

Reaching for the Gun: The Human Cost of Small Arms in Central Mindanao, Philippines*

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Executive Summary

- Mindanao, once known to Filipinos as the Promised Land, has been in a state of war for the last 30 years as Muslim rebels groups have fought for a separate status for the island from the rest of the Philippines. Small arms play a significant role in the conflict, in the hands of both combatants and civilians. This report sets out to examine the background to the conflict; to establish the routes by which arms reach the warring parties; to discover the reasons for civilian possession of arms; and to measure the resulting humanitarian impact of small arms through direct and indirect effects.

- Arms enter society through three main routes: diversions from government-controlled stocks; local manufacture; and illegal imports. The Philippines government has spent over PhP 73 billion to prosecute this war since 1970 (PhP 7.1 million per day).¹ IBON Facts and Figures, July 2000. At the height of the conflict it had to deploy 61 percent of the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) army and marine battalions, 40 percent of artillery capability, 50 percent of armour assets and 63 percent of tactical aircraft (Jubair, 1999; pp. 162-3). More than 100,000 persons died before 1996, when the government made peace with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) (IBON, 2000).

- But merely one month after the signing of the peace agreement, another Muslim rebel group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), rejected the agreement and prepared for war. In May 2000, the government took the offensive and demolished all MILF major camps without much resistance. But what was perceived to be a successful conclusion of the military offensive actually engendered a new phase of the war. The MILF called for a *jihad* (Holy War), and its army, the Bangsa Moro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF), reverted to guerrilla operations using unconventional tactics often perceived as terrorist tactics due to high collateral damage among the civilian population.

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- Only a preliminary assessment of the direct results of the conflict can be made on the available figures of deaths and injuries. There are no reliable estimates of the casualties incurred by the main protagonists of the war. Until May 2000, 810 AFP officers and men had died in action and 2,156 had been wounded.² Evidence of MILF casualties is hidden from the public, and AFP estimates are based on what indications they can gather of injury to MILF fighters, rather than body counts. According to the AFP, 457 MILF fighters were killed between January and August 2000. Documentation of the Church-based Justice and Peace – Kidapawan organisation records that of 190 conflict-related deaths in 2000 among civilians, 86 percent were caused by small arms.

- From the data gathered on wound types, it is clear that most civilian casualties of the war are caused by small-arms fire. Feeling at risk from armed attack, many civilians have reacted by obtaining a weapon for the home. In the words of Fr. Roberto Layson, Parish Priest of Pikit, Cotabato, ‘... as the violence escalated and more civilians were affected by atrocities of both the AFP and the MILF, civilians started to arm themselves.’ This occurs in a small village like Dalengaoen, Pikit (287 families), which had been used as a battle zone by the AFP and the MILF three times in 2000. After the MILF attack on November 11, 2000, when eight residents were killed, at least five Christian households sold their work animals in order to purchase small arms.³

- Findings show that the proliferation of small arms, most brought into the region by the conflict, have wider consequences for society. Police authorities in Cotabato, for example, show that 78.3 percent of people who died from criminal acts reported to the police in 2000 were killed by small arms. Small arms are routine accessories in homicide (82 percent) and murder (78 percent).

- The indirect consequences of small arms and armed groups can be judged from the figures for displacement, economic destruction, the poor provision of health care and education, and general lawlessness. The armed skirmishes in 2000 displaced an estimated half a million persons,⁴ destroyed 6,229 houses and damaged another 2,115. Of 439,000 people evacuated in August, 300 (mostly children) died of preventable diseases and 190,166 were still in the evacuation centers as of December 4, 2000.⁵ Until the year-end, 144 persons had been kidnapped, the majority by the rebel group, Abu Sayyaf, and 110

bombings in various parts of Mindanao caused the deaths of 82 persons and wounding of 363 others.⁶

- Sporadic clashes have prevented the delivery of services and implementation of projects. Children are often unable to sustain their basic schooling due to the intermittent closures of school facilities. Armed conflict has also had a profound effect on the provision of health services: in Central Mindanao, there are nine times more people per health worker than the national mean, and four times more per physician, creating a heavy burden on medical professionals working in already difficult circumstances.

- The report concludes that national and international action to stem the supply of weapons pouring into Mindanao should be accompanied by renewed attempts to end the conflict at the negotiating table. All sides should take more responsibility for ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid and respect for human rights.

The Setting

- The main subject of this study is Central Mindanao, particularly the provinces of Cotabato, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat. The territory straddles two regional political subdivisions, namely, the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)⁷ and Region 12.⁸ The report focuses on Cotabato.⁹ With a land area of 731,102 hectares and a political territory of 17 municipalities and one city, Cotabato contributes 34.3 percent of the total Central Mindanao population (including Maguindanao which officially pertains to the ARMM).

- Cotabato is typical among the component provinces of Region 12 for its multi-ethnic population and the predominance of Christian settlers in the economic and political life of the province. Like Lanao del Norte and Sultan Kudarat, Cotabato is considered a frontier of Christian settler migration into Moroland, a demographic tradition from which historic grievances of Muslims and other indigenous groups have arisen and been translated into armed political actions. The different ethnic groups are bound together by economic ties as many Christian settlers have invested capital and entrepreneurial skills in the region and are major employers of the indigenous population. These same communities, however, are

divided by cultural differences and religious affiliations that are often used by political elites as a basis for pursuing their own political agendas.

Table 1. Selected Statistics

Selected Statistics	Phil.	Mindanao	ARMM	Central Mindanao (Region 12)
Population, 1995 ('000)	68,349	16,129	2,021	2,360
Infant Mortality Rate, 1995 ¹⁰	48.9	54.3	63.4	53.5
Maternal Mortality Rate, 1995	180	202	320	187
Elementary School Drop-out rate, 1992-93	7.1	8.9	21.6	9.2
Poverty, % Households, 1994	35.5	47.6	60.0	54.7
GVA Agriculture, 1996 ('85 prices, PhP Billions) 178.4	59.6	4.8	7.7	
Growth Rate (Agriculture), 1992-1996	2.9	1.6	5.0	-7.1
Irrigation Coverage (1996), % of Irrigable Lands	42.0	29.0	21.0	20.0
Formal Financial Institution (1993), Percent	100	13.2	1.0	1.4
Barangays ¹¹ with Electricity (1995), Percent	100	25.3	5.9	2.6

Source:

ADB, March 1998, Socio-Economic Profile of Cotabato, Provincial Planning and Development Office (PPDO), 1998; NSO, 1998

The Mindanao conflict

- Despite high expectations, the peace agreement has not prevented the resurgence of armed conflict and the emergence of new representations asserted by the MILF and the Abu Sayyaf (Father of the

Sword) Group in Mindanao, now renamed as the Al-Harakatul-ul-Islamiya (Islamic Movement).

