

Asking my sisters

**INTERGENERATIONAL VOICES
OF WOMEN** FROM THE MORO
ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT IN
MINDANAO

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[I Have To Speak – Berghof Foundation](http://www.berghof-foundation.org) (berghof-foundation.org)

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INTRODUCTORY WORDS

BY BERGHOF FOUNDATION

This report seeks to give a voice to several generations of women active in the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Mindanao, Philippines. These powerful stories of pain and suffering, but also of armed mobilization against injustice, land grabbing and oppression, and in pursuit of religious freedom, self-governance, gender equity, sustainable development and education, show that female combatants have to be taken seriously for building sustainable peace.

Through participatory research, young MILF female members designed and conducted video interviews with their peers. They collected ten stories from war veterans and their daughters who reflected on their reasons for joining the MILF armed struggle, their time as women in war, their experience of gender roles and dynamics in the movement, their lessons learnt from the ongoing peace implementation process, and their aspirations for the future of their country and the coming generations.

The stories, as diverse as they are, emphasise the need to engage with the fate of female ex-combatants, a section of post-war societies that is usually forgotten and under-represented. During the MILF armed struggle for self-determination for the Muslim Bangsamoro people in the Philippine island of Mindanao, women of the movement self-organised into several civilian and military entities. One of them was the Bangsamoro Islamic Women Auxiliary Brigade (BIWAB), an all-female force that constituted a part of the MILF armed forces. BIWAB's main mission was to ensure the safety of the combatants by attending to their medical and other basic needs, and to serve as a reserve force.

In the aftermath of the 2014 peace accord with the Philippine government, the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in 2019 fulfilled a central aspiration of the MILF to rule over their own territory and ancestral domains. As a result, the MILF initiated the decommissioning of its combatants. BIWAB women seized the momentum to transform their military structure into a self-led civilian organisation, the League of Moro Women Organization Incorporated (LMWOI).

The testimonies collected in this publication were produced by our partner organisation Moro Women Development and Cultural Center (MWDECC), with funding from the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ). The report is accompanied by a video documentary, which was launched in October 2021 through a dialogue seminar to elicit a fruitful inter-generational exchange. These provided avenues for the researchers to present and discuss the results back to their community,

in order to reflect on the valuable contributions made by female BIWAB commanders in the last three decades of struggle, as well as the aspirations of their younger peers to pursue Jihad through peaceful social and political activism.

This report reinforces our belief that a more nuanced picture of the various ways in which women join and participate in conflicts is necessary to prevent war and enable sustainable peace; and that the voices of these young future leaders, their concerns and their hopes for the peace process ought to be amplified to strengthen their capacity for and role in peacebuilding.

INTRODUCTORY WORDS

BY MORO WOMEN DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL CENTER (MWDECC)

This report, and the accompanying video documentary, are a product of collective efforts of MWDECC and BIWAB to shed light on the undocumented participation and contributions of women in the Bangsamoro struggle. This will enlighten the young generation on the roles played by the Bangsamoro women as they contributed to the attainment of freedom and sustainable peace and development in the Bangsamoro homeland.

The recorded and documented narratives are considered as a historic document which will serve as a vital reference for the next generations who will form part of the future Bangsamoro saga. The next generation, who will value and enjoy the fruits of the sacrifices of BIWAB, may draw lessons from the great unprecedented contributions of the women as they stood on the foreground to fight for the rights of their nation.

The realization of this project underwent a thorough process, from the selection of researchers to the identification of interviewees. The establishment of coordination process and mechanism anchored on the context of the battle-scarred Bangsamoro communities which played an indispensable role in the success of the project's implementation. Contingency plans were set to ensure that unfavourable situations and other intervening events that would hamper the execution of the project would be pre-empted. First and foremost, the challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic were dealt with accordingly.

