

CONFLICT IN MINDANAO

Root Causes and Status

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Conflict situation in Mindanao

Government forces



MILF Forces

Sovereignty-based

Government forces



MNLF Forces

Sovereignty-based

Government forces



**Comunist Party
(CPP/NPA)**

Ideology-based

Government forces



Abu Sayaf/JI

Terrorism

Government forces



Criminal elements

Criminality

Clan/family



Clan/family

Rido (Clan conflict)

Scope of presentation

- This presentation is limited to the conflict between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Bangsamoro people.
- Specifically, between the GRP and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Who are the conflicting parties?

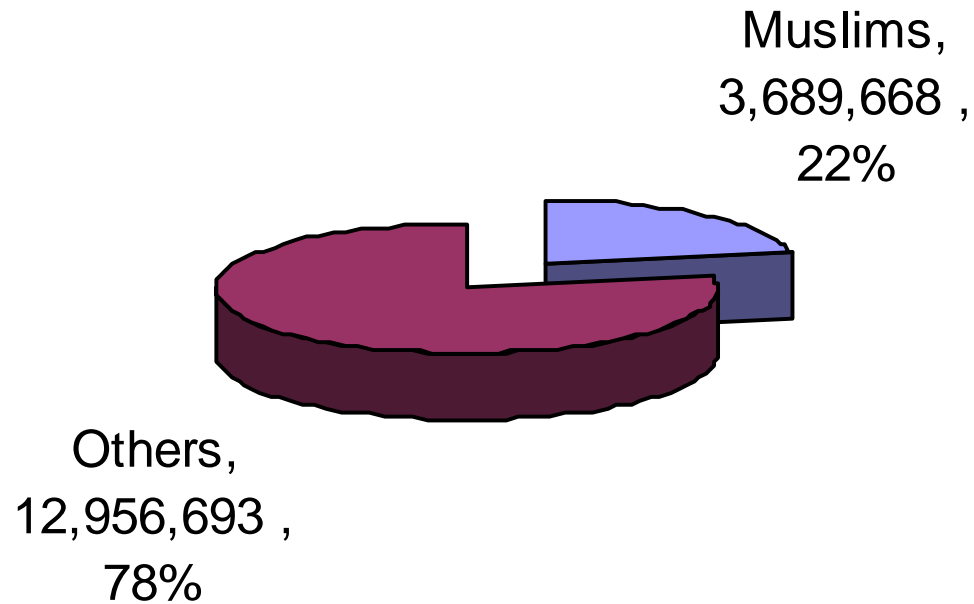
- The Government of the Republic of the Philippines
- The Bangsamoro people
 - Representative bodies:
 - Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)
 - Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)

Who are the Bangsamoro?

The Muslims who
traditionally inhabited
Mindanao, the islands of Basilan,
Palawan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi
call themselves Bangsamoro

