

By Remedios F. Marmoleño

It is a group which is known by different acronyms – ISIS, ISIL, IS and Daesh. However it may be referred to in the media it is known for one thing: violent terrorism.

ISIS has proclaimed its single objective – to establish a universal caliphate. If I interpret this correctly, it intends to make Islam the religion of the whole world. And if it acts like it did when it first came upon the scene, all who do not profess Islam are given these choices: convert, stay with your own religion but pay a tax for not being a Muslim, or be killed.

ISIS has created havoc in the world because it has chosen terrorism and violence as the means to achieve its identified goal of establishing a universal caliphate. It first reared its ugly head in the Middle East, particularly in Syria as this country entered its phase of rebellion against its Pres. Assad. Because it has a very strong presence in the Internet and its propaganda division is very sophisticated many young Muslims, even those who were born and grew up in Europe, have sought to join the ISIS army. Young Muslims who might be considered as Europeans run away from their homes to join the ISIS training camps. First they were just in the Middle East but now these young recruits are all over. The recent terrorist attacks in France and in England were carried out by young French and English recruits to the army of ISIS.

At first our government claimed that ISIS had not yet reached our shores. But the recent attack on Marawi has belied this. Indonesia has reportedly told our government that there are about 1200 ISIS “soldiers” in the Philippines but this is still to be verified. It is sad to note though that our government military brass reacted as though it had no idea just how extensive is the ISIS presence in the country.

If ISIS just wants to spread Islam as widely as possible I can understand that. After all, loyalists to an idea or a cause would want to convince as many as possible to join. But to use violence to achieve this is something else.

There is already enough suspicion, prejudice and bad feelings among religious groups in the world. What ISIS has done is to make this even worse in terms of how other religious groups

The tar brush of terrorism

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look at Muslims. And this for me is a great irony, because ISIS has made the tar brush apply to all Muslims, even those who are no more violent than you or I.