- Barely a month after the signing of the Peace Agreement, the MILF prepared for war and began to reassert its own representation of the demands of the Moro people. In a display of mass strength during the Bangsa Moro People's Assembly in Cotabato City on December 3–5, 1996, it declared its rejection of the Peace Agreement and reaffirmed its commitment to Islamic independence.

- Four years later, all-out armed confrontations between government forces and the MILF, as well as the Abu Sayyaf, caught domestic and international public attention. Hostilities escalated in nine municipalities of Maguindanao, five in Cotabato, three in Lanao del Sur, one in South Cotabato and in the cities of Cotabato and General Santos (CSPEJ, 2000).

- Refusing to recognize the MILF as a legitimate representative of the Moro people, the Philippine government engaged in dual tactics: military confrontations and piece-meal negotiations. Initial meetings between the MILF and the GRP in April, May and June of 1997 were bogged down by continued fighting. In June 1997, government forces attempted to seize control of Camp Rajamuda, the MILF's second biggest camp, resulting in the displacement of around 75,000 people (CSPEJ, 2000).

- Intense fighting continued until July after which the GRP and MILF signed an Agreement on the General Cessation of Hostilities (AGCH). This was followed by the signing of the Implementing Administrative Guidelines on the AGCH on September 12, 1997. By November, the two parties had signed a Ceasefire Agreement.

- Upon the election of Estrada to the presidency in 1998, his government appointed a new negotiating panel to talk peace with the MILF. What followed was a rough process that swung from war to negotiations finally leading to the government's all out offensive in April 2000.

- Two days after the government offensive, the MILF unilaterally suspended talks with the government. By May 7, 2000, the Department

of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) reported that the clashes in Maguindanao, Cotabato and Lanao had already affected 23,031 families (123,758 persons of whom 74,691 were housed in evacuation centers). By August 439,000 people had evacuated of whom 340,265 were housed in evacuation centers (PDI, 17 August 2000).

The humanitarian effects of the conflict

Direct effects

Death and injury from small arms

- Data suggest that small arms are causing huge numbers of civilian deaths. In a focused documentation of conflict-related cases, undertaken by the JP-Kidapawan, its January-November 2000 report reveals that of the 190 conflict-related deaths recorded, 86 percent were caused by small arms (gunshot wounds) and the rest by artillery and bombs. It also shows 186 conflict-related injuries, 53 percent due to small arms and 41 percent caused by bombs. The proliferation of small arms throughout society is also felt in the crime statistics. Police authorities in Cotabato record that 78.3 percent of persons who died this year due to crimes were killed by small arms.

Ethnicity and conflict

- Of Mindanao's 17 million population, 64 percent are Christians, 23 percent Muslims, and 18 percent Lumads (non-Muslim indigenous people). Ethnic preponderance varies in former Moro provinces where Christians have migrated. In Maguindanao, Muslims (60 percent) predominate over Christians. In Cotabato, Christians (71 percent) predominate over Muslims (18 percent) and Lumads. Armed skirmishes, aerial bombing, and artillery fires usually occur in interior villages where Muslims and Lumads predominate. The ethnic composition of the displaced population is more or less reflective of the overall ethnic composition of the areas directly affected by the armed conflict.

- However, more Muslim evacuees tend to go into and stay longer in evacuation centres than Christians. A social worker from the Pikit MSWDO observes that Muslims preponderate among the evacuees,

Villagers at risk

In Dalengaoen (Pikit, Cotabato), a barangay along the Cotabato-Davao highway inhabited by 287 families, eight residents were killed by small-arms fire from May to December 2000. This multi-ethnic village (36 per cent Christians, 62 per cent Maguindanaoan Muslims, and 1 per cent Lumads) used to be a model of inter-ethnic harmony, owing to long years of co-existence and intermarriages. The people's lives changed in the year 2000, after the government offensive against the MILF. Between May and November, the village had been used as a battle zone between the AFP and MILF three times (in May, June and November).

In May 2000, two Muslim male residents suspected of being MILF commanders were abducted by government forces, taken on board a British Simba APC (made under licence in the Philippines), and later found "salvaged" – summarily executed. On November 11, a 200-strong band of armed men alleged to be MILF occupied the whole community and ambushed vehicles passing through the village along the national highway. In this incident, five barangay residents were killed and two others wounded, aside from the 14 vehicle passengers injured during the ambush. Finally, during the second week of December, the barangay captain, a Muslim, was shot at close range by two men, allegedly on orders of the MILF, owing to his failure to argue against the death of two Muslims in the hands of the AFP. He died at the hospital.

Many villagers evacuated after the attack; fields have been abandoned because farmers are afraid to touch the booby traps (made of sharpened bamboo sticks) left by the guerrillas. The public primary school is also deserted. The school ground itself was once used as an AFP outpost, owing to which an adjacent house was destroyed by an RPG grenade, allegedly by the MILF. There are indications that the traditional harmony and indigenous ways of settling conflict have been weakened, if not completely broken. Christians who remain in the village are prone to arming themselves. At least five households have sold assets to acquire firearms, including three M16s (Armalite).

– from conversations with Fr. Roberto Layson, OMI, Catholic Parish Priest of Pikit, and Adel Naya, a victim of the alleged MILF attack. December 14, 2000

reflecting the fact that 60 – 70 percent of the population in affected barangays are Muslim, and they tend to stay longer. Most Christian evacuees, on the other hand, do not stay very long in the evacuation centers, because they usually come from barangays closer to the locations where the hostilities are not so protracted.¹²

- A senior staff of one NGO which has been operating in Cotabato Province for over a decade observes that Muslims are most affected because the conflict is mostly focused on predominantly Muslim areas. The preponderance of Muslim victims can also be gleaned from hospital records. Of the 556 armed conflict victims treated at the Cotabato Regional and Medical Center (CMRC) from April 29 to September 17, 2000, 91.2 percent were Muslims, while only 8.3 percent were Christians.

- Data suggest a pattern in terms of social bias. There are more Muslim than Christian victims of arms-related cases, and they are predominantly male. Even among child victims, there are more Muslims than Christians. Ethnic and social differentials can also be gleaned from the following observations:

- Among the 36 arms-related cases at CMRC, 58 percent are Muslims and 42 percent are Christians.

- 83 percent percent of the arms-related injury victims are males; and 17 percent female.

