

The draft Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) was finally completed by the 15-member Bangsamoro Transition Commission at the end of a four-hour plenary session on Sunday afternoon with 13 commissioners signing although two with reservations, and two commissioners absent.

The plenary was scheduled for 1 p.m. but started at 2 p.m. with only 13 of the 15-member Commission present.

Commissioners Johaira Wahab, chair of the Committee on Transitory Provisions, Amendments, Revisions and Miscellaneous Matters, and Fatmawati Salapuddin of Sulu were absent. Both commissioners could not be reached for comment.

Commissioners Froilyn Mendoza representing the indigenous peoples, and Peter Eisma of Basilan signed with reservations.

While the commissioners were busy deliberating issues on amendments and revisions, fiscal autonomy, and police force, among others, representatives of civil society groups picketed on the street outside the BTC office urging the commissioners to sign the BBL.

Representatives of the International Monitoring Team, Mayor Ramon Piang of Upi, Mayor Abdullah Campong of South Upi, Mayor Midpantao Midtimbang of Guindulungan town and board member Midtimbang and former Sultan Kudarat mayor Toca Mastura and journalists were among those who witnessed the deliberations at the plenary.

The signing took place after 6 p.m. as members of the Commission spoke first before they signed the draft bill.

On April 14, the Bangsamoro Transition Commission submitted to the Office of the President in Malacanang a partial draft containing only the draft on Basic Rights, Culture, Social Justice and IP was submitted because only the report of the Basic Rights committee was adopted by the plenary in its entirety on April 13.

BTC chair Mohagher Iqbal, also chair of the MILF peace panel, told MindaNews that Commissioner Raisa Jajurie has been tasked to deliver the signed draft to Malacanang.
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