Criteria were provided in the selection of researchers considering the challenging nature of the job. Hence, the pool of researchers who conducted the interviews were chosen from BIWAB to ensure and maintain the trust and confidence of the interviewees throughout the process. The researchers were selected based on set criteria such as educational attainment. The researchers needed to be

acceptable and trusted by BIWAB, with strong commitment and willingness to serve BIWAB and MWDECC beyond this project.

Experience, geographical location and tribe were among the identified variables used in selecting the interviewees who were classified as old combatants and young combatants. Both the young and old combatants were interviewed to ensure that both age groups are represented in the documentary.

This report will hopefully help to enlighten the sons and daughters of the women combatants who were deprived of their rights to enjoy a complete and happy family life while their mothers were in the struggle. Thus, it also serves as an instrument for bringing together the families that suffered the distastefulness of being disunited for a long uncertain time.

CONFLICT TIMELINE

- 1978 Founding of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) under the leadership of Ustadz Salamat Hashim.
- 1984 Establishment of Bangsamoro Islamic Women Auxiliary Brigade (BIWAB).
- January 7, 1997 Formal Peace Talks initiated between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the MILF during the administration of President Fidel Ramos
- March 22, 2000 “All-out war” launched by the government against the MILF under the administration of former President Joseph Estrada
- February 11, 2000 Another “all-out war” unleashed by former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo against the MILF
- October 14, 2008 Armed confrontation between the forces of GPH and MILF erupted when the Philippine Supreme Court issued a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) to the initially signed Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MoA-AD)
- October 15, 2012 Signing of Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB) in Manila, Philippines under the administration of former President Benigno Semion Aquino III.
- March 27, 2014 Signature of the final peace agreement, the Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro (CAB), between the GPH and the MILF in Manila.
- July 26, 2018 President Rodrigo R. Duterte signed the landmark Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) that replaces the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).
- January 21, 2019 and February 6, 2019 Ratification of Republic Act (RA) No. 11054 or the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) through plebiscites and the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

RESEARCHERS



MS. MOHANIE KASAN



MS. MARIFFA SAMAYATIN



MS. MONAWARA KUMAYOG

FEMALE EX-COMBATANTS FROM THE BANG-SAMORO ISLAMIC WOMEN AUXILIARY BRIGADE (BIWAB)

MS. ANISA “LING” GUMANDER, age 68,
BIWAB Brigade Commander, served for 49 years.

MS. (MALIYA D.) WILMA MADATO, age 54,
BIWAB Training and Education Department,
served for 44 years.

MS. ALYAH E. SALIK, age 44,
BIWAB Battalion Commander, served for 26 years.

MS. PAHMIA SEBING-HAMID, age 49,
BIWAB Battalion Commander, served for 26 years.

MS. UMMO WEEDAD MIMBANTAS, age 60,
BIWAB Battalion Mursidat, served for 22 years

MS. ROQAYYA CAMALUDIN BILAY, age 50,
BIWAB Battalion Commander, served for 26 years.

MS. HASNAH MACMOD ABDOLLAH, age 42,
BIWAB Battalion Commander, served for 26 years.

WOMEN FROM THE YOUNG GENERATION OF BIWAB COMBATANTS AND MEMBERS

MS. JOHANI DIMALAO IBAD, age 25,
BIWAB Battalion Commander, served for 10 years.
Her father, Zuharto Ibad, is a Brigade Commander
of the BIAF, and part of the National Guard.

MS. NORJANE HUSSEIN ANDONG, age 39,
BIWAB Executive Secretary. Her father, Hon. Hussein
P Munoz is the Deputy Chief of Staff of the MILF and
a member of the BARMM Parliament for the MILF.

MS. SOPHIE Y. SAMION, age 31 and
MS. SHATRA Y. SAMION, age 27,
members of BIWAB. Their Father, Murphy L. Samion
is a member of BIAF.

