online interviews, 12 and 13 January 2022.

⁶⁵ Crisis Group telephone interview, 20 November 2021.

IV. Reality Check

A. *The Many Layers of Inclusion*

The Bangsamoro's multi-ethnic character and political complexity suggest that any arrangement to achieve durable peace and stability will benefit by meeting certain criteria for inclusiveness. First of these is a genuine recognition of minority rights, as their denial or a failure to respect them may not only cause disillusionment but could even contribute to conflict, especially among the indigenous peoples in Maguindanao.⁶⁶ Secondly, the interim government needs to develop trust with local actors whose interests are often aligned with clans seeking to preserve power and cut across ethnic lines.⁶⁷ Intra-Moro conflict can turn deadly as a result of clan feuding; moreover, there is a broader danger that political differences between and among Moro elites and political groups could directly or indirectly feed violence when one group feels excluded.⁶⁸

Thirdly, the ex-rebels must find a way to satisfy their cadres and supporters without alienating the rest of the Bangsamoro in the process. In the past, discontent with unequal distribution of peace dividends has undermined the cohesion of Moro movements to the point of splintering, which in turn fuelled conflict.⁶⁹

Lastly, the parties should keep faith with the commitment to meaningful participation of women in the political process, as contemplated in the 2014 peace treaty.⁷⁰ Equity is certainly one reason but not the only one. Women's exclusion "will not lead to rebellion", but it would undermine the "quality of peace", as an observer of the peace process said – leaving women who played key roles during the Bangsamoro struggle prone to grievance and a sense of injustice.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Crisis Group interviews, indigenous persons, Christians and peace process observers, November-December 2021.

⁶⁷ For a more detailed discussion of this aspect, see Crisis Group Report, *Southern Philippines: Tackling Clan Politics in the Bangsamoro*, op. cit., pp. 23-25.

⁶⁸ Action by Moro armed groups often stems from perceptions of exclusion rooted in identity, as was the case with an attack on Zamboanga City in 2012 after the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro or the Sulu Sultanate's Lahad Datu incursion one year later. A combination of religious and political grievances can also drive narratives of exclusion, for example in the case of militant groups presently operating in the Bangsamoro. A third cause of flare-ups is some political elites' inclination to use armed force to advance their interests. Crisis Group interviews, Moro clan leaders, 23 November and 11 December 2019.

⁶⁹ Former entities that governed the region, for example Nur Misuari's MNLF from 1996 to 2001 or the Ampatuan warlord clan in the years that followed, have failed to create a Moro consensus precisely because residents felt that these leaders failed to take local interests into account. Crisis Group interview, Manila, civil society activist, 27 October 2019. See also Francisco Lara, *Insurgents, Clans and States: Political Legitimacy and Resurgent Conflict in Muslim Mindanao, Philippines* (Quezon City, 2014), pp. 227-261.

⁷⁰ A failure to include women could also have adverse effects on men. For example, a local peace worker from Maguindanao highlighted that if women lack access to education or social services, their sons will often need to support the family, making them more susceptible to recruitment by militant groups offering material benefits. Crisis Group online communication, 1 February 2022.

⁷¹ Crisis Group online interviews, former head of a peacebuilding NGO, 19 November 2021; activist, 30 January 2022. Yasmira Moner, "Examining Inclusivity in the Southern Philippines", U.S. Institute for Peace, 25 January 2022.

Reconciling all these parameters in the first years of the transition has not been easy, leading to differing perceptions of the interim administration's efforts to work toward greater inclusivity.⁷² With the MILF's Central Committee and other political-military structures intact, and dominated by former male combatants and religious leaders, some critics argue that overly centralised and opaque decision-making still prevails in the movement, and by extension, in the way it operates in government.⁷³ Those sympathetic to the ex-rebels, however, point out that political transitions are by definition delicate, all the more so in a polity as fragmented as the Bangsamoro. They also point out that the MILF is the largest existing cross-regional force, and therefore carries more potential for an inclusive approach than any of the region's other political actors.⁷⁴ Paradoxically, there are also rebels, both men and women, who feel that the organisation's revolutionary ideals are fading away, leaving them still loyal but disappointed and frustrated.⁷⁵

At the same time, despite its leading role in the interim government, the MILF is not synonymous with the parliament or the bureaucracy, making it difficult to place either blame or credit for the transition's twists and turns wholly with them. Many of the BARMM's ministers, for example, have their own power bases, political acumen and understanding of what it means "to be inclusive".⁷⁶ The regional government's inconsistent relations with local governments, meanwhile, stem as much from inherent cracks in the Bangsamoro's ethno-political setup as from the former rebels' difficulties in coherently dealing with the clans that dominate the region's towns and provinces, as witnessed in the extension debate.⁷⁷ Interim government officials, who may be experienced technocrats, neophytes or anything in between, also navigate the political transition differently.

B. *Inclusive Laws and Institutions?*

The Bangsamoro's new institutions provide various platforms through which minority groups and Bangsamoro women can take part in the transition and influence policies.

An important way to achieve inclusive political representation will be the BARMM's parliamentary form of government, a novelty in the Philippines. While President Duterte appointed the transitional parliament, in the future lawmakers will be elected and they, in turn, will elect the region's chief minister or top executive. The primary objective of establishing the Bangsamoro parliament was to create a forum where many groups could be represented politically, letting them "compete peacefully without escalation into the battlefield".⁷⁸ The appointed transitional parliament includes

⁷² Crisis Group interviews, community members and civil society activists, November-December 2021.

⁷³ Crisis Group online interviews, November 2021.

⁷⁴ Crisis Group online interview, international observer, 16 December 2021.

⁷⁵ Crisis Group interviews, MILF members, Camp Badre, 27 November 2021; Crisis Group online interview, source close to Lanao-based MILF, 22 August 2021. See also Froilan Gallardo, "MILF mujahideen frown on extending Bangsamoro Transition Authority", Rappler.com, 6 September 2021.

⁷⁶ Crisis Group telephone interviews, source close to the BARMM bureaucracy, 15 January 2022; local and international observers, 10 January 2021.

⁷⁷ Engelbrecht, "The Philippines: Three More Years for the Bangsamoro Transition", op. cit.

⁷⁸ Crisis Group online interview, former peace process official, 20 November 2021.

Christian and indigenous lawmakers, though politicians from the Moro majority dominate the 80-member legislative body.⁷⁹

But while the parliamentary appointments reflect the Bangsamoro's diversity in some respects, they are less representative in others.⁸⁰ Some parliamentarians have expressed to Crisis Group that the body has too few members from smaller Moro groups in the Bangsamoro.⁸¹ Only thirteen parliamentarians are women.⁸² With a few exceptions, almost all female lawmakers come from elite families or have served in government; few hail from remote rural areas, where the majority of Bangsamoro women live.⁸³

The parliament also demonstrates that even a nominally inclusive governing body fulfilling a peace treaty's terms will not always advance protections for the rights and aspirations of minority populations. In its three years, the legislature has passed 200 resolutions.⁸⁴ Many of these reflect lawmakers' sensitivity to issues related to inclusivity, including condemnation of several cases of gender-based violence, advocacy for rehabilitating the city of Marawi, which was damaged in battles with Islamist militants in 2017, and concern for the poor, people with disabilities, orphans and widows.⁸⁵ But indigenous peoples' issues have fared less well. A few months into the transition, the lawmakers went as far as to issue a resolution that encouraged the national indigenous peoples' commission to "cease and desist" from land surveys in Maguindanao that could help the Teduray-Lambangian assert their ancestral domain.⁸⁶ Even if it was not binding as a matter of law, the resolution raised questions about the ways in which the MILF-led interim government looks at minority rights in the Moro-majority region.

The regional government's efforts to support indigenous communities have been patchy in other respects. First, the indigenous peoples' code, a law that should ensure Lumads' rights and recognise non-Moro indigenous identity, has been in limbo for two years.⁸⁷ Secondly, some allege that the ministry of indigenous peoples' affairs itself is not living up to expectations. Though an ethnic Teduray heads the ministry, some locals in Maguindanao lament its inaction on land issues, lack of openness to

⁷⁹ The parliament includes two indigenous persons and two Christians, as well as MNLF representatives, traditional leaders, youths and businesspeople.

⁸⁰ Crisis Group online interview, interim government official, 23 June 2021.

⁸¹ Crisis Group interview, Cotabato City, 28 November 2019. For example, the Sama Badjao in the Sulu archipelago, who face some of the worst discrimination in Mindanao, lack direct representation in parliament. Crisis Group online interview, source from Tawi-Tawi, 10 November 2021. A former MNLF commander from Basilan, while sympathetic to the BARMM, pointed out that only a few members of parliament are Yakan. Crisis Group interview, Manila, 5 November 2019.

⁸² From 1990 to 2019, an average of four women (of 24 representatives) served in the present parliament's predecessor, known as a "regional legislative assembly".

⁸³ Crisis Group online interview, Lanao-based source, 20 November 2021.

⁸⁴ The role of resolutions is stipulated in Rule XII, Section 5 of the parliament house rules.

