

International Conference on
Population and Development in Asia: Critical Issues for a Sustainable Future
20 – 22 March 2006, Phuket, Thailand

Abstract

**Migration and Violent Conflict:
Mindanao and Population Displacements in the Philippines**

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The conflict situation in Mindanao can be traced back to the significant migration from Luzon and the Visayas that took place from the early part of the 20th century onwards. Ironically, it was the resettlement of Mindanao by predominantly Christian migrants that marginalized the erstwhile dominant Muslim and Lumad (i.e., indigenous non-Muslim and non-Christian) communities. The creation of such indigenous minorities was in turn accompanied by (and may have in fact produced the conditions for) economic deprivation. These twin factors of poverty and ethnic minoritization thus prompted the occurrence of violent conflicts between the principal combatants involved – the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), the New People's Army (NPA), and the government Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). The violent conflict situations in Mindanao have led to serious questions about the prospects of human security among especially the Lumad and Muslim communities. As a result, displacements and movements of hundreds of thousands of persons (predominantly involving Muslims) have taken place. This paper illustrates the dynamics of how conflict situations can impel people to move by tracing the origins of the Mindanao “problem” and how it has led to large-scale human displacements. It essentially argues that conflict-induced population displacements are likely to take place when there is a convergence of economic.