

**MESSAGE OF**  
**MP MARJANIE S. MIMBANTAS MACASALONG, PhD**  
Chairperson/ Commissioner representing Lanao Del Sur Province with Marawi City

**Bangsamoro Day**  
**January 18, 2021**

*Assalamu alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.*

Isang maalab, maligaya, at mapagpalang Bangsamoro Foundation Day sa ating lahat!

Before we begin, let us take a moment to remember those who lived and died and sacrificed for the Bangsamoro Struggle. Let us look back into our past, and remember the heroes and ordinary people, the groups and individuals, who toiled without seeing the sun rise over the fruits of their labor, who fought and bled for this better future that they never saw, but we now enjoy. All that we celebrate this week, we owe to them.

On this week, we celebrate the second-year anniversary of the inauguration of the BARMM. We commemorate the glorious culmination of decades of peace talks and a spirited campaign for the Bangsamoro Law with the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law. This, as we all know, is what paved the way to the birth of the political entity we have today. This is also in recognition that the cause and aspirations of the Bangsamoro are not only real—they are also just and legitimate.

I know this is not the celebration we had in mind. We will still have to follow health protocols and physical distancing guidelines. Many of us will only get to participate in the week-long celebration on FB Live. But that does not lessen the happiness or the significance of this milestone. If anything, celebrating BARMM's second year in the face of these challenges only highlights the strength, resilience, and resolve of the Bangsamoro people.

It has not been an easy two years. We have had to change not just the structure of the regional government; we faced the task of realigning this new system with the instrumentalities of the national government. My brothers in the Moro Islamic Liberation Front had to learn new ways to carry on the Bangsamoro Struggle. We had to deal with the impact of a global pandemic, which we are still battling today. And yet even then, it has been a very productive and fulfilling and promising two years.

Since we established the Bangsamoro, we have been able to usher in crucial reform, help countless communities, and start working to correct and improve the ways of the past—guided by the tenets of moral governance, and with an eye to a future that is more peaceful and more prosperous.

And I am proud to say that we at the Bangsamoro Youth Commission are following the lead of the Bangsamoro Government in this regard. Though the BYC is less than a year old, it has been able to do so much—including helping the Bangsamoro Youth affected by the pandemic, and instituting a priority agenda for the transition that will equip and empower them.

This is not to boast; this is only to say that we can achieve so much more. For the first time our people are experiencing strong and good governance enabled by a system of greater autonomy and greater empowerment that we have never experienced before. As a result, the prospects for peace and development in the region have never been brighter. Look at what we have done in two years, even in the middle of a pandemic, and imagine what we can do and where we can be in two more years, in two more decades. Together, I have faith: we will be able to achieve so much more.

On this occasion we are called to remember the past, to celebrate the present, and to gather our strength as we march on to the future we envision: a region that is peaceful, that is prosperous, that is strong; a region free from poverty, from injustice, from neglect; a region that we will be proud to pass on to future generations of Bangsamoro. May we all work hand in hand to turn this vision, this dream we can trace to the earliest days of the Bangsamoro people, into reality.

I wish you all a meaningful celebration of our Bangsamoro Foundation Day. Thank you.