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Conflict Alert 2019

War Makes States

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Peace
is within
our power

About Conflict Alert

Conflict Alert is a subnational conflict monitoring system that tracks the incidence, causes, and human costs of violent conflict in the Philippines. It aims to shape policymaking, development strategies, and peacebuilding approaches by providing relevant, robust, and reliable conflict data.

Conflict Alert was developed and is run by the Philippines Programme of International Alert, an independent peacebuilding organization.

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About International Alert

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We focus on issues that influence peace, including governance, economics, gender relations, social development, climate change, and the role of businesses and international organizations in high-risk places.

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War Makes States



Acknowledgements

2018

marks the 8th year of the Conflict Alert database on violent conflict in the Bangsamoro. We are now in possession of 8 years of granular and robust data of violent conflict from the village to the provincial level of Muslim Mindanao from 2011 to 2018.

This is certainly not a small feat in our aim to nuance the discourse of conflict, peace, and development, in particular, because long-term monitoring of conflict in Muslim Mindanao has never been more crucial than after the war in Marawi broke out in 2017. Emerging causes of violence, conflict strings, and the multicausality of causes necessitate continued systematic tracking of incidents and critical events to effectively deal with new types of violence and prevent its morphing into more deadly types.

One thing remained constant through our years of implementing Conflict Alert, and that is how it is truly a partnership among individuals and groups who are driven by the same strong commitment to understand the dynamics of conflict better and develop ways to address these.

We are grateful first and foremost to our partner academic institutions; particularly the **Western Mindanao State University (WMSU)** and **Notre Dame University (NDU)** who are at the forefront of liaising with the police, data gathering, bringing together strategic community members to Multi-

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The personal, and often firsthand knowledge of local conflicts of all our **MSVG members** in the different geographical clusters of **Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao-Cotabato City, and Zamboanga-Basilan-Sulu-Tawi-Tawi-Isabela City** supplement, challenge, and deepen our analysis. The MSVGs are project pillars and we hope they remain generous with their time, insights, analysis, and most importantly, their friendship, to sustain this shared endeavor.

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Finally, we thank everyone else we have collaborated with in the development sector, academe, government, the security sector, community leaders, and individuals, who share our commitment to evidence-based problem-solving in our own sectors and spheres and who use our data in crafting and adjusting their plans and implementation strategies on the ground. You inspire us to continue with our mission of understanding conflict and building peace.

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Foreword



Steven Robinson AO

Australian Ambassador to the Philippines

Supporting education and peace in Mindanao has been a cornerstone of Australia's development cooperation in the Philippines for more than two decades.

We are proud of the work of partners such as International Alert to build more peaceful and resilient communities.

Significant gains have been made in the last year, with the passage and ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law and the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. There remains much to be done, however, to ensure a successful transition and normalisation in the Bangsamoro. Australia is committed to supporting this work.

Peace and stability in the Bangsamoro are essential to the security of the Philippines and the region. The Conflict Alert 2019 Report will be a great source of robust and reliable data that will help inform the work of policy makers, peacebuilding partners, and donor agencies who seek to address current and emerging threats to peace in the South.

On behalf of the Australian Government, I congratulate our partner, International Alert Philippines, for this Conflict Alert 2019 report.

The Conflict Alert 2019 Report will be a great source of robust and reliable data that will help inform the work of policy makers, peacebuilding partners, and donor agencies who seek to address current and emerging threats to peace in the South.

Mara K. Warwick

*Country Director for Brunei, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand
The World Bank*

Congratulations to International Alert Philippines for the launch of the 2019 edition of the Conflict Alert report.

The World Bank is proud to support this important work that provides vital information for understanding the complexities of conflict and the prospects for peace in Mindanao. It is only through deeper understanding of these issues that the country can build resilient, peaceful, and progressive communities in Southern Philippines.

The Conflict Alert 2019 report highlights tremendous opportunities for accelerating progress towards peace and development.