- Among the Christian arms-related injury victims, 93 percent are males and 7 percent female. On the other hand, among the Muslim victims, 76 percent are male and 24 percent female.

- Victims aged 16-30 comprised 55.6 percent of the arms-related cases, followed by those in the 31-35 age bracket (25 percent). There were proportionately more (16.7 percent) children (15 years old and below) than elderly (2.8 percent) among the victims.

- Children (ages 15 and below) made up 7 percent of the Christian victims and 24 percent of Muslims. Among Christians, those aged 16-30 made up 47 percent of victims and among Muslims, 62 percent. Those aged 31-45 comprised 33 percent of Christian victims and 14

percent of Muslims. Victims aged 41-50 were found only among Christians, making up 13 percent of victims from said ethnic group.

- Lumads are also severely affected by the displacement resulting from the armed conflict. This is exemplified by the case of the evacuees in the Macatactac evacuation centre (barangay Lillongan, Carmen municipality) – comprising around 300 families, all belonging to the Aromanon Manobo tribe. These evacuees have been in the said evacuation center for one year already.

Development consequences of the conflict

- Table 1 demonstrates that the armed conflict has affected long-term social indicators. If we look at development in terms of interventions by NGOs and other agencies, another aspect of the development story is revealed. Not only are there numerous cases where the armed conflict and/or activities of armed groups have set back the timetable for certain project activities; in addition, the actual conflict may have eroded initial gains from project activities.¹³ Owing to renewed fighting, Oxfam has frequently had to suspend its own work of providing clean water and sanitary facilities for displaced communities and has been able to return to the area only when the security situation improved.

- Even a veteran Filipino NGO like the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), which has a long established base in Cotabato, is affected by the conflict. In some areas like the multi-ethnic municipality of Mlang (Cotabato), it is no longer possible to organise community meetings in the evenings (a normal practice in the past, because farmers work during the day).

- In the PRRM experience, the displacement of communities imposes additional workloads and efforts in terms of sourcing and mobilising relief-assistance funds. In the Mlang area, for example, the implementation of a production loan project was delayed because of disruptions in the normal production cycle and the sudden shift in the needs environment. In another case, PRRM had worked out a “Model Muslim Community” project with Flagship Projects Secretary Robert Aventajado for the Municipality of Carmen. The project was suddenly shelved because of the conflict.

- Development projects in Central Mindanao are caught in major dilemmas: one, how to rationalise relief assistance while investing on strategic programs; two, how to avoid falling into the trap of permanency of relief, thereby inducing evacuees not to return to their homes; three, how to create models which can serve as a magnet for meaningful public and private investments in the area. Unfortunately, the conflict has created barriers against public and private investments.

Conflict and development interventions

- One foreign-assisted programme, the Central Mindanao area of the ADB-funded Mindanao Regional Development Programme (MRDP), experienced more than a month's delay in the start-up of an infrastructure project when **a project engineer conducting the site survey was abducted and held** for one month by an armed group in the project site.

- The Accion Contra El Hambre (ACH)²⁴ was to undertake over a nine-month period activities that would set the stage for some long-term development in Sultan sa Barangis and Matanog municipalities, particularly with respect to water and sanitation and health concerns.

However, ACH arrived in the second quarter 2000 just as the armed conflict in the area escalated, resulting in a wave of population displacement, particularly in the Matanog area. Thus, ACH switched to the "emergency mode," engaging in relief work instead. Consequently, about 60 to 70 per cent of the development assistance resources expended by ACH to date have had to be spent on to the provision of emergency relief aid, benefiting evacuees from Matanog and Barira.

In effect, much of the development assistance resources of ACH have been put into relief assistance instead of the originally conceived strategic programme.

Effects on justice delivery and peace-making processes in the locality

- Intra-community relations have changed since the escalation of the armed conflict between government and MILF forces. The war has driven a wedge in the previously cordial relations among ethnic groups in communities, thereby disrupting, if not totally destroying, indigenous forms of conflict management and the effectiveness of justice delivery and peace-making processes.

- In the wake of the outbreak of escalated hostilities, coexistence in communities and peace-building efforts have suffered a setback. Armed elements – either aligned with the government or identified with the MILF – have committed atrocities against civilians, atrocities that fuel ethnic animosities and perpetuate the cycle of violence. The point has been reached where Christian peace advocates are perceived as “pro-Muslim” or “pro-MILF.” For instance, the OMI (Order of Mary Immaculate) priest (Fr. Layson) is being branded by some quarters as “OMILF.”¹⁵

- Civilians blame the external big actors as the culprits. A Christian barangay captain argues that “if armed groups from outside just don’t come into our community, there would be no trouble.” The implication is that the AFP and the MILF have dragged civilians into the conflict, forcing them to take sides – usually along ethnic lines.

- The November 11 attack on Dalengaoen was particularly disturbing for Christian residents as it was the first time for many years that civilians from their community had been killed. As a result, local Christians expressed feelings of distrust and disappointment against Muslims because, as one resident says, “they did not warn us of what was going to happen.” For fear of retaliation, a number of Muslim residents have moved out to neighbouring predominantly Muslim communities.

- Roman Catholic lay workers in Carmen observe that, in a number of mixed communities in the area, residents have resettled to where they can seek the protection of their own ethnic group. Muslim residents from the predominantly Christian barangays of Malapag, Aroman, and Rancho have moved to the Muslim-dominated barangays of Manarapan and Kitulaan. Meanwhile, Christian residents from the predominantly Muslim barangay of Kitulaan have moved to the Christian-dominated areas of

Aromanon to the Carmen town centre. In barangay Katanianan, Christian residents have congregated at the barangay centre, while Muslim residents moved to Sitio Pakan.

- Civilian killings had not occurred in Carmen since the height of the "Ilaga-Blackshirt"¹⁶ fighting in the 1970s, until the government's war with the MILF escalated. A series of inter-ethnic killings apparently motivated by a desire for revenge killings have taken place in Carmen municipality, beginning with the ambush-massacre of Christians in Sitio 29 of Barangay Kadiis in October by a notorious anti-Christian bandit group led by a certain Commander Pakil Ayunan.¹⁷ In an apparent retaliation, a band of masked and uniformed elements believed to be Christian CAFGUs (civilian militia) staged an ambush-massacre against Muslims of Barangay Manili in November.

- Local civil-society groups are spearheading inter-ethnic and/or multi-cultural institutions, especially in peacemaking. Local peace advocacy initiatives and non-government relief efforts have multi-ethnic participation. A local peace advocacy NGO, the ComPAX, counts Christians, Muslims, and indigenous people's representatives in the organisation. The Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Program of the Kidapawan Roman Catholic Diocese brings together Christian and Muslim staff and area coordinators. A Muslim-Christian local forum of Ulamas, Priests, and Imams has been set up as counterpart of the Bishops-Ulama Conference.¹⁸ But these groups are either left unheeded or threatened by the perpetrators of the wrongs that they seek to undo.

