

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK

SPEECH BY

PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.

**AT THE OPENING OF THE 2024 NATIONAL PEACE CONSCIOUSNESS MONTH AND THE
COMMEMORATION OF THE 28TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1996 FINAL PEACE AGREEMENT WITH THE
MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT**

[Delivered at Ceremonial Hall of Malacañan Palace | 02 September 2024]

Thank you to the Special Assistant to the President, Secretary Anton Lagdameo --- [*please take your seats*] --- who is also been our important operator in the issues that have been coming up as we prepare for the elections of next year for the parliamentary --- for the parliamentary members of the Autonomous Parliament of BARMM; the honorable members of the Cabinet; the Presidential Adviser on Peace and Reconciliation and Unity, Charlie Galvez Jr.; the Chair of the National Liberation Front, or MNLF and Minister Muslimin Sema; Vice Chair Moro National Liberation Front and Deputy Speaker, Abdulkarim Tan Misuari; my fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen, good morning!

Assalamu alaikum!

It is fitting that as we open the National Peace Consciousness Month, we also mark the 28th Anniversary of the 1996 Final Peace Agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front.

This momentous occasion brings us back to a defining chapter in our history when the government and the MNLF formally ended their decades-long struggle.

From the forging of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement under my father's administration to the signing of the 1996 Final Peace Agreement, we have demonstrated mutual respect and strong collaboration and a burning desire for peace.

In our broader quest for peace, we have also engaged other stakeholders in helping us forge a path towards meaningful autonomy for the Bangsamoro.

In 2014, the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro was signed. The journey was long and it was difficult. Negotiations sometimes stalled and there were occasions of very difficult areas of impasse.

However, our fervor and determination for lasting peace has endured. Through continuous conversations, concessions, compromise, we finally signed the Bangsamoro Organic Law in 2018.

The BOL is a testament to the value of peace for Filipinos. It enshrines the hopes and the dreams of the Bangsamoro people through the creation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The negotiations and peace talks took years and brought out a number of disagreements. Nonetheless, we persevered and came through for the sake of healing and for reconciliation for the betterment of our fellow Filipinos in Mindanao and of all Filipinos in the Philippines.

Not only did our efforts lead to peace, it also resulted in increased investments, generated more employment, helped lower the poverty incidence in BARMM.

I extend my gratitude to the men and women of the MNLF, under the leadership of Chair Nur Misuari and Chair Muslimin Sema, for your steadfast commitment as natural allies of this Administration and of course, as our brothers, our partners, and sisters in peace.

Let me recognize your support in our anti-terrorism campaign, particularly in the provinces of Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi, where insurgency was among its foremost concerns.

We also acknowledge our international partners. We would not have progressed this far without your help, without your guidance.

Rest assured that you can depend on this Administration to implement all signed peace agreements for the security, the inclusive progress, and stability not only in Mindanao but throughout our country.

The peace processes with former revolutionary organizations such as the MILF, Cordillera Bodong Administration-Cordillera People's Liberation Army, and the Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawang Pilipinas/Revolutionary Proletarian Army/Alex Boncayao Brigade-Tabara Paduano Group – now known as KAPATIRAN are now in the advanced stages of implementation.

We are also implementing the Transformation Program, which aims to uplift the socio-economic conditions of MNLF combatants, and their families, and communities as well.

In the spirit of convergence, I urge you to continue working with all stakeholders in the region towards accountable, transparent, and people-centered in governance in the region.

We are likewise encouraging you to engage in a continuing open and constructive exchange and dialogue with government and its instrumentalities to discuss the experiences and challenges of our people in Mindanao so that we can provide responsive policies to serve you.

I also call on the MNLF and other stakeholders of BARMM to ensure a peaceful, orderly, and credible conduct of the 1st Bangsamoro Elections next year.

The forthcoming election is an important reminder not only of the democracy that empowers us to mold our destinies but also of the visionaries who paved the way for the freedom that we all relish today.

This landmark, the election of the members of parliament that will occur next year, is as important a landmark as the signing of all of the peace agreements. This will now, not only formalize, not only institutionalize but actually operationalize BARMM's part in the national government. And that is a very, very important landmark; a very, very important part of our peace agreement.

This --- that will be the day when we can say that we have recognized the autonomy of BARMM and BARMM has also found – has also recognized its membership into the fold of society within the national government. And that is an important conclusion to any peace effort.

With peace and understanding now firmly rooted in our communities during this year's celebration of the National Peace Consciousness Month, let us now focus on the transformation of our country towards a more inclusive, peaceful, and progressive society.

Peace begins within us, it flourishes the moment that we strip ourselves of the idea of “us versus them”, promote respect for our fellows, uphold every one’s dignity.

We can only promote peace if we cultivate the foundations, the conditions, the necessary environment for it to thrive and prosper in every corner of our society.

To my fellow Filipinos, the dividends of the peace that we have worked so hard to achieve are now upon us, and the responsibility to create a more inclusive and prosperous country now lies in our hands.

For us to move forward as a strong, undivided nation, the government will continue to pursue a principled and peaceful resolution to internal armed conflicts, with neither blame nor surrender, but with dignity for all.

Together, let us build a more secure and dignified *Bagong Pilipinas*—where no one is neglected, where no one feels helpless, and most importantly, where no one lives in fear.

Again, Happy National Peace Consciousness Month!

Mabuhay tayong lahat!

Mabuhay ang BARMM!

Mabuhay ang MNLF!

Marami pong salamat sa inyong lahat! [applause]

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