Political violence, identity-based conflict, and crime-related violence have declined in almost all provinces. The incidence and human costs of conflict decreased sharply in 2018, in all provinces, and all conflict causes in the Bangsamoro region. However, the report rightly flags the lingering threat of violent extremism which has already caused vast suffering among many residents in the region.

I agree with the report's assessment that these dramatic declines in violence in 2018 signal a more conducive environment for peace and development to take firmer roots. The newly established autonomous government of the Bangsamoro region, with continued strong

support from the national government, has a better chance of succeeding at expanding initiatives that can immediately be felt by communities and change their lives for the better.

The findings of this report signal to national government agencies the perfect opportunity to strengthen and deepen their support for the new Bangsamoro region. Certainly, the development challenges facing Bangsamoro and Mindanao is complex and rooted in historical issues. Addressing these challenges take time. Supporting the new region while respecting its autonomy will be key to its success.

A successful Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) is in the interest of all Filipinos, and thus it is incumbent on all partners in development to support its vision to deliver better services, infrastructure development, social protection, job creation, and institutional development.

The World Bank remains a committed partner of the country in the mission to ensure the success of BARMM and the broader Mindanao development project.

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Counting the costs of gender-based violence: The unintended effects of the VAWC Law

Female-headed households and violent conflict: New conflict dynamics in the Bangsamoro

Abbreviations

ADRM	Alternative dispute resolution mechanism	MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao	MSVG	Multi-Stakeholder Validation Group
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group	MSU-IIT-IPDM	Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology-Institute for Peace and Development in Mindanao
BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao	NDU-URC	Notre Dame University-University Research Center
BIFF	Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters	NUP	Non-uniformed personnel
BOL	Bangsamoro Organic Law	PNP	Philippine National Police
CAB	Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro	PPO	Police Provincial Office
CEMS	Critical Events Monitoring System	PSA	Philippine Statistical Authority
DI	Dawlah Islamiya	SK	Sangguniang Kabataan
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development	SMS	Short message service
ERN	Early Response Network	TASBIKKA	Tabang Ako Siyap ko Bangsa Iranun Saya ko Kalilintad ago Kapamagayon (Bangsa Iranun for Peace and Unity)
FHH	Female headed households	TRA	Tax remittance advice
FAB	Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
GDP	Gross domestic product	VHF	Very high frequency (radio)
GRDP	Gross regional domestic product	VAW	Violence against women
GVA	Gross value added	VAWC	Violence against women and their children
IDP	Internally displaced persons	VE	Violent extremism
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria	VII	Violence intensity index
LGU	Local government unit	WMSU-RDEC	Western Mindanao State University-Research Development and Evaluation Center
MAA	Most Affected Area		
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front		

Executive Summary

Pease, it is said, does not happen overnight. Yet what happened in the Bangsamoro from 2017 to 2018 is probably the closest we can get to an overnight leap from war and uncertainty to peace and security in the region. From all accounts, the incidence and the human costs of conflict plunged in 2018 in all provinces and in almost all conflict causes.

The Conflict Alert 2019 report shows how violent conflict began to go down in 2017 despite the war in Marawi, but nowhere as dramatic as the nosedive in 2018. Political violence, identity-based conflict, and crime-related violence declined in almost all provinces.¹

Another good news is that conflict deaths have almost returned to their levels in 2015. The decline in conflict deaths was directly related to the decline in conflict incidents in general that was partly due to the drop in coordinated attacks and the lesser use of explosives in 2018.

The remarkable shift in the conflict situation certainly brings a more conducive environment for development to take place and for a lasting peace to be embedded in what has often been described as the most dangerous place in the country. More importantly, the situation buys time for the newly established Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) to strengthen its legitimacy and institutionalize the sort of reforms that can be felt immediately by the local population.

