

NATIONAL HARMONY

National Harmony is one of the main agenda of President Arroyo in her MTPDP. In her 10-point legacy, Arroyo pledged: "Peace will have come to Mindanao and all insurgency areas."

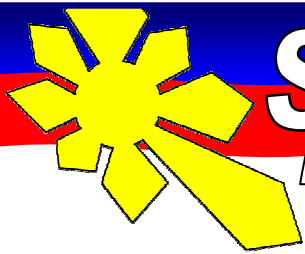
Summary

Peace talks

- **CPP-NPA:** President Arroyo resumed formal talks a few months into her term but acknowledged the US and EU governments' "terrorist" listing of the CPP-NPA a year after. The talks then went downhill—highlighted by the arrest of CPP founder Jose Ma. Sison in 2007. After a five-year hiatus, the formal talks will resume August this year.
- **MILF:** The GRP-MILF peace process during the nine years of the Arroyo government has its share of landmarks. But since August last year, or for almost a year, peace negotiations collapsed following the failed signing of the memorandum of agreement on ancestral domain. GRP said last month that it is ready to revive the talks: Arroyo on July 23 issued a policy directive suspending the offensive military operations against the MILF.

Armed conflicts, internally displaced persons, cost of conflict

- **198** armed conflicts nationwide since PGMA assumed office in 2001
- Under Arroyo's term, 2008 had the most number of people displaced—145,427 families or 697, 969 persons. This was due to attacks triggered by the failed MOA-AD.
- The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre ranked the Philippines no.1 in the world in terms of number of displaced persons in 2008.
- **DISPLACED:** From 2001- 2008, nearly all—9 in 10--displaced by armed conflict came from Mindanao.
- **CASUALTIES:** Since 2001, government records on armed conflicts show at least of 747 deaths, 649 injured and 21 missing persons from government troops, civilians and rebels.
- **COST OF ASSISTANCE:** Government figures estimated that the total cost of assistance extended to those displaced by armed conflict has reached almost half a billion since 2001 -- **P494.469 million**.
- **COST OF PEACE MAKING:** From 2003 – 2008, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process has been allocated a budget of **P1.4 Billion**. The funds have come mostly from government and some from grants and donations.



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Fast Facts



National harmony... (cont'd)

Peace talks between the GRP and CPP-NPA-NDF

(a more detailed timeline is available on QS)

Past administrations

Peace negotiations between the government and communist rebels began informally during the time of President Corazon Aquino (1986-1992). Significant steps were made during the administration of President Fidel Ramos (1992-1998) when he decriminalized the CPP-NPA through the repeal of the Anti-Subversion Law in 1992 and the signing of several significant agreements:

- the 1992 Hague Joint declaration which opened the formal peace talks
- the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (Jasig) in 1995 that gave safety passes for the people involved in the formal peace talks
- the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (Carhrihl) in March 1998.

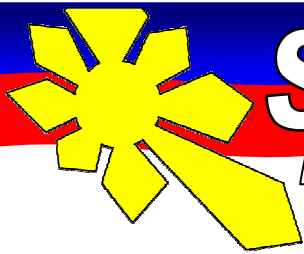
During the short term of President Joseph Estrada (1998-2001), the approval of the Carhrihl in 1998 was the main highlight. Estrada suspended and subsequently formally terminated the peace talks until he was ousted from office.

Arroyo administration

- 2001: Formal talks resumed in Oslo with the signing of the Oslo Joint Communique in April. But during the second round of talks in June, GRP declared a recess, then suspension of formal talks. Five informal talks were held subsequently.
- 2002: In August, the US government announced the inclusion of CPP/NPA in its list of "foreign terrorist organizations" and, later, financial sanctions on CPP/NPA and its founder Jose Ma. Sison. Arroyo welcomed the US listing and opted for a military solution to the armed conflict by issuing the "Nine point guidelines on the CPP" also in August.
- 2004: After four informal talks, formal talks resumed in February in Oslo, where the Oslo Joint Statement was signed so both sides would take effective measures to resolve the "terrorist listing" issue.

After the second and third rounds of formal talks in Oslo, where small agreements were signed, the NDF postponed the scheduled fourth round of formal talks in August to give GRP time to comply with agreements. In December, GRP declared suspension of formal talks.

- 2005: President Arroyo suspended the Jasig in September
- 2006: In February, the PNP charged with rebellion/insurrection 51 people including NDF leaders Sison and Jalandoni and four party-list representatives for alleged involvement in the attempt to overthrow the Arroyo government. AFP chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon vowed to crush communist insurgency by 2010.
- 2007: In August, Sison was arrested by Dutch police and ordered detained by a judge in The Hague on charges of giving orders, from the Netherlands, to murder former communist associates Romulo Kintanar and Arturo Tabara. He was released in September.



