

# PERCEPTIONS OF PEACE IN THE PHILIPPINES

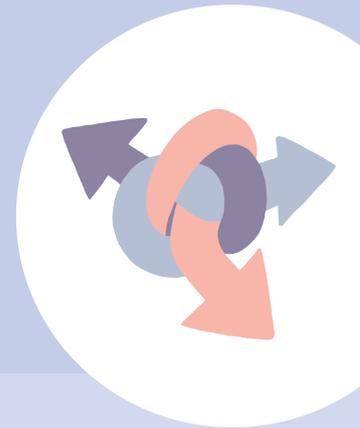
## PEACEBUILDING IN A CONTEXT OF MULTIPLE SOURCES OF VIOLENCE

FULL STUDIES ON

fes.de/en/shaping-a-just-world/  
peace-and-security/perceptions

### CONFLICTS

There are four major layers to violence in the Philippines. The communist insurgency of the New People's Army (NPA), first, persists in pockets through rural-governance deficits and unresolved grievances dating back to the Cold War and independence. In Mindanao, second, the long secessionist conflict yielded an autonomous Muslim-majority region yet splinter groups and clan rivalries see volatility endure. Warlordism and private armies, third, influence local elections, and via patronage shape who can use force with impunity. To the west, fourth, lies a further source of violence: territorial tensions with China reverberate into livelihoods and nationalist politics. These arenas overlap unevenly, producing a medley of conflicts that national policy must read interrelatedly rather than in isolation.



### THE THREE PILLARS OF PEACE



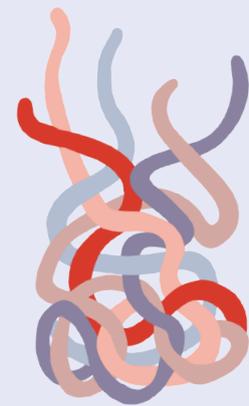
#### PHYSICAL INTEGRITY

Political violence has been partly contained by now, but state-based forms have risen sharply since 2017, attributable mostly to then president Rodrigo Duterte's "War on Drugs." After the Marawi siege, a state-led effort to take on various non-state armed groups, intensive security operations have continued in areas where these entities are present. Physical integrity is most at risk in the south, where NPA fronts and Islamist-leaning factions such as the Abu Sayyaf Group or the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters still operate in straddling insurgency and criminality. Elsewhere, violence is less intense but nevertheless persists around mining areas and during election periods, meaning that personal safety still depends heavily on where one lives.



#### HUMAN RIGHTS

Filipinos often describe human rights as central to peace, yet the country ranks among the worst globally for workers' protection according to the International Trade Union Confederation. Press freedom is also heavily restricted; the conditions that Nobel Peace Prize laureate Maria Ressa operates under are emblematic of those facing journalists who document abuses. Communities report a tension to exist between security operations and rights guarantees, especially for youth and rural organisers. Progress within autonomous Muslim-majority areas has created openings for social inclusion, yet rights delivery hinges on administrative consolidation and access to justice at the local level. Nationally, rule-of-law deficits and a backlog in prosecutions limit accountability.



#### CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

The 2014 Comprehensive Agreement created the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim-majority Mindanao, serving as a compromise between constitutional limits and Bangsamoro demands for self-determination. But local communities still face poverty, weak institutions, and slow peace dividends. Police, the armed forces, the Commission on Human Rights, Peace and Order, and Development Councils work to document abuses and bring together local officials, security actors, and community representatives. The NTF ELCAC (inter-agency liaison with local governments) takes this national. Together these mechanisms signal an official commitment to managing conflict amid warlordism and entrenched dynasties, but access to justice is often perceived as partial and tilted towards benefitting those in power.

### NOTIONS OF PEACE

For our Survey Results in Philippines scan:



Fieldwork done between 2019-2022