

**Solidarity Prayer for Healing and Reconciliation in Marawi, Mindanao, and to the World**  
**First-ever World Interfaith Harmony Week Celebration**  
**Audio Visual Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, College of Agriculture, MSU Main Campus, Marawi City**  
**7 February 2019, 9am-2pm**



Despite the many challenges during the preparation and the blasts in Kauswagan and Sultan Naga Dimaporo in Lanao del Norte that tightened the security in the area and many others including Marawi City, the Silsilah Forum Marawi celebrated the first-ever World Interfaith Harmony Week Celebration. It highlighted the people of Marawi. We've invited the Muslim and Christian women IDPs from Marawi City together with the Women Advocate for Peace from Munai, Lanao del Norte, Jesuit Refugee Service Philippines personnel, Duyog Marawi team, Christian Student Organization, Silsilah alumni, and friends. We believed that despite the destructions brought by the Marawi crisis, its people are the key in bringing hope, healing and reconciliation to the whole of Maranao community.

The highlight of the gathering was the Solidarity Prayer for Healing and Reconciliation. Representatives from the youth, Muslim and Christian men and women, alumni and invited guests uttered an intentional prayer for healing and reconciliation, rehabilitation, cooperation and unity for those affected by the Marawi crisis, Jolo bombing, blasts in Zamboanga and Lanao del Norte, and the Universal prayer for dialogue and peace.

Almost two years ago on 23 May 2017, the Inspired Maute- Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) group attacked the city of Marawi. Marawi siege is the most horrible event that drastically change the whole city of Marawi destroying the physical, biological, and environmental components resulted to the loss of lives of innocent peoples, properties, and significantly traumatized the residents and other nearby communities and municipalities. However, prior to the siege, the Inspired Maute-ISIS group had been vehemently devastating the peace and order in different Municipalities of the Province of Lanao del Sur,

affecting directly or indirectly the lives and economic development in the areas. Civilian displacement is among the key damages brought about by the crisis. Marawi sustained severe damage from the fighting mostly from the airstrikes and artillery. Ground Zero or Most Affected Area (MAA) is the heavily devastated two hundred-fifty (250) hectare, twenty-four (24) barangay main battle area between the government forces and the Inspired Maute-ISIS group and its allies.

At the height of the armed conflict, about one hundred seventy-five (175) Christian families from Barangay Datu Saber, Marawi City lost their homes when it was burned to the ground. These families were resettled in temporary shelters at the military reservation nearby the area. Tents were put up to accommodate them. Two of these tents sheltered three families and one with five families. There are home-based (living with relatives) and others opted to rent (because of the harsh condition in tents) and some built little barracks or small room in a construction site at Amai Pakpak Hospital where a family member worked as labourers. For those who are living in tents, sickness in children is a common problem. During daytime, it is hot inside the tent and at night time it is cold and wet especially at this time of the year (December-February is rainy and cold). All the mothers expressed that, they really wanted to transfer in a permanent shelter. These Christian IDPs felt neglected because priority were given only to the Muslim Meranao IDPs.

Many of the Christian women IDPs supported their families through small scale business like that of sari-sari store, selling frozen and fish products, street foods, and local delicacies. But when they lost their homes and source of income, daily sustenance is a struggle especially for those families who have students, special children, and elderly. In my hope to help them through my network of good friends, I personally conducted an assessment last 25 November and 23 December 2018 along with the Silsilah Forum Coordinators in Marawi, Ms. Ashrifah Paudac and Rev. Ariel Bulan.



There are thirty-eight (38) mothers and representatives from affected families attended the said assessment. I asked them individually what they need to support their respective families. They all hoped that additional financial source of income be granted to them. They will use it as small capital for their sari-sari store, frozen products, rice retail, selling street food to support their daily needs. They also requested for scholarship to their children who are in High School and/or College, and feeding program for those in Elementary. Like the rest of the Marawi IDPs, they are desperate for any financial or livelihood program that the government or independent institutions could provide.



I also conducted two (2) assessments on 23 November and 21 December 2018 at MSU Main Campus with Muslim Meranao IDPs with the help of Ms. Asrifah Usman Paudac, Muslim Coordinator of Silsilah Forum Marawi (she herself is an IDP). We identified mothers from the Most Affected Area or Ground Zero. Each one has her traumatic experience during the Marawi crisis. All of them flee for safety in nearby cities of Iligan and Cagayan de Oro and some went to the neighbouring Municipalities in Lanao del Sur and others travel as far as Manila and lived with relatives in hope to start a new life far from the glimpse of Marawi. Thousands of Meranao families were displaced, they lost their homes and source of livelihood. They even lost the hopes that they could rebuild their lives after the destructions of Marawi.



The silencing of the guns left haunting memories of shattered dreams of a once soaring business community. The ruins of war left a lifetime wounds and scars that will not easily be mended. Everyone expressed their dismay on the rehabilitation in Marawi that is taking so long to progress and their frustration to the Local Government Unit by failing to provide basic social services for the Marawi IDPs both home-based and living in temporary shelters (tents). By providing them with livelihood assistance, we also hope to equip them with basic knowledge in dialogue and peace building for them to be able to establish themselves as Muslim women advocate for dialogue and peace in Lanao del Sur.



I firmly believe that despite the destructions brought by the Marawi crisis, these women could empower one another and bring forth hope, healing and reconciliation to the whole of Meranao community. Both the Muslim and Christian women attended the WIHW Celebration in Marawi where we gave the sincerest act by highlighting them because they are the prime resource in mending the brokenness of Marawi















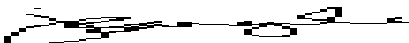








Prepared by

  
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