⁸⁵ Bangsamoro Parliament, Resolutions no. 14, 91, 117, 118, 151, 156, 169, 170, 176, 179, 184.

⁸⁶ The resolution also called for a halt to indigenous communities' applications for so-called Certificates of Ancestral Domain Titles that allowed them to legally secure land ownership rights.

⁸⁷ The code has recently been classified as a priority legislation. The interim government scheduled consultations on the code's deliberation, but the momentum abated as soon as the transition extension was announced in October 2021. Crisis Group online interview, indigenous civil society representative, 9 November 2021.

working with groups besides the MILF and overall lack of focus.⁸⁸ This stands in contrast to other indigenous peoples, for example in Basilan, who enjoy a positive relationship with the ministry.⁸⁹

Indigenous peoples, however, are determined to assert their rights, and worked to transfer the ancestral domain issue in central Mindanao to the Intergovernmental Relations Body, where representatives of the transition authority and national government officials tasked with indigenous affairs are now looking into the case.⁹⁰ In November 2021, both signed a memorandum of cooperation that aims to establish a common vision “to promote the well-being” of indigenous peoples.⁹¹ Some indigenous leaders from the BARMM value the continuing dialogue; others criticise the “slow and irregular” schedule of talks.⁹²

Bangsamoro’s Christians tend to be neither especially enthusiastic nor deeply apprehensive about the transition.⁹³ Except for land conflicts in South Upi, violence does not affect the Christian settlers who live alongside Moros in Cotabato City and elsewhere in the Bangsamoro.⁹⁴ The Church and Christian leaders supported the peace process, but recognise that decades of violence have produced certain biases and grievances among both Moros and Christians that are difficult to overcome.⁹⁵ In the BARMM, the Office of Settler Communities, attached to the chief minister’s office, represents Bangsamoro’s Christians. The office’s creation, while delayed, is a first step for the community to become “more active in governance”.⁹⁶

In its first three years in office, the interim government has made efforts to include women in policymaking. A key accomplishment was the establishment of the Bangsamoro Women Commission in January 2020. Headed by a senior female MNLF leader, the office aims to promote women’s welfare in the Bangsamoro.⁹⁷ Among other tasks, it has trained women’s grassroots organisations on livelihood skills and peace-building, started training BARMM staff on budgeting that takes into account the gender-differentiated needs of the female population, and campaigned to end the practice of child marriage.⁹⁸ The commission, with technical support from interna-

⁸⁸ Crisis Group interviews, Teduray community leaders, November-December 2021. A particular point of criticism is that the ministry’s leadership has pledged allegiance to the MILF.

⁸⁹ Crisis Group online interview, government officials, 31 January 2021.

⁹⁰ The body, comprising high-ranking government and MILF officials, is an interim mechanism tasked with resolving outstanding issues between Manila and the transition authority.

⁹¹ Document made available to Crisis Group. Notably, it contains no final decision about which legal regime should deal with indigenous rights.

⁹² Crisis Group interviews, indigenous leaders, 6 and 9 December 2021.

⁹³ Crisis Group interview, Christians representative, Cotabato City, 29 November 2021.

⁹⁴ In Wao, the only Christian town in Lanao del Sur province, intra-communal violence between local Maranaos and settlers caused a number of deaths and displacements in 2015. Relations have improved since, and the interim government assisted the town with food aid due to a surge in the coronavirus. Noel Punzalan, “BARMM sends more aid to Covid-19-hit Lanao Sur town”, Philippine News Agency, 27 September 2021.

⁹⁵ Crisis Group interview, Father Eliseo Mercado, 11 November 2019.

⁹⁶ Crisis Group interview, Christian representative, Cotabato City, 29 November 2021.

⁹⁷ It also employs MILF women as consultants. One Teduray woman is a member *ex officio*.

⁹⁸ On 10 December 2021, the Philippine Congress passed a bill prohibiting cohabitation and marriages involving minors below the age of eighteen. Pilar Manuel, “Duterte signs prohibition of child marriages into law”, CNN Philippines, 6 January 2022.

tional partners, has also crafted a Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.⁹⁹ This document aims to support women during conflict by encouraging gender-sensitive humanitarian responses, for example through “comprehensive” health packages and promoting linkages between community groups and civil society.¹⁰⁰ In the words of Chief Minister Ebrahim, it “should serve as a guide for all planners and implementers”.¹⁰¹

The interim government is also aiming to pass a gender and development code, which seeks to ensure the compliance of BARMM ministries and agencies with a Philippine law that requires 5 per cent of all government agencies’ budgets to be spent on gender-related programs.¹⁰² Many women from the MILF and civil society support the draft legislation, which they deem stronger than a previous version as it provides for a monitoring mechanism and sanctions in cases of non-compliance.¹⁰³

Notwithstanding these achievements, challenges remain. First, Bangsamoro remains socially patriarchal and traditional ideas about gender relations prevail.¹⁰⁴ It is hard to carry out the inclusion agenda in these circumstances. In one case, female village officials from Lanao attended trainings on budgeting and finance provided by local authorities, but then some received “instructions” from their husbands on how to allocate revenue.¹⁰⁵ Secondly, women remain underrepresented in some regional ministries and local governments in the BARMM. Those who hold positions are usually either from an “elite” background, have family ties “as daughters or wives” of rebel commanders or politicians, or have proven their loyalty to the MILF before or during the transition.¹⁰⁶ Thirdly, despite many interventions, whether by the women’s commission or individual female members of parliament, it is not clear that women’s voices are reaching “the strategic level” of decision-making, making the true effects of their participation hard to gauge.¹⁰⁷

Women’s voices are far from uniform, of course, and there are different views among those working on the transition as to whether it is providing sufficient space for women to help shape the new autonomous region. Women working in parliament or in the regional bureaucracy tend to have a more positive perspective on the progress made toward participation than those who are outside the system.¹⁰⁸ Most women

⁹⁹ The Action Plan follows a version drafted by the BARMM’s predecessor administration in 2010.

¹⁰⁰ “Bangsamoro Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2020-2022”, 25 October 2020.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3. The plan focuses on Maguindanao, however, and occasionally puts policy aspirations over specific plans of action for reaching the goals.

¹⁰² The code is at present with the Office of the BARMM Chief Minister and is scheduled to undergo parliamentary deliberation. Crisis Group telephone interview, source close to the process, 14 January 2021.

¹⁰³ Crisis Group online interviews, civil society activists, 16 November and 30 December 2021.

¹⁰⁴ Crisis Group online interviews, activists and officials, November-December 2021.

¹⁰⁵ Crisis Group telephone interview, Lanao-based source, 20 November 2021.

¹⁰⁶ Crisis Group online interview, female clan member, 24 November 2021.

¹⁰⁷ Crisis Group online interview, development official, 26 November 2021. Some female members of parliament are nevertheless convinced that their work with male counterparts on drafting legislation has an impact. Crisis Group online interview, 13 January 2021.

¹⁰⁸ Crisis Group online interviews, women political and civil society representatives, November 2021-January 2022.

who have been working with civil society remain more critical in their assessment.¹⁰⁹ Views are not monolithic among either group of women, however. For example, many advocates for women's rights, including indigenous women, credit the BARMM and its ministries with involving women from outside government in consultations on legislation.¹¹⁰ On the other hand, there are also people within or close to the BARMM who are critical of the interim government's efforts to strengthen participation, characterising them as "ceremonial" or "tokenistic".¹¹¹

In the end, women's meaningful participation remains a process, especially when there is no clear consensus on what it entails. Some Bangsamoro women say more representation could be "a boost" to visibility and, by extension, more gender-responsive policies.¹¹² Others remain cautious, arguing that a stronger female presence in parliament would not necessarily lead to women having more influence or producing gender-sensitive policies.¹¹³

C. *Uneven Development*

A major challenge for the interim government has been to deliver much-needed public services across the poverty-stricken region and promote governance for all of Bangsamoro's residents. Regional disparities remain, particularly along the central Mindanao-Sulu archipelago fault line. For example, according to available data, while the region's overall poverty rate decreased in 2021, provincial indicators for development in Sulu and Tawi-Tawi stagnated.¹¹⁴

The regional authorities' overarching objective of raising the level of human development across the Bangsamoro relies on some key institutions, in which the interim government has made efforts to ensure a level of diversity. For example, MILF chief negotiator Mohagher Iqbal, supported by several former civil society activists, oversees the education portfolio, focusing on efforts to revamp the moribund state of schooling in the region.¹¹⁵ Iqbal retained several bureaucrats from the preceding administration in his office, including islanders, and is seen across the aisle as an effective administra-

¹⁰⁹ Crisis Group interview, Cotabato City, 30 November 2021; Crisis Group online interview, 12 January 2022.

¹¹⁰ Crisis Group interview, indigenous civil society leader, Cotabato City, 26 November 2021.

¹¹¹ Crisis Group interviews, policy adviser, 20 November 2021; interim government official, 12 January 2022. One international observer said she had seen many women participating in workshops but far fewer working in the regional administration. Crisis Group online interview, 10 February 2021.

¹¹² Crisis Group online interview, Lanao-based activist, 20 November 2021.