MS. RAJMA EBRAHIM, age 29,
instructor and chairwoman of the Lumpukan na
Kababayan Consumer Cooperative. Her mother, Maria
Amor Ebrahim, is Social Welfare Committee (SWC)
Provincial Chairwoman, and her father, Sahar Ibrahim,
is a member of the BIAF.

PATHWAYS INTO THE STRUGGLE



“I HEARD THE STORY OF WOMEN”

Violence, oppression, inequality and deprivation force people and communities to make difficult decisions in wartime, triggered by dramatic personal and collective experiences. What factors drive women to join the call to arms, be it as a combatant, a trainer, a nurse, a cook, or a social activist? The various responses to this question reveal interesting intergenerational patterns. Senior women veterans serving as BIWAB commanders or trainers shared their painful memories of collective discrimination and repression, as well as their direct experiences of violence, torture and killings of close family members. Their peers from the younger generation were more likely to join the struggle due to family ties in the movement, a sense of duty or commitment, and the desire to promote Jihad.

COLLECTIVE DISCRIMINATION AND OPPRESSION

Pahmia Sebing-Hamid

We had to join the struggle because of the oppression and discrimination.

Anisa “Ling” Gumander

I joined because we saw what was happening, our relatives were gradually annihilated, especially our relatives in Islam in the North (upstream).

In 1972, the Bangsamoro were deliberately opposed without doing anything, and because of that our Muslim brothers and sisters had the consciousness to fight because we did not want them to just kill us for no reason.

Roqqaya Calamudin Bilay

It hurt me seeing my Muslim brothers and sisters abused, deprived of their houses, and their animals and livestock being taken from them. I witnessed the abuses done to my brothers in Islam. This pushed me to join the struggle.

Hasnah Macmod Abdollah

As well as in our minds, it is ultimately in our hearts that we will fight because of what our ancestors went through here.

Norjane Hussein Andong

There were times that if you wore a hijab, you would be followed and investigated even in malls. But deep inside I was really scared because I didn't know what they were thinking. They were maybe thinking that I'm a terrorist or maybe they thought I'm a MILF rebel because we were not free back then.



MS. HASNAH MACMOD ABDOLLAH | AGE 42

Anisa “Ling” Gumander

We were also afraid, everyone was afraid, but we endured it because we did not want to be oppressed and we saw that our brothers were fighting.

Rajma T. Ebrahim

I knew what we are fighting for in BIWAB. I knew that I’m fighting for my freedom to exercise my religion.

Pahmia Sebing-Hamid

We were robbed of our land, and we were expelled from our own land. So, it is our obligation to join Jihad.

Hasnah Macmod Abdollah

Especially when histories of massacres were told by our parents, I realised that women and children must participate in Jihad, not only through the use of firearms, but they can help in many ways, like giving support through words and doing good deeds.

Roqqaya Calamudin Bilay

I joined BIWAB because of the hardships I experienced together with my parents. Our situation is very critical and it's very hard if no one will stand and fight for our rights as a Muslim, especially here in Salama, where Muslim are the minority.

GENDERED VIOLENCE

Alyah E. Salik

When I heard the story of women who were helplessly raped by soldiers and being killed, I told myself that Insha'Allah, when I grew up, if there was a group who were willing to train military, I would not hesitate to join so that I wouldn't experience what our Bangsa-moro sisters experienced during Martial Law. So that's one of the reasons that pushed me to join.

Anisa "Ling" Gumander

What I will never forget until now is when my first cousin was taken by the soldiers in 1978. Her name was Camilla Gumander, she is like a sister to me. The soldiers raped her. She was also detained in the soldiers' camp for a few months. She only escaped with the help of a soldier who became her friend there. But when she came home, her whole body was full of dark spots caused by cigarette burns perpetrated by the soldiers, which was done to her after they raped her. My other cousin was also taken by the soldiers, who beheaded her and put her head in a hat. All we got was her body and we buried her headless.

Hasnah Macmod Abdollah

My female cousins were taken and put on a naval boat. They were exposed to the sun for two days. And when they died, they were thrown into the sea. The children who died were not even buried and were also thrown into the sea, not even moving near the shore.

