Why the BOL is important, even to Muslims living in Metro Manila

Written by Portia Ladrido Updated Jan 22, 2019 1:20:01 AM



sell a medley of food, drinks, home decor, and garments. "Dito, nagtitinda ako ng kakanin," says Racma Kusain Machmood, a 56-year-old Muslim who left Cotabato City for

Manila in 1988, because of the conflict in her hometown among the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and the Ilaga, an extremist Christian group. "Nakita namin 'yung mga namamatay na Muslim. ['Yung Ilaga], kung hindi tenga, ulo 'yung pinutol nila. Kung hindi ulo, 'yung titi," she recalls.

Fifty-six-year-old Racma Kusain Machmood left Cotabato City for Manila in 1988, after a series of wars in her hometown. Phóto by JL JAVIER She, her husband, and their son first arrived and made a living in Quiapo, Manila in the '80s. In 2000, however, under Joseph Estrada's regime, their resettlement area was demolished, transferring them to Maharlika, which now has the largest community of Muslims in Metro Manila. Across her tiangge is another open-front hut owned by Haja Sulaika Saligan, who like Machmood, has been selling a variety of goods in the village. She arrived in Maharlika in 2002, after leaving Sambulawan in Maguindanao because of the war between the MNLF and the AFP. "Kasi 'yung mga sundalo pinupuntahan nila ang ka-Musliman, kaya 'yun nagigiyera," she says. "Pero ngayon hinahanap nila kalayaan at kapayapaan kaya baka maayos din." Despite being displaced for almost two decades now, Saligan and Machmood are optimistic that the Bangsamoro

What the BOL means for every Muslim The BOL, previously called the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), is a product of the many peace negotiations between rebel groups, largely headed by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and the Philippine government. The law abolishes the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), which was signed by Cory Aquino in 1989. Often called a failed experiment, the ARMM was said to be spoiled by corruption and negligence; and today, Jan. 21, the BOL plebiscite commences for voters to decide if whether or not Mindanaoans want to ratify the new law. The BOL plebiscite also allows voters to determine the areas to be covered by the new region — the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) — and replace not only what area the ARMM constitutes, but also hopefully extinguish the decades-long rebellion in Mindanao, give the BARMM a substantial budget that can rebuild the towns that have been destroyed because of war, and solidify the Bangsamoro identity. In an interview with CNN Philippines, Islamic law and politics professor Jamel Cayamodin of the University of the Philippines said that the new law is crafted in a move to answer the needs, grievances, and requests of Muslims in Mindanao. "When you talk about the BBL, it's the advocacy of every Muslim ... For the past years, since martial law, the Muslims have been asking for self-determination," Cayamodin said.

One public housing building in Maharlika Village consists of 60 units, measuring either 24 sqm or 22.5 sqm. Photo by JL

"Kasama kami nung nag-rally kami sa Senate, sa Mendiola, sa Batasan para pirmahan na ['yung BOL,]" says Haja Sulaika Saligan, a resident of Maharlika who is originally from Maguindanao. "Importante sa amin [ang] kapayapaan at pagkakaisa. 'Yun ang pinaka-base." Photo by JL JAVIER Indeed, it is not only for Muslims living in Mindanao that the BOL is of importance. In Maharlika, several tarpaulins ("Yes to Bangsamoro Organic Law!") hang on the chipped walls of the worn-out buildings. Saligan, who is also an adviser of the Hukbong Federal ng Pilipinas, a group that advocates for federalism in the

"Kasama kami nung nag-rally kami sa Senate, sa Mendiola, sa Batasan para pirmahan na ['yung BOL,]" she says.

Haja Sapia, a 78-year-old from Cotabato City who is also a resident of Maharlika, says that more than anything else, the BOL is a promise of peace in her hometown. After years of moving from one province to another, of crossing rivers

"[Ang makabalik] talaga 'yung [gusto] namin. Di lang kami makabalik kasi 'yun ang mahirap, maya-maya may putok

with her children, of hiding in trees, being back in Mindanao is a desire she always wants to make possible.

"Importante sa amin [ang] kapayapaan at pagkakaisa. 'Yun ang pinaka-base."

sa kabila, may putok na naman. Nakakatakot. Hindi kaya 'yung ganon," she says.



Islam identity in Manila While many displaced Muslims have already rebuilt their lives in Manila, there are still those who want to go back to Mindanao should the BOL be ratified. Muhammad Alforso, one of the community leaders in Maharlika who was originally from Marawi, has been an imam (a worship leader) of the village for almost a decade now.

