

ANNEX ON NORMALIZATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Annex on Normalization?

The Annex on Normalization is one of the four Annexes that provide essential details to the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB). The other Annexes are: 1) Annex on Transitional Arrangements and Modalities; 2) Annex on Revenue Generation and Wealth Sharing; and 3) Annex on Power Sharing.

What is normalization? Why is it important in the peace process with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)?

Normalization is the process through which communities affected by the decades-long armed conflict in Mindanao can return to a peaceful life and pursue sustainable livelihoods free from fear of violence and crime. It involves the transition of the MILF's Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) to a peaceful civilian life, which includes putting their weapons beyond use. It also involves the redress of unresolved legitimate grievances and the rehabilitation of conflict-affected areas.

What are the components of normalization as provided in the Annex?

The process of normalization has three main components: 1) security aspect; 2) socio-economic development; and 3) transitional justice.

The security aspect of normalization includes policing, decommissioning of MILF forces and weapons, redeployment of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) from or within the conflict-affected areas, and the disbandment of private armed groups (PAGs). The security aspect of normalization will take into account the needs of the communities involved.

Socio-economic development programs will be undertaken for the rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development of the Bangsamoro. In particular, socio-economic programs will be instituted to address the needs of BIAF members, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and poverty-stricken communities.

Transitional justice mechanisms will also be put in place to address the legitimate grievances of the Bangsamoro people, correct historical injustices, and address human rights violations – with the end in view of healing the wounds of conflict.

What is decommissioning?

Decommissioning is the gradual and phased process through which MILF forces and weapons are put beyond use. It includes the transition of the MILF's BIAF to a peaceful civilian life.

Who will oversee the decommissioning of MILF forces and weapons?

There will be an Independent Decommissioning Body (IDB) that will oversee the process of decommissioning of the MILF forces and weapons. The IDB shall be composed of three (3) foreign experts and four (4) local experts jointly nominated by the Parties. The IDB will be chaired by one of the foreign experts.

How will the IDB oversee the decommissioning?

The IDB shall perform the following functions:

1. Conduct inventory, verification and validation of BIAF members, arms and weapons;
2. Develop and implement a schedule of decommissioning of BIAF forces;
3. Plan, design, and implement techniques and technologies for weapons collection or retrieval, transport, and storage and putting weapons beyond use in accordance with the agreement of the parties; and
4. Report on the progress of its work and submit its terminal report to the GPH and MILF Panels.

The IDB will ensure that the decommissioning of MILF forces and weapons is commensurate to the implementation of all the agreements of the Parties.

What will happen to the police and the military in the area to be covered by the future Bangsamoro political entity?

The organization of a police force for the Bangsamoro will be consistent with the constitutional principle of one Philippine National Police. The police force for the Bangsamoro shall be professional, civilian in character, effective and efficient in law enforcement, fair and impartial, and accountable under the law for its actions. It shall be responsible both to the Central Government and the Bangsamoro Government, and to the communities it serves. An Independent Commission on Policing (ICP) has been created to recommend the appropriate policing for the Bangsamoro.

The redeployment of AFP troops and units from or within the Bangsamoro shall be based on a joint security assessment. The parties agree that the retention of some AFP installations in the Bangsamoro shall be in direct response to national defense and security needs.

What is the timeframe for decommissioning?

The decommissioning of MILF forces and weapons shall coincide with and shall be commensurate to the implementation of all the agreements of the Parties. The GPH and MILF Panels aim to sign an Exit Agreement in 2016 certifying that all commitments have been met.

What will the security arrangements be during the transition to the establishment of the Bangsamoro Government?

The Government and the MILF shall work in partnership to secure the peace on the ground, particularly during the transition stage. This partnership entails the establishment of several joint mechanisms.

There will be a Joint Normalization Committee (JNC), created by the Government and the MILF, which will coordinate the different normalization processes and mechanisms.

There will also be a Joint Peace and Security Committee (JPSC) to coordinate the security component of normalization.

The Joint Peace and Security Teams (JPSTs) shall be the operating units composed of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the PNP, and the MILF's Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF). These mechanisms shall work for the maintenance of peace and order and the stability of the areas mutually identified by the GPH and the MILF.

The JPSC shall be under the JNC and will have the following functions:

1. Coordinate with the command structures of the Government and the MILF on security arrangements relevant to its functions;
2. Develop policies and operational guidelines for the effective partnership of the JPSTs; and
3. Coordinate the security arrangements for the activities related to the implementation of the FAB and its Annexes.

What about private armed groups in Mindanao? Will this problem be addressed in the normalization process?

The Government, in coordination with the MILF, will develop a plan for the disbandment of private armed groups (PAGs) as part of the normalization process. The disbandment of private armed groups using diverse and appropriate approaches shall be a priority undertaking of the Government.

What will happen to the MILF camps in Mindanao?

The Government and the MILF will constitute joint task forces for the following previously acknowledged MILF camps:

1. Camp Abubakar as-Siddique in Maguindanao
2. Camp Bilal in Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur
3. Camp Omar ibn al-Khattab in Maguindanao
4. Camp Rajamuda in North Cotabato and Maguindanao
5. Camp Badre in Maguindanao
6. Camp Busrah Somiorang in Lanao del Sur

The task forces will assess the needs, plan appropriate programs, and undertake the necessary measures to transform these areas into peaceful and productive communities.

How will the normalization process address the condition of communities that have been affected by the armed conflict?

There will be intensified development efforts for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and development of conflict-affected areas. Specifically, programs will be instituted to address the

needs of BIAF members, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and poverty-stricken communities. Specific measures will be taken to address the needs of indigenous peoples, women, and children. Said programs will be guided by a community-needs assessment. The socio-economic programs shall be community-based, with the end in view of reinforcing social cohesion and unity.

To help them transition to a peaceful civilian life, a needs and skills assessment of BIAF members for decommissioning shall be undertaken for the development of a responsive program that addresses their needs and those of their communities. Special socio-economic programs will be provided to the decommissioned women auxiliary forces of the MILF.

What role does transitional justice play in normalization?

The transitional justice program referred to in the annex aims to address the legitimate grievances of the Bangsamoro people, correct historical injustices, and address human rights violations. The goal of transitional justice is to ensure accountability, serve justice, and achieve reconciliation in the areas affected by the armed conflict. It also aims to address the root causes of the conflict so that the communities can be assured that there will be no repetition of past abuses and violations.

There shall be created a Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) to undertake a study and recommend to the Panels the appropriate mechanisms for transitional justice and reconciliation. Among the mechanisms that may be employed are amnesty and pardon (as mentioned in the Annex) and reparations (as mentioned in the FAB).

How will the normalization process be funded?

The Government shall provide the necessary funding for the normalization process. Both the Government and the MILF may access funds from donors for the operations of the different mechanisms under the normalization process to supplement the budgetary requirements provided by the Government.

There will also be a Normalization Trust Fund where donor country support, assistance, and pledges may be coursed.