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National harmony... (cont'd)

- 2008: The Norwegian government hosted in May an informal meeting for the GRP and NDF representatives to restart the stalled peace process. A three-day “secret” meeting of the peace panels was held again in Oslo in November.
- 2009: After a five-year break, formal talks will resume in August
 - On June 15, the parties met in The Hague and agreed on the necessary preparations for the resumption of formal talks.
 - On July 8, Malacañang and the NDF announced that preparations are being made for the resumption of formal talks in Oslo in August 2009. Both negotiating panels have agreed on the implementation of the Jasig to enable persons to participate in the preparatory meeting and formal talks. Both panels have also agreed to exchange within July their respective drafts of the Joint Statement that shall embody the agenda and points of agreement of the panels in the formal talks.

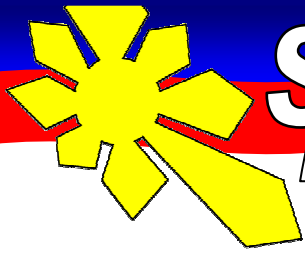
Peace talks between the GRP and MILF *(a more detailed timeline is available on QS)*

Past administrations

- The Tripoli Agreement of 1976 was the highlight of peace negotiations with the Muslims under the Marcos administration. But subsequent acts of Marcos went against the agreement; violence ensued.
- Under the Aquino administration, the Jeddah Accord was signed in 1987, only to be overtaken by the then newly ratified Constitution, which provided for the creation of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The Organic Act creating the ARMM was signed into law in 1989. Four provinces voted to be included in the region, which elected its first set of officials in 1990.
- The Ramos administration gained much headway with negotiations and programs that culminated in the signing of the final peace agreement between the GRP and the Moro National Liberation Front in 1996. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front, however, continued with its struggle, but committed to a ceasefire in 1997. Peace talks between the government and MILF started on January 7, 1997.
- President Estrada declared an "all-out war" against the MILF in 2000, suspending the peace talks. MILF's main headquarters, Camp Abubakar, was overrun in July that year.

Arroyo administration

- 2001: agreements jumpstarting the resumption of GRP-MILF peace talks were signed; a law strengthening and expanding the ARMM lapsed into law without the President's signature (RA 9054)
- 2003: President Arroyo declared a war against the MILF following a series of bombings in Mindanao and hostilities between government troops and MILF forces; peace talks resumed later that year where both panels agreed on a “mutual cessation of hostilities”
- 2004: GRP-MILF peace talks began threshing out the issue of ancestral domain, but difficulties arose in subsequent years as both parties did not agree on the areas to be placed under the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity.



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Fast Facts



National harmony... (cont'd)

- 2007: Marine officers were beheaded in Basilan on July 10 after skirmishes with the MILF. Both peace panels noted in November that year that the exploratory talks successfully resolved outstanding issues on the ancestral domain issue.
- 2008: The Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) was initialed in Malaysia in July. The Supreme Court issued a TRO on the formal signing of the MOA-AD in August upon the petition of local officials from North Cotabato. President Arroyo dissolved the peace panel in September, and the Supreme Court ultimately declared the MOA-AD unconstitutional in October.
- 2009: the GRP is awaiting advice from the Malaysian government, the third-party facilitator, on when the peace talks will resume; PGMA declared the suspension of offensive military operations on July 23

Armed conflict

- The last year of the Estrada administration recorded 50 armed conflicts *(see QS for details)*.
- Since PGMA assumed office in 2001, continuous intense fighting between the government troops and rebel groups resulted in 198 armed conflicts nationwide recorded by the DSWD and NDCC.

The highest number of recorded armed conflicts, 30, was in 2008, all in Mindanao. These conflicts occurred after the failed MOA-AD in 2008. *(see QS for details)*

Because of these armed conflicts, various places in Mindanao were placed under state of calamity: the provinces of Maguindanao and Lanao del Norte; the municipalities of Libungan in Cotabato and Tangkal, Linamon, Kauswagan, Munai, and Kolambugan, Lanao del Norte were placed under the state of calamity.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) – “bakwits” *(see QS for details)*

- From 2000 to 2009, government recorded the most number of internally displaced in 2000—the last full year of the Estrada administration.

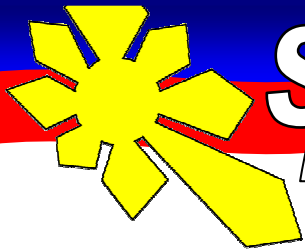
Almost a million persons (985,412) were displaced in 2000, the year that marked Estrada’s all-out war against the MILF.

- Under Arroyo’s term, 2008 had the most number of displaced—145,427 families or 697, 969 persons.

All these people were displaced by the conflicts in some part in Mindanao after the failure of the MOA-AD.

