



## **International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Workshop for Bangsamoro Women**

Camp Darapanan, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, 13-17 August 2006

### Workshop Report

#### **Context**

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and its armed wing, the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF), was one of the first groups to sign the “Deed of Commitment under Geneva Call for Adherence to a Total Ban on Anti-Personnel Mines and for Cooperation in Mine Action” in March 2000. It reaffirmed its commitment in April 2002 following a field verification mission conducted by Geneva Call. Geneva Call has been working with the MILF to improve the implementation of the Deed of Commitment and the group’s understanding of, and respect for, humanitarian and human rights standards.

In November 2005, at the request of the MILF’s leadership, Geneva Call, in collaboration with the Institute for Bangsamoro Studies (IBS), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Philippine Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, organised an International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and human rights training of trainers for 65 of the group’s military and political officers. In discussions with the MILF following the workshop, it was decided to develop a similar training for Bangsamoro women and youth. The training for the youth, entitled “Trainer’s Training on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law for Bangsamoro Youth”, took place 2-5 May 2006.

Considering the success of the first two events, Geneva Call, in co-operation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Institute of Bangsamoro Studies and the South-Eastern Asia Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (SEASUCS), decided to develop a similar training programme which took into consideration the special needs and issues arising for women in a conflict situation.

These programmes illustrate Geneva Call’s support to the long-term implementation of the commitment to ban anti-personnel mines and the development of the knowledge and understanding of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and international Human Rights (HR) standards by armed Non-State Actors (NSAs). As parties to an armed conflict, NSAs have obligations under IHL. NSAs therefore need to be aware of IHL and HR standards in order for such standards to be respected. It is therefore important to ensure that humanitarian and human rights norms are explained and disseminated to armed groups.

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## **Objectives**

The workshop aimed at completing the process of comprehensively improving the MILF/BIAF's implementation of and overall respect for humanitarian and human rights norms through the training of all its main actors: Men, youth and women. As such, the specific objectives were as follows:

- To orientate Bangsamoro women on the basic principles of international humanitarian law and human rights;
- To build the capacity of Bangsamoro women to further disseminate this information among other members of the MILF and within the larger Bangsamoro community; and,
- To foster a trickle down effect of these principles among the MILF and larger Bangsamoro community.

As with the proceeding trainings, the workshop was not just about imparting knowledge; it was also about passing on skills that would enable participants to train others. As such, the technical training and support provided during the various sessions reinforced the women's capacity to train others in these international standards. The benefit of encouraging MILF members to learn how to teach others was that the principles could be appropriated by the group rather than being seen as imposed by the outside. This would be more conducive to their acceptance.

In the long term, it is hoped that IHL and HR standards will be adopted by the MILF/BIAF. Beyond ensuring the wide dissemination of the principles, the trainings sought to ensure that these would also be included in the group's own training programmes, reflected in any orders issued by the leadership, and adopted into the group's code of conduct and disciplinary measures.

## **Participants**

The participants were selected by the MILF. Criteria for selection included a high school education, a command of English and the capacity for passing on the information they learned to other members of the MILF and the larger community. In the end, 25 participants were selected. They were drawn equally from the Tao-sug, Magindanao and Maranao ethnic-linguistic groups within the Bangsamoro Islamic Women's Armed Brigade, the Social Welfare Committee and the provincial committees. Age was also considered, and participants were fairly represented in this regard. Two members from the Bangsamoro Women Solidarity Forum, Inc. also participated in the training.

## **Preparations**

Unlike the previous workshops, it was decided to first circulate a questionnaire to all participants in order to gauge their knowledge of the proposed topics as well as their personal objectives for the workshop. The questionnaire was compiled by the SEACSUCS with little input from the other organisers. In retrospect, it would have been good for the other organisers, especially Geneva Call, to have included some basic questions to have helped adapt its session to the participants' needs. The summary of the questionnaire responses can be found in annex II.

The agenda of the workshop was adapted to the responses to the questionnaire and perspective needs of the women. In addition to one day on IHL, one day on human rights and a half day each on child protection issues and landmines, a section on women's rights was included as well as the session on first aid training and module development, each of half a day in duration. The practical exercises in IHL were dropped. The agenda can be found in annex I.

As with the November 2005 workshop, the Institute for Bangsamoro Studies coordinated

all logistical aspects of the workshop with the MILF. The workshop itself was held in Camp Darapanan. As such, the Office of the Presidential Advisor to the Peace Process, the Joint Coordinating Committee for the Cessation of Hostilities and the International Monitoring Team were advised. Geneva Call handled all the coordination between organisers.

## **The Workshop**

The MILF set the tone for the importance of the workshop for the organisation in the opening programme. Welcome remarks were made by Mr. Muhammad Amin, Secretary of the Central Committee and Al-Haj Murad Ebrahim, Chairman of the Central Committee provided a keynote message. The MILF's intervention made clear that they were obliged to adhere to IHL and only through respecting IHL would they receive respect from the international community. They also highlighted how most, if not all, IHL was inscribed in Islamic law on which the MILF's ideology is rooted. They assured the organisers that what was learned would be faithfully implemented.

