

## MARITIME TERRORISM NETWORK: THREAT AND SECURITY IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTHEAST ASIA

HERDI SAHRASAD<sup>1</sup>, AL CHAIDAR<sup>2</sup>, M. AKMAL<sup>3</sup>,  
SAIFULLAH ALI<sup>4</sup>, NANDA AMALIA<sup>5</sup>,  
DARA QUTHNI EFFIDA<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Paramadina,  
<sup>2,3,4,5,6</sup>Universitas Malikussaleh Aceh

### *Abstract*

Southeast Asia is a region that is vulnerable to terrorism. Of the total terrorism cases that occurred in the world, 50 percents occurred in this region. Mindanao is one of the regions in Southeast Asia that since a long time ago has been the basis of world-class terrorism. This situation is getting worse due to the presence of terrorist groups with a strong tradition of maritime piracy. The nexus between terrorism and piracy makes the issue of maritime terrorism in Southeast Asia a regional security concern. Abu Sayyaf Group is a terrorist group in the Southern Philippines that is very well-known but difficult to map. This makes the Abu Sayyaf a source of prolonged tension in the Southern Philippines in particular and in the Southeast Asia region in general. This study is a field observation that uses descriptive analysis to reveal the details of the Abu Sayyaf and the issue of terrorism in Mindanao.

*Asia Tenggara adalah salah satu wilayah yang rentan terhadap terorisme. Dari total seluruh kasus terorisme yang terjadi di dunia, 50 persen terjadi di wilayah ini. Mindanao merupakan salah satu wilayah di Asia Tenggara yang sejak lama menjadi basis terorisme kelas dunia. Situasi ini semakin buruk karena keberadaan kelom-*

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Corresponding author; email: <sup>1</sup>sahasrad@yahoo.com, <sup>2</sup>alchaidar@yahoo.com, <sup>3</sup>m\_akmal@yahoo.com

*pok-kelompok teroris dengan tradisi pembajakan maritim yang kuat. Adanya keterikatan antara terorisme dan pembajakan membuat isu terorisme maritim di Asia Tenggara menjadi perhatian keamanan regional. Abu Sayyaf adalah kelompok teroris di Filipina Selatan yang paling dikenal tetapi susah untuk dipetakan. Hal ini yang menjadikan Abu Sayyaf sumber ketegangan berkepanjangan di Filipina Selatan khususnya dan di kawasan Asia Tenggara pada umumnya. Artikel ini melalui pengamatan di lapangan dan menggunakan analisis deskriptif, mengungkap seluk beluk Abu Sayyaf dan isu terorisme di Mindanao.*

**Keywords:** Abu Sayyaf; Jemaah Islamiyah; Mindanao; Moro; terrorism.

## Introduction

Mindanao and Sulawesi in recent years have become world's attention because of the emergence of terrorist organizations such as Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah. Their existence is said to have eliminated the role of more moderate and nationalist group of freedom fighter such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The Abu Sayyaf group consists of Islamic militias that base around the Southern Philippines' archipelago, including Jolo, Basilan, and Mindanao. To get world attention, the Abu Sayyaf group from its inception until now is known to often kidnap and ask for ransom.<sup>2</sup>

The power of the Abu Sayyaf is highly calculated by the Philippines military and countries in Southeast Asia. Initially,

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<sup>2</sup> The name "Abu Sayyaf" comes from the name of Professor Abdul Rasul Sayyaf which is the name of the Mujahideen fighter in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the Abu Sayyaf Group was founded by Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani, a former member of the National Moro Liberation Front in the early 1990s in Basilan that now becomes their main basis. Abu Sayyaf itself is derived from Arabic, Abu means holder and Sayyaf means sword. So, Abu Sayyaf means a group of swordsmen. The members of the Abu Sayyaf have commonly practiced military training at the Mujahideen training camp in Afghanistan.

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their main funding support was Mohammed Jamal Khalifa, one of Osama bin Laden's siblings. At first, Abu Sayyaf was affiliated with Al Qaeda but has now joined the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) since 2013. Khadafi Janjalani was named the leader of this group by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and in March 2016 they took hostages to 10 Indonesian sailors who were fishing in Philippines waters (Frank and Hookway 2001).

Abu Sayyaf has expanded its network to Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia. This group is responsible for bombings, killings, kidnappings, and extortions in an effort to establish a Muslim state in the West of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago and to create a conducive atmosphere for the creation of a big Pan-Islamic based country in the Malay Peninsula—Indonesia and Malaysia—in Southeast Asia (Hidayat and Gaus 2005). Khadafi Janjalani, brother of Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani, later became the leader of the Abu Sayyaf. The main goal is still the same that is establishing an Islamic State. After Abdurajak Janjalani's group was divided into different factions, its activities were further colored by robbery and kidnapping rather than political struggle. This was proven in 2000, this group has kidnapped 53 people including priests, several teachers, and students. To redeem the hostages, Abu Sayyaf demanded ransom and two hostages reportedly beheaded (Hefner 2003). The Abu Sayyaf has published a number of lists of demands that is the establishment of an independent Moro State, the release of several terrorists who have been detained abroad, prohibition of fishing boats operating in the Sulu Sea, protection for Filipinos in Sabah Malaysia and ransoms of around 1 million US dollars for one hostage.

Until the end of 2001, the Abu Sayyaf group still carried two US citizens and one Filipino nurse in Basilan Island as the result of kidnapping seven months ago. This was known when the

group offered negotiation to release them in the City of Zamboanga in April 2002. In June 2002, a hostage, US citizen, Martin Burnham, died during an attack by the Philippines forces against the Abu Sayyaf basis. While his wife, Gracia Burnham, could be saved. Meanwhile, a Filipino nurse, Ediborah Yap, was killed during a rescue operation by the Philippines military. In June 2002, Abu Sayyaf kidnapped foreign nationals including four Indonesian citizens. They were the ship crews of SM88 that was carrying coal from Indonesia to Cebu Island in the Central Philippines. The assault was carried out in the Jolo Island offshore and the four were then taken to the land of Jolo Island. Two days later, one Indonesian crew member Ferdinand Joel was rescued.

