JOINT PRESS RELEASE


THE MILF TECHNICAL COMMITTEE PROPOSED A SINGLE TALKING POINT – “TO SOLVE THE BANGSAMORO PROBLEM”. ANOTHER MEETING WAS SET FOR FEBRUARY 25-26, 1997 AT THE SAME VENUE FOR THE MILF TECHNICAL COMMITTEE TO EXPOND ON ITS PROPOSAL AND FOR THE GRP TECHNICAL COMMITTEE TO PRESENT ITS POSITION.
THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEES ON THE CESSION OF HOSTILITIES, ON THE OTHER HAND, EXCHANGED POSITION PAPERS ON THE CESSION OF HOSTILITIES, WHICH ARE INTENDED TO GENERATE A FAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE FOR THE FORMAL PEACE TALKS. THEY AGREED TO MEET AGAIN ALSO ON FEBRUARY 25-26, 1997 FOR THE SUBMISSION OF THEIR FINAL RESPECTIVE POSITIONS AFTER CONSULTATIONS WITH THEIR PRINCIPALS.

THE MEETING WAS VERY CORDIAL, WITH THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEES EXPRESSING THEIR WILLINGNESS TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR ASSIGNED TASKS AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME.

APPROVED FOR RELEASE:

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Chair, GRP Committee on Agenda Setting

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Chair, MILF Committee on Cessation of Hostilities

INTERIM CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES IN BULDON, MAGUINDANAO

WHEREAS, the attainment and preservation of peace and order is a universal concern and aspiration of all individuals;

WHEREAS, it is incumbent on the Government of the Republic of the Philippines to maintain and ensure the enforcement of all its laws, rules and regulations;

WHEREAS, recent events in the Municipality of Buldon, Maguindanao have disturbed the peace and order in the area;

WHEREAS, the return to normalcy in the Municipality of Buldon is a general concern of the GRP, MILF and all sectors as it will insure the delivery of vital resources and services and complement efforts towards the attainment of peace in the area;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Technical Committees on Cessation of Hostilities of the GRP and the MILF hereby covenant and agree;

WITNESSETH:

1. The Provincial Governor of Maguindanao will provide assistance to insure the return of office of the Municipal Mayor of Buldon, Maguindanao.

2. The GRP and MILF forces will maintain "as is, where is" positions within the area of conflict in Buldon, Maguindanao, prior to further discussions on the matter on February 9, 1997.

3. The PNP elements in the Municipality of Buldon, Maguindanao, assisted by local CAPGU elements, shall continue its mission to enforce all laws and maintain peace and order within the area.

4. The MILF will remove and shall not establish checkpoints, detachments, roadblocks, and other smaller control points along the road networks from Pagung to Buldon, Maguindanao.

5. The AFP and MILF will refrain from making provocative actions against each other such as saluting, shouting, mortar shelling and deployment of additional troops.

6. All AFP forces deployed in Buldon, Maguindanao from January 1, 1997 up to the present will be withdrawn from the area at the option of the AFP based on its evaluation of the peace and order situation.

5. The Provincial Governor of Maguindanao, within