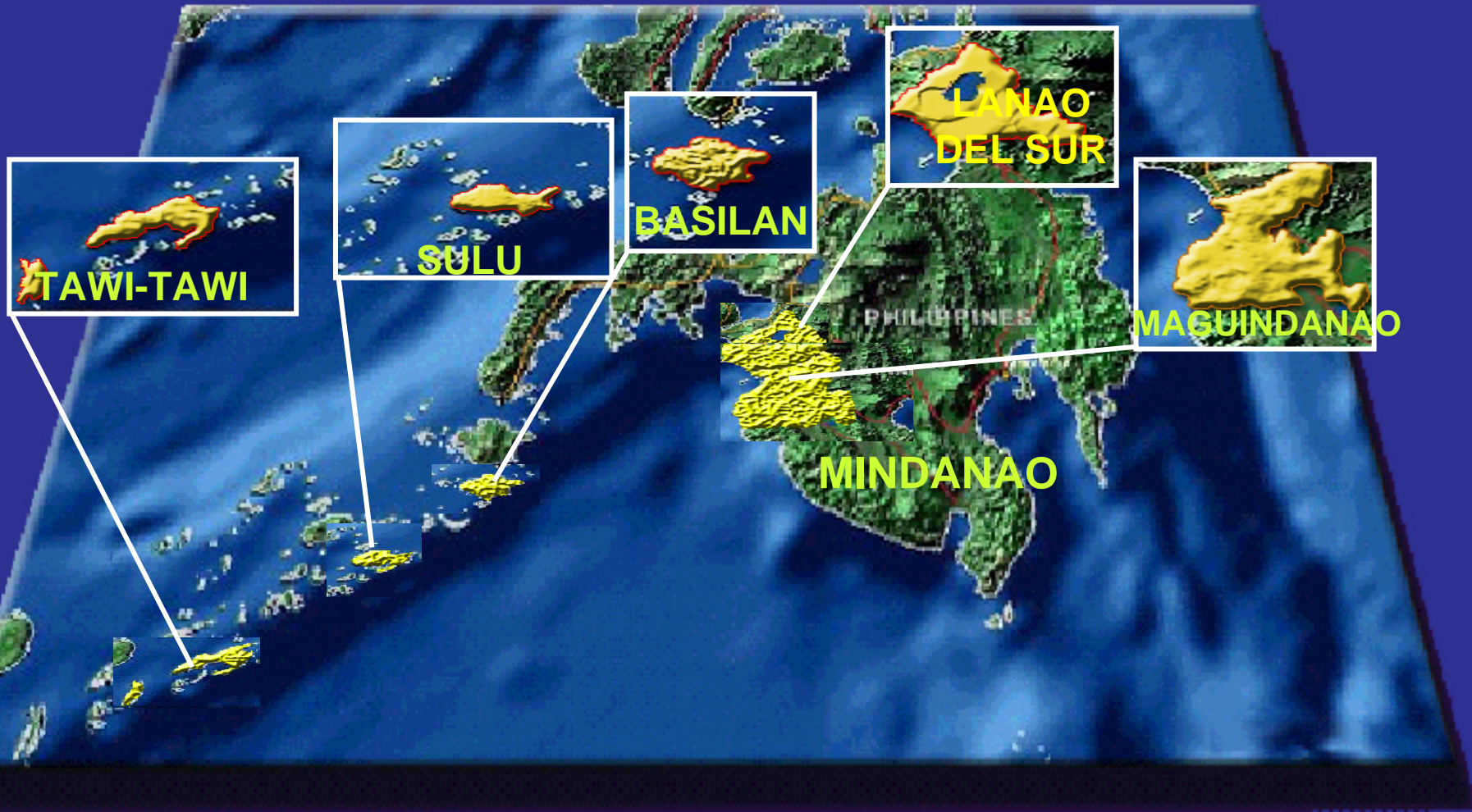


Muslims in Mindanao and Palawan (2000)



Total Population of Mindanao and Palawan (2000) - 16,646,361

Provinces where Muslims are majority



Conflict-affected areas

| Provinces Muslims are majority | Provinces Muslims are significant minority |
|---|--|
| Lanao del Sur Maguindanao Basilan Sulu Tawi-Tawi | North Cotabato Sultan Kudarat Lanao del Norte Zamboanga del Sur Zamboanga del Norte Zamboanga Sibugay South Cotabato Davao del Sur Davao Oriental Compostela Valley Sarangani Palawan |

Nature of the conflict

- **Sovereignty-based**

- Bangsamoro claim for separate independent state of their own
- Assertion of their right to determine their political status since their incorporation to the Philippine state was without their plebicitary consent.

Drivers

- Their historical awareness that before the formation of the Philippine state, the Bangsamoro people had their independent governments.
- Their unpleasant experiences under the Philippine unitary state.

Experiences Under the Philippines

Strong bias and prejudice of the Christian majority towards the Muslims

– Filipinas Foundation study (1973)

- Muslim-Filipinos were the “least likeable” ethnic group
- 54% of respondents had unfavorable comments towards Muslims