¹¹³ Crisis Group interview, Cotabato City, BARMM official, 26 November 2021.

¹¹⁴ Sulu's poverty rate has remained constant since 2018, while Tawi-Tawi saw an increase. The provinces have also different relationships with the MILF-led BARMM. In Tawi-Tawi, the ruling Sali clan and the MILF are on good terms, while in Sulu, the ruling Tan family has been alternately critical and cooperative. Crisis Group interviews, BARMM official, Cotabato City, 27 November 2019; civil society leader from Tawi-Tawi, 10 November 2021.

¹¹⁵ An official stressed that the ministry tries to promote gender-sensitive policies through trainings and includes gender considerations in project design, for example by ensuring proper sanitation facilities for girls and boys when constructing or refurbishing school buildings. There is also a designated bureau for indigenous peoples' concerns in the ministry. Crisis Group interview, senior BARMM education official, Cotabato City, 9 December 2021.

tor.¹¹⁶ Raissa Jajurie, a Tausug lawyer and former activist, heads the social services and development ministry, which has made efforts to extend its outreach to the Bangsamoro's fringes, particularly during the pandemic.¹¹⁷ A special committee on Marawi, co-chaired by Maranao lawyer Anna Basman, is looking into supporting the town's rehabilitation, the slow pace of which has dented the interim government's image among some Maranaos, who are already critical of their perceived underrepresentation in its ranks.¹¹⁸

While the former rebels have started work on long-awaited development projects across the region, the efficacy of their interventions is hard to measure, particularly when it comes to the mainland-island divide.¹¹⁹ In the first year of the transition, the budget allocated to the island provinces was much lower than those for Maguindanao and Lanao, but the BARMM's technocrats have since attempted to narrow the gap.¹²⁰ Moreover, the interim government has clearly made efforts to carry out more projects on the islands, particularly relating to public infrastructure.¹²¹ Yet some locals still that feel the regional government is not visible enough in the island provinces, saying they have a sense of "being left behind".¹²²

The interim government's efforts to more equitably distribute peace dividends across sub-regions are laudable, but the region's governance does not yet appear to make the Bangsamoro's political economy more inclusive. Powerful families, and to an extent the "new economic elites" that have emerged during the transition, dominate business, industry and resource extraction.¹²³ In Maguindanao, for example, indigenous Tedurays in Datu Blah municipality live in relative peace but "suffer in silence", as the ruling clan monopolises the town's economy.¹²⁴ Talking about the province's rural villages, a Moro human rights activist said most poor communities remain "at

¹¹⁶ Crisis Group interview, bureaucrat from Basilan, 21 December 2019. Crisis Group online interview, source from Sulu, 17 September 2021.

¹¹⁷ Crisis Group online interview, Tausug civil society activist, 9 November 2021.

¹¹⁸ See Katrina Auditor, "Marawi rehabilitation delays could cast a dark shadow over Duterte's peace legacy", *The Diplomat*, 7 December 2020; and Aliah Baniaga Adam, "Examining Women's Critical Role in Peacebuilding in the Southern Philippines", U.S. Institute for Peace, 9 February 2022.

¹¹⁹ An assessment of development aid for the island provinces over the decades provides a muddled picture that could account for the islands' already difficult position. While Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi initially benefited from the 1996 agreement, donor attention subsequently shifted to central Mindanao as conflict resumed in 2000. As a result, the islands had to rely on their own, rather modest budgets and meagre support from the BARMM's predecessor. Crisis Group online interview, development expert, 10 January 2022.

¹²⁰ Crisis Group online interview, parliamentarian from Basilan, 12 January 2022.

¹²¹ Crisis Group data on development projects, corroborated by interviews. Crisis Group online interview, government official and former activist, 16 November 2021. In January 2022, for example, the authorities repaired a bridge in Jolo town that had decayed after years of neglect. Crisis Group online interview, source from Sulu, 25 January 2022. Tawi-Tawi has been another major beneficiary.

¹²² Crisis Group online interviews, civil society activist, 10 November 2021; interim government official, 13 January 2022. "New Dawn in Mindanao", webinar, University of the Philippines Mindanao, 19 November 2021. Part of the challenge also appears to be perception. During the COVID-19 pandemic, strict travel guidelines made it more difficult for BARMM officials to go to rural areas. Yet assistance has also reached the islands, including the most far-flung municipalities. Crisis Group telephone interview, Zulhikar Samsaradi, NGO leader from Sulu, 25 February 2021.

¹²³ Crisis Group telephone interview, head of an international NGO, 9 February 2021.

¹²⁴ Crisis Group online interview, indigenous leader, 6 December 2021.

the margins” both politically and economically.¹²⁵ And while there has been a nominal upsurge of investments, mainly local but also international, results in terms of jobs are not yet tangible.¹²⁶ Some observers have warned that should indigenous peoples and Moro farmers continue to be economically disenfranchised, violence, whether criminal or political, could be in the offing.¹²⁷

D. *Violence, Peacebuilding and Inclusion at the Local Level*

Deadly conflict in the Bangsamoro has considerably decreased since the autonomous region came into being, but flare-ups still occur. Communal conflicts and clan feuds are often rooted in local conditions, such as competing land claims or political rivalries, that in turn have different effects on various social groups.¹²⁸

A case in point is recurrent tension in South Upi, where political and economic triggers regularly tip decades-old disputes into armed confrontation.¹²⁹ Historically complicated relations between Maguindanaons and Tedurays in the area, as well as dynamics related to elections, worsen competing individual and communal land claims.¹³⁰ In 2019 and 2020, conflicts between families from the two communities were rampant in the villages of San Jose, Itaw, Kuya and Lamud, as well as neighbouring hamlets.¹³¹ Clashes erupted over land disputes between indigenous and Moro villagers, and quickly spread to involve members of MILF, its predecessor group and non-Moro paramilitaries who supported their kin.¹³² Insecurity has also driven Teduray villagers to join local communist bands for the sake of protection and access to guns.¹³³

Violence subsided over the course of 2021, but the fragile stalemate is likely to be untenable. Some Moro and Teduray civilians cannot return to their farmland due to insecurity or occupation from the other side, while others live in constant fear of

¹²⁵ Crisis Group telephone interview, 24 November 2021.

¹²⁶ Crisis Group online interview, donor official, 23 November 2021.

¹²⁷ Crisis Group online interviews, peacebuilding experts, 23 and 26 November 2021.

¹²⁸ The protracted strife between the Philippine government and militant groups mostly affects particular areas in the Bangsamoro, such as the hinterlands of Maguindanao or Patikul town in Sulu.

¹²⁹ The town’s experience contrasts with that of the neighbouring municipality of (North) Upi where the indigenous mayor helped create a peace council that has been managing such conflicts with greater success.

¹³⁰ Armed clashes in South Upi date back to communal violence in the 1960s and 1970s, which led to further conflict between the military and the MILF. Political struggle among Moro strongmen for control of the town and its environs caused displacement and economic deprivation among the Teduray, many of whom had to sell or mortgage their land to Maguindanaons or Christian settlers. Moros, indigenous communities and settlers all have legitimate claim to own particular plots of land, which makes the disputes almost intractable.

¹³¹ Crisis Group interviews, MILF members and indigenous villagers, South Upi and Lebak, 26 and 28 November 2021.

¹³² Some Moros allege that Christians who control South Upi’s politics use the Teduray as proxies in their conflict with the Maguindanaons. In some instances, militants intervened to back their Moro relatives; in others, they joined the fray in exchange for monetary compensation. Crisis Group online interview, human rights activist, 24 November 2021.

¹³³ The Philippines’ communist insurgency, the New People’s Army, has expanded its operations to the Bangsamoro highlands over the last few years. It has sought recruits in the South Upi village of Kuya. Crisis Group interviews, sources from South Upi, 24 and 28 November 2021.

renewed violence.¹³⁴ The interim government responded with humanitarian measures such as timely relief assistance, but the drivers of violence remain.¹³⁵ A major challenge appears to be the interim government's unwillingness to settle the conflicts in good faith, which would require disciplining MILF members, or followers of other Moro armed groups, and resolving competing land claims once and for all.¹³⁶

Local violence tends to affect women in specific ways.¹³⁷ Women and girls displaced by conflict, whether hosted by relatives or living in shelters, carry the double burden of having to take care of their families and support their husbands in securing livelihoods.¹³⁸ In some cases, women are also directly targeted – by state forces or as part of clan wars.¹³⁹ On some occasions, women interlocutors said, the “way of the gun” has taken such hold in society that men use violence not only against one another but also against women.¹⁴⁰ For example, South Upi, which has been particularly affected by conflict, is also one of the BARMM towns with the highest rates of recorded gender-based violence, including domestic abuse.¹⁴¹

Yet despite the specificities of women's experiences and needs amid violence, authorities can sometimes focus primarily or exclusively on men.¹⁴² For example, a human rights activist from Maguindanao who interviewed relatives of victims of military mortars commented that local authorities and media alike spoke only to men after the incident, ignoring female witnesses: “Where is the story of the mother? ... Why was she not given a voice?”¹⁴³ Paradoxically, in cases of gender-based violence,

¹³⁴ Crisis Group interview, MILF commander, Lebak, 28 November 2021.