Then in March 2003, one Indonesian crew, Zulkifli, succeeded to save himself and reported that another Indonesian crew member, Muntu Jacobus Winowatan, was died. He was shot in a Philippine military rescue operation in February 2003. The last Indonesian hostage, Lerrech, has successfully escaped from Abu Sayyaf detention on April 11, 2003. In March 2016, the Abu Sayyaf group again kidnapped 10 Indonesian citizens who were Brahma Ship's crews that loaded coal belonging to a mining company from Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan.

The Abu Sayyaf is the name of an Islamic-based military terrorist and separatist group based around the Southern Philippine Islands, especially in the Jolo, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, and Mindanao regions. This group is often referred to as a terrorist group because of the concept of their struggle with hard-line Islamic ideology or radical Islam. This group has a chairman or leader named as Khadaffi Janjalani.

The study of the prospect of the security in Sulawesi and Sulu seas of the Southern Philippine briefly provides an overview of the socio-economic conditions of community groups in Min-

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danao that support the operations of the Abu Sayyaf factions and the map of relations between the Abu Sayyaf factions and the local elites in Southern Philippines. Besides, it also provides an overview related to the reasons why the community groups and local elites give support to these armed groups.

This study regards that finding the root of the problems of the Philippines Moro People is the most important thing to do and find a solution for their problems. Unfortunately, Moro Muslim relation with the Manila Government in many cases means confrontation and demands for their independence. The Filipinos Muslim, the Moro Nation, believe that they must fight for their life and security guarantees, live according to the values they believe in and have the power to determine their fate. We, the Indonesian people who are predominantly Muslim, hope that the struggle will reach its culmination and the peace could be realized in this very dynamic region in culture, trade, politics, and sciences.

That men and women used to shed their own blood and the blood of others seemed to be a reality of the modern world that is difficult to overcome. We try to understand such conflicts by identifying their backgrounds but this is the most difficult puzzle to solve all kinds of armed ethnonationalism. Why are they inspired to fight and die for the nation? This study investigates the meaning and motivation of such struggle, the Muslim separatist movement in the Philippines. This study traces the development of Muslim nationalist identity in the Philippines, the origin of Muslim rebellion against the Republic of the Philippines, and the mobilization of support of the people for separatist movements in both armed and unarmed phases. This study is not a report from the “front line” or the description of the center of the political command of the Muslim nationalist movement in the Philippines. This ethnography portrays the views of the poor ur-

ban Muslim community, many of whom seek refuge with armed rebellions.

### **Mindanao, Community, and Conflict**

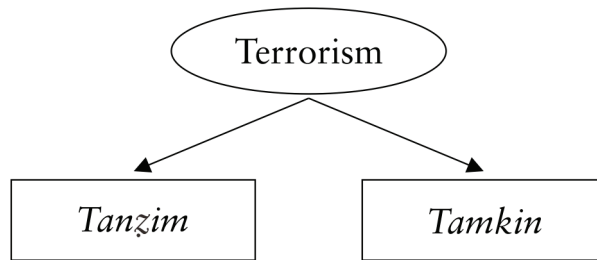
Mindanao is the second largest island in the Philippines and one of the three main island groups along with Luzon and Visayas. Unlike the northern part of the Philippines that culturally inherited Western—Spain and America—culture, the southern region contrarily inherited Islamic culture. Mindanao, located in the southern part of the Philippines, is a historic residential area for the majority of Muslims or Moro tribes and other ethnic groups such as Maranao and Tausug. The warfare for independence has been pursued by various Muslim factions for five centuries against the rulers. Spanish, American, Japanese and Filipino forces have not yet succeeded in reducing the will of those who want to secede from the Philippines, which is predominantly Catholic. Now, the majority of the Mindanao population is Catholic due to the pattern of unfair land ownership and a large number of migrants to the region. This triggered the poor and marginalized Mindanao Muslims and separatist movements who have struggled for hundreds of years.

For the last few years, Mindanao has been under surveillance because of the emergence of Islamic terrorist organizations and their existence is related to the conflict in the Middle East. Mindanao is considered the basis of the Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah whose emergence has reduced the role of more moderate and nationalistic groups of freedom fighters such as the MILF. Moro conflict is a revolt that is taking place on the Island of Mindanao, Philippines. In 1969, political tensions and an open battle took place between the Philippine Government and Moro Muslim rebel groups. The Moro Rebellion led to the Jabitah massacre, which killed 60 Muslim Filipino commanders due to a planned operation to reclaim the eastern part of the

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Malaysian state of Sabah (Abuza 2014). In response, a professor of Philippine University, Nur Misuari, founded the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), an armed rebel group that intends to establish an independent Mindanao. In the following years, MNLF was divided into several different groups which included the MILF that wanted to establish an Islamic state in the Philippines.

Figure 1  
*Typology of terrorism<sup>a</sup>*



<sup>a</sup>*Terrorist typically avoid direct confrontation with military forces and are organized more like criminal gangs—secretive and smaller in number—and rarely chose to directly confront military forces. Terrorist also ordinarily do not seek to directly control and administer territory.*

The Moro Rebellion has its roots in the long history of the Bangsamoro rebellion against foreign rulers, started from the American annexation of the Philippines in 1899. Since then, the Moro rebellion has turned against the Philippine government. The number of victims of the conflict varied, however, the Upsala Conflict Data Program estimated that around 6,015 people were killed in an armed conflict between the Philippine Government and the ASG, BIFM, MILF and MNLF factions from 1989 to 2012 (Clamor 2002).

