

**Najib Welcomes Framework Agreement Between Philippine Government, MILF
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 7 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has welcomed the announcement of a framework agreement for peace between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

He said both sides had demonstrated their desire to end the decades of violence, and commended their efforts to come to an agreement despite their differences.

"I also reserve special praise for President (Benigno) Aquino for his unwavering commitment to a durable peace in the Philippines.

"I am delighted that through this historic deal, the rights, dignity and future prosperity of the Bangsamoro people will be protected, while at the same time the sovereignty and constitution of the Philippines will be preserved," Najib said in a statement issued to Bernama.

The announcement of the framework agreement came following the 32nd round of exploratory talks between the negotiating panels from both sides held in the Malaysian capital from Oct 2 to 7.

Najib said: "It is important that all parties stand true to their commitments and work towards a new era of peace in the Philippines."

The agreement, he said, would ensure that the Bangsamoro people would enjoy the dividends of peace which they rightly deserved.

"In turn, they should respect their fellow Filipinos of Christian faith as moderation is the true Islamic way," he said.

The prime minister said he was honoured that Malaysia had been able to facilitate the talks since 2001, and lead the International Monitoring Team from 2004.

"This process has strengthened the bonds of trust between our two countries, and we will continue to offer our support to help build capacity among the Bangsamoro," Najib said.

Najib said that he would continue to work closely with President Aquino to implement the framework agreement.

"And in honouring a promise I made to the President, I look forward to travelling to Manila to personally witness the signing of this landmark agreement," he added.

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