Gender relations and the presence of small arms

- One of the patterns emerging from the conflict in Central Mindanao is that women, especially those with children, are often left to assume the heaviest burden in dealing with the economic consequences of the armed hostilities. This is because displacement adversely affects family incomes, and it is mainly women who assume full management of the family. Two Aromanon widows in the Macatactac evacuation centre narrate how their lives have become more difficult after their husbands were killed during the May 19, 2000 AFP-MILF skirmishes. Apart from caring for their small children and taking responsibility over their farms, they also have to seek work elsewhere to supplement their income.

- In other cases, husbands disappear from the community for fear of conscription, and wives take over the obligation of running the family. In Dalengaoen (Pikit), a Christian woman married to a Muslim is now left alone to care for their home, children, and farm, because her husband went abroad in order to avoid MILF conscription.

- Conditions in the evacuation centres show that it is mostly women, along with children and the elderly, who are handling household affairs. The common explanation of Christian informants is that able-bodied Muslim men are conscripted into the MILF's combat units during periods of intense fighting. Among Christians, on the other hand, it is often the case that men stay behind to look after their livestock and property, while the women and children take refuge in safer places.

- Neither men nor women are passive victims of conflict. The situation obliges them to become actors. The variance lies in the roles that they play. In the case of Delangaoen, after the November 11 attack, the collective opinion of men was shaped in favour of arming themselves (purportedly to protect their women and property), disregarding the voice of the community's women, who argued that the resort to arms would attract more violence. The Delangaoen case is a classic example of a situation in war when "traditional gender ideals are stressed – men's masculinity encouraged to take up arms in defence of country, ethnic group or political cause" (Byrne, 1996; p. 33). There is a prevailing macho culture which ridicules men who refuse to take up arms and fight.

- The culture of machismo seems to prevail even in peacemaking – both at the national and the local levels. Where Christian and Muslim church leaders have succeeded in creating institutions of peace like the Bishops' and Ulama's Conference, or its local counterpart in Cotabato, the Forum of Ulama's, Priests, and Imams, none has yet induced women to participate actively in crucial deliberations. Neither are women seen in the composition of the MILF and GRP negotiating panels. Women are largely excluded from high-level negotiations, and diplomacy aimed at bringing an end to conflict and their concerns are almost always entirely neglected (Byrne, 1996; p. 37).

Armed groups and arms supplies

Warring parties

- **Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)** – The AFP has a total active-duty strength of 106,500, distributed across the following armed services: Philippine Army – 68,0000; Philippine Navy (including 8,400 Marines and 2,000 Coast Guard) – 23,000; Philippine Air Force – 15,500; and a reserve force of 128,000.¹⁹ This does not include the 13 Regional Commands of the Philippine National Police (PNP), which are directly supervised by the Department of Interior and Local Governments (DILG).

- It had a budget in the year 2000 of PhP 41 billion (roughly USD 820 million at current exchange rates), up from PhP 14.4 billion (USD 680 million) in 1988. Military expenditures soared during the offensive against the MILF. In June 2000, President Estrada ordered the release of an initial PhP 5.484 billion for the AFP's modernisation programme (Business World, June 2, 2000). At the height of the military campaign in July, Estrada approved an "emergency purchase" of ammunition worth PhP 1.47 billion, believed to be the biggest purchase to have been made by the AFP in recent years (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, July 5, 2000).

- In Cotabato, at least five army battalions are currently deployed (40IB, 39IB, 75IB and 27IB). They are backed up by mobile Scout Rangers and Army strike forces, as well as the PNP's Special Action Force.

- **MILF and the Bangsa Moro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF)** – Led by Hashim Salamat, the MILF takes its roots from the MNLF and was originally established in 1978 as the New MNLF before it renamed itself the MILF. While it was originally confined to the Maguindanao faction of the MNLF, it has expanded and embraced other Islamized ethnic groups to include Tausugs, Yakans, Maranaos and Iranuns – and even former MNLF fighters.

- The **BIAF** has an estimated strength of 15,000 armed fighters, by far the biggest insurgent force in the Philippines to date (*Philippine Star*, January 17, 2000). This armed strength is augmented by the strength of armed civilians who can be mobilised by a call to arms, as in

Hashim Salamat's call for *jihad* after the government launched its offensive. In the context of a *jihad*, other considerations, such as ethnicity, lose saliency in favour of providing a common defence against other non-Islamic groups (Enloe, 1996; p. 201). Although hard data are not available, capability is also influenced by the MILF's capacity to mobilise child soldiers. Acquisition of and bearing of firearms is part of the cultural rites of passage for young men among Islamized ethnic groups.

Secondary actors in Central Mindanao

- **New People's Army (NPA)** – The CPP-NPA is in the process of recovery after a fractious ideological split in 1992. It has declared an alliance with the MILF, which is confirmed by the latter. Its low-key potential in the conflict can be inferred from its operational proximity to the Central Mindanao conflict, owing to its presence in the border provinces of Bukidnon, Davao del Sur and Cotabato. Like the MILF and in the absence of an age limit in its Constitution, the NPA is capable of mobilising child soldiers. Young recruits join NPA units as couriers, combat-support elements, or as reserve elements during battles.

- **The Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGUs)** date back to the 1950s, when then President Ramon Magsaysay established the Barrio Self-Defense Units (BSDUs), a citizens' militia to work alongside the Philippine Constabulary and the Philippine Army in fighting against communist guerrillas called Huks, later renamed as the HMB.²⁰ At the height of the communist insurgency in the 1980s, President Marcos established its successor, the Integrated Civilian Home Defense Forces (ICHDF), most infamous for vigilantism against communist guerrillas and sympathisers.

- The present CAFGU is anchored on President Aquino's 1987 Executive Order 264. There are currently 30,000 CAFGUs mobilised in support of the AFP, with a budget allocation of PhP 876.5 million this year. Around 72 percent are deployed in the AFP's Southern Command – Mindanao (IBON Features). Its strength reached a peak of 75,000 in 1992 (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 14 March 2000).

- In March 2000, President Estrada approved a plan worth PhP 1 billion to mobilise an additional 35,000 CAFGUs (Philippine Star, March

3, 2000). Around 10,000 were actually deployed in Mindanao by the end July at the height of the military offensive against the MILF, with a budget of PhP 119 million out of the PhP 313 million originally requested by the AFP (IBON Features).