¹³⁵ Crisis Group online interview, indigenous rights advocate from South Upi, 9 November 2021.

¹³⁶ Crisis Group online interview, humanitarian worker, 24 November 2021.

¹³⁷ From 2011 onward, indigenous women in Maguindanao have been mostly affected by the government's conflict with militant groups and communal violence. As many settlements of Tedurays are in the remote highlands, relief was often slow to reach these villages, a problem the BARMM has tried to fix. Crisis Group analyst's interviews and observations in a previous capacity, South Upi and Upi towns, 2016-2019.

¹³⁸ During clan conflicts, men's mobility is often limited, which leads to women taking on additional tasks. See also “Gender and Conflict in Mindanao”, The Asia Foundation, 2012. As most military operations in the Bangsamoro are directed at Moro militant groups, some locals say security forces have been monitoring women in the affected communities due to their alleged links with fighters. Crisis Group online communication, source from Lanao, 24 August 2021.

¹³⁹ Sources cited an extrajudicial killing of a paralegal in Datu Saudi Ampatuan town in 2018. Clan feuds whose roots are in gender-related issues, such as rape or elopement, are at present less prevalent than before but not unheard of. Crisis Group online interview, source close to the MILF, 20 December 2021. Some reports also said women faced retaliation for alleged transgressions of cultural norms.

¹⁴⁰ Crisis Group online interview, 26 November 2021. Relatedly, notions of masculinity and feelings of honour and pride also feed routinely into clan warfare. See Wilfredo Magno Torres, *Rido: Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in Mindanao* (Manila, 2007), pp. 309-310.

¹⁴¹ Crisis Group online interview, 26 November 2021; Crisis Group analyst's interviews in a previous capacity, men and women in Kuya and Pandan villages, 2016-2018. The pandemic has also led to an increase in gender-based violence.

¹⁴² See, for example, Sara E. Davies, Jacqui True and Maria Tanyag, “How Women's Silence Secures the Peace: Analysing Sexual and Gender-based Violence in a Low-intensity Conflict”, *Gender and Development*, vol. 24, no. 3 (2016), pp. 459-473.

¹⁴³ Crisis Group online interview, women's rights activist, 24 November 2021.

women often choose not to report violations to authorities due to cultural stigma or a perception that “keeping quiet will prevent conflict from escalating”.¹⁴⁴

As for local peacebuilding efforts, Bangsamoro women often play an active role, participating alongside men in efforts to defuse community conflicts and limit violence.¹⁴⁵ Traditionally, for example, Maranao women from royalty or the political elite have acted as intermediaries or arbiters in clan feuds.¹⁴⁶

The peace process and the transition have provided more opportunities for women to learn about, and engage in, conflict resolution at both the regional and local levels. For example, starting in 2016, the UN Development Programme trained a number of Bangsamoro women and men as “insider mediators”, who later became crucial actors in negotiating key provisions of the Organic Law with members of the Philippine Congress.¹⁴⁷ During the last months of 2021, Maguindanao and indigenous women created their own mediation network in Maguindanao that accompanied the government-MILF ceasefire mechanism when it deployed on the ground in cases of violations.¹⁴⁸ A local NGO led by a woman in Sulu province, Tumikang Sama Sama, has mediated feuds in the province even when the logistics became much more difficult during the pandemic.¹⁴⁹

Yet some women who spoke to Crisis Group said they feel “underutilised” by decision-makers, despite advantages that Bangsamoro women peacemakers typically have, such as safe access to conflicting parties during a feud’s early stages (for example via back channels) and the ability to unpack conflict dynamics while being perceived as objective and non-partisan.¹⁵⁰ To the extent that women are sidelined, locals suggest several possible explanations, including lack of awareness of the contributions women can make, the perception that conflict resolution is a man’s job and women’s underrepresentation in formal political positions, which in the Bangsamoro are crucial

¹⁴⁴ Crisis Group online interview, former government official, 14 January 2022.

¹⁴⁵ Women can also contribute to violence. For example, some researchers suggest that Moro women have a right to retaliate during clan feuds. Crisis Group telephone interview, researcher, 3 December 2021. In case of indigenous women, a prominent female militia commander from South Upi, whose son was killed “in front of her eyes” decades ago, was known to lead her clansmen in fighting Moros for years before making peace with Maguindanaons in her village after talks. Crisis Group online interview, Teduray leader, 6 December 2021.

¹⁴⁶ These women of royal descent, known as Bae A Labi, play a role in conflict resolution, for example by convening parties to negotiate or handling disputes arising from social issues such as marriage. While their soft power stems from their lineage, their methods in influencing conflict actors differ depending on the clan they represent. Crisis Group online interviews, Filipino conflict resolution expert, 26 November 2021; Maranao academic, 30 January 2022. See also Birte Brecht-Douart, “The Influence of the National Question and the Revival of Tradition on Gender Issues among Maranaos in the Southern Philippines”, PhD dissertation, University of Frankfurt, 2011.

¹⁴⁷ “Conversations with Atty. Naguib Sinarimbo”, *Mindanews.com*, 29 December 2018.

¹⁴⁸ Crisis Group correspondence, women’s network leader, 3 January 2022. Local conflicts have often led to larger confrontations between government forces and the MILF in the past.

¹⁴⁹ Such as in the towns of Kalingalan Caluang and Indanan. See the Facebook page of Tumikang Sama Sama.

¹⁵⁰ Crisis Group interviews, NGO representatives, Cotabato City, 26 and 30 November 2021. Some male interlocutors share this perception. Crisis Group telephone interview, 15 January 2022.

for bestowing legitimacy on potential mediators.¹⁵¹ In addition, women indicated that concerns for personal safety sometimes make them hesitant to intervene when violence escalates.¹⁵²

E. *The Challenges of Normalisation*

Normalisation not only illustrates the transition's complexity, but its gaps also reflect Bangsamoro's fault lines and suggest that the process is less than fully inclusive.

First, there is a perception among locals and supporters of the peace process that the national government is overly focused on disarming the MILF rebels, at the expense of other crucial elements of normalisation, including the need to transform rebel camps into "productive communities".¹⁵³ These critics sometimes point to the promise of inclusive normalisation in the peace agreement.¹⁵⁴

Secondly, the bulk of socio-economic and security interventions occur in central Mindanao, where the six recognised MILF camps are located, and not in the provinces of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, which also host thousands of fighters.¹⁵⁵ While failure to deliver the promised socio-economic packages following disarmament risks frustrating guerrillas, in the islands, such a scenario could drive them toward the remnants of the Abu Sayyaf Group (a network of criminal and militant cells operating in the Sulu archipelago) and lead to violence and crime.¹⁵⁶

Thirdly, given that swathes of Teduray-Lambangian ancestral land overlap with MILF Camps Badre and Omar, mechanisms through which indigenous peoples can articulate their concerns are needed to demonstrate the normalisation process's respect for indigenous rights and to avoid misunderstandings that could lead to renewed violence. One such mechanism is the Camp Transformation Task Force, in which the Tedurays have one representative for each camp. In addition, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process has pledged to look into conflicting land claims that could hamper normalisation.¹⁵⁷ But many Tedurays feel there are still no guarantees they will be heard, and some say the MILF, which plays a central role in camp transformation, are prone to adopt what they see as patronising attitudes. "It

¹⁵¹ Crisis Group online interviews, mediation expert, 26 November 2021; observer of the peace process, 9 January 2022; Crisis Group telephone interview, BARMM bureaucrat, 14 January 2022. For example, women from Datu Saudi Ampatuan town in Maguindanao who attended conflict resolution trainings had to deal with community elders who opposed these activities and demanded that they appoint training participants. Most women in Maguindanao who play a role in mediation hold political office, such as the governor, Mariam Sangki-Mangudadatu. Notably, the governor prefers settling conflicts through selected local bodies rather than in person.

¹⁵² Crisis Group online interview, mediator, 16 December 2021; Crisis Group interview, member of MILF's Social Welfare Committee, Lebak, 28 November 2021.

¹⁵³ Crisis Group online interview, source close to MILF, 3 January 2022.

¹⁵⁴ Annex on Normalisation.

¹⁵⁵ The central government and the MILF have focused their efforts on camps in Lanao and their surroundings, particularly to counter dissatisfaction among the Maranaos after the Marawi siege in 2017. Crisis Group online interview, source close to the process, 29 November 2021.

¹⁵⁶ Crisis Group telephone interview, economist, 15 July 2021. See also Crisis Group Report, *Keeping Normalisation on Track in the Bangsamoro*, op. cit.