The Moro Conflict in the Philippines is a conflict that has been happening since the colonial to the independence period and even said to continue until the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But, in this study, it would be limited up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moro conflict

in the Philippines is varied. It means that this conflict did not only occur among two parties but various parties. It is said that this conflict began during the colonial period including Spanish imperialism, American, and after independence even with the Philippine government itself. After that, the Moro people fought with the immigrants and with Christian groups. Started from Spanish colonization in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Spain came to bring new socio-political conditions. Spain occupied the North Philippines, by spreading Christianity. But when Spain would seize the Southern Philippines in which the Muslims were the majority, they failed. The resistances in the Southern Philippines were carried out by Sultan Sulu, Maguindanao, and Buayan to whom the Spaniards called Moro<sup>3</sup> (Wiharyanto 2011).

According to Spanish, the Islamic Sultanate represented a backward society, barbarian, rude, and uncivilized. For years, Spain which was one of the superpower countries along with the Portuguese did not succeed in seizing Mindanao. The efforts of the Spanish government to control Mindanao within 200 years did not succeed whether in the context of economics, politics, or the spread of religion as a whole. Only a few regions in the northern part of the Mindanao archipelago have been successfully controlled i.e. in Davao del Norte and Zamboanga del Norte. Various resistances were carried out by the Moro group and the battle against Spain was called the Moro War (Surwardono 2013).

The battle against Spain strengthened the relationship between the Sulu and Maguindanao Sultanates which was initially less harmonious as they had the same goal in fighting against the Spanish government. As the United States came in the Philippines in 1898, the Southern Filipinos did not want to help the leaders of the North Philippines and Spain to face America and

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<sup>3</sup> Because their skin was black like Muslims in North Africa.



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the Philippines finally fell to America. It was marked by the Paris Agreement on December 10, 1898. During this time the Southern Philippines was successfully controlled by the Americans because they managed to persuade the datu to stand with them. In contrast to Spain, the US government did not directly show their imperialist attitude but concealed it with a mission in education and development.

The cohesiveness of coalition between the Sulu and Maguin-danao Sultanates in responding to the possibility of US penetration in Mindanao made the US government preferred to manage and control Mindanao through cultural, social and economic manners like through modernization policy (Surwardono 2013, 41). Modernization here means that America was trying to improve Moro's standard of living, but they did not get a positive response. America's efforts to lift the left behind villages of the Southern Filipinos were considered an act of aggression against the Moro people.

On the other hand, America also did not advocate Christian-Islamic hostility. In fact, America continued to grow the seeds of hostility because they brought thousands of Christian immigrants to Islamic regions. In their official policy, the United States let the Moro people practice their religious life and their ritual habits remained uninterrupted. The Southern Philippines was opposed to modernization so when the system of modern government was introduced, only the North Philippines could accept it. The people in the Southern Philippines still used the traditional system of datu. America treated well the datu who recognized their sovereignty and suppressed those who did not.

As a result, those who held government positions were the North Filipinos, while the Moro people were increasingly left behind in the government. The Moro people were also excluded from the discussion of their independence. When the 1926

Balcon Bill constitution was issued, the United States supported the choice of the Philippines elites who wished to combine the Islamic Sultanate in Mindanao into the Philippines territories (Goda 1999). This made the relationship between the Islamic Sultanate and the United States unfavorable. The enactment also urged the Islamic sultanate of Mindanao to propose petition to the United States in order not to be included into Philippines territory. Surwardono (2013, 56) stated that this step was carried out in 3 stages i.e. the Sulu community petition, dated June 9, 1921. Then proceed with a petition which is often known as the Zamboanga Declaration, dated February 1, 1924. And the last petition was resubmitted on March 18, 1935, known as the Dansalam Declaration—by 120 Moro datu, mainly from Lanano—that stated the separation from the Commonwealth government and chose to be under the protection of the United States until the Moro community could establish their own government.

Despite the petition was issued during World War II, the United States was able to invite the Moro people to fight together with the North Filipinos. They carried out guerrilla warfare against Japan. At that time they all did not care about their respective backgrounds. Wrapped in the spirit of patriotism, they created a strong sense of nationalism. The profits gained from investment in the Philippines were not many. The government's costs could not be fully covered by local tax revenues while the costs were increasing due to additional military defense costs. In short, the Philippines economically really did not give benefit to the United States.

The Philippines gained independence from the United States in 1946. But the independence did not change anything and had no meaning for the Moro people. They continued to gain various forms of discrimination and marginalization such as pover-

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ty, difficulty in obtaining employment, and low level of education. Even discrimination has frequently led to military violence (Bastin and Twitchett 1970).

The Philippines government continued to include the Mindanao region into the Philippine administrative territory and did not respond to the petitions submitted by the Moro people. The Manuel Quezon government did not care about the demands of Moro people in Mindanao and even put Mindanao as one of the important assets to solve the problems in Luzon and Visayas such as land problem and extractive and agrarian investments. Such policy was taken because Mindanao is an area that has very wide land availability and natural resources potential for large investments (Rood 2005).

Because there was no response from the government, Datu Utdog Matalam felt disappointed and then established MIM (Moro Independence Movement) that strived for the independence of Moro. In addition to the existence of MIM, the birth of the MNLF led by Nur Misuari also succeeded in gaining the support from the International World including the OIC and MILF. The Moro armed groups increased their attacks on military units in the Philippines so that many government soldiers become the victims. As a result, many troops from headquarter were sent to the South Philippines. In October 1972, a greater rebellion exploded. The rebel armies took over government radio transmitters in Mindanao. The attack was prepared in more detail, proving that the target was well chosen and the time for the attack was also determined through careful planning.