Each of the organisers also gave a short message to the participants during the opening programme. This was followed by a short expectation check by the SEACSUCS and a round of introduction of the participants. The workshop then commenced.

Each organiser was responsible for the conduct of their respective session. The sessions included lectures, visual aids, practical exercises and question and answer periods as determined by the organisation in charge. No problems arose. All the participants were interested in the topics and learned quickly. As the participant designated to make closing remarks mentioned, they "hoped this is not the end, but the beginning."

The closing programme was organised by the participants themselves. Abhoud Lingga, from the Institute of Bangsamoro Studies congratulated the MILF for allowing the organisers to conduct the training. He noted that basic knowledge of IHL and HR was very important during the conflict, especially as 60% of the victims are civilian. And, he noted that though war cannot be humanised, the impact on civilians should be reduced as much as possible. Each of the other organisers also took time to make some final remarks. In addition, honoured guests, Von al-Haq, Chairman of the MILF Coordinating Committee for the Cessation of Hostilities, and First Admiral Mohd. Som Ibrahim, the Deputy Head of Mission of the International Monitoring Team, also spoke. Von al-Haq noted that the trainings would prove beneficial to all in times of peace and war, while First Admiral Som Ibrahim reminded the participants that "knowledge that is not used is like a tree that does not bear fruit."

## **Specific Observations from the Session on Anti-Personnel Landmines**

Geneva Call conducted the session on landmines in the same format as that which was used with the other two groups, which had worked well. It started with an interactive dialogue on what are the different types of mines, what are the triggering mechanisms, and why anti-personnel mines are banned. Following this there was a brief introduction to the mine ban movement and Geneva Call's work with non-State actors. The Deed of Commitment obligations were then discussed in detail with a special emphasis on the importance of each of the obligations. The participants then broke into small groups to plan and present each of the obligations as if they were presenting to their communities. In conclusion, the ICRC video on landmines was shown and an explanation was provided on how to mark and map mined areas.

Unlike the previous trainings, half way through the session it became clear, that the women had no prior knowledge or understanding of anti-personnel landmines. Many immediately pictured mineral mines rather than explosive devices. They expressed frustration with this lack of knowledge, and concern that they would not be able to pass

on the knowledge they gained about the ban before they had some general knowledge of landmines in particular. This was resolved following the ICRC video screened at the end of the session. However, it pointed to the necessity of improving the adaptation of the presentation style to different audiences, for example by showing the video first before going into the obligations of the Deed of Commitment. This was a very good learning experience for future Geneva Call trainings.

### **Next Steps**

It was agreed between the organisers and the MILF leadership that the next step would be to provide a more detailed training module development workshop for selected participants of each of the trainings. Modules could be developed for each topic covered and for different groups: combatants, youth, women, community members, etc. The SEACSUCS along with the Center for Muslim Youth Studies, Inc.—which provided the logistics for the youth training—will be the primary organisers for the module training, which is expected to take place in early 2007.

# International Humanitarian Law & Human Rights Workshop for Bangsamoro Women

13-17 August 2006, Camp Darapanan

## Day 1: Sunday, 13 August

7:00 – 8:00	Breakfast
8:00 – 9:00	<u>Opening session</u> <i>Chair: Prof. Abhoud Lingga, IBS</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Welcome statements from IBS, GC, ICRC, SEACUCS</li><li>- Keynote address by MILF</li><li>- Expectation check by SEACUCS</li><li>- Introductions</li></ul>
9:00 – 10:00	<u>International Humanitarian Law by the ICRC</u>
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee break
10:30 – 12:30	<u>International Humanitarian Law by ICRC</u>
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch break
13:30 – 15:00	<u>International Humanitarian Law by ICRC</u>
15:00 – 15:30	Prayer & coffee break
15:30 – 17:30	<u>International Humanitarian Law by ICRC</u>
18:00 – 19:00	Dinner

## Day 2: Monday, 14 August

7:00 – 8:00	Breakfast
8:00 – 10:00	<u>First Aid by PNRC</u>
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee break
10:30 – 12:30	<u>First Aid by PNRC</u>
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch break
13:30 – 15:00	<u>Obligations of the anti-personnel mine ban by Geneva Call</u>
15:00 – 15:30	Prayer & coffee break
15:30 – 16:30	<u>Practical exercise by Geneva Call</u>
16:30 – 17:30	<u>Practical exercises in marking &amp; mapping mined/dangerous areas by ICRC</u>
18:00 – 19:00	Dinner

## Day 3: Tuesday, 15 August

7:00 – 8:00	Breakfast
8:00 – 10:00	<u>Human rights law by IBS</u>
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee break
10:30 – 12:30	<u>Human rights law by IBS</u>
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch break
13:30 – 15:00	<u>Human rights law by IBS</u>
15:00 – 15:30	Prayer & coffee break
15:30 – 17:30	<u>Human rights law by IBS</u>
18:00 – 19:00	Dinner
19:30 – 21:00	<u>Human rights law by IBS</u>