¹⁵⁷ Crisis Group telephone interview, peace process official, 29 December 2021.

is mere tolerance, rather than acceptance”, commented a development official working on normalisation.¹⁵⁸

Lastly, while women form an active part of the Moro rebel movement, the male-dominated nature of normalisation bodies and processes has meant that their perspectives have at times been neglected. Most normalisation mechanisms, including disarmament, are in the hands of men – MILF commanders and senior government officials.¹⁵⁹ Although trained in combat, the movement’s women cadres, enrolled in the Bangsamoro Women’s Auxiliary Brigade, have traditionally played medical and logistical roles in guerrilla camps.¹⁶⁰ As a result, they are much less involved in decommissioning, something that female MILF members seem to accept, though high-ranking women say the actual number of cadres is higher than just the few hundred fighters that some estimates cite.¹⁶¹

Worse is the limited role women are able to play in the transformation of MILF camps. A Maranao observer said female MILF members have things to say about camp management but “have been denied this opportunity”.¹⁶² Livelihood trainings organised in some camps under the umbrella of government-MILF normalisation mechanisms, for example, sometimes fail to include women, leaving non-governmental organisations to fill the gap.¹⁶³ Women’s particular requirements, such as livelihoods for woman-headed households or health needs, are also not always included in needs assessments.¹⁶⁴ MILF women, as a result, see normalisation as bristling with challenges, from program design to participation. A woman from the MILF’s social welfare committee said of the MILF: “Whenever they needed us, we would attend rallies to support their advocacy, like the call for extension [of the transitional period]. Now [that the extension has been granted], they forget about us”.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁸ Crisis Group online interview, 29 November 2021.

¹⁵⁹ A welcome step was the appointment of parliament member Laisa Alamia as head of the government’s Task Force on Decommissioned Combatants, a body charged with overseeing socio-economic integration after disarmament. Men dominate most of the other bodies, however. Men’s predominant roles in normalisation have also contributed to rising expectations of husbands and sons, who are the primary beneficiaries of the packages, to provide for their families. Crisis Group online interview, Lanao-based source, 20 November 2021.

¹⁶⁰ As political officers, women also engage in the MILF’s Social Welfare Committee. This structure is not included in the official disarmament but still benefits from interventions by international development partners. Crisis Group online interview, U.N. official, 11 January 2022.

¹⁶¹ Crisis Group interview, Cotabato City, 26 November 2021. Some female MILF members speak of up to 20,000 women cadres. The divergent estimates stem from the MILF’s self-perception as a community-based movement; supporters and part-time members thus look at themselves as full members, even if MILF leaders do not. Only some 100-plus women combatants have been decommissioned thus far. Some of the socio-economic interventions for combatants were not always tailored to the specific needs of women in their various roles such as farmers or small entrepreneurs. Programs often followed traditional gender roles, for example skills training in baking or dressmaking, without prior consultation. See also “Women Journeying Towards Peace”, Oxfam, October 2021, pp. 7, 9. Crisis Group online interview, source close to MILF, 20 December 2021.

¹⁶² Crisis Group online interview, Lanao-based expert, 20 November 2021.

¹⁶³ Crisis Group online interview, development official, 22 November 2021.

¹⁶⁴ Crisis Group interview, female MILF cadre, Guindulungan town, 27 November 2021.

¹⁶⁵ Crisis Group online interview, 30 December 2021.

Some MILF women, however, also navigate the transition's occasional uncertainty with an aspiration for self-reliance. As a senior female cadre said: "I am pleading and asking my Bangsamoro sisters to learn and not to rely on men in [the MILF's military wing]".¹⁶⁶ Wives of ex-combatants have started lobbying for better implementation of the normalisation process, as for example in Sapa-Sapa town in Tawi-Tawi.¹⁶⁷ Other ex-rebel women have engaged with civil society in trainings or worked together, with some success, in economic cooperatives.¹⁶⁸ More broadly, MILF women in the parliament or BARMM bureaucracy have exerted efforts to assist decommissioned and active women cadres, for example through livelihood support during the pandemic, information sharing or scholarships.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ "Asking My Sisters: Intergenerational Voices of Women from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Mindanao", Berghof Foundation, November 2021.

¹⁶⁷ Crisis Group online interview, source from Bongao, 10 November 2021.

¹⁶⁸ Crisis Group interview, Cotabato City, activist, 30 November 2021; Crisis Group online interview, development official, 13 January 2022.

¹⁶⁹ Crisis Group interview, Cotabato City, senior BARMM official, 26 November 2021.

V. Shaping an Inclusive BARMM

While the Bangsamoro peace process has made undeniable gains, fostering inclusive peace and governance still faces challenges. The interim government should seek to overcome these challenges and develop policies that serve all Bangsamoro people.

A. *Promoting Inclusive Governance*

To bridge real and perceived divides between central Mindanao and the island provinces, the interim government should fund more development projects with a particular focus on health, energy and infrastructure in Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.¹⁷⁰ Programs that provide much-needed assistance to particularly vulnerable people, like the housing support that the BARMM and Tawi-Tawi's provincial government directed toward the indigenous Badjao, should also be expanded.¹⁷¹ Creating sub-offices of vital ministries in Bongao, Lamitan and Jolo could be another way to show the regional government's commitment to the more remote parts of the region.¹⁷² In addition, the interim government's ministries, and perhaps even parliament, could on occasion conduct meetings in the island provinces instead of the regional capital of Cotabato.¹⁷³

The Bangsamoro government also needs to build more trust with the region's indigenous peoples. Declaring all indigenous areas under the ancestral domain in Maguindanao, which would give the indigenous peoples the foremost right to land ownership and use through land titles, is not realistic in the short term, as it would clash with legitimate Moro land claims.¹⁷⁴ A more promising near-term option is to safeguard indigenous rights through legislation that offers formal legal recognition of non-Moro indigenous identity in the region. Passage of the long-awaited indigenous peoples' code, which, among other things, would offer this recognition, should be a top priority.

To further imbue the peace agreement's references to the "meaningful participation" of women with substance, the interim government could take several steps. First, it should pass the gender and development code, which requires gender sensitivity in BARMM programming.¹⁷⁵ Pending the code's passage, BARMM agencies and local government units should use their existing budgets for interventions that promote women's participation in peace and development programs beyond activities such as cultural events that some see as tokenistic. Other initiatives could include workshops on disaster preparedness, places for women on local development councils and jobs

¹⁷⁰ Crisis Group online interview, interim government official, 12 January 2021.

¹⁷¹ See the note on the Tawi-Tawi provincial governor's Facebook page, 30 January 2022.

¹⁷² Crisis Group online interviews, development planners, 10 January 2022.

¹⁷³ Crisis Group interview, senior BARMM official, Cotabato City, 26 November 2021.

¹⁷⁴ Some indigenous leaders also emphasise that the notion of ancestral domain is not about exclusionary ownership of land but a "shared" territory with the Moro people and mutual respect, including the right to be informed about any transaction in the indigenous domain, known as "free and prior informed consent". Crisis Group online interviews, indigenous leader, 21 February and 6 December 2021.

¹⁷⁵ Crisis Group online interview, peacebuilding expert, 16 December 2021.

for women as community peacekeepers.¹⁷⁶ Secondly, ministries and members of parliament should consult more with women from all social strata about drafting the remaining priority codes and future laws with the help of civil society and village officials.¹⁷⁷ Planners should also be attentive to women's specific needs in, for example, planning for Marawi's rehabilitation and providing services for jailed, displaced and orphaned women and girls.¹⁷⁸

In addition, gender sensitivity trainings for the BARMM's administration could allow for a more informed conversation on how to strike a balance between patriarchal reservations and the peace process's aspirations to address the needs of Bangsamoro women.¹⁷⁹ Providing women from the interim government and civil society a joint platform to discuss policy initiatives, perhaps as a "women's caucus" in the parliament, could also be a way to institutionalise women's participation.¹⁸⁰

With the interim government's term now extended for another three years, selecting the next set of Bangsamoro parliamentarians could also provide a welcome opportunity to reinvigorate inclusive governance.¹⁸¹ Should Manila opt to appoint new officials instead of extending some or all of the present ones, they should aim to make the parliament more representative, by including additional women and members of smaller Moro communities.¹⁸² In addition, the new parliament could have at least one more seat for indigenous peoples and include a representative from each of Mindanao's displaced population and the MILF's women auxiliary brigade.¹⁸³

B. *Managing Conflict and Sustaining Peace*

A crucial task for the former rebels in achieving durable peace is to tackle local violence and reduce the potential for conflict flare-ups, especially in or near indigenous communities. "We just want to live in peace", said an indigenous leader.¹⁸⁴ The MILF should press its commanders and rank-and-file members to abstain from violence against indigenous peoples and sanction individuals who instigate or escalate attacks.

¹⁷⁶ Crisis Group interview, local activist, Cotabato City, 30 November 2021; Crisis Group online interview, governance scholar, 20 November 2021.

¹⁷⁷ Crisis Group telephone interviews, civil society activist, 16 November 2021; indigenous youth leader, Cotabato City, 26 November 2021. Consultations should include indigenous women and girls. According to an interim government official, planning for the education code included consultations with women. Crisis Group online interview, 13 January 2022.

¹⁷⁸ Crisis Group telephone interview, activist, 24 November 2021; Crisis Group interviews, activists, Cotabato City, 26 November 2021. In the case of Marawi, the interim government could work together with Manila in supporting food security programs that involve women at all stages of design and implementation (for example, through needs assessment and trainings) and ensuring proper sanitation facilities for women in evacuation centres and host communities.

