

The EU is a partner for Peace and Development in Southern Mindanao



In southern Mindanao the EU helps build confidence between the parties to the conflict through its participation in the International Monitoring Team and its humanitarian and development assistance.



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I. The European Union participates in the International Monitoring Team

The European Union was invited by the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front Peace Panels to take responsibility for the Humanitarian, Rehabilitation and Developmental component of the International Monitoring Team. In parallel EU Member State the United Kingdom is a member of the International Contact Group on the Peace Process.

Lasting peace cannot be built without respect for Human Rights. This also applies to the conflict in southern Mindanao. Reports of human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law need to be verified and reported, in an independent way. Human rights violations sometimes go unreported. Victims often fear retaliation if they report what they have been through. European experts on the ground look into allegations, interview witnesses, and collect evidence which is verified with both sides, building confidence and introducing transparency on the issue between them.

This enhances people's trust and confidence in the peace process as a path to peaceful co-existence. Both Parties are kept fully informed of this monitoring work on incidents which are regularly addressed quickly and directly by the parties themselves.

As a means to prevent further violations, the EU experts are also providing training and recommendations to the Parties who have shown an interest in promoting a culture of awareness and respect for human rights within their ranks.



Through its support for civil society and direct participation in the International Monitoring Team the EU encouraged the resumption of peace negotiations and helped improve the humanitarian situation in conflict-affected areas contributing to the following results:

EU Concrete contributions to Peace and Security

- The successful continuation of peace negotiations through the provision of advice to the parties and the organisation of visits of 15 eminent international peace specialists to learn lessons from successful and failed peace processes around the world.
- The mobilisation of communities to directly address the parties through the organisation of more than 150 civil society advocacy activities.
- A better understanding of the root causes of the conflict and of Moros, Christians, and indigenous people's grievances through the organisation of more than 150 consultations, interviews, and roundtables.
- Increased transparency and confidence in the peace process through the organisation of 75 community forums and media outreach activities.
- Increased consideration of gender-related issues and participation of women in the peace process through the organisation of 15 training sessions and more than 10 workshops and advocacy activities with concrete recommendations to the Parties.

EU Concrete contributions to improving the Humanitarian Situation

- Enhanced security in conflict-affected areas thanks to the presence of two EU humanitarian and human rights specialists and 185 accredited civilian protection monitors and 640 civilian monitors undertaking daily monitoring missions.
 - Improved protection, thanks to the conduct of over 500 verification missions on alleged humanitarian and human rights-related incidents leading to the formulation of recommendations to the Parties for their swift action.
 - Increased awareness and understanding of humanitarian law and human rights violations through the organisation of 19 training sessions for the Parties' armed forces and over 500 meetings.
 - Improved assessment of the humanitarian situation through the establishment of an integrated computer-based humanitarian monitoring mechanism, the conduct of more than 25 humanitarian needs-assessments and the provision of protection to internally displaced persons for their return or resettlement.



II. The European Union provides development assistance to Mindanao

Since the 1990s, the EU has been active in helping to address poverty and development in Mindanao as a contribution for the advancement of the on-going peace negotiations between the parties to the conflict.

More than €150 million (Ph 9 billion) has gone towards programmes such as:

1. The rehabilitation of internally displaced persons
2. Institution Building
3. Increasing the revenues of the most vulnerable members of society and responding to humanitarian crises.

1. Rehabilitation of Internally Displaced People

Over the past 15 years (1997-2011), the EU has provided €35 million (PhP 2 billion) to provide aid to victims of natural and man-made disasters in Mindanao.

These funds provided assistance in various ways, including:

- 50,000 people in evacuation centres received food packages consisting of rice, green munggo, dried fish, sardines, brown sugar, coffee and cooking oil.
- 35,000 people received non-food items including hygiene kits, sleeping mats, mosquito nets, kitchen utensils and school supplies for children, essential medicines and healthcare services.
- 7,000 malnourished children in the rehabilitation sites were given supplemental feeding, which involved the distribution of micro-nutrient supplements and essential vitamins. Those traumatized by the conflict also received psychosocial services.

In addition, 800 shelters, 100 water systems, 16 health centres were provided for the benefit of more than 150,000 people.



2. Building the Institutions for a peaceful and secure Mindanao

More than 300,00 people have already benefitted from 141 projects implemented by the Mindanao Trust Fund which is 70% financed by the European Union (European Commission and Sweden).

Since 2006 the EU has channelled Php 500 Million to projects of two types: (1) community-driven development projects (CDD) analysing development problems and identifying priority interventions. (e.g., potable water systems, community learning/livelihood centres, improved rural roads, public markets, solar dryers, warehouses, etc); and (2) community-driven reconstruction projects (CDR) to improve livelihood opportunities and build shelters for internally displaced households to store farming and fishing equipment, draft animals etc.

The Mindanao Trust Fund (MTF) is a multi-donor funded community-based development programme managed by the World Bank in conflict-affected communities in

EU monitors conferring with Filipino Army officers during a briefing in Midsayap.

Mindanao. The programme involves intensive participation of Bangsamoro stakeholders in planning, management and implementation of reconstruction and development initiatives. Through the MTF, the Bangsamoro Development Agency, the development arm of MILF has improved its management capacity to work with local government units and other local development groups in reconstruction and development.

The successful implementation and completion of these various small-scale community projects in a volatile and difficult environment has contributed in bringing about localised peace, reconciliation and social cohesion in the conflict-affected and vulnerable areas of Mindanao including improvement in the welfare of the communities.



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3. Increasing the revenues of the most vulnerable in society

Under the EU Food-For-Assets project, approximately 210,000 direct beneficiaries (or 1.26 million indirect beneficiaries) received food assistance as an incentive upon successfully working in various community-based projects and life-skill trainings. Approximately, 12,000 metric tons of food were distributed. This successful project made significant impact in the target communities, including:

- 683 kilometres of irrigation structures rehabilitated;
- 53 solar driers, twenty mini-warehouses, two coconut driers, two plastic driers, one coffee sorting shed constructed;
- production of rice on 191 hectares of land doubled;
- 2.6 million trees planted; and,
- 2,422 hectares of terraces preserved.

This initiative was implemented by the World Food Programme in partnership with the Department of Social Welfare & Development, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for total amount of €6.4 million. The project supported agriculture, natural resource management and livelihood diversification in 5 conflict-affected provinces: Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat.



EU Ambassador Guy Ledoux in discussion with former Head of the GPH Ceasefire Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities, Brigadier-General Rey Ardo.