## Day 4: Wednesday, 16 August

7:00 – 8:00	Breakfast
8:00 – 10:00	<u>Women's Rights by IBS</u>
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee break
10:30 – 12:30	<u>Women's Rights by IBS</u>
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch break
13:30 – 15:00	<u>Child protection in armed conflict by SEACUCS</u>
15:00 – 15:30	Prayer & coffee break
15:30 – 17:30	<u>Child protection in armed conflict by SEACUCS</u>
18:00 – 19:00	Dinner

Day 5: Thursday, 17 August

7:00 – 8:00	Breakfast	
8:00 – 10:00	<u>Training module development</u> <i>by</i> SEACUCS	
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee break	
10:30 – 12:30	<u>Training module development</u> <i>by</i> SEACUCS	
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch break	
13:30 – 15:00	<u>Closing session</u>	<i>Chair: Prof. Abhoud Lingga, IBS</i>
	- Summary by IBS	
	- Participants' feedback	
	- Co-organisers' feedback, IBS, ICRC & SEACUCS	
	- Statement by the MILF	
	- Statement by the GRP-CCCH (tbc)	
	- Statement by the IMT (tbc)	
	- Closing statement by Geneva Call	
18:00 – 19:00	Dinner	

# **WOMEN'S WORKSHOP ON HR AND IHL**

## **Summary of Responses to the Training Needs Questionnaire**

### **Background**

The training needs questionnaire was sent to the target participants who are women members or supporters of the MILF. The objective was to gauge their knowledge and understanding on the topics covered and to elicit their suggestions and expectations on the content and pedagogy of the upcoming women's workshop.

Twenty-five potential women participants responded to the questionnaire.

### **Summary of Responses**

#### **1. What do “human rights” and “international humanitarian law” mean to you?**

Human rights mean the following:

- Rights of persons to have self-determination
- Rights of human beings
- Right to peaceful assembly
- Right to defend one's rights
- Right to protect against “lawless events”
- Peaceful life / to attain peace
- Exercise and expression of religion, culture, sex and language
- Life, liberty and property
- Based on constitutional law
- Agreed in the UN Charter / “Universal declaration”

IHL means the following:

- “Man-made law” / part of international law / Functions during the violation of HR
- Part of UN Charter / Declared by the UN / Under the supervision of the UN
- “Organization” to secure persons against violation of HR, to avoid inhumane treatment/ punishment, and to secure maintenance of law during war.
- Devoted to the promotion of human welfare
- “A law which all countries are engaged”
- “Law controlled by a superpower and the concerning countries”
- Protect the Bangsamoro law
- “Maintain the rights processors of HR”
- “Supporting and sharing given in a war area”
- “Supporting or sharing more strategies or lawful war”

#### **2. What aspects of HR and IHL would you like to know more about?**

- Rights during war and peace
- Exercising or application of ones religion, liberty and property
- Rights of women
- Rights of the Bangsamoro to self-determination
- Rights of individuals in the community
- Right to assembly and petition the government
- Rights of “non-state sector”
- Rights of captured soldier or combatant during war

- Right to defend their state / Right to become autonomous
- How to avoid “lawless activities” of the government
- Rights of non-state actors to defend themselves against violations of government
- How to fight for one’s rights
- Addressing HR violations

### **3. What does “child protection” mean to you?**

- Right from birth until they reach puberty / or become “independent”
- Protection of children against discrimination, child abuse, child labor, maltreatment and bad influence
- Ensure their daily needs
- Educate the child through Islamic methods, about good values, and aimed to ensure good character
- Right to child to go to school peacefully
- Process of development of the child into the “right path of life”
- Caring of the child
- Parental responsibility / “Parents to aid the child”

### **4. What aspects of child protection would you like to know?**

- Rights of Bangsamoro children
- Right to strengthen relationship with family and community
- Role of family and community in ensuring their rights and development
- How they become a religious leader
- How to raise, educate child with good values, principles, and to become a responsible person

### **5. I will learn effectively during the workshop if the teaching method is...**

- Clear
- Uses video, visual aids and multi-media
- Availability of handouts and reading materials
- Based on actual cases or real situations
- Has more discussions and suggestions
- Employs field exercises

### **6. I will be comfortable if the language used in the workshop is...**

- English
- Tagalog
- Taglish
- Maranao dialect
- Ensure translator

### **7. I will enjoy the workshop if...**

- Visual aides and materials are available
- There are games and icebreakers
- Use of practical and actual exercises

- There is cooperation between trainers and participants
- Establish teamwork
- Certificates are available

**8. I am more comfortable attending the workshop together with...**

- Companions/ friends
- Participants from other provinces/ Meet new people
- “Group where I belong”
- Foreign and local trainers and lecturers
- Friendly participants
- With her staff

**9. I can focus on the workshop during the following dates...**

- First week of June

**10. After the attending the workshop, I plan to...**

- Re-echo the training to community/ Barangay/ Municipality/ Province
- Share information with “my company”, “to my community”, “to those concerned”, and “concerned individuals”
- Conduct a seminar