- The common perception is that CAFGUs, being an adjunct to the AFP's war against Moro rebels, generally favour the Christian population. The Justice and Peace Desk of the Diocese of Kidapawan cites the example of the village of Rancho in Liliongan, Carmen (Cotabato), when on December 3, 2000 CAFGUs allegedly burned 97 houses owned by Muslims.

- The present CAFGUs are largely untrained villagers, often local thugs issued weapons by the government for a meager salary of PhP 1,800 a month. While the government spends PhP 120,000 a year to maintain an AFP regular, a CAFGU member costs the government only PhP 21,600 a year. In practice, what actually entices people to join is not the salary but the licence to carry firearms and the sense of power that this brings; from this arises the perceived licence to abuse human rights.

- **Civilian Volunteer Organisations (CVOs)** – "There are 10,000 CVO members in Cotabato funded by the Provincial Government. Every barangay in Cotabato has a maximum of 40 CVO members," according to Nasser Ali, Research and Documentation Officer of JP-Kidapawan.²¹ Membership of the CVO provides a chance for armed civilians to legitimise their possession and carrying of weapons outside their homes.

- **National Islamic Command Council (NICC)** – The NICC was formed in 1994, led by Milham Alam, former Chief of Staff of the MNLF's Bangsa Moro Army (BMA). It is composed of more radical members of the MNLF. It has a secessionist goal, like the MILF. It is alleged to have a military alliance with the MILF evidenced by the MILF-NICC joint attack on the Municipality of Kauswagan (Lanao del Norte) on March 17, 2000 (Intengan, 2000).

Other armed actors

- **Bandits and Pseudo-Rebels** – There are no hard data available on the strength and number of bandit groups operating in the region.

Their activities increase when periods of intense fighting in the wider conflict make relations between Christian and Muslim communities particularly tense. One infamous group that operates in Carmen (Cotabato) is the group of Commander Pakil Ayunan, a Muslim bandit group with an established notoriety for killing Christian civilians.

- Muslim and Christian bandit groups are customarily disowned by government forces and the MILF, even as they serve to broaden the conflict and multiply the disastrous effects.

- **Special CAFGU Active Auxiliaries (SCAAs)** – Special CAFGUs were established in 1989 on the authority of the then Defense Secretary Renato de Villa. They are special units trained and armed by the government, but they have been deployed to private corporations. There are 2,698 members of SCAAs deployed in 33 company-sized formations, 32 of which are deployed in Mindanao.²² Some of the companies they serve are Dole Philippines (pineapple plantation), Stanfilco (banana plantation) and PICOP (logging). Although SCAAs are not deployed for state-related armed conflicts, they get involved in land disputes and labour-related problems that are essentially part and parcel of the social tensions that fuel the armed conflict.

Sources of small-arms possession and trends in access

The illicit weapons trade

- Uncontrolled firearms are unregistered and often supplied by local gun manufacturers. The MILF acquires arms from the well-known weapons trafficking routes in Thailand, which also supplies the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. The majority of illegal weapons imported into Mindanao have come from foreign suppliers in Asia, for example from Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, China, and perhaps even Indonesia. The 'Golden Triangle' area is well known for its arms trafficking. The three main sources for this illicit trade are 'material originating in Thailand, material originating in Cambodia, largely obtained from government stocks and trans-shipped through Thailand; and material obtained in China.' (Robert Karniol, *Illicit Flows, Arms Smuggling in the 'Golden Triangle'*, July 2000). Other research has found substantial evidence of a supply route from Libya and Afghanistan.²³

- Corrupt law enforcers who work together with the smugglers often facilitate the trade. In these cases smugglers usually use commercial vessels, and middlemen are employed to dispatch the undeclared arms. In an attempt to break these smuggling rings, the police look for arms that are undeclared or mis-declared, and consigned to fictitious names and addresses. There have been several reports in the media of guns from Malaysia, which is used as a transit point for high-powered weapons from foreign sources, and intended for Muslim insurgents. The military has monitored several arms shipments from Malaysia to the Abu Sayyaf. Military intelligence suggests that Abu Sayyaf receives money from foreign religious and revolutionary organisations sympathetic to their 'cause'. Former Libyan Ambassador Abdul Rajab Azzarouq, who was involved in the negotiations, said a "livelihood package" was offered for Mindanao, totalling more than US \$20 million (Associated Press, August 16, 2000). The official explanation for this "package" was that the money would be spent on projects of benefit to the community. A reliable source told researchers that "the ASG [Abu Sayyaf] received a share – said to total around US \$8-10 million – of this windfall."²⁴ The increased purchasing power of the rebel group suggests that this may indeed be the case.
- A Philippines Embassy official in London confirmed that his confidential sources suggest that both the Abu Sayyaf and MILF are getting arms from Pakistan. There are also suspected major firearms "leakages" from Russia and China. The information on this is however patchy at best, and further field research must be done to substantiate these rumours.
- The number of arms originating from – or trafficked through – Europe is unknown. Due to the absence of effective end-user controls, there is a chance that any arms leaving Europe for South East Asia will find their way to the region's trouble-spots, including Mindanao.²⁵
- This supply is supplemented by the unlicensed gunsmiths, and the manufacturing facilities of the rebels themselves, who make a variety of *small arms including assault rifles, and rifle-propelled grenades*. Secretary of Defense, Orlando Mercado, said that a stronger and better-armed Abu Sayyaf emerged from the hostage crisis in 2000. In addition to the money paid for hostages, it is widely believed that when two Filipino broadcasters were freed, P5m in cash and firearms worth P1m exchanged hands.

Some sources claim that this included 5xM203 rifle-grenade launchers and 5xM16 assault rifles.

Legal supplies to the Philippines

"This dirty business (arms transfers) fuels conflicts, fortifies extremism and destabilises entire regions. All of us whose nations sell such weapons (small arms, ammunitions and explosives), or through whose nations the traffic flows, bear some responsibility for turning a blind eye to the destruction they cause." (Madeleine Albright, Washington Post 24 January 1999)

- The legal flow of arms into the Philippines has served the rebel groups in Mindanao well. Once released into the country, small arms tend to gravitate towards areas of demand. In the Philippines, the area of highest demand by non-state actors is Mindanao. Arms have been recovered from rebels which can be traced to the coup attempt in 1980s, when a number of firearms were reported "lost", but were in fact sold to the secessionist forces. There is continuing leakage of military and police firearms, which are either seized in skirmishes with the rebels or sold.