Maliya Madato

I told myself that I would join the BIAF so that I would not be like those women who were violated, raped, and thrown by the military.

Pahmia Sebing-Hamid

During martial law, women were the most vulnerable against violations.

FAMILY TIES AND INTERGENERATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Maliya Madato

I joined the training to protect myself and my family.

Pahmia Sebing-Hamid

It's difficult for me because I joined the war in the mountains leaving my family with nothing, not even a single cent. When you left them, you were not sure if you could still return alive. But we couldn't do anything else than Jihad for their future.

Johani Ibad

I joined BIWAB because my father inspired me. My father is a member of MILF-BIAF and I witnessed his determination in carrying out his duties and responsibilities as a commander. My father was always gone as I grew up. He was always in the military camp. I told myself that if women were allowed in BIAF I would really join.

Norjane Hussein Andong

One thing I learned during my training in BIWAB was that if we want to have exactly the same rewards as our parents, we also have to go through whatever they went through.

Rajma T. Ebrahim

My mother was crying because I was still young and she knew that BIWAB could go to war. It's a good thing that my leader is also my aunt so we trusted her. My cousins and my relatives were also members of BIAF and BIWAB. Almost all of us here were members of BIAF, the Social Welfare Committee (SWC) and BIWAB.

Norjane Hussein Andong

My cousins, my relatives are members of BIAF and BIWAB. Almost all of us here are actually part of the BIAF, SWC, BIWAB organisations. I was well-informed because my father was Brigade Commander here in Davao at the time.

Hasnah Macmod Abdollah

I joined Jihad for the future generation. Even if we cannot harvest the fruit of this struggle, at least, our children and the next generation cannot experience those injustices done to our parents and to us, and they can benefit from the fruit of our sacrifices and hardship.

Anisa "Ling" Gumander

Whatever happens I will continue and will never forget the injustices my family experienced.



MS. UMMO WEEDAD MIMBANTAS | AGE 60

RELIGIOUS APPEAL

Sophie Y. Samyion

My reason for joining is Jihad Ma'am. Only Jihad.

Shatra Y. Samion

I joined to strengthen my belief in Islam. Even if I am just a woman, I really support BIWAB. Because BIWAB is working together with BIAF, so I just really want to do Jihad, fighting for the sake of Allah.

Norjane Hussein Andong

My father used to hold a program related to Jihad. So, we were taught that we had an obligation to support and continue what our parents have started aside from our obligation in Islam.

LIFE IN CONFLICT



“OUR SLIPPERS WERE ALWAYS PACKED”

Life during conflict is a life in constant fear and comes with both personal and collective sacrifices. Personal, family and community sufferings become a terrifying part of everyday life, leaving people with difficult decisions to make and painful memories to curate. How does one raise children during the midst of war? How do you endure hunger when bullets are being fired? And how can religion be practiced when your religion makes you a target? During the height of the conflict, the obligations and duties as women, mothers, and MILF members had to be fulfilled at the same time.

HARDSHIPS IN WAR

Anisa “Ling” Gumander

In March 9, 1973, the offensive began here in Sultan Kudarat. All the civilians fled. Then, for more than ten days we stayed in an evacuation area. The civilians had to move again because there was another shooting, and they couldn’t stand the hunger. We experienced hardships, however Alhamdulillah [praise Allah] no one died, probably because of the devotion of the people.

Roqqaya Calamudin Bilay

Bomb here, bomb there, our slippers were always packed in a bag because Father’s brother said “Don’t leave your belongings behind, maybe we’ll evacuate later”. What I can’t forget till I die is when we didn’t have food to eat. We couldn’t get any supply of food, so we just ate dried shrimp mixed with banana pulp to survive. There were times when we ate only ginger during *shuhor* [breakfast at dawn during the month of Ramadhan]. Of course, we continued our fasting because it is part of our faith, Islam. As a niqabi, it was very difficult since we had to remove it when going to the training camp so as not to look suspicious to the military.