- Based on the 2008 data, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre ranked the Philippines no.1 in the world in terms of number of displaced persons.

The IDMC is a Geneva-based international body monitoring conflict-induced internal displacement. The IDMC keeps its own database sourced from various government agencies and media reports.



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Fast Facts



National harmony... (cont'd)

- From 2001- 2008, nearly all—9 in 10-- displaced by armed conflict came from Mindanao.
- The military operations against the Pentagon kidnap-for-ransom group and succeeding military offensives against Islamic rebel groups in 2003 resulted in the highest number of displaced – 91,151 families or 452,258 persons.
- The attacks by MILF 'renegade' commanders after the unsuccessful MOA-AD resulted in the displacement of 145,427 families or 697,969 persons.

Casualties of war

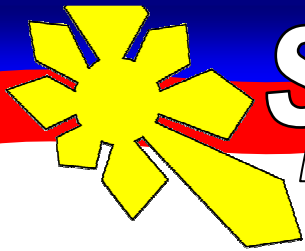
- PGMA's all-out policy on peace was among her first orders when she took office.

Less than a month into office, Arroyo issued Executive Order No. 3 dated February 28, 2001 entitled "Defining Policy and Administrative Structure for Government's Comprehensive Peace Efforts". The EO states "the government shall continue to pursue a comprehensive, integrated and holistic approach to peace" in solving the problem of insurgency and Islamic rebel groups in Mindanao."

- The 'all-out peace' policy of the government did not result in "no" or "less" casualties due to armed conflict. Since 2001, government records show at least of 747 deaths, 649 injured and 21 missing persons from government troops, civilians and rebels.
- The year of the military pursuit against the Pentagon group, 2003, was the same year that recorded the most number of casualties -- 284 deaths and 227 injuries nationwide, but mostly from Mindanao. 2008 closely follows with 163 deaths and 123 injuries. The figures reflect the fighting that followed the failed MOA-AD.

Cost of conflict

- Government figures estimated that the total cost of assistance extended to those displaced by armed conflict has reached almost half a billion since 2001 -- P494.469 million.
- Last year, 2008, recorded the biggest amount spent for assistance to those displaced by internal conflict under the Arroyo administration -- P211.975 million. Funds come from the DSWD, local government units and non-government agencies.
- The government spent the most for assistance during major military operations and political conflicts - - P106 M in 2003 during the military offensive against the Buliok Complex and P211.9 in 2008 when some parts of Mindanao were battered by MILF attacks triggered by the failed MOA-AD.
- The effects of the "all-out war" against the MIILF by President Estrada in 2000 carried over to 2001 where the government spent P121 million for assistance. This is the second biggest amount spent on assistance due to armed conflict under the Arroyo administration.
- In one year, from August 2008 to July 2009, NDCC estimates the cost of damages to infrastructure and agriculture at **P252 million**.



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National harmony... (cont'd)

- Government figures show 2003 as the year where conflict wreaked the most damage against property since Arroyo took office: **7,404** houses were totally and partially destroyed.

This was the year when Arroyo ordered a military offensive against the Buliok Complex in Pikit, North Cotabato, a camp tagged as base of lawless groups.

- In 2008, MILF renegade forces launched attacks on several towns in North Cotabato. Data show **1,850** houses were damaged -- the second highest since 2001.

Cost of Peace

- From 2003 – 2008, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process has been allocated a budget of **P1.4 Billion**. The funds have come mostly from government and some from grants and donations.
- The Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process was allocated its biggest budget, **P426,319,038.18** in 2008 – almost double the allocation of the previous year.

Other peace efforts

Balik Baril Project

- The Aquino administration launched the Balik Baril program under the AFP in March 1987. The program aimed to entice armed groups like the CPP-NPA, MILF, MNLF breakaway group to surrender their weapons and return to mainstream. It offered money to rebel returnees for weapons surrendered.
- The total number of surrendered firearms and explosives from 2000-2008 under the Balik Baril Project was about 6,549.
- Since President Arroyo took office in 2001, about 7,397 rebels have availed of the Balik Baril Project of the DND and AFP.
- Under PGMA's term, in March 2007, the Balik Baril project became a joint project by the AFP and the OPAPP through its Social Integration Program.

Social Integration Program (SIP)

- Arroyo's Administrative Order No. 172 created the Social Integration Program in 2007. The National Committee on Social Integration (NCSI) is tasked to implement the program, which allows rebel returnees to take course programs and monetary assistance to jumpstart their own business.
- From 2000 to 2008 period, the AFP recorded a total of 9,901 rebel returnees. The highest number of recorded rebel returnees under the program—2,504-- was in 2000 under the Estrada administration. This was closely followed by 2,153 rebel returnees in 2003 under PGMA's term.
- The number of rebel returnee has been declining from 2004-2008.