

The Bangsamoro Basic Law: Step Forward on a Longer Road to Peace

Soliman M. Santos, Jr.

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The recent signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) has taken the Bangsamoro problem and the Mindanao peace process back into the consciousness of the Filipino people. Through the leadership of President Benigno S. Aquino III, the Philippine Government (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) have agreed on a version of an organic act for Muslim Mindanao — the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).

This Article evaluates the BBL vis-à-vis the provisions of component peace agreements included in the CAB. The Article compares the provisions of the component agreements of the CAB, including, mainly, the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB), with the provisions of the BBL now pending before Congress, taking into consideration the statements made by the MILF about the BBL. The Article also touches on the peace agreements signed by the GPH and the Moro National Liberation Front and how the same are bound to affect the Mindanao peace process, in general, and the Bangsamoro problem, in particular. The Author also discussed the existing constitutional framework and how the same affects the over-all Mindanao peace process.

After exhaustive analysis and historical backtracking, the Author concludes that the signing of the FAB, the CAB, and the eventual enactment of the BBL should not be the end of the Mindanao peace process. As indicated by different statements and events from major stakeholders, the BBL is just but an initial and politically feasible step under the present Aquino Administration. The Author justifies that the enactment of the BBL today rather than stalling the whole process and ending up with nothing is the better option for the *Moros* in their aim for self-governance. The Author also suggests that, although constitutional amendments are intrinsically necessary to grant the Bangsamoro their legitimate aim for self-governance, this process can be deferred to a later time and after the proposed Bangsamoro Government has been given a test run. The Author ultimately posits that solving the Bangsamoro problem is a distant reality but the enactment of the BBL should be a welcome first step towards that eventuality.