Pahmia Sebing-Hamid

If you ask me how hard it is for mujahidin to raise children, it’s very hard. You have to leave them with nothing because you have duties and responsibilities to fulfil.

GENDER ROLES

Anisa “Ling” Gumander

At that time, I had not fought in combat because there were still men who could fight and if there were men, the women would not fight. The men were combatants, and the women were non-combatants.

If we talk about support, we brought them food in the jungle during the war. Also, we gave them mats, clothes and other necessities that we could provide. Those were some of BIWAB's responsibilities.

Umno Weedad Mimbantas

As women, we were the ones who had easy access and could easily pass through checkpoints. There were so many checkpoints during that time. That's why we play a great role then.

Rajma T. Ebrahim

BIWAB is like BIAF but they are just behind BIAF and support them. We supplied food and other BIAF's needs during the guerrilla war.

Roqqaya Calamudin Bilay

We really wanted to perform our duty even if it's just carrying bullets and food supplies for our Mujahidin, Insha'Allah we did it.

Anisa "Ling" Gumander

Everything that has to be done in this world, it cannot be done only by men, there should be women too.

At the height of the war, there were wounded and dead combatants. I was ignorant in the field of medicine, but I had to perform dozens of surgeries due to bullet wounds. I used the trainees' notebooks as reference because there were no medics and doctors back then who were members of the struggle.

Umno Weedad Mimbantas

The form of war at that time was guerrilla warfare. We were taught how to inject medicine and give dextrose because there were no active doctors. Women were trained outside and would copy what they learned in treating the wounded.

Roqqaya Calamudin Bilay

When [former Filipino President] Erap Estrada declared an all-out war, we removed our niqab here in Davao Oriental, it was difficult to deliver medicines that were needed by our wounded BIAF brothers. What we did was to wrap the dextrose, bandage and other medicines in a gift box and ride a motorcycle wearing a casual dress pretending to attend a wedding.

Norjane Hussein Andong

So Alhamdulillah [praise Allah], there were instances we were able to help, for example by collecting medicines and other support from our relatives when there were armed clashes. Since we were so young back then, we were not financially capable and our resources were very limited.

Alyah E. Salik

What I really wanted was to join the military. I joined as a medical aide until 1994 and joined in the military training of BIWAB. In 1994, we took basic training at Camp Abubakar.

EDUCATION ACROSS GENERATIONS

Johani Ibad

As his children, we never felt sullen or angry, instead we are proud of our father. His dedication to his duty in jihad and strong resolve to his principles made us proud of him. Even though he didn't have enough time for us, he always reminded us to study hard. He always emphasised that our education is the only thing he could leave us.

Our training was not that difficult compared to the previous members. Their training was held secretly. My training was just a basic military training course but we also experienced sleeping in banana leaves and just eating swamp cabbage and salt.

Anisa “Ling” Gumander

We will do our best in BIWAB to follow whatever order that was agreed for the good of Bangsamoro. I’m already a senior citizen but I’m still here in BIWAB serving the Bangsamoro. I even sacrificed my education. I couldn’t finish studying both English and Arabic because I focused on BIWAB.

Norjane Hussein Andong

They thought that if you are a rebel, you don’t have the ability to send your children to school but, Alhamdulillah [praise Allah], we have a management graduate and the third one graduated at Jamiat Cotabato University and our youngest sister is a human resource graduate.

Alyah E. Salik

I finished my High School without entering the last grading period because I was in training in Bombaran for more than two months.

Pahmia Sebing-Hamid

I was in my second year in college when I joined the Jihad. I made sure I did my responsibility in Jihad despite the difficulties. I did my best to deliver what was expected of me for the future.

