

IMT-M10 Reaffirms Malaysia's Commitment To Peace In Mindanao

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KUALA LUMPUR, March 10 (Bernama) -- Yet another of Malaysia's international monitoring teams begins its task in Mindanao on Friday, reaffirming the country's commitment to the peace process between the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The Malaysian International Monitoring Team - Mindanao 10 (IMT-M10) - takes over from IMT-M9 which had served since March 14, 2014, and assigned for one year to four areas, Cotabato City, Iligan City, Zamboanga and General Santos City.

IMT-M10 comprises 16 officers and personnel from the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF), Royal Malaysian Police, Defence Ministry and Foreign Ministry, led by Maj Gen Datuk Sheikh Mokhsin Sheikh Hassan.

For the record, 240 officers and personnel from the security forces and defence ministry (not including IMT-M10) had participated in the peacekeeping mission since Sept 9, 2004.

Other countries in the IMT are Brunei, Indonesia, Japan, Qatar and some nations of the European Union.

Chief of Defence Forces Gen Tan Sri Zulkifeli Mohd Zin said recently the IMT-M10 would be the last of the Malaysian teams.

He said that once the peace agreement was signed, the IMT would end its mission and a decommissioning committee was likely to be set up to ensure that the ceasefire stayed as agreed.

The Mindanao conflict had raged on for three decades before Malaysia endeavoured and succeeded in bringing both sides to the negotiation table and a ceasefire.

On Jan 25 this year, 44 Philippines National Police-Special Action Force (PNP-SAF) and eight members of the MILF were killed in a clash, in what is seen as an attempt to derail the peace process.

International Studies expert Prof Datuk Dr Mohamad Abu Bakar said the Malaysian team stood to gain much experience with its presence in Mindanao for the sake of solidarity as a member of ASEAN and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

"Our team is aware of and sensitive to what is happening, including not wanting to be blamed for interfering in the domestic affairs of another country.

"As such, every action in upholding the responsibility is always neutral and logical," he told

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