

PRESS RELEASE  
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### **BIAF steps up campaign against violent extremism in Maguindanao**

COTABATO CITY- The violent actions of a local ISIS-inspired group in Maguindanao brought havoc to villages prompting the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to defend its communities against violent extremism, a senior leader said.

Mohagher Iqbal, chairman of the MILF Peace Implementing Panel, on Friday, stressed that violent extremism is not accepted in Islam.

He emphasized that it is necessary for the MILF to protect its identified areas and communities from groups or individuals that pose any threats.

This responsibility, Iqbal recalled, echoes the religious ruling of the Dar-ul Iftah by Sheikh Abu Huraira Odasan against violent extremism.

"The stand of the MILF was further affirmed by the issuance of the religious edict from the Dar-ul Iftah, under the guidance of Islam and teachings of Prophet Muhammad, that every Muslim has the responsibility to defend and protect his people once an individual or group intrudes his village to cause damage and pain," Iqbal said in the vernacular.

Iqbal, however, clarified that an armed approach is not the only solution to combat violent extremism.

"It must to find all other peaceful solutions to problems of what the Bangsamoro facing nowadays," Iqbal said.

Meanwhile, on the issue of joint combat operations, Iqbal said that there are no joint operations between the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) and the government troops in Marawi and Maguindanao.

"Officially and formally, there is no such thing as joint operation to be conducted by the MILF forces and government forces in Maguindanao", Iqbal commented.

On August 2, Abu Toraife's Jamaatul Mujahiren Wal-Ansar declined and opened fire at the emissary sent by the MILF for a peace negotiation in Barangay Pusaw, Shariff Saidona Mustapha, Maguindanao.

The Jamaatul Muhajiren Wal-Ansar is a breakaway group of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF).

"There is a continuing risk of youths being enticed by violent and extremist ideologies and join local ISIS-inspired groups as a result of existing global and domestic injustices," the MILF leader said.

"The passage of the Bangsamoro Basic Law and the implementation of the signed peace agreements are examples of concrete steps that can provide long-term solutions against violent extremism," Iqbal concluded.

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