The MNFL movement realized that if there is no foreign funding, then they will not be able to survive against the government army. To get foreign funds, MNLF established branches in various Islamic countries and carried out propaganda that showed the suppression of the Philippine government against

the Moro people (Wiharyanto 2011). Libya was the first country to provide unlimited assistance by which the Moro people equipped themselves with the up-to-date weapons. Libya not only provided financial support but also weapons. The militant cadres of MNLF were also sent out of the country to undergo military training with assistance from the elites of the Mindanao Sultanate who were disappointed with the Marcos government policy. The first group delivered was MNLF combatants or better known as the Top 90 and included MNLF chairman, Nur Misuari, embarked from Pangkor Island near Penang Island in Malaysia through the Libyan facility (Surwardono 2013). In addition to Libya and Malaysia in the 1980s, Syria was also involved in training Moro militants. But, the Philippines government also asked for help from foreign parties to face Moro rebels. The Philippine government requested weapons assistance to the United States and to other European countries. The Moro resistance was increasingly strong and persistent in struggling against the Philippine government after getting some assistance. Therefore in 1973, armed resistance increased. And finally, Marcos realized that the war would last so long and cost a lot. Besides, there were many victims. After getting realized, Marcos chose a political alternative to solve the Moro problem.

This conflict occurred between Moro and Non-Moro groups in Mindanao. This conflict began when Non-Moro groups or migrants took over Moro's lands in Mindanao. In 1918, the Moro population in Mindanao reached 80% and Non-Moro population was around 20%. The Moro community inhabited 18 regions of 20 regions in Mindanao. And in 1970, the Moro population in Mindanao remained 20% only and occupied 13 regions in Mindanao while the Non-Moro population became 80% by occupying 18 regions (Surwardono 2013, 45). From this statement, it can be concluded that between 1918 and 1970

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there was a drastic change in the number of Non-Moro and Moro residents in Mindanao. And those who occupied 18 regions in 1970 were Christian of Mindanao. The changes of the map of land ownership have led to the distribution of the work of the Mindanao people, the Moro people who previously owned the land turned into the workers who worked for the land of the Christian community.

The conflict of land then developed into a conflict with a primordial character. Government policies that moved the Viyasa ethnic group and formed a civilian force took over the land and defended the land taken. Land acquisition often used violence even a murder. Because of the existence of these civilian forces, it resulted in various tragedies in the early 1970s where 40,000 Moro residents were killed by armed civilians. The group was called the Ilaga group that carried out massacres against the Muslim community. Whereas the Maros government tended to neglect it, so that the conflict that was initially the land conflict turned into a religious conflict in Mindanao (Kiefer 1972).

But, the Mindanao people also did not remain silent, some of the Moro elites with their civilian group called Baracuda fought against the Ilaga group and the central government. The Baracuda group used religion to thrill the spirit of the Moro people in order to persistent to defend their land and dignity. The group also internationalized this conflict to the Islamic world so that Islamic communities around the world provided assistance to Islam in Mindanao for the sake of religion.

Some efforts to end the incessant conflict in Mindanao in the southern Philippines have been conducted whether by involving domestic and foreign interference. Some of the settlement efforts that have been carried out among others were conflict resolution initiated by the OIC in 1973 by forming a 4-state commission. The four members were Libya, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, and

Somalia to investigate the cases of violence by the Philippine government against Moro. But it increased to 6 countries after Indonesia and Bangladesh joined as the members. The result of the Tripoli Agreement was that the acknowledgment of the Mindanao autonomous region legally that included 13 regions such as Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboangan del Zur, Zamboangan del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Davao del Sur, South Cotabato, Palawan, and all cities and villages in the region. The agreement also regulated the autonomous region to establish sharia courts, schools, administrative systems, economic and financial systems, regional security, representative bodies, and executive councils. Matters concerning foreign political policies and national defense remained the responsibility of the Central government and created a body called the Moro autonomous government (ARMM).

Towards the 1990s, the power of the central Philippine government was disrupted, this made Moro Muslim factions again mobilized the power to take advantage of the moment to declare the formation of an Independent Moro State. MNLF that during the Tripoli Agreement felt being capitalized by Marcos policy, chose to continue the armed struggle for the establishment of an independent state. To anticipate the mobilization in Mindanao, Aquino asked that the negotiations must be held again and finally agreed by Nur Misuari, the leader of the MNLF. Then, three people were sent to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia to negotiate in the 1987 Accord of Jeddah. Aquino was willing to negotiate in the matters of economic, political, social, and cultural issues except for the discussion on the issue of freedom of Moro. The outcome of the negotiations between the MNLF and the Philippine Government was the improvement of the status of the previous autonomous region into an expanded autonomous region.

The peace process in Southern Mindanao continued to take place after the replacement of President Aquino's regime with a

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more proactive one, Fidel Ramos. As time goes by, the militant groups such as the Abu Sayyaf continued to carry out terror and attacks in Mindanao, including kidnapping with ransom. Although violence continued, President Ramos would continue to realize the peace in Southern Mindanao.

On September 2, 1996, the Final Peace Agreement was formally agreed upon witnessed by Indonesia's foreign minister, Ali Alatas and the General Secretary of the OIC in Jakarta. By producing 81 points of agreement, the point was to increase the status of the expanded autonomous region to be a special economic region. The people of Mindanao carried out general election and won by Nur Misuari with 90% of the votes (Surwardono 2013).

Conflict and poverty are two things we can never separate. The incessant conflict caused various impacts both in terms of economy and education. The conflict that happened created a condition where the level of security was very low, this affected the economic system of Moro which was experiencing disruption especially in terms of low investment. Many Moro children could not go to school as their schools were being used as refuges. Damaged infrastructure and houses must be abandoned due to this conflict. The cost of rebuilding Mindanao after the conflict required a large amount of money.