- The USA between 1992-98 – as part of the excess defence articles (EDA) programme – gave to the Philippines government 3,638 M-14s, an unspecified number of M-16s, 16,488 Colt M1911 Pistols, 10 x m240 Ms, 22,500 116 A-1 Automatic rifles. It should perhaps come as no surprise to note that some of these M-16s were recovered from the scene of a firefight between National Democratic Front and government forces. The USA also gave two refurbished Lockheed Martin C-130B transport planes. The 106th JS Congress passed the FY2000-2001 State Department Authorisation Act (HR 3427) Section 1308. This establishes US Policy for transfer of EDA to the Philippines and authorises US \$5 million minimum Foreign Military Financing for each of the fiscal years 2000 and 2001, and encourages the President to transfer to the Philippines – on a grant basis – aircraft and naval vessels that become available under EDA programmes. These "loss leaders" for future arms purchases have been successful. US and Philippine defense officials formed a Defense Experts group (the first meeting was in December

1999) to discuss and assess military equipment assistance that the USA could provide. The AFP is involved in an on-going consultation process with the Americans, who are hopeful of securing substantial orders as the Philippine economy recovers and the modernisation programme gets under way.

- Other transfers include Ultimax machine-guns from Chartered Industries, Singapore. Also, the Armed Corporation of Philippines has signed a deal to manufacture under licence from Denel of South Africa LW Vektor SP-19mm pistol. Arms Corporation will license-build 10,000 for PNP and also market the weapon commercially. The Asian Armoured Vehicle Technologies Corporation (AAVTC) will mount a one-man 12.7mm Browning machine-armed turret to the first 100 Simba APCs purchased from UK's GKN Defence. The Simba is a front-line combat vehicle. The order for the 150 APCs was worth US\$46m.

Military budget

- The Philippine economy did do well during the period of economic growth which was enjoyed by most other South East Asian states in the late 1980s and early 1990s, though not to the same extent. In the second half of 1997, the year of ASEAN's thirtieth birthday, a financial crisis ravaged several states in East and SE Asia, having a sharp impact on military budgets. Indonesia, Thailand, and to a degree the Philippines suffered the worst economic downturn. Currency depreciation and domestic inflation have severely eroded the purchasing power of governments' budgets. Since the economic crisis, Philippine military spending has been constrained. It is now around 1.3 percent of GDP – one of the lowest in the region. The 15-year military modernisation programme due to start in 1996 was postponed, until the first tranche of funding was approved in 2000 by Parliament. The value of this commitment by the government is only P 5.8bn. A Philippines Embassy official in London commented that "...not a lot can be bought with this. With the recent troubles in the south of the country, the priority is now to buy counter-insurgency weapons. These are expensive, we are thankful to our American friends, who continue to help us through this difficult period [by supplying weapons]."

The Insurgents go shopping

- In 1998 the Abu Sayyaf leader, Galib Andang, is reported to have said that the problem was not the supply of weapons, but finding the money to pay for them. Today the situation is markedly different. It has been reported that Libya paid US\$1m for each of the ten Western hostages kidnapped from Malaysia's Sipadan resort in April 2000. But Seif al-Islam (head of the Gadhfi Foundation which helped to negotiate their release) said "not more than US\$6m" was paid (Philippine Daily Inquirer, August 23, 2000) – not an insignificant amount.

- In August 2000 Galib Andang boasted "we now have enough men and guns to burn down the town of Jolo ... if the government launches an offensive" (Philippine Daily Inquirer, August 7, 2000). According to military intelligence reports, they are willing to pay "top Peso" for heavy weapons such as rocket launchers, mortars, and machine guns. They now have much more money, and are offering to pay P48,000 for one M-16 rifle, the standard weapon of the Philippine armed forces. The government lists the price of an M-16 at P25,000. The most expensive rifle being sought by kidnapers is the Ultimax, a light machine gun. They are offering to pay P280,000: it actually costs around P93,000. The group have also stated a desire for 'baby' M-16s fitted with a grenade launcher; this is the M-203, for which they are offering P210,000. The government's arsenal includes a comparable grenade launcher which cost P30,000. The Abu Sayyaf are also reportedly seeking to buy recoilless rifles – anti-tank rocket launchers – at P450,000 apiece. A similarly inflated price of P60,000 has been paid for M-14s, but the price tag should be only P25,000. Machine guns of the M-60 type are being bought for P150,000, while P200,000 is being offered for 81-mm mortars and P150,000 for smaller mortars. "The illicit trafficking and smuggling of firearms poses a serious threat to national security and a stumbling block to economic development" (Lt Col Gilberto Abanto of the Intelligence Service of the AFP, Asia Times, May 12, 2000)

- A WW11 vintage rifle – the M-1 Garand – which is used by Abu Sayyaf snipers is being purchased for P10,000 above the usual price of P15,000. These weapons are sourced from smugglers, the entry point being the country's porous borders in the south. The arms are then easily taken to Mindanao.

Civilian possession

- It is difficult to estimate accurately the number and types of small arms in the possession of civilians, largely because these are mostly illegitimate. However, it is apparent from the information provided by various sources that a significant number of small arms are indeed already in the hands of or accessible to civilians – both Muslim and Christian. These small arms are largely manufactured locally, although there seems to be a growing trend towards the acquisition of high-powered rifles of foreign make such as M-16s and M-14s.

- The PNP Provincial Director of Cotabato argues that only a “wild guess” can be made. The rule of thumb in the PNP, a joke he says, is to estimate the number of firearms by counting the number of households in the area. He estimates that most of these are World War II-vintage US-made firearms, such as Garand and carbine rifles, described as “left-overs” from the height of the Muslim unrest in the 1970s. It is to be noted that despite government efforts to retrieve firearms from general circulation after World War II, either by threat of penalty,²⁶ offers of compensation²⁷ or mobilisation of private funds to provide incentives,²⁸ illegally owned small arms proliferated.

- Firearms of US make (such as M16s) predominate even among the MILF. The number of firearms of European make is dismissed as insignificant. According to the PNP Provincial Director, “the FAL²⁹ is no longer being manufactured, and what’s left in the field are few, no longer in good condition, and mostly being used for show [paporma].” The AK³⁰ is not popular, because ammunition for it is difficult. The RPG-7³¹ is of Russian make, but most of what the MILF now has is locally manufactured. As for handguns, the European-made 9 mm is not as popular as the US-made .45 calibre.