To be sure, the peace and security situation remains fragile, and there are bad outcomes that accompanied the good. New types of violent conflict and new conflict actors are emerging. Extremist violence remains resilient and transition-induced violence is growing apace. Multi-causal violence that combines political and identity-based violence continues to rear its head despite the end of the war in Marawi and

¹ Tawi-Tawi registered a marginal increase in violent incidents of conflict.

is now the leading cause of conflict deaths. In fact, violent extremism has eclipsed other causes of conflict deaths since 2016. Sulu is one such case where the incidence and deaths attributed to extremist violence has continued to rise from 2016 to 2018.

The second cause for concern is that the incidence of violent conflict and the average number of conflict deaths from 2016 to 2018 were much higher than in the years prior to the spike in 2016. In short, the bar has been raised by the higher average number of violent incidents, higher than the recorded levels during the government's total war against the MILF in 2000.

In summary, the Bangsamoro is not out of the woods yet.

Nevertheless, the 2018 drop in conflict incidents demonstrates a retreat from the most violent years (2016 and 2017) in the Bangsamoro, as lesser violence resulted from fewer gun battles and explosions, and as extremists engaged in sporadic clashes against government troops.

Conflict incidents plunge in 2018

To be sure, violent conflict had already started to decline in 2017 but nowhere as fast as the end of 2018. The provinces of Lanao del Sur, Basilan (including Isabela City), and Maguindanao (including Cotabato City) saw the biggest declines in the numbers of violent conflict from 2017 to 2018. Sulu is worth noting for registering the lowest decrease in incidents from 2017, a fact buttressed by the continuing flashpoints related

to the shadow economies in illicit drugs, illicit weapons, and kidnap-for-ransom coupled with frequent attacks by factions of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) engaged in extremist violence.

This is in contrast to the increasing violence that has been the trend in almost all causes in violent conflict before. Rebellion-related violence associated with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) has been on the downtrend since 2016. Rebellion-related political conflict was vastly reduced by the ceasefire agreements between the government and the Moro fronts, which have continued to hold.

Nonetheless, the average number of incidents was higher in the 2016-2018 period in contrast to 2013-2015. This signifies a higher bar in the averages or the severity of conflict.

Long view on conflict incidence

The Bangsamoro region encountered the worst spikes in violent conflict starting in 2016. Despite the slight decline in 2017, the level of violence remained significantly higher than the trend from 2013 to 2015. The combination of emerging extremist violence in 2016, including the national elections and the government's war on drugs, were bound to raise the number of incidents and the human costs of conflict.

Maguindanao and Basilan remained the perennial trouble spots in terms of conflict incidence per 100,000 people and per 1,000 square kilometers. Basilan was worse in terms of conflict incidence per capita, while Maguindanao was worse when

it came to conflict density. Maguindanao has been consistent in having the highest incidence among the ARMM provinces since 2011.

Lanao del Sur ranked second in conflict incidence in 2017 because of the events leading to and during the Marawi siege and before falling to fourth place in 2018. The island provinces of Basilan and Sulu exhibited similar numbers except in 2016 when Basilan surpassed Lanao del Sur and placed second to Maguindanao.

Sulu demonstrated less dramatic trends compared to other provinces due to the resilient presence of criminal, shadow economy, and violent extremist groups in the island. Tawi-Tawi remained an isolated case throughout 2011-2018, registering no sudden increases or declines in the number of violent conflicts.

Conflict deaths also tumble

Conflict deaths took a nosedive in 2018, after the war in Marawi. All provinces demonstrated declines in conflict deaths per 100,000 persons from 2017 to 2018, except Tawi-Tawi. Maguindanao posted the highest number of deaths per 100,000 persons, with Sulu second and Basilan third. However, in terms of density, Sulu was first and Maguindanao second.

While conflict deaths have declined after the 2016-2017 spikes, the average number of conflict deaths from 2016 to 2018 was still more than twice the average number of deaths from 2013 to 2015.

