

Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) peace panel chair Mohagher Iqbal reiterated last February 12 during a Senate inquiry on the Mamasapano tragedy that the MILF does not wish to return to armed conflict, saying “[i]yan ang daan na hindi na natin babalikan, na lahat tayo talo, lahat tayo biktima (That is a path we will no longer return to, where we all lose, where we are all victims).”

“On the part of the MILF, we are committed to peace,” Iqbal said during the inquiry. “For us there is no other option except the option of peace.”

Iqbal however lamented Senator Alan Peter Cayetano’s insinuations that Moros repay public goods and services like roads from the government by going up in arms.

“Hindi tama yung sinasabi (ni Senator Cayetano) na binibigyan kami ng kalsada, sinusuklian namin ng armas (What Senator Cayetano is saying that we repay roads with arms is wrong),” Iqbal clarified.

“Nauna kaming biktima (We were the victims first,)” Iqbal added, referring to the historical injustices that have been inflicted on Moros over the years. Enumerating several massacres that the Moros have endured, Iqbal reminded Cayetano that “hanggang ngayon walang hustisya. Hindi patas ang laban. Patas lang kung armas ang gagamitin (Until now we have no justice. The fight is not fair. It could only be fair if we resorted to the use of arms).”

Iqbal however noted that with the full implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB), signed between the government and the MILF last March 2014, there will be no need for the MILF to resort to arms anymore. Part of the CAB is the passage and implementation of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), which will establish the Bangsamoro region to replace the current Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

“Kung maipasa po ‘yan (BBL) at mai-implement po, wala nang dapat lumaban sa gobyerno dahil wala nang legitimate cause (If the BBL is passed and implemented, there will be no more legitimate cause for armed conflict against the government),” Iqbal stressed.

“Kung may eleksyon tayo sa 2016 hopefully, nag-decommission na po ang MILF, wala na pong armas ang MILF (If we have elections in the Bangsamoro, hopefully in 2016, the MILF will have decommissioned and we will have no more arms),” Iqbal added.

MILF against all forms of terrorism, ready to aid gov’t in hunt for Usman

During the Senate inquiry Iqbal also expressed the MILF’s categorical denouncement of terrorism and its commitment to aid the government in hunting down the terrorist Abdul Basit Usman.

“The MILF is against all forms of terrorism. We have made a solemn vow to fight terrorism in our areas. Terrorism is inconsistent with Islam and has no place in the orientation and principles of the MILF,” Iqbal said.

“Our previous actions bear witness to our commitment against terrorism,” Iqbal added. “To tag MILF as terrorist group is unfair.”

“The MILF did not harbor Marwan or Usman. The MILF has no links with these terrorists and terrorist organizations. Marwan and Usman were in areas outside the MILF-controlled areas,” Iqbal clarified.

“Please do not let this unfortunate incident be used to derail the 17 years of hard work and lessen ourselves for peace and justice,” Iqbal appealed. “Let peace be our legacy. Let us be partners for peace.”