

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE**

**PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**SPEECH OF**

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.**

**AT THE “*PANABANG SI KASANYANGAN*” PEACE OFFERING  
CEREMONY**

[Delivered at the Kasanyangan (Peace) Monument, Sumisip, Basilan | 02  
March 2024]

Thank you to the special assistant, Secretary Anton Lagdameo.

*[Please take your seats.]*

To the distinguished guests, ambassadors, partners from the diplomatic corp, and the other NGO agencies who have joined us here today in commemoration for all the assistance that they have provided in making BARMM a success and for bringing peace in this area.

National Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro; National Security Council Secretary, Secretary Ed Año; the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, Secretary Charlie Galvez; BARMM Chief Minister Al-hajj Murad Ebrahim; and of course, Basilan Governor Hadjiman Hataman Salliman; and other distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Mga kasamahan ko sa pamahalaan; ang aking mga kababayan, magandang umaga sa inyong lahat.

Good morning and *assalamu alaikum!*

I am very happy to be here in beautiful, bountiful, and breathtaking Basilan.

Our presence in today’s event reaffirms the truth that what was once a Ground Zero of war, <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> is now turned into an epicenter of peace.

A province that was once tainted by violence and terrorism is now a zone of peace, made possible not by military might alone but more <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> so by a people saying no to violence.

Peace is more than the cessation of hostilities. It <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>is about the creation of a social order that values human dignity, improves lives, and promotes progress.

Peace is totally achieved not when the sound <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>of gunfire has ended. It is when the clamor for better lives has been met.

This is the kind of peace that we see that dawned of here in Basilan.

This is the kind of peace where the depressing tally of the casualties of war has been replaced by the statistics of human development.

The kind that endures because it uproots the causes of people's discontent that purveyors of violence may want to exploit.

This is the kind of peace that draws strength from the free will of the people instead of commanding their allegiance by force.

Basilan has arrived at this junction of its proud history because it refused to continue to be a place of violence .

Like its ancestors who fended off colonizers, <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>the *Yakans*, the *Tausugs*, the *Chavakanos* repudiated modern-day terrorism that was trying <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>to enslave them by enchanting them with lies.

Attacked and threatened, the people of Basilan stood their ground, again and again and again.

They never ceded their communities, never surrendered their future to an ideology that clashes with the values they hold dear.

*Kasama rin ang mga mamamayang Kristiyano ng Basilan na nanindigan sapagkat ang Kristiyanismo at Islam ay parehong nakapundar sa malalim na pananalig sa "salam."*

This is the kind of peace that we are witnessing in Basilan, of various faiths working together, because people chose not to let diversity be a cause of division, but used it as a source of strength and solidarity.

So, amidst these triumphs, it is just fitting that a year ago you unveiled the *Kasanyangan* Monument.

It is not just a memorial of the hard road to peace or a manifesto of never going back to the path of violence but a reminder of the long journey ahead

that we have yet to undertake. But by your actions, you have indeed honored the ideals this monument stands for.

Through your Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Assistance for Security, Peace, Integration and Recovery for Advanced Human Security <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> in BARMM (ASPIRE), these programs, the province of Basilan and its partners have facilitated the surrender of more than 400 firearms in exchange for livelihood opportunities, the documentation of more than 4,000 high-powered and small weapons, and the processing of almost 200 license to own and possess firearms.

You have also facilitated the surrender of former ASG members.

You have established greater control over the use and movement of weapons, fostering peace and order in the province.

For that is how peace is strengthened, <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> by disarmament, by decommissioning, <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> and by demobilization, in a society which has rejected arms as tools for political ends.

I recognize our public servants in the Provincial Government of Basilan, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity (OPAPRU), the AFP, the PNP, and the community and religious leaders, including the volunteers, for going above and beyond your call of duty.

And, of course, the political leadership, the governors here of the BARMM provinces, who are joining us on this important day.

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I also want to thank our international partners and allies, particularly the UN, <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> the EU, and the governments of Japan, and Australia for your unending support <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> to our pursuit of a just and amicable peace.

It must be woven now into the fabric of social life. In the case of Basilan, the harnessing of its potentials– a land blessed with resources, and a people rich in talent – is the key to enduring peace, one that is based on common progress <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> and shared prosperity.

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Basilan's new role is now the war against hunger.

You have a land area twice the size of Singapore, blessed with a rich soil, above-all more or less typhoon-free, which makes you an ideal bulwark in our fight for food security.

*Ang kailangan lang ay tulungan ang Basilan para maging isang lubos na food and fisheries production center.*

*Kasama niyo ang pambansang pamahalaan sa bagong hamon na hinaharap ninyo na ito. [Applause]*

When your agri-fisheries potentials are unlocked, the whole country, not only Basilan, not only BARMM but the whole country will benefit.

This makes Basilan no longer an island far south, but a very strategic island in the front and center of our national goals and our transformation.

Your future and fate are therefore intertwined with the nation's. Please be assured that we will play our role as partner of Basilan's great leap forward.

May the hope we feel today sustain what we have already achieved in Basilan, and power us towards a *Bagong Pilipinas*.

*Maraming salamat sa inyong lahat. Mabuhay tayong lahat at magandang umaga po sa inyo!*

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