Conflict causes and deaths

The year 2018 saw the resilience of extremist violence, which is both an identity and political issue. Extremist violence registered significant increases from 2016 to 2017 and placed third in terms of conflict causes in 2018. It has emerged as the top cause of deaths from 2016 to 2018, surpassing other types of violence.

In terms of incident numbers, shadow economy-related causes were in the lead but resulted in few deaths, in contrast to lesser cases of identity-related conflict that had deadlier results. Resource

issues was last among the six main causes in terms of incidence but placed fourth in deaths.

Political issues claimed the most lives followed by identity issues from 2011 to 2018. Political issues ranked fourth in the share of conflict incidents from 2016 to 2018. These encompassed extremist violence, competition over elective positions, and conflict between and among rebel groups. Rebellion-related conflict drastically declined to single-digit incidents starting in 2016, in contrast to 2011 to 2015 when it topped the list of political issues.

The 2011-2018 period demonstrated how the human cost of political violence shifted from rebellion being the deadliest until 2015, to extremist violence in a short period of three years.

Single and multi-causal violence

The top three most common combinations of conflict causes in 2017 remained the same in 2018. These were (a) identity combined with political issues; (b) common crimes combined with shadow economy issues; and (c) identity combined with shadow economy issues.

Finally, though conflict deaths from multi-causal incidents declined from 2017 to 2018, the number of deaths from multi-causal incidents was about five times higher than the 2013-2015 average number of deaths. Deaths from single causes more than doubled in 2018 from 2017 due to illicit firearm-related incidents.

Temporal behavior of conflict

The stricter rules and policies in the carrying of firearms plus the interdiction of armed groups bent on extremist violence was not without its critical moments. The months of April-May and September-October saw increases in conflict incidence, though they were not enough to reverse the downward trend observed throughout the year.

The rest of 2018 saw a more stable and secure environment. The campaign for the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) kicked off towards the end of the year, and security was

heightened as part of preparations for the January 2019 plebiscite, which followed the declining conflict incidence in the last quarter of 2018.

War makes states: conclusion and implications

“War makes states,” according to the conflict scholar Charles Tilly, and nowhere is this more apparent than in Muslim Mindanao.

The thesis resonates in the recent war in Marawi and other flashpoints across Muslim Mindanao that led to the deployment of a massive security force that produced a fragile peace that, in turn, has benefitted the statebuilding project of a nascent Bangsamoro region.

However, an accounting of the reasons behind the significant decline in violent conflict must be conducted apace similar efforts to understand the resilient violence in the region. Violence may rebound if steps are not taken to institutionalize the practices that brought about a fragile peace.

With these in mind, the following conclusions are evident:

One, the imposition of martial law contributed significantly to the decline in conflict incidents and conflict deaths in 2017 and 2018. Martial law was imposed due to the eruption of war in Marawi but its positive effects on peace and security were felt across the region, reproducing the order and stability needed ahead of the major political battles in 2018 and beyond.

Two, the collapse in the incidence and costs of violent conflict has brought about a fragile peace in the Bangsamoro, which has created conducive conditions for development planning and action in the short term. The possibilities for statebuilding created by the new security environment buys ample time for the BARMM and the transition authority to undertake immediate and doable reforms in the economic and political infrastructure of the region.

Three, the rise of multi-causal conflict that is based primarily on identity reveals the serious cleavages and divisions within Mindanao society

that continued to undermine political authority and paved the way for violent extremism to flourish. In fact, new fissures are being induced by the rise in violent extremism and the deficit in legitimacy that continues to hound the transitional authority, even with the passage of the BOL.

The implications on peacebuilding and development are obvious.

One, unless a political settlement is reached on the critical issue of illicit weapons, the withdrawal of the huge military presence in the region may destroy the fragile peace and reverse the gains of the past two years. The normalization process and the so-called decommissioning of combatants and weapons will have, at best, a limited and negligible effect on the peace and security situation in the region. It will not weaken armed challenges to the State from rival holders of the means of coercion.