*Table 1.1*  
*Pirate attacks by region, 1999-2001<sup>a</sup>*

Year	International Water		Territorial Water		Harbors	
2003	102	24%	88	21%	232	55%
2002	49	13%	72	19%	262	68%
2001	79	21%	125	34%	166	45%
2000	136	29%	224	48%	111	23%
1999	38	12%	201	68%	70	23%

<sup>a</sup>Sources: Derek Johnson and Mark Valencia, *Piracy in Southeast Asia: Status, Issues, and Responses*, Singapore, ISEAS.

Moro conflict in Mindanao, Southern Philippines was a long-drawn conflict that has not been resolved yet. Efforts made for the peace process continued to be carried out but the demand for independence was also incessantly echoed by the Moro separatist group to establish an independent state that is free from Philippine government intervention. This conflict heated up as religious issues were brought to this conflict. This conflict will never end if the Muslim minority in the Philippines continues to get political pressure from the central government. They just demanded for independence.

In the Philippines, the conflict occurred because of the competition of the Muslim and Christian mission after the 13<sup>th</sup> century. State discrimination against Muslim minority groups even became more pronounced when they called themselves as Moro, meaning that it is identical to the Islamic group that once occupied Spain. This is why the conflict continued to happen. Religion and ethnic identity even occupied an important part of the conflict. The rebellion by Muslim Minority groups in Mindanao, Southern Philippines, was much influenced by unfair treatment in economic and political life, even though there was a religious factor behind it. The Southern Philippines is an area that never stops experiencing conflict. This is the area where the majority of its population is Muslim. The conflict that occurred in this area was due to competition among religions apart from factors such as politics, social and culture. The most crucial factor is related to religion.

The conflict in the Philippines began with colonization carried out by the Arabs and later by Christians where these two religions until now are still competing for the attention of the indigenous people. Islamic Arabs shifted to the South of the Philippines when Christians occupied the North. According to the Muslims, the root of the separatist movement in the Philippines



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was because the culture and religion of the Southern Philippines that was basically Muslim were different from those of the North that was basically Christian. The Northern was colonized while the Southern was not. It means that the Southern which was originally dominated by the Muslims has been disturbed by the presence of the Christians in this area.

The conflict that occurred in the Philippines began to occur since the arrival of Spanish Christians and succeeded in occupying the Northern Philippines or Luzon islands in 1565. Since then, the Spaniards wanted to establish the Philippines as a colony and convert the population into Christianity. A resistance was initiated by the indigenous Muslim but won by Spain in 1673. After Spain came to rule then America and Japan came successively to conquer until the Philippines proclaimed itself as an independent State on July 4, 1946. During Marcus's reign, the conflict initially occurred as a result of murder at Corregidor. The Filipino Muslim volunteers, trained in guerrilla tactics by an official force, were killed on the order of the army commander. They refused to be sent to Sabah to carry out military infiltration.

Because of the incident, the Moro Muslim Liberation Front (MNLF) was established. MNLF was a movement that was very influential in fighting for the freedom of Moro Muslims. The other two groups are the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the most recent one is the Abu Sayyaf which was formed in 1989 (T. Abdullah 2002). These three groups had the same goal of wanting to establish an Islamic theocracy in Southern Philippines and economic development in their territory. This paper will just discuss the movement of the Abu Sayyaf Group, where this movement has created fear in the Southern Philippines because their actions have led to acts of terrorism.

The Philippines is part of Southeast Asia. The majority of the population is Roman Catholic. About 4,392,872 or 5% inhab-

itants of the population are Muslim. They are called Muslims Filipinos or also called the Moro Nation. The Moro's region includes Mindanao, Sulu, Tawi-tawi, and Palawan. They are often referred to as the Southern Philippines. This area covers 23 Provinces with an area of 96,438 km<sup>2</sup>, approximately 33% of the Philippines.

The Moro people, *bangsa Moro*, consist of 13 ethnic groups i.e. Maranao, Maguindanao, Tausuq (Sulu, Suluk, Zolo), Samal, Yakan, Sangil, Bajao, Kalibogan, Jama Mapun, Iranun, Palawanon, Kalagan, and Molbog. Meanwhile, the Tausuq tribe is a combination of several tribes i.e. the tribe of Buranun, Taguimaha, Baklaya, Dampuan, and Banjar. The Baklaya tribe is believed to be a migrant tribe from Sulawesi, Indonesia. Maybe they are the Bugis from South Sulawesi. The Banjar tribe came from Borneo, Kalimantan, Indonesia. Meanwhile, the tribe of Dabilitas is believed coming from Champa, Indochina, that migrated to the Philippines and throughout Southeast Asia.

The Moro or Bangsamoro, in the writing of the Mindanao people in the Southern Philippines, is the name for a nation consisting of various tribes and clans who live in Mindanao, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, and Basilan. The Southern Philippines is said to be the traditional residence of the Moro people. This traditional residence means a form of social order that is still original, not yet mixed with foreign culture, and not even mixed with Islamic culture. The area includes Mindanao, Tawi-Tawi, Sanga-Sanga, Bato-Bato, Zamboanga, the areas close to Brunei, East Malaysia, East Kalimantan, and eastern Indonesia.

