



OPE-P IN BRIEF

The 6th 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 Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in their fight against ISIS affiliates and other terrorist organizations.

ISIS-P Bombs Cathedral

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- On January 27, suicide bombers associated with ISIS-P **killed 20** and **wounded 102** at a Roman Catholic cathedral on the southern island of Jolo.
- The first bomb went off inside during mass, and the second detonated outside, **targeting first responders**.
- This was the **deadliest ISIS-P attack** since the 2017 siege of Marawi.

ISIS-P Remains Fractured, Lacks Unified Leader

pp. 8-10

- The DoD estimated ISIS-P's strength at **300-550 members**, the same as last quarter.
- The DoD acknowledged that it had **low confidence** in these numbers and was uncertain whether ISIS-P recruitment exceeded surrenders and casualties.
- Abu Dar, **leader of the Maute Group** faction of ISIS-P, was **killed** in a clash with the AFP on March 14.
- The DoD saw **no indication** of significant financial or media **support** from the **international ISIS leadership** to ISIS-P this quarter.

Peace Process Yields Autonomous Regional Government

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- In the Philippines' Muslim majority provinces, **voters approved** the formation of a new autonomous Bangsamoro region.
- The Bangsamoro government will control most of the region's **domestic** and **budgetary** matters.
- The new government is dominated by **former militants**, many of whom have **criminal records** and **no experience in governance**.
- Under the peace agreement, **40,000 militants** are expected to be **decommissioned**.
- The Bangsamoro region is populated by **3.7 million** of the Philippines' **poorest citizens**.

Philippine Government Plans to Review U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty

pp. 14-15

- The treaty, ratified in 1951, serves as the **foundation for all security cooperation** between the two countries, including OPE-P.
- Philippine **President Rodrigo Duterte** expressed **doubt** about the U.S. commitment to defend Philippine territorial claims in the **South China Sea**.
- Senior U.S. officials, including **Secretary of State Pompeo**, reaffirmed the U.S. promise to **defend the Philippines** from any foreign aggression.

U.S. Personnel Numbers Classified This Quarter

pp. 12

The DoD **previously provided** the DoD OIG **publicly releasable** numbers of military, contractor, and civilian personnel supporting OPE-P. However, this quarter, it stated that those **figures were classified**.

USAID Efforts Shift from Crisis Response to Peace and Stability

pp. 18-21

Programs will focus on **long-term goals**, such as good governance, countering violent extremism, and building local economies.

- The number of people **displaced** by the 2017 **Marawi crisis** has remained at about **70,000** since July 2018.

Lead IG Agencies Complete 2 OPE-P Oversight Projects

pp. 25-26

A DoD OIG evaluation found that the DoD **did not provide** the required **counterterrorism training** to the AFP's conventional forces.

A USAID OIG audit found that USAID's local solutions initiative in the Philippines **lacked metrics for success**.