Two, a plebiscite does not cement the ‘right to rule’ and neither will the reference to one united Bangsamoro. The rise in identity-based conflict is a pattern in many conflict-to-peace transitions and is often a signifier of dissatisfaction, discrimination, and exclusion that local citizens experienced under previous political authorities in Muslim Mindanao, who did not adequately represent the voices of all ethnic and social groups, nor do so now.

Three, the new types of violence and the newly emerging and complex set of actors and alliances that affect peace, security, and development programs requires more informed and intelligent yet nuanced approaches to institutional change and development intervention.

The Bangsamoro is in a sweet spot at the moment. But it remains locked in a world where alliances between criminal and extremist groups have not been destroyed, where new internal and cross-border alliances between extremist groups are increasing, and where transition-induced violence continues to grow.



A Philippine flag flutters in the wind in the most affected area of Marawi shortly after the government declared the city liberated from terrorist influence in October 2017. © Jorge Golle/International Alert Philippines

War Makes States:

State and Security in the Bangsamoro

The year 2018 saw many places in the Bangsamoro region rise from the ashes of the war against violent extremism in 2016 to 2017.

A fragile peace reigned in Marawi City and in other conflict-ridden areas of Maguindanao, Basilan and Sulu.

The relative stability that came with the continued decline in violent incidents from 2017 to 2018 prepped the establishment of a new regional authority and paved the way for the peaceful political battles in the first half of 2019 such as the referendum on the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) and the 2019 midterm elections.

Conflict incidence

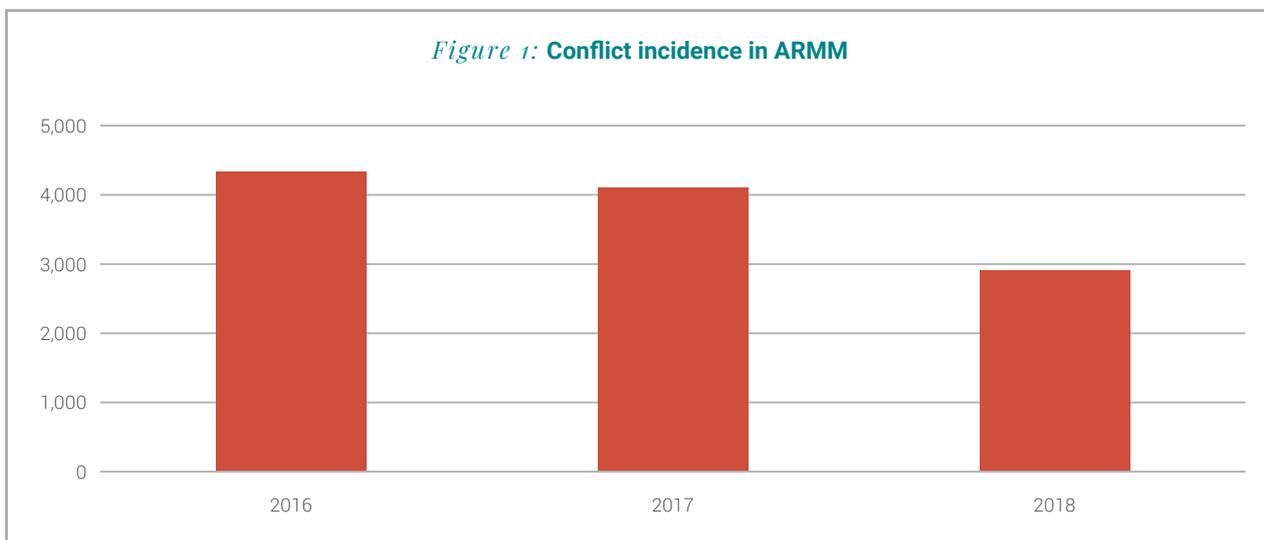
Continued drop in violent conflicts

Conflict incidence across the Muslim Mindanao region continued to decrease in 2018. There were 2,910 violent conflicts, a 30% drop from 4,140 incidents in 2017 and a 33% slide from 4,363 incidents in 2016. (See Figure 1).

