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OIC urges PH gov't to preserve gains of Bangsamoro peace agreements

KUWAIT -- The 57-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has passed a resolution here on May 28 calling on the Philippine government to ensure that the gains of all peace agreements it entered with the two Moro fronts be preserved in the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).

The OIC's resolution is in line with its declaration of full support for the Bangsamoro peace process, particularly in the efforts of the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to convince both chambers of Congress to pass a law that is the legal iteration of the signed Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro.

The OIC's appeal that the BBL contains all the gains of the peace agreements with the Moro fronts is likewise in line with the Philippine government's efforts to ensure that the Bangsamoro entity be inclusive, in which all the Moro groups, non-Moros, indigenous peoples and other stakeholders and sectors are fully represented to secure just and lasting peace in Mindanao, putting an end to all armed conflicts.

The OIC resolution is referring to the peace agreements between the Philippine government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and MILF.

The 1976 Tripoli Agreement and the 1996 Final Peace Agreement (or the Jakarta Peace Agreement) are peace pacts inked by the Philippine government during the presidency of the late President Ferdinand Marcos and of former President Fidel V. Ramos and the MNLF.

The CAB, on the other hand, is the peace agreement signed by the Philippine government on March 27 last year under President Benigno S. Aquino III and the MILF. The Annex on Power Sharing of the CAB stipulated that all gains of previous peace agreements should be preserved.

The resolution approved by the powerful group of Islamic nations during the two-day 42nd Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, "calls upon the Secretary General [Iyad Ameen Madani] to exert his efforts to find common grounds between the parties to the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro and the 1996 Agreement on the implementation of the 1976 Peace Agreement."

It stated that the OIC leadership should "develop a mechanism to ensure that the gains of the 1996 Final Agreement on the implementation of the 1976 Peace Agreement are preserved and the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro are fully implemented with the end goal of integrating the gains achieved in these peace agreements in the Bangsamoro Basic Law."

It also called on “the Government of the Philippines to work both the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) to incorporate the most outstanding features of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement and the 1996 Jakarta Final Agreement into the Bangsamoro Basic Law governing the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region.”

Earlier, Philippine government chief negotiator Prof. Miriam Coronel-Ferrer said the government took all efforts to make sure that the BBL would build on the gains of all peace agreements in Mindanao to bring genuine autonomy to the Bangsamoro.

To ensure that all the Moro fronts remain in harmony in their pursuit of Moro interests, the OIC resolution also committed the group’s continued facilitation of the Bangsamoro Coordination Forum (BCF), a body reactivated in 2014 to solve the differences of ideologies between the leaderships of the MNLF and the MILF.

The OIC said it “commends the efforts of the Secretary General at narrowing the gap between the positions of the leaderships of the MNLF and MILF to continue their joint coordination and work to achieve peace and development for the people of the Bangsamoro under the framework of Bangsamoro Coordination Forum (BCF) established between the two fronts at the Islamic Conference in Dushanbe, in particular, his quick action to avoid widening the gap of mistrust and division between the two liberation fronts.”

In April, Madani led an OIC delegation that visited the Philippines for a series of meetings, which included overseeing the BCF conference among the leaders of the two Moro fronts in Davao City.

In its resolution, the OIC welcomed the efforts of Special Envoy Ambassador Sayed El-Masry for leading the “activation and operationalization of the Bangsamoro Coordination Forum (BCF) and their pledge to consolidate their efforts towards achieving the Bangsamoro people’s aspirations.”

“They further pledged to work for harmonizing the two peace tracks through finding common grounds between the 1976 Tripoli Agreement and the 1996 Jakarta Agreement on the one hand and the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) on the other, in order to preserve the gains contained in these agreements,” the resolution reads.

On top of these, the OIC also commended “the firm commitment” of the Philippine government and the MILF to the peace process and its “determination to work for achieving an enduring, just and lasting peace” despite the Mamasapano incident in January. ###