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Press Release

Third-Party Monitoring Team issues its third annual Public Report

Notes developments over the past twelve months, and highlights the need to sustain public confidence in the peace process during the governmental transition.

The Third-Party Monitoring Team (TPMT), formally established in 2013 as part of the peace process between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, today issued its third annual Public Report.

TPMT Chair Alistair MacDonald said “the past year has been a difficult one, with the tragic events at Mamasapano casting a dark shadow over the peace process throughout the year, and with Congress being unable to complete its deliberations on the BBL. There has however been significant progress in a number of areas, including for example the successful completion of the first, ceremonial, stage of decommissioning on 16 June, or the completion of the work of the Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission.”

MacDonald noted also that there has been an upwelling of both domestic and international support for the peace process. And most importantly, both Parties have remained fully engaged with the process – as confirmed at the most recent meeting of the Panels in Kuala Lumpur on 10-11 February, or in the statement of MILF Chair Murad Ebrahim on 18 February.

Nevertheless, the failure of this Congress to complete its deliberations on the BBL has meant that confidence in the peace process among the wider Moro community has taken a knock, and MacDonald noted that this setback, with its attendant frustration, could increase the risk that some young people may become more attracted to violent extremism – against which risk the most effective vaccination is a successful conclusion to the peace process.

MacDonald concluded therefore that it will be essential to build a path forward, so that the next Administration can hit the ground running, and to work to sustain public confidence in the process during this period of transition. He added that “the TPMT remains confident that the prize of peace can be attained, since no Administration can afford to ignore the costs of conflict in Mindanao – the human costs, the developmental costs, the security costs, or the risk of worsening a climate conducive to the spread of violent extremism. The FAB and CAB will therefore remain the cornerstone of peace, and it will be the responsibility of the next Administration and the next Congress to bring this process to a successful conclusion.”

Background

The independent Third-Party Monitoring Team (TPMT) was set up by the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front to monitor the implementation of the GPH-MILF peace agreement, as provided for in the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB) signed on 15 October 2012.

The TPMPT has five members (two nominated by the GPH, two by the MILF, and a jointly-nominated Chair) : Karen Tañada (Gaston Z Ortigas Peace Institute, Philippines), Steven Rood (The Asia Foundation, USA), Rahib Kudto (UNYPAD, Philippines), Huseyin Oruç (IHH, Turkey), and Alistair MacDonald (Chair, former EU Ambassador to the Philippines, now retired).

The TPMPT is tasked with monitoring, reviewing and assessing the implementation of all signed agreements between the Parties, primarily the FAB and its Annexes. In particular, its basic functions are to :

- monitor and evaluate the implementation of all agreements;*
- review and assess the progress of the implementation of commitments by both Parties under the Agreements (submitting comprehensive periodic reports and updates to both Parties for their appropriate action);*
- and to communicate to the public the progress and developments in the implementation of the Agreements of the Parties.*

The TPMPT was launched in July of 2013, on the basis of Terms of Reference agreed by the Parties in January of that year. The TPMPT has so far convened sixteen times in the Philippines, on a roughly two-monthly basis, and will continue its work through until the completion of the Exit Document foreseen in the FAB.

The present Public Report is the third such report issued by the TPMPT (previous reports were issued in February 2014 and February 2015).

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