Broadly speaking, Islam got into the Philippines starting from the 11 to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. During 14 to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Islam was ruling that is in the form of sultanate government. Islam theoretically started entering the Southern Philippines with various versions such as through a trader. Another version said through a wanderer who acted as a trader. To name a few, Mashaika ar-

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rived on the Island of Sulu. It is assumed that he came from the Malay. He was the first person to bring and spread Islam in the Philippines. Then, there was Muhammad Kabungsuwan, coming to the Maguindanao tribe in the Tinundan region and Sharif Awliya who came to Mindanao. He is from Johor. The spread of Islam in Mindanao was continued by his son-in-law named Sharif Maraja. According to him, Islam spread to the Davao region, Lanao Lake and Bukidnon. The other name was Karim Al Makhdum, a Sufi who is also an Islamic jurist that came to Sulu. But, the story of this scholar was mixed with odd folklore. Sharif Abubakar, originally from South Yamen, Hadramaut, continued the reign of the Sulu Sultanate, which was the first Islamic ruler in the Philippines. He first landed in Palembang and Brunei. Then he married the daughter of King Bwansa, the king of Sulu who was a Muslim. He then replaced his father-in-law's position as a king. Since then, Islamic law was applied, but by considering to local customs that were not in contrary with Islam. From this sultanate, Islam finally spread throughout the Philippines (Azra 2003).

The power of Islam at that time was held by three sultanates i.e. Sulu, Maguindanao, and Buayan. But then the Maguindanao and Buayan Sultanates were united by Sultan Kudarat to become the Maguindanao sultanate. Filipino Muslims are Sunni. At the beginning of the 1970s, many world Islamic leaders visited the Philippines. There were also many Filipinos who studied in Islamic cultural centers. After their return, they spread Islam, established Islamic schools, mosques, places to teach the basic teachings of Islam and the Qur'an. Until now it is well known as a good educational institution named Jamiatul Al Islamiyah Philippines in the city of Marawi.

Even though various conflicts occurred, the spread of Islam was even more intense especially by the Sulu tribe when the Por-

tuguese were able to control Malacca in 1511, a city that was very busy with trading activities. They formed small groups of various barangays, scattered to Kalimantan, Mindanao in the north, and to the Buranun tribe in the hinterland. Since then, a closer relationship was established with other Islamic sultanates in the archipelago or Nusantara and Malaya. This relationship was established considering that the arrival of Portuguese and other western imperialists were not just trading and seeking trade commodities, but they also wanted to dominate the territory and spread religion (Phelan 1993).

Amidst the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Islam began to root in the Philippines. It even reached the island of Luzon. In Manila itself, a small Islamic empire has been established in Tondo. During the 15 to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Islam was introduced through official royal lines. It was the king of Baguinda who first allowed the propagation of Islam to his territory. The arrival of Portuguese to Southeast Asia was the beginning of a conflict among indigenous people, especially Moro Muslims, and after the Portuguese was able to conquer Malacca. The first white man to enter the Philippines was Ferdinand Magellans in 1512. He was a Spanish. He was killed by a local tribe in a battle.

There are three major Moro Muslim tribes, i.e. the Sulu (Tausuq), Maranao, and Maguindanao tribes. There is one more tribe that is the Banguingui tribe which is the smallest Muslim tribe. But the first three tribes above are the Muslim groups that were often used by the Portuguese to achieve their goals. Datu Uttu from the Tausuq tribe provided a boat for the Portuguese invaders to destroy other Islamic Tausuq tribes. Similarly, when Marcos came to power, he tried to continue to break the resistance of the Tausuq tribe.

During the US occupation, several Muslim groups signed a peace agreement, while others continued to struggle. The tena-

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cious resistance was carried out by Datu Ali, in 1903, who was famous for his brave fighting, but broken, destroyed, even he was killed due to the betrayal of Datu Plang. The next Western imperialist that came to Philippines was Spain. They declared war with the Moro people. It was at this time that there were divisions among the datu, fighting over power and influence. They started to provoke one another that led to an inter-tribal war. This situation benefited the colonialists and it was used to conquer the Moro people. Their long journey from Spain to Southeast Asia was blessed by Philip II, the Spanish king at that time. "I give you permission to make the Moro Muslim become slaves to you. But I forbid you to enslave other than Moro Muslim," that was the letter of the king of Spain to Conquistador Miguel Lopez Legaspi who acted as the head of troops landing on the Island of Cebu, in 1565. Under his leadership, the Islamic da'wah was ceased with 300 years of war.

Spain's hatred against Islam is rooted in history. Islam controlled them for about 4 centuries. Therefore their hatred of Islam was addressed to the Moro people. Various massacres, murders, and harassments were carried out by the Spaniards. The doctrine of Islamic teachings is deceitful, not true, and it is a law of Satan was firmly attached to the head of these invaders. That was also what the Spanish Governor, Bishop Salazar, and his accomplice said: "Islam is like a fire that spreads like an epidemic". Or "The Muslims are robbers, lanun in the ocean", said Pio Pie, a Jesuit priest.

The Spaniards were only able to conquer the Moro people with the power of weapons, but not in the matters of faith. When they used steamships in the 1800s, the Moros were powerless against this imperialist. The datu and small kings were forced to pay tribute if they did not want their ships to be destroyed, or their commodities destroyed, or their villages burned. Even

Francisco Ducos, a Spanish priest, led his own army for 7 years against the Muslims.

By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, other colonialists—England, France, Netherlands—began to arrive in Southeast Asia. Their presence made Spain worried. Large-scale conquests began to take place against the Moro people, especially against the Tausuq tribe who were indeed skilled at fighting in the sea. It was the Spanish warlord, General Arolas, who appointed himself as the Sulu sultan, in the midst of ongoing resistance by the Tausuq, Sulu, tribe. The incessant resistance from Bangsamoro is known as Juramentado. Then United States came to the Philippines. There was a war between these two colonizing nations, the United States versus Spain. The Spanish were defeated and in 1899 were forced to leave the Philippines. It does not mean that the condition of Moro Muslims was better with the change of the invaders. Various massacres, repressions, intimidations, harassments, and other hardships occurred during the US's occupation over the Philippine.