¹⁷⁹ Crisis Group interview, MILF community leader, Cotabato City, 30 November 2021.

¹⁸⁰ Crisis Group telephone interview, source close to the BARMM bureaucracy, 15 January 2022.

¹⁸¹ The outgoing Duterte administration could name a new set of parliamentarians; otherwise, the new president will inherit the task in July 2022.

¹⁸² Crisis Group online interview, community leader in Datu Saudi Ampatuan, 30 December 2021. Late in 2021, the interim authorities passed a resolution calling on President Duterte to extend all members' term.

¹⁸³ Crisis Group interview, senior MILF official, Cotabato City, 26 November 2021.

¹⁸⁴ Crisis Group online interview, local indigenous leader, 22 February 2021.

Field commanders could also use their kinship networks and related forms of soft power to deter non-MILF armed actors from violence. For their part, indigenous leaders should address their grievances non-violently, for example by continuing to register these in outreach to Bangsamoro authorities and documenting human rights abuses or other actions against them or their property.¹⁸⁵ Local civil society, including women's organisations, could also contribute to conflict resolution initiatives, particularly as they have a track record in managing community-based conflict in South Upi.¹⁸⁶

Meanwhile, the interim government should go beyond existing stopgap arrangements and seek longer-term solutions to proactively resolve local land conflicts, particularly in South Upi.¹⁸⁷ To this end, it should develop, in collaboration with local governments, an inventory of competing land claims in affected villages, categorise them according to complexity and begin working through the least difficult first. The BARMM's ministries – such as those of indigenous peoples' affairs, of public order and safety, of environment, natural resources and energy – perhaps coming together in a special inter-agency task force, could spearhead these efforts.¹⁸⁸ The interim government should also convene a series of inclusive discussions among the parties to the most protracted local conflicts as the first step toward developing tailored dispute resolution roadmaps for each.¹⁸⁹ In South Upi, for example, it would need to secure the buy-in of local Moro leaders and commanders; indigenous representatives; and Christian political and business interests.¹⁹⁰

It could address the issue by outlining ownership of contested land, developing clear roadmaps to resolve the conflicting claims and ensuring comprehensive buy-in through consultations with Christian, Moro and indigenous leaders. Local civil society, including women's organisations, could also contribute to conflict resolution initiatives.¹⁹¹

Making normalisation more inclusive could also help address grievances by giving people in Mindanao an opportunity to benefit more evenly from the anticipated peace dividends. Here, the Philippine government needs to fast-track the camp transformation program and delivery of socio-economic packages to ex-combatants, including those in camps and towns in western Mindanao. The participation of indigenous peoples in camp transformation is also imperative, not only through representation

¹⁸⁵ Crisis Group online interview, indigenous leaders, 30 January 2022.

¹⁸⁶ Crisis Group online interviews, indigenous activist, 9 November 2021. For example, a Moro youth organisation and a Teduray-led women's group managed to partially resolve a land-cum-political conflict in the village of Pandan between armed Moro men and an indigenous leader. Crisis Group online interview, source involved in the process, 22 November 2021.

¹⁸⁷ Crisis Group online interviews, peacebuilding experts, November 2021.

¹⁸⁸ For more ideas on conflict resolution in the Bangsamoro, see Crisis Group Report, *Tackling Clan Politics in the Bangsamoro*, op. cit., p. 27.

¹⁸⁹ A complex and often violent land conflict, involving settlers, Moros and indigenous groups occurred between 2012 and 2016 in the town of Datu Paglas and the adjacent towns of Tulunan and Columbio. After a number of failed efforts by the national and local governments to resolve it, local leaders conducted a series of meetings with all parties over several months, including MILF forces, paramilitary commanders and technical experts on land issues. The area has seen no hostilities since. Crisis Group online interviews, mediation experts, 19 and 23 November 2022.

¹⁹⁰ Crisis Group online interview, conflict resolution expert, 20 December 2021.

¹⁹¹ Crisis Group online interviews, indigenous activist, 9 November 2021.

in steering bodies, but also in decision-making on land use and livelihood projects in or near Camps Badre and Omar. Finally, the Philippine government and the MILF should revive information drives on normalisation in MILF camps and indigenous communities, among other things to avoid false expectations and to promote transparency.¹⁹²

Both the government and the MILF should also encourage participation of women, as well as female MILF cadres and their families, in project planning and implementation under the normalisation umbrella.¹⁹³ They should ensure better representation in steering bodies that oversee the process in Manila and Cotabato, and actual implementing bodies on the ground in camp areas, such as the camp task forces or other normalisation bodies.¹⁹⁴ Giving the Bangsamoro Women's Commission a chance to participate in meetings and workshops on normalisation could also help spread awareness.¹⁹⁵

C. The Role of International Actors

International actors also have a role to play in supporting inclusive policies in the Bangsamoro, though they should let local actors guide them in setting an achievable agenda.¹⁹⁶ Donors should keep supporting the interim government's administrative capacities through trainings and continue dialogue with the BARMM on the importance of women's political participation. Donors should also coordinate a comprehensive mapping of development and peacebuilding programs in the Bangsamoro and adjacent areas, to help eliminate redundancy and help ensure that investments are directed everywhere they are most needed. Working with local civil society, including through provision of funding, particularly with organisations focused on indigenous groups and islanders, as well as women leaders, could be another way to support higher levels of civic participation and a richer political life for these people.¹⁹⁷ In some

¹⁹² Crisis Group telephone interview, government official, 29 December 2021; Crisis Group interview, Cotabato City, 26 November 2021.

¹⁹³ Crisis Group interview, Cotabato City, civil society leader, 30 November 2021.

¹⁹⁴ Crisis Group telephone interview, civil society leader, 25 February 2021; Crisis Group interview, senior BARMM official close to MILF, Cotabato City, 9 December 2021. These bodies include the Joint Peace and Security Committee that designs normalisation activities on the ground. More broadly, the overseeing structures could be the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Reconciliation and Unity in Manila or the Joint Normalisation Committee consisting of government and MILF officials.

¹⁹⁵ The commission has so far been on the sidelines of the normalisation process. Crisis Group telephone interview, 14 January 2021.

¹⁹⁶ Crisis Group online interviews, development officials, 11 and 22 November 2021; academic, 20 November 2021; local scholar, 30 January 2022. Several Bangsamoro interlocutors voiced appreciation for donors' generosity but emphasised the need to be realistic in expectations of results. Donors are aware of this dilemma, recognising that interventions should entail a degree of "practicality". Crisis Group online interview, 23 November 2021.

¹⁹⁷ Some BARMM bureaucrats see particular merit in working with civil society, for example, to better understand how communities have responded to the pandemic. Crisis Group interview, Cotabato City, 26 November 2021.

cases, donors may be able to find additional resources for these activities in existing peacebuilding portfolios designed to support the transition.¹⁹⁸

To tie the need for inclusion with Bangsamoro's political realities, donors could also build on the experiences of the UN Insider Mediators platform – which helped bring civil society and the MILF together in the run-up to the Organic's Law's passage – to create a loose network of individuals trained in mediation. Such a network could consist of younger MILF and MNLF leaders, and both male and female representatives from all Moro and indigenous communities, including civil society organisations. Scions of the Bangsamoro's influential clans should also participate. Involving these young clan representatives could help address a gap that civil society figures and observers identified earlier in the peace process, whereby clans and youth did not actively shape political discourse.¹⁹⁹ The new generation would benefit from deeper knowledge of peace efforts and the emerging political order, as it will better prepare them to be effective leaders in the future.²⁰⁰ Such a platform would also allow for informal conversations among future regional policymakers, helping bridge the divides that persist in the newly autonomous region.

¹⁹⁸ Such as the European Union's flagship Subatra and Australian Aid's Pathways programs.

¹⁹⁹ Crisis Group online interviews, youth representative, 28 July 2021; peace process observer, 24 November 2021.