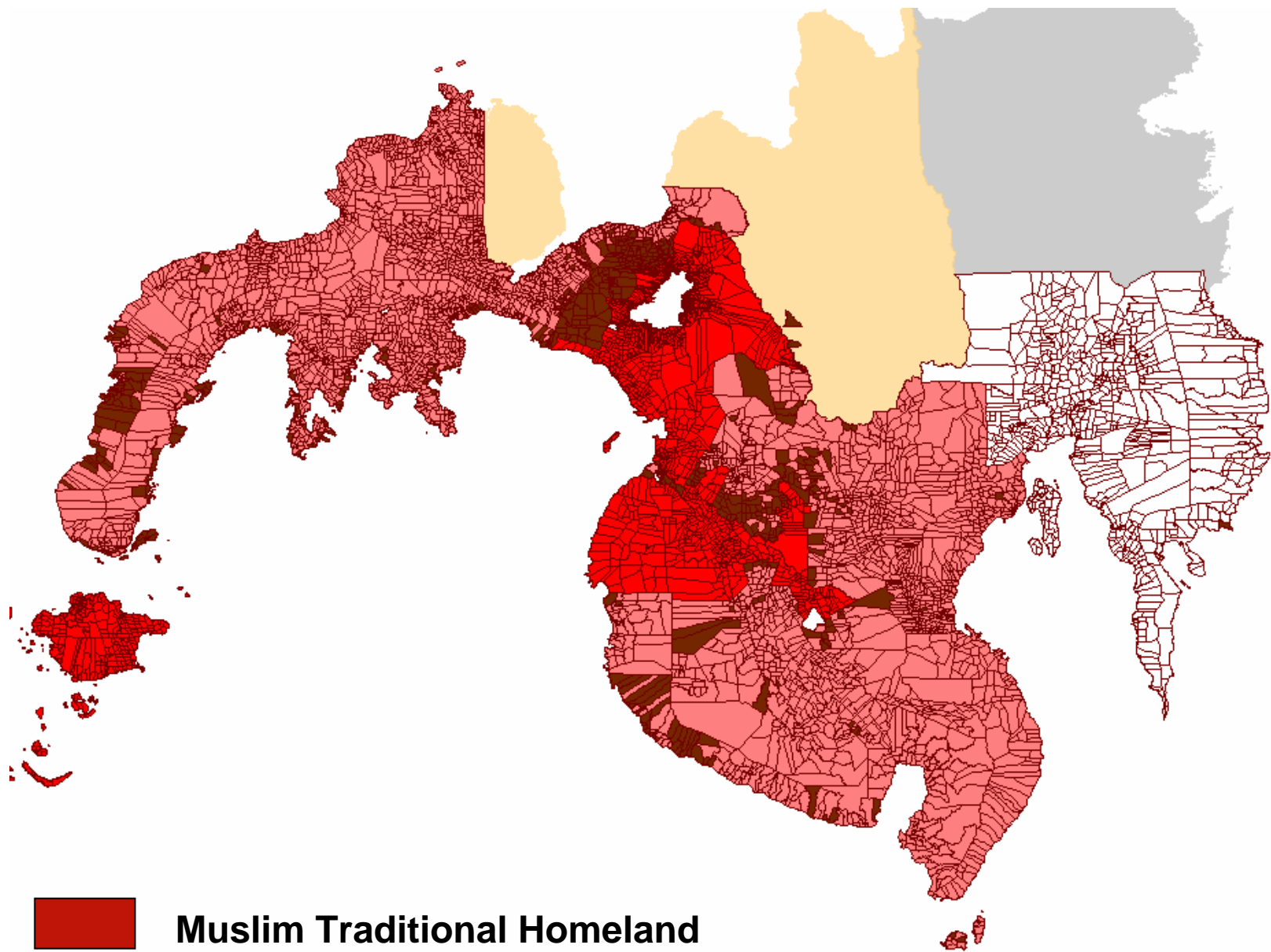
– Philippine Human Development Report (2005)