- Data furnished by the Operations and Intelligence Section of the Cotabato Provincial Police Office indicate that there is an estimated 1,340 firearms in the possession of non-police/non-AFP elements in the province. Of this total number, only 20 (or 1.5 percent) are licensed, consisting of foreign-made high-powered firearms. The remaining 1,320 (or 98.5 percent) are unlicensed – of which 62 percent (820) are foreign-made high-powered and 38 percent (500) are homemade. Of the estimated number of unlicensed foreign-made high-powered firearms in

the possession of non-police/non-AFP elements, it is reckoned that 20 are in the hands of elements of the CPP/NPA and 30 in the control of the MILF. The remainder would be in the hands of civilians. The depth and spread of the conflict, however, belies the police data.

- A senior NGO staff member interviewed observed that, aside from the MILF, the AFP/PNP, CAFGUs and CVOs, there are other sections of the population possessing firearms. These sections include "vigilantes," typified by the Tadtad cult; "laga" hold-outs; cattle-rustling gangs; and "ordinary" farmers, both Muslim and Christian. Among these armed sections of the population, the most common firearms are locally manufactured ("*paltik*") handguns, using 5.52 mm (M-16) ammunition or 12-gauge shotgun ammunition; 12-gauge shotguns; carbines; Garand rifles; and a few Thompson sub-machineguns. There are also .38 and .357 calibre handguns (mostly "*paltik*"), and some .45-calibre pistols.

- Firearm possession is fairly common even among civilians. While unable to give any quantitative estimate of the extent of arms proliferation among civilians, Fr. Layson implies that there is some truth in the perception that there is a relatively large number of small arms among the civilian population, both Christian and Muslim. He also says that Moro civilians are "more armed" than Christian civilians. "Long arms" (i.e. M-16s) are now common among civilians, he also observes. There is also a large number of homemade firearms ("*paltik*") such as the so-called "fortylite" (a handgun similar in appearance to the .45 calibre pistol but using .552 mm or M-16 ammunition) and .45 calibre handguns. Grenades are likewise in the hands of some civilians.

- A lay worker of the Roman Catholic Church in Carmen municipality estimates that the number of firearms among civilians in the municipality could be over half the total number of households, with some households having more than one firearm. These range from shotguns to M-16s and M-14s. He adds that firearm possession is most common among households in town centres.

- Another lay worker reckons that 50-70 percent of Christian households in the municipality illegally possess firearms, aside from CAFGUs and CVOs. In his estimate, about 20 percent of these illicit firearms are home-made 12-gauge shotguns and .38 calibre handguns. The remaining 80 percent or so range from carbines and Garands to M-

16s and M-14s. As for the Muslim civilians, he says that while they may not necessarily keep firearms in their domicile, they do have access to firearms being kept secretly in MILF arms caches for use by those who are mobilised for combat duty.

View of a community leader

"I keep a gun as a protection, because no matter how well you deal with people [as a barangay official], there may always be some who may resent you. There are five registered firearms owned by civilians in my community. These are all homemade, including .38 calibre revolvers and a .45 calibre machine pistol. While its my impression that Christian civilians in the community do not have guns, it's my feeling that Muslim civilians have hidden firearms. Christians are wary about keeping illegal guns, because some other Christians are likely to tell about it. Muslims are more united and do not tell on each other. The firearms held by Muslim civilians in the community include M-16s, M-14s and locally made "fortylites." Twelve-gauge shotguns are no longer in fashion, as these too low powered in comparison with those held by the armed groups that may pose a threat to the community."

(Extract from an interview with a barangay captain from a village near Pikit.)

- Civilians in zones of conflict tend to see the possession of firearms as a necessity – mainly as a means for "protection and defence." The Roman Catholic parish priest of Pikit sees the phenomenon as "an offshoot of the culture of violence (spawned by the) escalation of war, (because) as war escalates, more civilians are dragged into it." This is seconded by no less than the PNP Provincial Director, who says that one after-effect of the escalation of the government-MILF hostilities is to encourage civilians (whether Muslim or Christian) to arm themselves "for protection."

- The recent escalation of hostilities between government forces and the MILF has fuelled civilians' demand for additional and more powerful firearms. In Dalengaoen, where several Christian farmers traditionally keep firearms "for protection," more people are acquiring

firearms or intending to do so after the November 11, 2000 attack. At least five people have already purchased new guns – three of which are M-16s (as of first week of December 2000), using proceeds from selling carabaos or cattle.

- Even among non-Muslim indigenous peoples there is a growing feeling that they need to arm themselves for protection. A Roman Catholic lay worker estimates that among the Aromanon Manobo tribe in the area there may be about 20 to 30 guns, ranging from World War I vintage .30 calibre bolt-action breech-loading Springfield rifles to Garands. These guns, he says, include “personal” weapons (mostly “left-overs”

Table 2. Prices of Firearms and Ammunition, Cotabato³²

Type	Price (PhP)	Price (USD) ³³	Equivalent in Commodity
Firearms			
Cal. 45	15,000-25,000	300-400	1-2 cows
Cal. 38	2,000	40	2 sacks of rice
Garand (Cal.30)	15,000-20,000	300-400	1-2 cows
M16	25,000	400	1 carabao
Shotgun	3,000	60	3 sacks of rice
Pistolite	800-1,000	16-20	1 sack of rice
Fortylite	1,000	20	1 sack of rice
Dentists	1 : 65,611	1 : 116,611	1 : 243,300
Ammunition			
M16	5-8	0.10	
Cal. 45	25	0.50	
Cal. 38	18	0.36	
Garand	12-18	24-36	
Shotgun	60-70	1.20-1.40	

Source: Ali Nasser and Haruta Mamugkat, JP-Kidapawan

from World War II) as well as those recently issued by the government to Manobo CAFGUs.

Availability of small arms supplies

- Philippine laws, rules, and regulations governing ownership, possession, and carrying of arms take their roots from the American colonial administration, with the passage of the American Congress Act No. 2711, otherwise known as the Revised Administrative Code of 1917, the latest addition of which is Republic Act 8294 (Topacio, 1997; p.1). Aside from duly authorised persons and entities, firearms may be possessed by any private individual who is at least 21 years old and who passes a neuro-psychiatric test conducted by any government or government-accredited psychiatrist. An individual may own a maximum of one (1) low-calibre rifle (up to Cal. 22) or shotgun (up to gauge 12) and one (1) pistol (up to Cal. 357).³⁴ The gun-owner may be issued a Permit to Carry Firearms Outside of Residence (PTCFOR) if the individual can prove that he/she was a kidnap victim, a robbery victim (of at least PHP 1 million), or under threat by the NPA or other organisations identified as subversive by the government.³⁵ The issue of a licence is done by the Director General of the PNP by authority of the President.