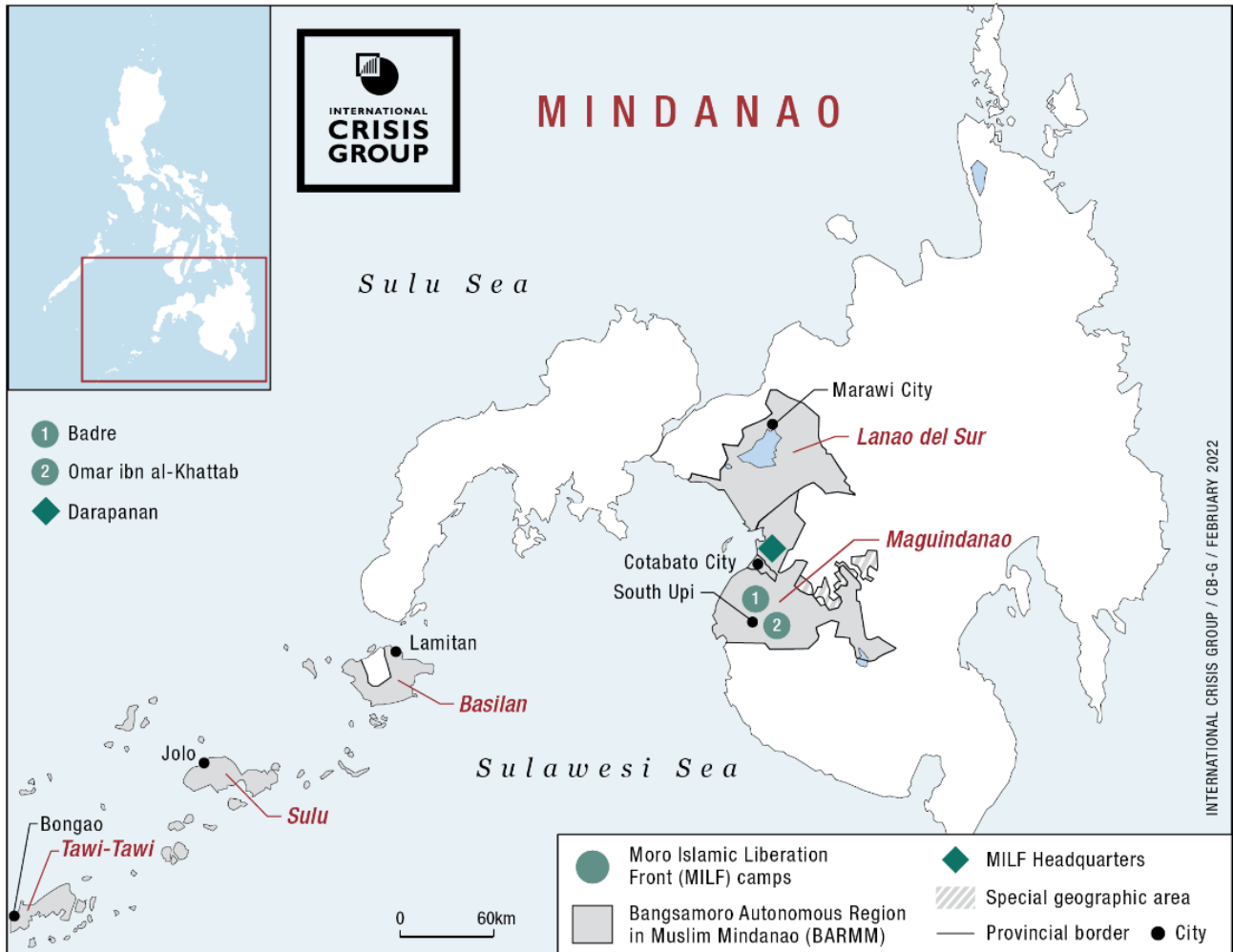
²⁰⁰ Crisis Group interviews, clan leaders, Marawi and Manila, 13 November and 10 December 2019.

VI. Conclusion

Ending the Moro conflict took decades. But while the peace process has put an end to open war in the Bangsamoro, the transition remains a work in progress, with many challenges. Regional disparities remain, clan feuds and uneasy relations between Moro and indigenous communities in Maguindanao linger, and the normalisation process is behind schedule. The extension of the transition period until 2025 could, in that regard, be a blessing in disguise. Indeed, the interim government can use the extra time to expand the gains achieved so far and to cultivate broader support among the population. It can work to equitably distribute peace dividends among all the people of the Bangsamoro, for example, and keep developing policies that support women's and minorities' participation in civic and political life. Doing so would help achieve the vision laid out in the peace agreements: a Bangsamoro that enjoys good governance, a region where men and women from all quarters can participate in building a more peaceful future.

Manila/Brussels, 18 February 2022

Appendix A: Map of Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindano (BARMM)



Appendix B: About the International Crisis Group

The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 120 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries or regions at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international, regional and national decision-takers. Crisis Group also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a monthly early-warning bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in up to 80 situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

Crisis Group's reports are distributed widely by email and made available simultaneously on its website, www.crisisgroup.org. Crisis Group works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The Crisis Group Board of Trustees – which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media – is directly involved in helping to bring the reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policymakers around the world. Crisis Group is co-chaired by President & CEO of the Fiore Group and Founder of the Radcliffe Foundation, Frank Giustra, as well as by former Foreign Minister of Argentina and Chef de Cabinet to the United Nations Secretary-General, Susana Malcorra.

Comfort Ero was appointed Crisis Group's President & CEO in December 2021. Ero first joined Crisis Group as West Africa Project Director in 2001 and later rose to become Africa Program Director and Interim Vice President. In between her two tenures at Crisis Group, she worked for the International Centre for Transitional Justice and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, UN Mission in Liberia.

Crisis Group's international headquarters is in Brussels, and the organisation has offices in seven other locations: Bogotá, Dakar, Istanbul, Nairobi, London, New York, and Washington, DC. It has presences in the following locations: Abuja, Addis Ababa, Bahrain, Baku, Bangkok, Beirut, Caracas, Gaza City, Guatemala City, Jerusalem, Johannesburg, Juba, Kabul, Kiev, Manila, Mexico City, Moscow, Seoul, Tbilisi, Toronto, Tripoli, Tunis, and Yangon.

Crisis Group receives financial support from a wide range of governments, foundations, and private sources. The ideas, opinions and comments expressed by Crisis Group are entirely its own and do not represent or reflect the views of any donor. Currently Crisis Group holds relationships with the following governmental departments and agencies: Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Austrian Development Agency, Canadian Department of National Defence, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, European Union Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, French Development Agency, French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, Global Affairs Canada, Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Liechtenstein, Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, United Arab Emirates (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy), United Nations Development Programme, United Nations World Food Programme, UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and the World Bank.

Crisis Group also holds relationships with the following foundations and organizations: Carnegie Corporation of New York, Ford Foundation, Global Challenges Foundation, Henry Luce Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Ploughshares Fund, Robert Bosch Stiftung, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Stiftung Mercator, and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.

February 2022

Appendix C: Reports and Briefings on Asia since 2019

Special Reports and Briefings

Council of Despair? The Fragmentation of UN Diplomacy, Special Briefing N°1, 30 April 2019.

Seven Opportunities for the UN in 2019-2020, Special Briefing N°2, 12 September 2019.

Seven Priorities for the New EU High Representative, Special Briefing N°3, 12 December 2019.

COVID-19 and Conflict: Seven Trends to Watch, Special Briefing N°4, 24 March 2020 (also available in French and Spanish).

A Course Correction for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, Special Briefing N°5, 9 December 2020.

Ten Challenges for the UN in 2021-2022, Special Briefing N°6, 13 September 2021.

North East Asia

The Case for Kaesong: Fostering Korean Peace through Economic Ties, Asia Report N°300, 24 June 2019.

South Asia

After Sri Lanka's Easter Bombings: Reducing Risks of Future Violence, Asia Report N°302, 27 September 2019.

Getting the Afghanistan Peace Process Back on Track, Asia Briefing N°159, 2 October 2019.

Twelve Ideas to Make Intra-Afghan Negotiations Work, Asia Briefing N°160, 2 March 2020.

Raising the Stakes in Jammu and Kashmir, Asia Report N°310, 5 August 2020.

Pakistan's COVID-19 Crisis, Asia Briefing N°162, 7 August 2020.

Taking Stock of the Taliban's Perspectives on Peace, Asia Report N°311, 11 August 2020.

What Future for Afghan Peace Talks under a Biden Administration?, Asia Briefing N°165, 13 January 2021.

Pakistan: Shoring Up Afghanistan's Peace Process, Asia Briefing N°169, 30 June 2021.

Beyond Emergency Relief: Averting Afghanistan's Humanitarian Catastrophe, Asia Report N°317, 6 December 2021.

Pakistan's Hard Policy Choices in Afghanistan, Asia Report N°320, 4 February 2022.

Women and Peacebuilding in Pakistan's North West, Asia Report N°321, 14 February 2022.

South East Asia

Fire and Ice: Conflict and Drugs in Myanmar's Shan State, Asia Report N°299, 8 January 2019 (also available in Burmese).

A New Dimension of Violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State, Asia Briefing N°154, 24 January 2019 (also available in Burmese).

Building a Better Future for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh, Asia Briefing N°155, 25 April 2019.

An Opening for Internally Displaced Person Returns in Northern Myanmar, Asia Briefing N°156, 28 May 2019 (also available in Burmese).

The Philippines: Militancy and the New Bangsamoro, Asia Report N°301, 27 June 2019.

Peace and Electoral Democracy in Myanmar, Asia Briefing N°157, 6 August 2019.

Myanmar: A Violent Push to Shake Up Cease-fire Negotiations, Asia Briefing N°158, 24 September 2019.

A Sustainable Policy for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh, Asia Report N°303, 27 December 2019.

Southern Thailand's Peace Dialogue: Giving Substance to Form, Asia Report N°304, 21 January 2020 (also available in Malay and Thai).

Commerce and Conflict: Navigating Myanmar's China Relationship, Asia Report N°305, 30 March 2020.

Southern Philippines: Tackling Clan Politics in the Bangsamoro, Asia Report N°306, 14 April 2020.

Conflict, Health Cooperation and COVID-19 in Myanmar, Asia Briefing N°161, 19 May 2020.