In 1946, the Philippines were liberated by the US. However, a minority of Moro Muslims, a term for migrant residents, or a population with small and specific quantities, or a population of people who were forced to join a larger group, was still not immediately independent. They ought to continue to struggle to bring up their identity (*Kompas* 2002). But the independence achieved by the Philippines had negative and positive aspects. In the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, Muslim relations with the Islamic worlds were carried out through the Muslim communities of Southeast Asia, such as Malaysia-Riau Indonesia, Malay tribe; Thailand, Pattani, and Brunei Darussalam. But after being released from the US, Moro Muslim relations could be directly linked to Islamic centers in the Middle East. Especially after the Islands of Mindanao and Sulu became part of the Republic of the Philip-

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pines. The influence of Egyptian and Pakistani reformists began to enter the Philippines such as Muhammad Abduh, Jamaluddin al-Afghani, Sayyid Quthub, Abul A'la Maududi, and other Muslim thinkers.

Selamat Hashim, a founder of the MILF, was influenced by the reformist movement of Sayyid Quthub and Abul A'la Maududi. In the beginning, the MILF tried to change the fate of Moro Muslims in peaceful ways. But finally, armed resistance was taken by them. It inspired to the emergence of the MNLF which fought through armed resistance. The relationship was very beneficial for Moro Muslims. In the 1970s, when there was a massacre carried out by the Manila government, Libya immediately reacted and brought the problem of Filipino Muslims to the OIC forum, Organization of Islamic Conference.

MNLF resistance eased after Manila in 1975 tried to negotiate MNLF demands. One year later, an agreement was realized, known as the Tripoli Agreement that bound the MNLF to receive limited autonomy. Manila only provided autonomy in the fields of education and court, not in the field of defense and security/military and foreign policy that was still managed by the Manila government. The autonomy was given to 13 provinces i.e. Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Sur and Del Norte, North-South Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat Authority, Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte, and Palawan (MICD 2005).

Except for armed resistance, Moro Muslims also fought peacefully under UN supervision. This peaceful struggle is very unique. In 1999, the Moro People's Consultative Assembly was held for the first time that was carried out in a large meeting and attended by more than one million Moro Muslims. The meeting resulted in an agreement to establish an independent government of the Moro people. This large meeting took place many

times, between 1999-2001. That happened in Cotabato City and Davao City on October 23, 1999, Marawi City on October 24, 1999, and in Basilan on December 7, 1999. There was also another big meeting in 2001 which was attended by 2.5 million people. Basically, these large mass meetings wanted self-government, while rejecting limited autonomy from the result of the Tripoli Agreement. Ferdinand Marcos once tried to break Tripoli's agreement in a subtle way that was by trying to move the Christian population to the 13 provinces. After the number of Christian residents in those 13 Moro Muslim provinces was quite many, a referendum was held to give the right for special autonomy.

The hypothesis based on the BPPK preliminary study suggests several points, as follows: (1) the Mindanao region, especially the islands in the Sulu Sea, has a very high poverty rate of more than 50%. (2) Abu Sayyaf factions survived because of support from local community groups, where the support was successfully defended by the Abu Sayyaf group because they provided economic trickle downs from their kidnapping ransom. Hence, there was a mutualistic symbiosis between the Abu Sayyaf factions and the community groups and local elites that got an advantage that also served as the basis for the support and protection of the group. (3) Thus, a study needs to be carried out to be able to properly understand the socio-political and economic conditions in the Mindanao region for the purpose of formulating a strategic recommendation to bring a dignified settlement to the security issues in the seas of Sulu and Sulawesi. (4) So far, there have been joint efforts between the authorities of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, especially from the aspect of security cooperation to overcome the threat of shipping in the Sulu Sea. However, a new breakthrough is still needed to strengthen the impacts of trilateral cooperation.



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### Abu Sayyaf, the Security of Sulu and Sulawesi Seas: Maritime Terrorism and Piracy

Sulu is a province in the Philippines. Its capital city is Jolo. This province is located in the Muslim Autonomous Region of Mindanao. The province has an area of 1,600 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 849,670 people and 134,868 residences. The province has a population density of 531 people per km<sup>2</sup>. The Sulawesi Sea is an ancient oceanic pool that was formed 42 million years ago. The boundary between the Sulawesi Sea and Sulu is at Sibutu-Basilan Fault. Strong ocean streams, deep ocean trenches, and high mountains of the sea along with volcanic islands result in complex oceanographic features.

Figure 2



Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, 24 May 2017

The Sulawesi Sea attracted international attention due to pirate activities that not only plundered small fishermen but also giant container ships. The pirates have weapons, high-tech equipment such as radar and GPS navigation devices, and high-speed motorboat. The Sulawesi Sea is an important transportation route for trade, a popular place for ocean floor diving, and luxurious ocean cruises.

Basilan is an archipelagic province located in the western part of Mindanao in the waters of the Sulawesi Sea, Moro Bay, and Sulu Sea between Zamboanga City and Sulu. Its areas are about 1,379 km<sup>2</sup> including its surrounding islands. The city is divided into one city and six municipalities. It had 332,579 populations in 2000 of which 32% were Yakan, 25% were Tausug, 15% were Chavacano, 13% were Sama, 11% were Cebuano, and 4% belonged to other ethnic groups. The population was predominantly Muslim, 51%. This was one of the most depressed provinces in the country. Its socio-economic conditions have been compounded by the presence of groups of armed extremists and lawless elements, especially the Abu Sayyaf that has gained international fame for kidnapping.

Lanao del Norte is in North of Mindanao, bordered to the North by Iligan Bay and Misamis Oriental, to the East by Bukidnon, to the West by Panguil Bay and Zamboanga del Sur, and to the South by Lanao del Sur and Bay of Illana. Its land area is 427,845 ha with a population of 758,123. It consists of Iligan City and 22 municipalities. At that time a province was separated from Lanao del Sur on May 22, 1959, under Republic Act 2228, and Iligan City became its capital. The population is predominantly Christian.