Norjane Hussein Andong

We should listen to the story of our parents and uncles, so that we could appreciate our own history and this history will be instilled in our minds and hearts. Let’s make the next generation proud of us.

WOMEN'S SELF-ORGANISING IN CONFLICT



“WE NEED WOMEN TO FULFIL OUR DREAMS”

Armed conflict shapes and re-negotiates gendered roles, and self-organising helps to provide a sense of purpose. BIWAB tells the story of women’s collective mobilisation. They carved a space for themselves in the national liberation struggle of the Bangsamoro people, by serving their community.

Umno Weedad Mimbantas

BIWAB was founded in 1991, it was then called The Bangsa Bae. They helped the rebels. When they needed medicines the women gave them. The women would bring what they needed in the forest. BIWAB are the women who are part of governance in our communities. Our goal is to show that we need women to fulfil our dreams for good governance in our area. It is difficult to achieve our dreams if men and women do not work together.

Maliya Madato

Our first objective is to Islamise the Bangsamoro women on the ground. Our second objective is to strengthen and empower women combatants. The third one is what we call interest, which means that we want our members to be interested and dedicated to their duties and responsibilities.

We never recruited women to join the training, they personally approached us and tended their application. It means there was no coercion, it was purely voluntary.

Roqqaya Calamudin Bilay

If you're already part of BIWAB you have to undergo an Islamisation program and lectures about Jihad.

Sophie Y. Samion

Military and Exercise were also included in the training. Every morning and afternoon we marched. After lunch, we prayed.

Maliya Madato

We educated women on their rights. We went to the community and gave them printed copies of their rights. We informed the women that their rights are beyond cooking and serving their husbands and that they have a greater role to play. I was determined to train other Bangsamoro women for them to defend themselves. Women are always a victim.



MS. ROQQAYA CALAMUDIN BILAY | AGE 50

This was the primary factor that pushed me to join the training.

Anisa "Ling" Gumander

BIWAB promotes women's participation in all aspects. We should not be excluded from any activities because of our gender. When men are combatants and women are non-combatant, it's impossible to operate without coordination. Women's participation is important because women have abilities that men don't, men also have abilities that women don't.

Umno Weedad Mimbantas

We advocated and promoted Islam. We encouraged women to join Jihad because we are required to do so as Muslim.

Norjane Andong Hussein

It's good that we could share a portion of our history as women and make them realise that we are here now because of our leaders' sacrifices. We will no longer experience injustices and oppression again because of the BIAF and BIWAB's sacrifices.

Rajma T. Ebrahim

Right now our organisations work together. Women and men alike have unity and cooperation. BIWAB is an organisation of women throughout Mindanao that can help men.

Johani Ibad

I am happy that I am part of BIWAB, and I've been here for Jihad. I feel happy and accomplished that I became one of the instruments in establishing BARMM.

Alyah E. Salik

I never once disregarded my responsibility in BIWAB, despite how difficult the situation was, even if I was not sure if I could bring food and milk for my children, because I knew I can achieve my dream through BIWAB. Basically, what was the most rewarding part was when we finally understood the importance of what we were doing, the importance of our participation in Jihad, and the importance of our support to the Bangsamoro leaders.

Hasnah Macmod Abdollah

Hopefully, my participation in BIWAB and the participation of our colleagues in BIAF will make Islam prevail.

Sophie Y. Samion

I'm also proud that BIWAB strengthened my faith in Islam.



MS. MALIYA MADATO | AGE 54

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PEACE PROCESS



“NO ONE SHALL BE LEFT BEHIND”

The peace process brought along positive change and tangible benefits. For women who sacrificed many years of their lives to the struggle, they could finally enjoy time for family, experience religious freedom, and take part in self-governance.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PEACE PROCESS

Pahmia Sebing-Hamid

I'm thankful that there is a peace process. It allows me to be with my family, especially I am now with my loving children because during the time of war, I had not been with them. We had very few time with each other before.