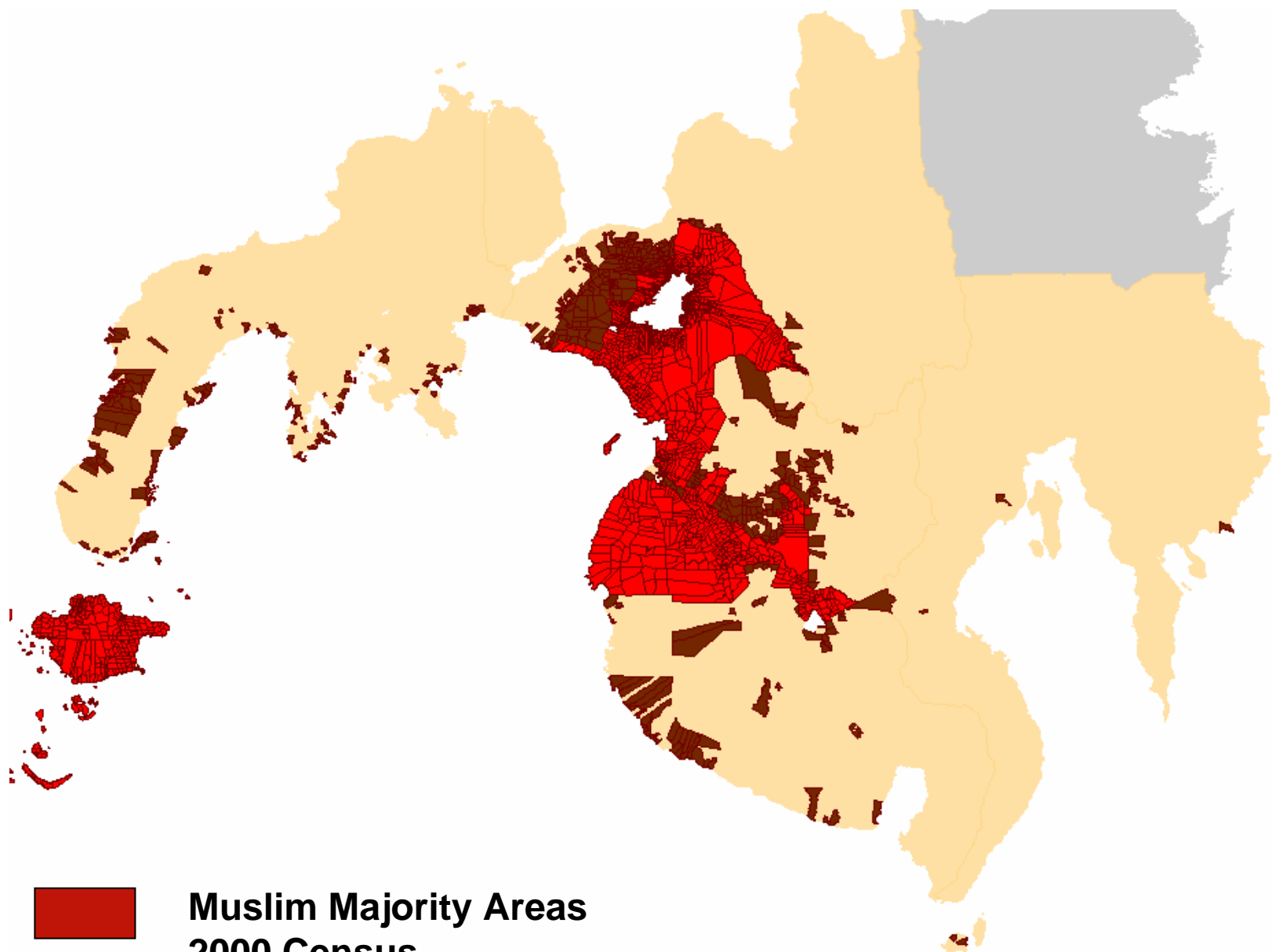
- 33% to 39% of Filipinos are biased against Muslims
- 46% of Christian population would choose Christian male worker and 40% Christian female domestic helper. Only 4% will choose a Muslim male worker and 7% Muslim female domestic helper.
- In Metro Manila 57 percent opt for residence with higher rent but far from a Muslim community.

Experiences Under the Philippines

Minoritization of the Bangsamoro in their own homeland

In 1918, the Muslims were dominant in Mindanao but government settlement and development programs reduced them, together with the Indigenous peoples, minority in their homeland.





Experiences Under the Philippines

Failure of the Government

- to protect the interest of the Bangsamoro people over their lands.
- Worst still, government development programs are among the reasons why they lost their lands to migrants from the north.