Sulu and Mindanao Sea surround the archipelago in the West and North and the Sulawesi Sea in the East. More than 157 islands form this province. The islands have a total land

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area of 167,930 ha. It has 18 municipalities, ten of which are on land and eight are municipal islands. The capital is Jolo. The provincial population based on the 2000 census consisted of 619,668 inhabitants. The main ethnic groups are Tausug, Samal, and Badjaos.

Tawi-Tawi Island was part of Sulu until September 11, 1973, when the Province was created through Presidential Decree No. 302. Tawi-Tawi is located in the Southwestern tip of the Philippines and bridges the international border with Sabah, East Malaysia. Its combined land area is 342,656.10 ha. It is bordered by the Sulu Sea in the North and West and Celebes Sea in the South and East. Of the 307 islands, 88 are characterized by extensive coral reefs. It consists of 10 municipal islands. The population of the province is 322,317, of which the majority is Samal and the Tausugs. It is the largest Province in Western Mindanao. It is located at the Northwest end of the Zamboanga Peninsula Region and consists of two cities i.e. Dipolog and Dapitan, and 25 municipalities. Its government office is in Dipolog City.

With approximately 400 km of irregular coastline facing the Sulu Sea, the Province is bordered by Misamis Occidental in the North, Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga Sibugay in the East, and Zamboanga City in the South. The population is mostly Christian. Zamboanga del Sur is located in the Southern part of Zamboanga Peninsula that forms the Western part of Mindanao. It is bordered in the North by Zamboanga del Norte, to the East and Northeast by Misamis Occidental and Lanao del Norte and Panguil Bay, to the South by Moro Bay, and to the Southwest by Zamboanga Sibugay. The province consists of Pagadian City, Zamboanga City, and 26 municipalities. The land area reaches 4,735 sq km and has a population of 836,147. Zamboanga Sibugay was established through the laws of the Republic Act 8973 in February 2001 and consisted of 16 municipalities.

The government is located in Ipil, about 134 km from Dipolog City. The land area is 360,775 ha and the total population is 497,239. The province is bordered to the North by Zamboanga del Norte, to the South by Dumanquilas and Sibugay Bays, to the East by Zamboanga del Sur, to the West by Zamboanga City and three other cities in Zamboanga del Norte. Its main inhabitants are Catholic, Protestant, and Islam. Ethnic groups found in this province are Tausug, Maranao, Maguindanao, Subanen, Samal, and Yakan.

### **Conclusion**

Southeast Asia has spectacularly become the bright spotlight of world maritime terrorism, because of very high piracy incidents and the growing threat of terrorism. Southeast Asia is the region most vulnerable to piracy, accounted for about 50 percent of all worldwide attacks. This situation is getting worse due to the existence of terrorist groups—originally indigenous people—with strong maritime traditions. The nexus between piracy and terrorism makes maritime terrorism in Southeast Asia a regional security concern. Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah are the terrorist groups in Southern Philippines, Southeast Asia that has been engaging for a long time in maritime terrorism. Of this group, the Abu Sayyaf is the most well-known yet not much understood (Banlaoi 2007).

One terrorist group that has developed the ability to conduct maritime terrorism in Southeast Asia is the Abu Sayyaf. Initially, it was called the Mujahideen Commando Freedom Fighters (MCFF). The Abu Sayyaf was organized in the Philippines as an underground Muslim militant group in the early 1990s by Ustadz Abdurajak Janjalani, who was recognized as the overall “amir.” Janjalani established the ASG in a global context and as the rise of regional Islam. Janjalani has developed close friendships with Osama Bin Laden and Ramzi Yousef in the early

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1980s while he was in Peshawar, Pakistan (I. Abdullah 1982). Yousef was the mastermind of the “Bojinka plot” to bomb eleven American jetliners and to kill Pope Johannes Paul II during a visit to Manila in 1995. Through Janjalani, Yousef was able to establish an al-Qaeda terrorist cell in the Philippines. In 1984, Janjalani returned to Basilan and became a diligent preacher.

Janjalani delivered at least eight sermons radically which is based on the concept of *jihād fī-sabīl-lillāh* that is to be a martyr for the purpose of Islam. He called both Muslims, even mullahs, and non-Muslims to have a superficial knowledge of the Quran and Hadith. He has strongly condemned the Philippines constitution as guidance for Filipino society and affirms the Quran “as the only proper guide for human life as it is revealed by God who cannot do wrong and who knows everything”. He regarded Filipino Muslims as victims of oppression, injustice, and lack of development that is why urging them to fight and die for Islam and get a heaven as their reward.

The struggle of the Abu Sayyaf Group, like other Muslim radical groups in the Philippines, is firmly rooted in socio-cultural, political, economic and historical factors that can be traced to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, the merchants and Muslim teachers from Indonesia and other neighboring countries reached the Pagan Island of the Philippines, spreading Islam in Mindanao and Luzon. In 1521, the islands were colonized by Magellan of Spain and the new invaders prevented further spread of Islam. The Muslims fought against Spain, America, and Japanese colonization for almost four hundred years. When the Philippines became independent in 1946, they continued to fight what they called as “Imperialist of Manila.” Filipino Muslims, therefore, has fostered a sense of separatism as long as the existence of Islam in the Philippine archipelago.

Janjalani recruited new followers from Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga City, and General Santos City. Most of

them were the former members of the MNLF or the MILF who were not satisfied with the movement of the group. During the formative period, the Abu Sayyaf Group lacked lots of funds to advance their program. The Abu Sayyaf requested foreign funds, using the name Al Harakatul al-Islamiyya. Abu Sayyaf was also involved in a kidnapping to raise funds. One of the main victims was Ricardo Tong, an owner of shipbuilding yard, who was released on January 17, 1994 after paying five million pesos. ASG also carried out various exploitation activities to obtain funds.

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