An Avoidable War: Politics and Armed Conflict in Myanmar's Rakhine State, Asia Report N°307, 9 June 2020.

Rebooting Myanmar's Stalled Peace Process, Asia Report N°308, 19 June 2020.

COVID-19 and a Possible Political Reckoning in Thailand, Asia Report N°309, 4 August 2020.

Identity Crisis: Ethnicity and Conflict in Myanmar, Asia Report N°312, 28 August 2020.

Majority Rules in Myanmar's Second Democratic Election, Asia Briefing N°163, 22 October 2020 (also available in Burmese).

From Elections to Ceasefire in Myanmar's Rakhine State, Asia Briefing N°164, 23 December 2020.

Responding to the Myanmar Coup, Asia Briefing N°166, 16 February 2021.

The Cost of the Coup: Myanmar Edges Toward State Collapse, Asia Briefing N°167, 1 April 2021.

Southern Philippines: Keeping Normalisation on Track in the Bangsamoro, Asia Report N°313, 15 April 2021.

Myanmar's Military Struggles to Control the Virtual Battlefield, Asia Report N°314, 18 May 2021.

Taking Aim at the Tatmadaw: The New Armed Resistance to Myanmar's Coup, Asia Briefing N°168, 28 June 2021.

Competing Visions of International Order in the South China Sea, Asia Report N°315, 29 November 2021.

The Philippines' Dilemma: How to Manage Tensions in the South China Sea, Asia Report N°316, 2 December 2021.

Vietnam Tacks Between Cooperation and Struggle in the South China Sea, Asia Report N°318, 7 December 2021.

Myanmar's Coup Shakes Up Its Ethnic Conflicts, Asia Report N°319, 12 January 2022.

Appendix D: International Crisis Group Board of Trustees

PRESIDENT

Comfort Ero

Former Crisis Group Vice Interim President and Africa Program Director

CO-CHAIRS

Frank Giustra

President & CEO, Fiore Group; Founder, Radcliffe Foundation

Susana Malcorra

Former Foreign Minister of Argentina

OTHER TRUSTEES

Fola Adeola

Founder and Chairman, FATE Foundation

Hushang Ansary

Chairman, Parman Capital Group LLC; Former Iranian Ambassador to the U.S. and Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs

G rard Araud

Former Ambassador of France to the U.S.

Carl Bildt

Former Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Sweden

Sandra Breka

CEO of the Robert Bosch Stiftung

Maria Livanos Cattau

Former Secretary General of the International Chamber of Commerce

Ahmed Charai

Chairman and CEO of Global Media Holding and publisher of the Moroccan weekly *L'Observateur*

Nathalie Delapalme

Executive Director and Board Member at the Mo Ibrahim Foundation

Alexander Downer

Former Australian Foreign Minister and High Commissioner to the United Kingdom

Sigmar Gabriel

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Vice Chancellor of Germany

Hu Shuli

Editor-in-Chief of Caixin Media; Professor at Sun Yat-sen University

Mo Ibrahim

Founder and Chair, Mo Ibrahim Foundation; Founder, Celtel International

Wadah Khanfar

Co-Founder, Al Sharq Forum; former Director General, Al Jazeera Network

Nasser al-Kidwa

Chairman of the Yasser Arafat Foundation; Former UN Deputy Mediator on Syria

Bert Koenders

Former Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations

Andrey Kortunov

Director General of the Russian International Affairs Council

Ivan Krastev

Chairman of the Centre for Liberal Strategies (Sofia); Founding Board Member of European Council on Foreign Relations

Tzipi Livni

Former Foreign Minister and Vice Prime Minister of Israel

Helge Lund

Former Chief Executive BG Group (UK) and Statoil (Norway)

Lord (Mark) Malloch-Brown

Former UN Deputy Secretary-General and Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

William H. McRaven

Retired U.S. Navy Admiral who served as 9th Commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command

Shivshankar Menon

Former Foreign Secretary of India; former National Security Adviser

Naz Modirzadeh

Director of the Harvard Law School Program on International Law and Armed Conflict

Federica Mogherini

Former High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Saad Mohseni

Chairman and CEO of MOBY Group

Ayo Obe

Chair of the Board of the Gor e Institute (Senegal); Legal Practitioner (Nigeria)

Lubna Olayan

Chair of Executive Committee and Deputy Chairperson of Olayan Financing Company (OFC)

Meghan O'Sullivan

Former U.S. Deputy National Security Adviser on Iraq and Afghanistan

Kerry Propper

Managing Partner of ATW Partners; Founder and Chairman of Chardan Capital

Ahmed Rashid

Author and Foreign Policy Journalist, Pakistan

Ghassan Salam 

Former UN Secretary-General's Special Representative and Head of the UN Support Mission in Libya; Former Minister of Culture of Lebanon; Founding Dean of the Paris School of International Affairs, Sciences Po University

Juan Manuel Santos Calder n

Former President of Colombia; Nobel Peace Prize Laureate 2016

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Former President of Liberia

Alexander Soros

Deputy Chair of the Global Board, Open Society Foundations

George Soros

Founder, Open Society Foundations and Chair, Soros Fund Management

Darian Swig

Founder and President, Article 3 Advisors; Co-Founder and Board Chair, Article3.org

Helle Thorning-Schmidt

CEO of Save the Children International; former Prime Minister of Denmark

Wang Jisi

Member, Foreign Policy Advisory Committee of the Chinese Foreign Ministry; President, Institute of International and Strategic Studies, Peking University

CORPORATE COUNCILS

A distinguished group of companies who share Crisis Group's vision and values, providing support and sharing expertise to strengthen our efforts in preventing deadly conflict.

President's Council

CORPORATE	INDIVIDUAL	
BP	(2) Anonymous	Stephen Robert
Shearman & Sterling LLP	David Brown & Erika Franke	Alexander Soros
White & Case LLP	The Edelman Family Foundation	Ian R. Taylor

International Advisory Council

CORPORATE	INDIVIDUAL	
(1) Anonymous	(3) Anonymous	David Jannetti
APCO Worldwide Inc.	Mark Bergman	Faisal Khan
Chevron	Stanley Bergman & Edward Bergman	Cleopatra Kitt
Edelman UK & Ireland	Peder Bratt	Samantha Lasry
Eni	Lara Dauphinee	Jean Manas & Rebecca Haile
Equinor	Herman De Bode	Dror Moreh
Ninety One	Ryan Dunfield	Lise Strickler & Mark Gallogly
Tullow Oil plc	Tanaz Eshaghian	Charitable Fund
Warburg Pincus	Seth & Jane Ginns	The Nommontu Foundation
	Ronald Glickman	Brian Paes-Braga
	Geoffrey R. Hogue & Ana Luisa Ponti	Kerry Propper
	Geoffrey Hsu	Duco Sickinghe
		Nina K. Solarz
		Raffi Vartanian

Ambassador Council

Rising leaders from diverse fields who contribute their perspectives and talents to support Crisis Group's mission.

Christina Bache	Reid Jacoby	Betsy (Colleen) Popken
Alieu Bah	Tina Kaiser	Sofie Roehrig
Amy Benziger	Jennifer Kanyamibwa	Perfecto Sanchez
James Blake	Gillian Lawie	Rahul Sen Sharma
Thomas Cunningham	David Litwak	Chloe Squires
Matthew Devlin	Madison Malloch-Brown	Leeanne Su
Sabrina Edelman	Megan McGill	AJ Twombly
Sabina Frizell	Hamesh Mehta	Theodore Waddelow
Sarah Covill	Clara Morain Nabity	Zachary Watling
Lynda Hammes	Gillian Morris	Grant Webster
Joe Hill	Duncan Pickard	Sherman Williams
Lauren Hurst	Lorenzo Piras	Yasin Yaqubie

SENIOR ADVISERS

Former Board Members who maintain an association with Crisis Group, and whose advice and support are called on (to the extent consistent with any other office they may be holding at the time).

Martti Ahtisaari Chairman Emeritus	Kim Beazley Shlomo Ben-Ami	Swanee Hunt Wolfgang Ischinger
George Mitchell Chairman Emeritus	Christoph Bertram Lakhdar Brahimi	Aleksander Kwasniewski Ricardo Lagos
Thomas R. Pickering Chairman Emeritus	Kim Campbell Jorge Castañeda	Joanne Leedom-Ackerman Todung Mulya Lubis
Gareth Evans President Emeritus	Joaquim Alberto Chissano Victor Chu	Graça Machel Jessica T. Mathews
Kenneth Adelman Adnan Abu-Odeh	Mong Joon Chung Sheila Coronel	Miklós Németh Christine Ockrent
HRH Prince Turki al-Faisal Celso Amorim	Pat Cox Gianfranco Dell'Alba	Timothy Ong Roza Otunbayeva
Óscar Arias Richard Armitage	Jacques Delors Alain Destexhe	Olara Otunnu Lord (Christopher) Patten
Diego Arria Zainab Bangura	Mou-Shih Ding Uffe Ellemann-Jensen	Fidel V. Ramos Olympia Snowe
Nahum Barnea	Stanley Fischer Carla Hills	Javier Solana Pär Stenbäck