Public Land Law and Resettlement

| Allowed Number of Hectares | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Year | Homesteader | Moro and Wild Tribe | Corporation |
| 1903 | 16 has. | No provision | 1,024 has. |
| 1919 | 24 has. | 10 has. | 1,024 has. |
| 1936 | 16 has. | 4 has. | 1,024 has. |

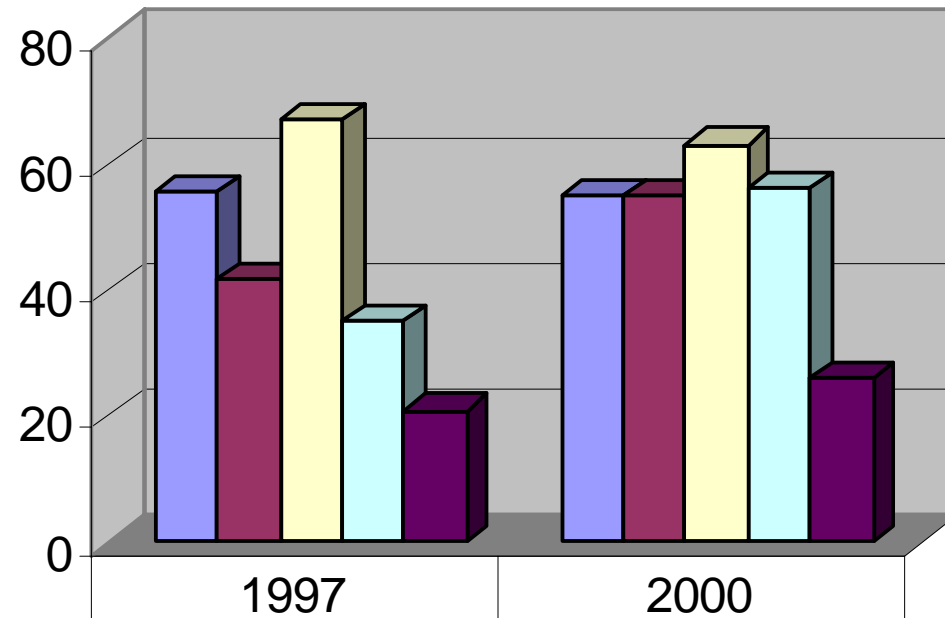
Experiences Under the Philippines

Failure of Government to deliver basic services and needed development

Muslim areas continue to suffer the highest poverty incidence.

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Incidence of Poor Families



| | | |
|-------------|------|------|
| Lanao Sur | 55.6 | 55 |
| Maguindanao | 41.6 | 55 |
| Sulu | 67.1 | 63.2 |
| Tawi-Tawi | 35 | 56.5 |
| Basilan | 20.9 | 26.2 |

Human Development Index, 2003

| National Rank | Provinces | HDI |
|---------------|---------------|------|
| 76 | Maguindanao | 0.36 |
| 68 | Lanao del Sur | 0.48 |
| 77 | Sulu | 0.45 |
| 74 | Basilan | 0.41 |
| 75 | Tawi-Tawi | 0.36 |

Note: The HDI is a summary measure of human development. It measures the average achievement in a country in three basic dimensions of human development, namely: Longevity as measured by life expectancy at birth; Knowledge, as measured by basic enrollment ratio; Standard of Living, as measured by real income per capita (Philippine Human Development Report, 2005, UNDP)

Source: Human Development Report 2005 (UNDP)

Experiences Under the Philippines

Failure of Government to protect their persons and properties

- Reported massacres of Muslims remain unsolved until now (e.g., massacres in Manili, Tacub, Malisbung, Pata island)**
- Reported bombings of mosques remain unsolved.**

Phases of Bangsamoro struggle

- Peaceful struggle
- Armed struggle

Peaceful assertions

- **When the U.S. planned to grant independence to the Philippines, Bangsamoro leaders petitioned the U.S. government that the Bangsamoro territories should not be included in the would-be Philippine Republic.**
 - **June 9, 1921- petition of the people of Sulu**
 - **February 1, 1924 - Declaration of Rights and Purposes (Zamboanga declaration)**
 - **March 18, 1935 - Dansalan Declaration**
- **When their territories were made part of the Philippine Republic in 1946, the Bangsamoro people continue to assert their right to independence through peaceful means**
 - **Amilbangsa Bill (H.B. 5682)**
 - **Mindanao Independence Movement**