Reymally Macusang, a member of the Maharlika Condominium Unit Owners Association, says that since the National Housing Association (NHA) awarded the buildings to the displaced Muslims in 2000, not once were they checked or

maintained because of "delinquent" renters. Photo by JL JAVIER

dun, wala na, wasak na kaya parang wala na kaming mabalikan," he says.

public.



Muhammad Alforso, an imam in their village, sees the Bangsamoro Organic Law as a chance to restore his broken town, but more importantly, as an opportunity to start anew in the place where his being Muslim is not questioned or judged. Photo by

He says that Maharlika Village, in fact, has been often tagged as a dangerous place, a haven for 'bad Muslims' and 'criminals.' "Bakit katulad ng mga kapatid natin na mga Christian na kapag nagkasala ay ang sinasabi ay eto si Juan

Alforso also shares how when he was walking around in his tunic in one of the nearby markets, some bystanders started shouting "Abu Sayyaf!" towards him. Macusang shares this sentiment, adding that their Islamic faith is what

"Nakatatak na sa ibang tao na Muslim, terorista siya. Muslim, Abu Sayyaf siya," she says. "'Yung challenge [ay] kung paano pakikisamahan 'yung non-Muslim na mga brother and sister kasi lalo na 'yung [mga sinasabi nila,] tumatak

These seemingly little, day-to-day displeasures have been imprinted on Macusang and conceivably all other Muslims making a life in Manila. Alforso says this is also the main reason why going back to Mindanao remains to be a dream

"Kahit saan ka pa mapadpad, mapunta, walang kasing ganda ang pamumuhay doon mismo sa pinanganakan sa'yo."

ang ginawa niya ay ganito ... Hindi sinasabi na 'Katolikong' Juan?" he says.

has kept them strong despite the many accusations hurled at them.

'yun sa pagkatao namin."

that he holds dear.

(https://homeequitytips.com/sso/article/unlock-home-equity/? (http://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2022/2/22/Charlie-Cojuangco-death.html?

Edition 🤝 marks of Cable News Network, Inc., displayed with permission. About us (/aboutus/) Contact us (/aboutus/contactus/) Join our team (/aboutus/jobs/)

9oFI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDF9D4o0rHcyt6P3uHAAQ#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDF9D4o0rHcyt6P3uHAAQ) Many people with HIV experience weight gain after starting treatment. Learn why this happens + how to work with (https://twww.myhrvearn.com/hejsst/cgs//fclick?pi-ank-tideystrow-around water-around water-aroun utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=paid&utm_campaign=hiv_tc_symtuza_janssen_taking-care-ofyourself&utm_content=How+To+Talk+To+Your+Doctor+About+Weight+Gain+and+HIV&tblci=GiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_l60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDF9D4o0rHcyt6P3uHAAQ#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_l60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDF9D4o0rHcyt6P3uHAAQ) (http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2022/1/28/Pacquiao-links-Marcos-Moreno-to-corruption-issues.html?fbclid=lwAR2) Pacquiao links Marcos, Moreno to corruption issues Sen. Manny Pacquiao says voters should reject fellow presidential hopefuls Isko Moreno and Bongbong Marcos because of corruption issues. (http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2022/1/28/Pacquiao-links-Marcos-Moreno-to-corruption-issues.html?fbclid=lwAR2) (https://trackvrw.com/adServe/aff?oid=587877&pid=443239&subid=GiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-

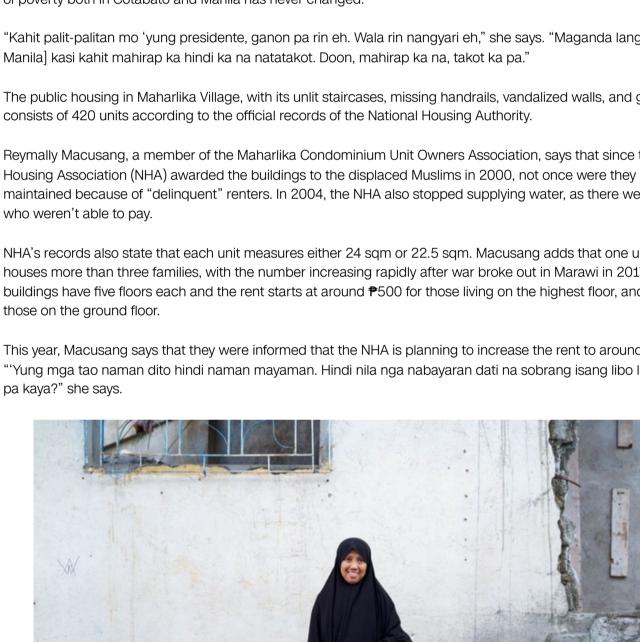
Mortgage Rates Fall Again. Check These Lenders Now in The Dalles chooseyourmortgage (https://trackvrw.com/adServe/aff?oid=587877&pid=443239&subid=GiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP- $9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWC2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWC2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWC2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDR4lco2tXUj_4k5c3\#tblciGiDYfWC2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTDBkjQ1jblciGiDYfWC2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTDBkjQ1jblciGiDYfWC2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTDBkjQ1jblciGiDYfWC2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTDBkjQ1jblciGiDYfWC2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTDBkjQ1jblciGiDYfWC2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTDBkjQ1jblciGiDYfWC2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTDBkjQ1jblciGiDYfTDBkjQ1jblciGiDYfWC2jkJAYHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFl_160RMFTDBkjQ1jblciGiDYfTDBkjQ1$ (http://cnnphilippines.com/world/2022/1/29/Mark-Milley-warning-of-Russian-invasion-in-Ukraine-.html????) Top US general warns of 'horrific' outcome if Russian forces 'unleashed' on Ukraine Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley warned a Russian invasion of Ukraine would be (http://cnnphilippines.com/world/2022/1/29/Mark-Milley-warning-of-Russian-invasion-in-Ukraine-.html????) © 2015 Nine Media Corp. CNN name, logo and all associated elements ™ and © 2015 Cable International News Network. Warner Media Company. All rights reserved. CNN and the CNN logo are registered

