
NEXUS BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND ORGANIZED CRIMES

1. In the Philippines, the local terrorist groups (LTGs) remain disorganized and fractured following their major setbacks, notably their failed attempt to seize Marawi City in May 2017 and the killing of Owaida Marohomsar Abdulmajid @Humam/Abu Dar, the last among the leaders who plotted the Marawi siege. Nonetheless, the tactical alliance of these LTGs with transnational criminal syndicates enabled these groups to counter the focused military operations against them. The nexus between the LTGs and the narco-politicians was particularly evident during the Marawi siege. Narco-politicians who are close relatives of the Maute-Romato clans supported the LTGs with personnel, funds and firearms that helped sustain the siege.

2. Transnational crimes--notably kidnapping, extortion, drug trafficking, and arms smuggling--have become reliable tools for the LTGs, specifically the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), to generate much-needed money and resources that allowed them to sustain their terrorist operations. In the case of the ASG, its connection with Malaysian syndicates enabled it to target foreign kidnap victims in Sulu and Celebes Seas. The ASG's trademark kidnap-for-ransom operations not only enabled the group to generate millions of pesos but also became its reliable political tool to gain media mileage and internationalize its extremist agenda. Drug smuggling, kidnapping, carjacking, robbery, extortion, and other organized crimes also funded the terror attacks in the country, including the Daesh-inspired attempt to seize Marawi City.

3. To effectively address the evolving threat of terrorism, extremism, and organized crimes, the Philippines is currently in the process of amending the Human Security Act to make our law more responsive to the threats posed by extremist ideology. The Philippine government has strengthened its efforts toward collaboration with the international community, the private sector,

and other stakeholders. Philippine security forces have intensified the monitoring of all the terrorist and criminal groups in the country, enhanced inter-agency and private sector coordination; and enlisted the cooperation of the Muslim religious leaders and elders and their communities to resolve these problems.

4. Likewise, the ratification of Republic Act (RA) 11054 or the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao--popularly known as the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL)--is seen to end the decades-long Moro conflict. Incidentally, the Moro conflict in southern Philippines provided the opportunity for terrorist extremism to take root. But with the new law, the Philippine government is optimistic that by giving autonomy to the Moro people, this will address the issues that have given rise to Islamic extremism/terrorism.

5. Indeed, the problem of terrorism is a complex web involving transnational organized crimes and various groups help contribute to the continued resilience of local terrorist organizations. The Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) – collectively known as the Communist Terrorist Group (CTG) – is one such group that is also engaged in murder, arson, harassment, robbery, extortion, and other organized criminal activities.

6. The CTG has been masquerading as a pro-people movement while committing the same brutal atrocities as the Daesh. Like the Daesh, the CTG's influence is far-reaching as it has already entrenched itself through its international solidarity works (ISW) in various local and international organizations which enable local terrorists to raise funds from foreign donors and funding agencies.

7. The CTG has also sought to forge an alliance with the Daulah Islamiyah (DI) in Central Mindanao. Such collaboration is directed against the government as the common enemy. Under this cooperative arrangement, the CPP-NPA provides the DI with weapons and teaches them on organizing works

while the latter provides training for NPAs on the manufacture of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

8. It is our fervent hope that by locally proscribing the CPP-NPA as a terrorist organization, the true nature of the group will be exposed to the community of nations as an equally brutal and dangerous terrorist and criminal group just like the Daesh and Al Qaeda.

9. Towards this end, President **Rodrigo Roa Duterte** signed Executive Order No. 70 creating the National Task Force to End the Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) to institutionalize a whole-of-nation approach for the attainment of inclusive and sustainable peace by enhancing non-armed approach and good governance to defeat the local communist terrorists by further improving the delivery of basic services and social development packages in conflict-affected areas and vulnerable communities.