Triggers to the armed conflict

- Emergence of government-backed anti-Muslim militia, the Ilaga.
- Declaration of martial law

Costs of the conflict

- 50,000 deaths
- 2 million refugees
- 535 mosques destroyed
- 200 schools demolished
- 35 cities and towns destroyed

Costs of the conflict

- Government spent P76 billion from 1970-1996
- In year 2000 all-out war against the MILF, Government spent no less than P6 billion
- Economic output lost directly –
\$2 billion to \$3 billion from 1970-2001
(about P5 billion to P7.5 billion annually)

Approaches to resolve the conflict

1. Negotiations

2. Third party facilitation

3. Monitoring implementation of agreements

Approaches to resolve the conflict

1. Negotiations

1.1 GRP-MNLF Negotiations (1975-1996)

- 1976 Tripoli Agreement – Framework for autonomous region for Muslims in Southern Philippines
- 1996 Final Peace Accord – Details of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement framework.
- Ceasefire agreements
- Disagreements on the implementation of the 1996 Peace Accord
 - No benchmark
 - No workable mechanism in monitoring implementation of agreement

Approaches to resolve the conflict

1. Negotiations

1.2 GRP-MILF Negotiations (1997-present)

– Major aspects

- Security (ceasefire)
- Humanitarian, rehabilitation and development
 - Commitment to observe international humanitarian laws and respect human rights
 - Rehabilitation and development of conflict affected areas
- Ancestral domain

Approaches to resolve the conflict

1. Negotiations

1.2 GRP-MILF Negotiations (1997-present)

- Ceasefire holds
- Ceasefire mechanism in placed
- Implementing guidelines on rehabilitation and development signed
- The issue of ancestral domain is under discussion

Approaches to resolve the conflict

1. Negotiations

1.2 GRP-MILF Negotiations (1997-present)

Discussions on the issue of ancestral domain is divided into four strands –

- Concept
- Territory
- Resources
- Governance

Approaches to resolve the conflict

1. Negotiations

1.2 GRP-MILF Negotiations (1997-present)

- Consensus on major issues in the four strands were reached by GRP and MILF
- Empasse in the negotiations – due to disagreements on territory and issue on constitutional process
- GRP offers to grant self-determination to the Bangsamoro people, and to hold referendum in the future to determine their political status.

Approaches to resolve the conflict

2. Third party facilitation

2.1 GRP-MNLF Negotiations

- Organization of Islamic Conference
 - OIC Secretariate
 - OIC Quadripartite Commission/Committee of the Six/Committee of the Eight
 - Libya
 - Indonesia

2.2 GRP-MILF Negotiations

- Malaysia

Approaches to resolve the conflict

2. Third party facilitation

Importance of third party facilitation –

Involvement of third party, as experience in Mindanao peace process demonstrates, is valuable to bring together conflicting parties to talk peace. When negotiations are at a stalemate, third party intervention is useful to break the deadlock.