Organic Law (BOL), which was signed by President Duterte in July 2018, will give them the peace that the Filipino-Muslim community have long been clamoring for. The Maharlika Village in Taguig City is known to have the largest community of Muslims in Metro Manila. Photo by JL JAVIER

Muslims in Manila on the BOL Philippines, proudly shows her I.D., a photo of President Duterte plastered on the topmost part. She says that having a federal government is an important shift for the country, and that the ratification of the BOL is a crucial step towards

that direction.

"Kahit palit-palitan mo 'yung presidente, ganon pa rin eh. Wala rin nangyari eh," says Haja Sapia, a resident in Maharlika who was originally from Cotabato City. "Maganda lang dito [sa Manila] kasi kahit mahirap ka hindi ka na natatakot. Doon, mahirap ka na, takot ka pa." Photo by JL JAVIER



He left Marawi over 10 years ago to earn a better income in Manila, and he would go back and forth from Manila to Marawi to take care of his families' various livelihoods. But in 2017, the Marawi siege happened, reducing his city to

"Nung nangyari na 'yung sa Marawi, hindi na kami nakauwi dahil 'yung mga kabuhayan namin, pati mga bahay namin

Nonetheless, Alforso sees the BOL as a chance to restore his broken town, but more importantly, as an opportunity to start anew in the place where his being Muslim is not questioned or judged. He laments about how despite having a relatively peaceful life in Manila, Islam is still a religion and a way of life that is rarely understood by the general Filipino

nes&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=alternating-thumbnails-a:Below Article Thumbnails:) nes&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=alternating-thumbnails-a:Below Article Thumbnails:) You May Like (https://homeequitytips.com/sso/article/unlock-home-equity/? 9oFI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-9oFI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ) Oregon Residents Are Accessing Their Home Equity Without A Loan **Home Equity Tips** utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=paid&utm_campaign=14685433&utm_term=cnnphilippines&utm_content=3056494645&utm_publisher= $90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ\#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiD7tFYoh4TmpfCNgInRAQ#tblciGiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-90FI_I60RMFTTBkjQ1jsiDYfWPQA#tblciGiDYfWA#tblciGiDYfWA#tblciGiDYfWA#tblciGiDYfWA#tblciGiDYfWA#tblciGiDYfWA#tblciGiDYfWA#tblciGiDYfWA#tblciGiDYfWA#tblci$ fbclid=lwAR2Hm123MNerkVin2BsMwfZhPgEg_4rHcK6ixnOUUH9khdhy2_CyoWOV2MI) Tarlac congressman Charlie Cojuangco dies at 58 The Tarlac 1st District representative's wife China Jocson-Cojuangco confirmed his death in a Facebook post on Tuesday. No other details were provided. (http://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2022/2/22/Charlie-Cojuangco-death.html? fbclid=lwAR2Hm123MNerkVin2BsMwfZhPgEg_4rHcK6ixnOUUH9khdhy2_CyoWOV2MI) (https://www.myhivteam.com/resources/how-to-talk-to-your-doctor-about-weight-gain-and-hiv? utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=paid&utm_campaign=hiv_tc_symtuza_janssen_taking-care-ofyourself&utm_content=How+To+Talk+To+Your+Doctor+About+Weight+Gain+and+HIV&tblci=GiDYfWV2jkJAXHqrsUmjhLiP-How To Talk To Your Doctor About Weight Gain and HIV vour doctor to best manage it. myHIVteam