TPMT

THIRD PARTY MONITORING TEAM

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The first parliamentary elections in the Bangsamoro are a big achievement – but the peace process is not yet complete

Statement by the Third Party Monitoring Team (TPMT)

On 14 September 2026 more than 2 million voters in the Bangsamoro elected their first-ever regional Parliament, a significant collective step towards meaningful self-governance. The aspiration of the citizens of the Bangsamoro to chart their political future through a democratic process after decades of struggle was inspiring. Former combatants have become political actors. New parties were formed. New alliances were crafted. The people's votes counted. The high voter turnout bears witness to the outstanding importance which the Bangsamoro people have accorded to these polls.

These elections are a historic achievement and a direct result of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB), painstakingly negotiated between the Parties, the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) over a period of 17 years.

The Third Party Monitoring Team (TPMT) would like to express our appreciation to the COMELEC, election officers, election monitors, security personnel including those under peace process mechanisms, as well as domestic and international observers for their important contribution to the conduct of the elections under often challenging conditions. That being said, we are deeply concerned over the killings in the lead up to, and on the day of the election, alongside other reported incidents of violence. We join the calls for thorough investigations into each of these deaths.

Attention now shifts to the formation of the new elected government. The TPMT calls on all political stakeholders in the BARMM to respect the results of the elections and to ensure a peaceful and inclusive completion of the political transition.

With the impending establishment of the regular Bangsamoro government the political track of the CAB is about to reach its conclusion. This leaves the gradual normalization of previously conflict-affected areas and their transformation into peaceful and progressive communities as the major remaining task. As we have repeatedly pointed out, this represents an equally important part of the CAB. Decommissioning, camps transformation, disbanding of private armed groups, and transitional justice and reconciliation feature among the many tasks yet to be fully accomplished. Whatever the composition of the future Bangsamoro government, the remaining obligations necessitate the sustained and effective cooperation between the MILF and the Central Government as the Parties bearing primary responsibility for the efficient and effective implementation of the CAB.

The CAB represents the political commitment by the Philippine government and the MILF to build a future for all Bangsamoro, offering a just solution to the Bangsamoro question and a path to lasting peace. ~~T~~This agreement is a promise signed on behalf of the nation, and a commitment to the nation. It is a promise to be kept. We call on all political stakeholders in the BARMM and Manila to uphold and nurture commitment to the CAB in a spirit of trust and mutual respect.

The TPMT notes as positive the continued strong commitment by the Peace Implementing Panels to the implementation of the CAB. We very much welcome the re-engagement led by GPH Panel Chair Mel Senen Sarmiento and MILF Panel Chair Mohagher Iqbal which already resulted in the lifting of the temporary suspension of cooperation in the field of normalization. We further welcome the Special Meeting of the Panels scheduled to take place on 25 September in Kuala Lumpur upon the invitation of Malaysian Facilitator Tan Sri Dato Seri Panglima Zulkifli Zainal Abidin. As the BARMM looks beyond election day, the Special Meeting is of particular importance as it offers the opportunity to review progress under the peace agreement and to agree on concrete steps to ensure that all of its targets shall be fulfilled for the benefit of future generations.

The TPMT stands ready to contribute to this aim. ###

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