- It is apparent from field data that small-arms supplies are relatively easy to come by. These supplies range from locally made handguns to foreign-made assault rifles. High-powered firearms of foreign make that are available to civilians are generally perceived to come from members of the armed forces as well as paramilitary units. Allegedly, these elements sell their "savings" or "surplus" to interested civilians. According to one informant, a CAFGU member offered him a genuine .357 calibre handgun confiscated from an illegal possessor during a raid they had conducted.

- A former high-ranking Communist rebel cadre also reveals that one of their biggest sources of ammunition was government military personnel from a military training camp. The ammunition sold were so-called "savings", i.e. ammunition reported as expended during training exercises but actually stashed away for sale. Civilians in Cotabato have seen ammunition boxes marked "Government Property Not For Sale" left by MILF rebels.

- A former member of the government militia in the 1970s (then called the "Barangay Self-Defense Unit" or BSDU) also relates that an Army unit assigned to their area issued Garand rifles and ammunition to several members of the BSDU. When the unit moved out, the rifles remained with the BSDU members.

- Certain local government officials in the conflict zone are reportedly maintaining clandestine arms-fabrication facilities. These facilities reportedly turn out "souped-up" 12-gauge shotguns, which are being issued to civilian volunteers. The number of small-time illegal arms dealers cannot be estimated, but it is apparent that there are a lot of them. These dealers generally supply locally made handguns ("*paltik*") and a few foreign-made handguns and rifles. ❁

Endnotes

- 1 Ibon Facts and Figures, July 2000.
- 2 AFP Press Briefing, June 2000.
- 3 Information provided by Fr. Roberto Layson and Adel Naya, Delangalen resident and victim of the MILF attack.
- 4 PD, January 4, 2001.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Created by the 1990 Organic Act (RA 6734), the region covers predominantly Muslim of Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Maguindanao. By virtue of the 1996 GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement, the ARMM would have been subjected to an amendatory law that would pave the way for a new regional autonomous government (NRAG) after September 1999 through a referendum or plebiscite. Overtaken by adverse events and factors, the plebiscite was indefinitely postponed.
- 8 Region 12 is composed of two provinces, namely, Lanao del Norte, Sultan Kudarat and Cotabato which are geographically separated by Maguindanao (ARMM).
- 9 Municipal data focuses on Pikit (Pop. 57,909) and Carmen (Pop. 40,237).
- 10 The 1997 World Population Data suggest an Infant Mortality Rate of 34 per 1,000 livebirths in 1995 (ADB, 1998).
- 11 A barangay is the smallest administrative unit, usually a village and its surrounding land.
- 12 Fr. Layson estimates that the evacuees in Pikit are about 80 percent Muslim, 15 percent Christian and 5 percent 'lumad' (of the Manobo tribe). This ethnic composition reflects the general composition of the municipality as 16 affected areas (of the 42 barangays of Pikit) are either predominantly Muslim or mixed communities.
- 13 Direct and indirect bilateral and multi-lateral development programmes for Central Mindanao came as a corollary response to the post-conflict conditions established by the 1996 GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement. In 1997 the SPCPD and the National Development Authority (NEDA) crafted an integrated development framework and public investment plan for the SZOPAD areas. The UNDP and other international development agencies implemented a project worth PhP 24.6 billion (GIVE AN APPROXIMATE DOLLAR EQUIVALENT, of which 50 percent was allotted to infrastructure, 32 percent to agro-industrial development, 5 percent to human-resource development, and 1 percent to

development administration (Baker, 1998; p. 37). The government, on the other hand, allocated PhP 39.8 billion for infrastructure and capability building, including PhP 2.3 billion earmarked for livelihood and capacity-building in direct core communities of the MNLF (Baker, 1998; p.37).

- 14 Based on the interview with Claudia Plock, Medical Coordinator of ACH, on 29 November, 2000, in Cotabato City.
- 15 A derisive adjective given by anti-Muslim Christians to suggest that the Fr. Bert Layson of the OMI religious order is an ally of the MILF.
- 16 The "Ilagas" are Christian paramilitary groups organized by anti-Muslim Christian politicians in Cotabato otherwise known as the "Magic 7." The "blackshirts" are MNLF fighters, so-called because they wore black uniforms.
- 17 The MILF denies any association with Commander Pakil.
- 18 An initiative of the Philippine Jesuits, the Bishops-Ulama Conference was established and held its first meeting at the Ateneo de Manila University in July 1996 (Intengan, 2000).
- 19 1991 data, U.S. Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, June 1991.
- 20 With reference to the Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon, the armed wing of the old Communist Party of the Philippines, which was later renamed the Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan (HMB) or People's Liberation Army.
- 21 During an interview by the author on 14 December 2000.
- 22 Carlo Pablos, "Special Cops, private armies," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, August 21, 2000.
- 23 Meriza Makinao and Alfredo Lucang 'Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration: The Mindanao Experience', in Dipankar Banerjee (ed.) *South Asia at Gun-point*, Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Sri Lanka, October 2000.
- 24 Confidential interview, December 2000, London.
- 25 John McFarlane, *Transnational Arms Flows: Small Arms Trafficking and the Threat to Regional Security*, A Law Enforcement Perspective, Transnational Security Threats in Asia Conference, Honolulu, August 9, 2000.
- 26 Republic Act No. 4 of July 19, 1945 increasing the penalty for the illegal possession of firearms.
- 27 Republic Act No. 486 of June 10, 1950 authorising anyone surrendering a weapon to get compensation for the value of the firearm and procure a permanent licence.
- 28 Setting up of the Peace and Amelioration Fund Commission on January 7, 1954, jointly funded by government and the private sector to entice holders to surrender their weapons.
- 29 With reference to the 7.62 mm Belgian-made high-powered automatic rifle.
- 30 With reference to the 7.62 mm Russian-made Kalashnikov automatic rifle.
- 31 With reference to the Russian-made, anti-tank, Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG). During the author's visit to Camp Abubakar in September 1999, he observed that MILF fighters mostly had the earlier model, RPG-2, which is similar to the Chinese version, B40. MILF ordinance units are capable of manufacturing the launchers. It is unlikely that the MILF is capable of producing the projectiles, especially for RPG 7 because of the high technology required for its manufacture.
- 32 Source: Nasser Ali and Haruta Marmugkat, Justice and Peace Desk, Diocese of Kidapawan.
- 33 At US1=PhP 50 exchange rate
- 34 As provided by Standing Operating Procedure No. 13 for Licensing of Firearms, 19 September 1991.
- 35 Guidelines in the Issuance of Permit to Carry Firearms Outside of Residence issued by the Philippine National Police.