Johani Ibad

Now that we have the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), many things have changed. We can now experience travelling to different places, meetings in different hotels and many more things.

Hasnah Macmod Abdollah

BIWAB operations really changed. Back then we were having meetings in the mountains and forests because we were afraid of the armies. Fish sauce was enough for us to survive because we were hiding from the eyes of the soldiers. But now, we are no longer meeting in the mountains but in beautiful hotels where our fare, food and accommodations are free of charge. These are some of the changes we are thankful for now that we have the BARMM government.

Roqqaya Calamudin Bilay

We could really feel the discrimination before as a Muslim minority. We were oppressed and that pushed us to join the BIWAB. Unlike today, we can exercise our rights, we can wear the niqab. Alhamdulillah [praise Allah], maybe if no women stood to fight against oppression, there might be no freedom until now.

Norjane Hussein Andong

The women now are lucky, they are not discriminated against for wearing hijab and niqab, they don't have to take off their niqab, unlike before, when you had to take it off because of fear. You would have been considered a rebel, and you would be arrested or abducted.

We can experience lasting peace if a chance will be given to all Bangsamoro. It means that no one shall be left behind.

Anisa “Ling” Gumander

We are peaceful now, but what we can't guarantee is the future because we can't see it. As for what we feel now, we feel secure because we have a good government.

Ummo Weedad Mimbantas

Everyone who has suffered for Jihad, especially the family of the Mujahideen, will put in their hearts the gratitude because we have achieved BARMM. The Bangsamoro are isolated so it is necessary for our leaders to take care of the people because they are the ones who are capable now.

Maliya Madato

In 2020, BIWAB transitioned into a new organisation. We call it the League of Moro Women Organization Incorporated (LMWOI). Here, we capacitate women to uplift their social and economic status and to maintain their unity and solidarity.

Alyah E. Salik

There were NGOs who encouraged us to serve the community now that we were not allowed anymore to conduct military training. So, we are now strengthening our campaign on an awareness program about BARMM moral governance.

Johani Ibad

For me, we can achieve true peace if moral governance will be implemented or will truly be carried out.

Rajma T. Ebrahim

By sharing my story, I can encourage the Bangsamoro youth and women to participate in governance.

**ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE
AND LESSONS LEARNT**



“IF NOT NOW, IN THE NEXT GENERATION”

Building peace is a long-term endeavour, which continues well beyond the timeline of peace accord implementation. It continues over several generations. For women combatants, peace does not mean the end of the struggle; it enables a new form of Jihad, without the violence. It allows the next generation of women to focus on their education, and to contribute to the state-building project, while paying tribute to the legacy and sacrifices of their elders for a better future.

CONTINUING THE JIHAD

Anisa “Ling” Gumander

Until now that I am a senior it has never been in my heart to relax or withdraw. No matter what, I will also die.

Johani Ibad

To my fellow BIWAB, I just want to tell them: let’s strengthen our camaraderie. We should not be divided, because what we are facing now is a higher form of Jihad.

Umno Weedad Mimbantas

Our vision is for Jihad to succeed and last the Bangsamoro rule. BARMM need to see different ways to help the people, the needy, the youth who need the programs, and those in need of livelihood assistance. They all need to be given attention because otherwise it will be difficult for the Bangsamoro to succeed.

Norjane Hussein Andong

I know that what I’m doing is right, I know that what my family is doing is right, I know that what everyone with us is doing is right in that kind of work.

FOR THE NEW GENERATION

Pahmia Sebing-Hamid

Let us develop ourselves. Let us educate our children for them not to go astray because it is our responsibility as parents to guide them in the right path. Especially you, young people, you must study really hard and graduate because there is a saying that ‘young people are the hope of the people.’

Alyah E. Salik

We must focus on education and the youth for the future of BARMM. This can be a long-term solution in alleviating poverty.



