

PRESS RELEASE

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MILF stands firm on its non-partisan policy for the Barangay and SK polls

CAMP DARAPANAN, SULTAN KUDARAT– The Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front upholds its directive for its members not to participate and intervene in the upcoming Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections.

BIAF spokesman Von Al Haq said on Sunday that this memorandum was issued for immediate implementation to all officers and forces on the ground.

Al Haq stressed that the filling of candidacy of any BIAF members for the barangay elections is strictly prohibited.

“It is the standing policy of the MILF. We are not allowed direct or indirect participation on the electoral process,” Al Haq said.

He expounded that indirect participation includes serving as security escorts for candidates during the campaign and election day; lending firearms and other weapons; and other acts that would provide support to any candidates and political parties.

Al Haq added that the Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) of both the MILF and government signed a Memorandum of Understanding on May 4 to maintain the peace on the ground during the elections.

Al Haq also said that in response to the agreement, the General Staff headed by BIAF-MILF Chief of Staff Sammy Al-Mansoor also issued a memorandum for all units to observe and implement the MoU signed by the joint ceasefire committee.

In the MoU, both parties agreed that the PNP and military could enter MILF territories during the election period provided that proper coordination is observed.

“We know that they will enter, pass by, or bring ballots. And that was agreed on by both parties. We do not see it as a problem,” Al Haq disclosed.

However, he clarified that during the elections it would be the PNP and military that would play the major role.

For the BIAF, it would only play a minor role but it would step up to the task if needed, Al Haq said.

“BIAF would provide help to the AFP and PNP only if necessary,” he said.

The guidelines of the barangay election agreement between the government and MILF include mechanisms on the mobility of people and forces.

“The main routes, water and land usually used by the MILF troops during movements and activities shall be left opened. Provided, however, that MILF movements are properly coordinated earlier with the GPH CCCH and the existing ceasefire mechanisms,” the agreement stated.

“But there are restrictions mentioned in the memorandum on what the BIAF should not do,” Al Haq emphasized.

The document said that “the MILF shall refrain from consolidating its forces for any purpose/s including peace gatherings from the time the election paraphernalia are deployed until the Election has been completed except at Camp Darapanan in Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, Camp Bushra in Lanao del Sur, and in urban centers, when necessary, and in coordination with the GPH CCCH.”

It added that “MILF armed elements should not go near polling centers and precincts, avoid display of firearms and uniforms along routes leading to the areas where electoral activities are ongoing”.

The MILF will immediately disseminate the memorandum signed by the Chief of Staff to the ground.

BIAF members who will violate this memorandum will be sanctioned according to the policies of MILF as determined by the disciplinary board.

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