



# OPE-P IN BRIEF

The 4th quarterly report submitted by the Lead Inspector General for Operation Pacific Eagle - Philippines (OPE-P) summarizes the quarter's key events and oversight of the U.S. mission to support the Philippine government in its fight against ISIS affiliates and other violent extremist organizations.

## The OPE-P Mission

pp. 6-7, 20

- The 3 lines of effort under OPE-P are:
  - Isolate, degrade, and defeat** ISIS-P and other violent extremist organizations.
  - Counter radicalization** and violent extremism.
  - Build partner capacity** to deny terrorist safe havens.
- 250 U.S. troops** support the OPE-P mission.
- Assistance to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) consists primarily of **intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance** support.
- U.S. military presence and counterterrorism activity in the Philippines have **not changed significantly** under OPE-P.
- Most of the **\$100.2 million** spent by DoD on OPE-P in FY 18 paid for **intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance** support to the AFP.

## ISIS-P Weakened but Still Dangerous

pp. 10-11

- DoD estimated **500 ISIS-P fighters** "with **unknown loyalty**" to ISIS ideology were active.
- DoD lacked reliable information on ISIS-P **recruitment**.
- Relations with core ISIS remained **degraded**, and **no Philippine "emir"** was recognized by international ISIS leadership.
- ISIS-P lacked formal **command structure** and was unable to carry out large-scale attacks.
- Several **factions** of ISIS-P conducted **uncoordinated terrorist activity** in their own areas of influence.

## ISIS-P Carries Out Low-Level "Opportunistic" Attacks

pp. 11-12

**July 7:** ISIS-P **overran and held** the town of Datu Paglas for 12 hours before being repelled by the AFP.

**July 30:** The **first suicide bombing** by ISIS-P, carried out by a Moroccan national, killed 10 and wounded 9.

**August 28:** A bombing at a street festival killed 2 and wounded 37.

**September 2:** A bombing at an Internet café killed 1 and wounded 15.

## DoD and DoS Set Priorities for FY 19

pp. 8-9

- U.S. and Philippine 4-star commanders agreed to **281 joint activities** in 2019, up from 261 in 2018.
  - These activities aim to enhance Philippine **counterterrorism, maritime security, and humanitarian support** capabilities.
- U.S. Embassy Manila's Integrated Country Strategy for FY 2019 includes 2 objectives to counter ISIS-P:
  - Increase the capability** of the AFP.
  - Address the **root causes of violence** in the Philippines.

## U.S. Disaster Assistance to Marawi

pp. 17-18



\$37M

### BREAKDOWN

**\$10.5M**

Shelter & food for IDPs

**\$26.5M**

Ongoing development activities

## Many IDPs Return, but Displacement Remains a Serious Problem

pp. 17-18

- More than **320,000** people **returned** to their homes in and around Marawi, but **70,000 remained displaced**.
- Reconstruction stalled** on Marawi's commercial center, which was destroyed by fighting in 2017.
- More than **100,000 children** had still not returned to **school** or were at risk of dropping out, and less than **24% of IDP children** were enrolled.

## New Law Promotes Reconciliation with Philippine Muslim Population

pp. 13-14

- The **Bangsamoro Organic Law** was enacted on July 26, 2018, with participation from former militants.
- It requires a referendum to create an **autonomous region** in the Philippines' **Muslim-populated** south.
- Many of the central government's powers would be devolved, but **Manila** will retain control of the **police and military**.
- The new law's **impact** on radicalization **remains to be seen**.