Approaches to resolve the conflict

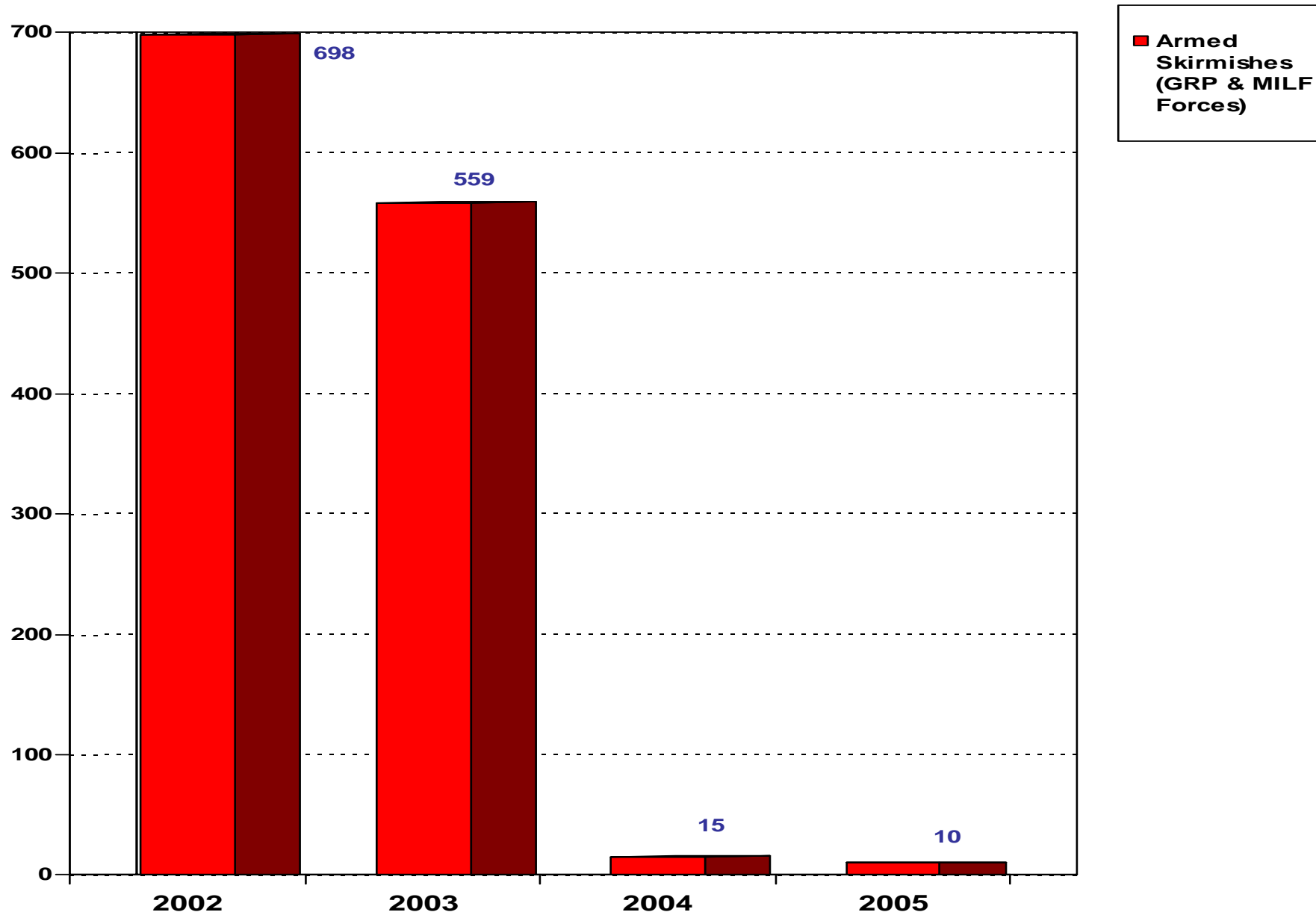
3. Monitoring (GRP-MILF Negotiations)

- Local monitoring team (LMT)
- Coordinating Committees on Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH)
- Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (AHJAG) - Coordinates action against criminal groups
- International Monitoring Team (IMT) – Monitors implementation of ceasefire and socio-economic assistance in conflict-affected communities
 - Malaysia
 - Brunei
 - Libya
 - Japan (socio-economic)

Approaches to resolve the conflict

3. Monitoring

The presence of the IMT significantly reduced armed encounters between Government forces and MILF forces



Effects of the conflict to democratic practices

- **Security**

- Inadequate security
- Lack of security becomes incentive for many to join vigilantes groups (private provision of security without effective public oversight)
- Human rights violations

- **Weak rule of law**

Effects of the conflict to democratic practices

- **Governance**

- Conflict being used as excuse in lack or inefficient delivery of social services
- Hampers transparency in running the affairs of government
- Hinders eradication of corruption
- Toughens political patronage

Effects of the conflict to democratic practices

- **Slow down economic development in conflict affected areas**
 - Destruction of infrastructures during war
 - Disincentive to investments that are needed for job creation

Conclusion

- For sovereignty-based conflicts, power sharing is the win-win solution.
- Decisions on power sharing arrangements should be worked out through negotiations.