MS. SOPHIE Y. SAMION | AGE 31

MS. SHATRA Y. SAMYION | AGE 27

Umno Weedad Mimbantas

We need to have programs for young people today on how they can live peacefully because if they are not given attention now, it may be difficult for us to help them in the future. Programs for young people, especially children need to be extended so that we can achieve success in the next generations.

Hasnah Macmod Abdollah

What I want to advise the youth is that no matter what happens, they should never forget BIWAB and all its sacrifices and contributions. Abide by the teachings of Islam and don't forget Jihad.

Alyah E. Salik

If it will not happen during this time, then it might happen in the next generation. Educate the young and let's work together to build our Islamic government.

Anisa “Ling” Gumander

The advice that I can give to the young generation is not to be distracted with the past experiences we had. They have to focus on their future. They have to learn our religion because we already have our own government where we can exercise Islam.

Norjane Hussein Andong

I would advise the youth to go back to our history. Learn the experiences, the sacrifices of our leaders, the true leaders of Jihad; not those opportunists that you just saw now highlighted in the government. Keep in mind our history and take it to your heart.

We should listen to the story of our parents and uncles, so that we can appreciate our own history, and this history will be instilled in our minds and hearts.

Roqqaya Calamudin Bilay

I hope that until our last breath, we will remain united for the same cause to make the words of Allah prevail. I wish that our young generation could inherit the unity and love for others regardless of their tribe, because in Islam, we should love everyone.

Ummo Weedad Mimbantas

We need to have programs for the youth for a brighter future. If they are disregarded now, it will be hard for us to help them in the future. We need to extend and expand programs for the youth to ensure the success of the next generation. We also need to give attention to our senior citizens. Unlike the youth, they might not be able to harvest the fruit of their sacrifices. We are not sure if they will still be alive when that time comes. So I hope that they will be given attention.



MS. NORJANE HUSSEIN ANDONG | AGE 39

Alyah E. Salik

I hope that the children of the shahid mujahidin [those who died in Jihad] will be given scholarships. We have to identify the poorest, especially those in the hinterland, and give them assistance. The services of the BARMM government must reach the rural areas.

Roqqaya Calamudin Bilay

We just want to share our legacy so that our efforts will be remembered even after we die. We can leave this legacy to the young generation, and for them to know that their ancestors once fought for their freedom. They will know that their ancestors experienced oppression in the hands of disbelievers and be thankful that they will no longer experience the same fate.

FOR WOMEN

Pahmia Sebing-Hamid

I am pleading and asking my Bangsamoro sisters to learn and not to rely on men in BIAF.

Rajma T. Ebrahim

As a BIWAB, the advice I can give is that, let us stay united. Let us help and support each other, especially with our current situation. Let us strengthen our solidarity and camaraderie. Without it, we will be divided, there will be gaps.

Maliya Madato

The best thing that we want to happen in the Bangsamoro is for our identity to be recognised and our rights as a woman to be respected. We want to be treated as women. We understand that women and men have differences in Islam, but we want also to fully exercise our rights as a woman. We want to achieve the recognition of the community and especially, we want our efforts as women to be recognised by the Bangsamoro leaders and that we also have rights to serve the community.

Johani Ibad

For me, I want to see my siblings and other women finish their studies. I believe that education is their key to success.

Anisa “Ling” Gumander

The good thing is that women will not anymore experience the hardships and pains that we experienced before.

Pahmia Sebing-Hamid

I want to be an instrument in upholding the rights of women. I will be an instrument in protecting them against any form of violence. I want to be an instrument to educate the women and develop their skills for their future.

KEY ACRONYMS

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| BARMM | Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (Philippines) |
| BIAF | Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces |
| BIWAB | Bangsamoro Islamic Women Auxiliary Brigade |
| GPH | Government of the Philippines |
| LMWOI | League of Moro Women Organization Incorporated |
| MILF | Moro Islamic Liberation Front |
| MWDECC | Moro Women Development and Cultural Center |
| SWC | Social Welfare Committee |