The most likely explanation is the strong and expanded presence of the State’s coercive power that was made possible by the imposition of martial law. Nowhere in Mindanao has the impact of martial law been as strategic and decisive as in Muslim Mindanao. Increased police visibility coupled with the expansion in the number of military checkpoints have made it extremely difficult for people to carry their firearms in public and to engage in gun battles across the region, especially in urban areas like Cotabato, Isabela, and Marawi cities, and urban areas adjacent to the Bangsamoro such as the cities of Iligan, Zamboanga, Kidapawan and General Santos.



Figure 1: Conflict incidence in ARMM



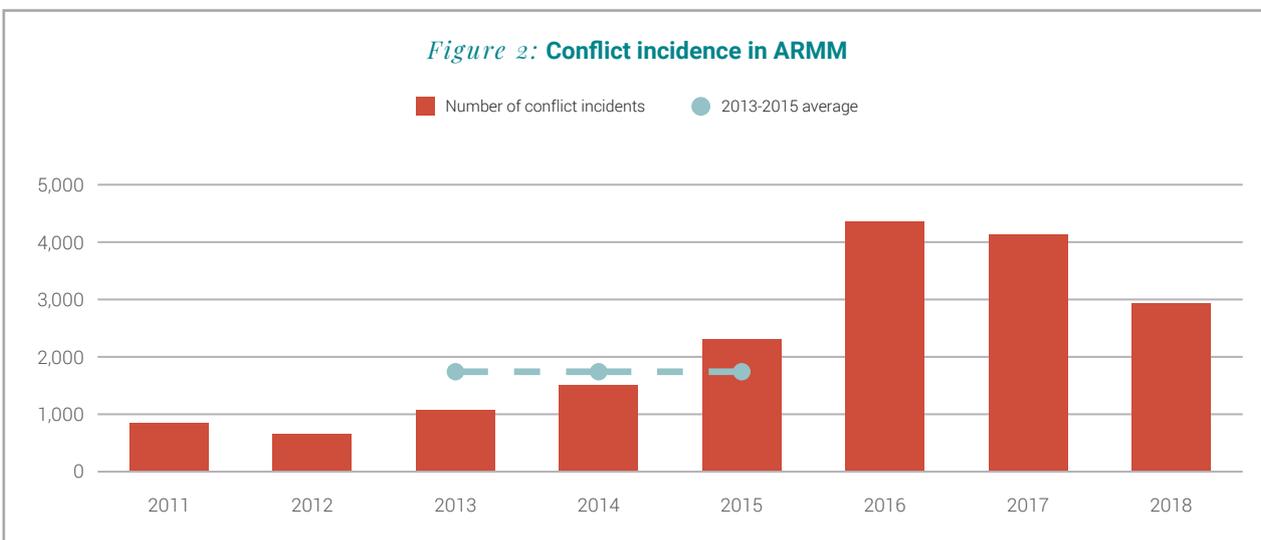


Soldiers secure a section of the most affected area in Marawi City, most of which remains closed to civilians.  Mark Navales

Indeed, the years 2016 and 2017 proved to be the most violent in the 2011-2018 period, as monitored by Conflict Alert. The year 2016 saw the onset of conflict with the holding of national elections, the subsequent launch of the war on drugs, and the emergence of violent extremism in Central Mindanao.

Meanwhile, extremist violence peaked in Marawi in 2017, with thousands killed and tens of thousands displaced by five months of urban warfare. In contrast, 2018 seemed quiet, although the total number of incidents that year was way above the average from 2013 to 2015, the three-year period just before the abrupt shifts that began in 2016. The 2013-2015 period is used in this report for temporal comparison to the period after it. **(See Figure 2).**

Figure 2: Conflict incidence in ARMM



Conflict incidence

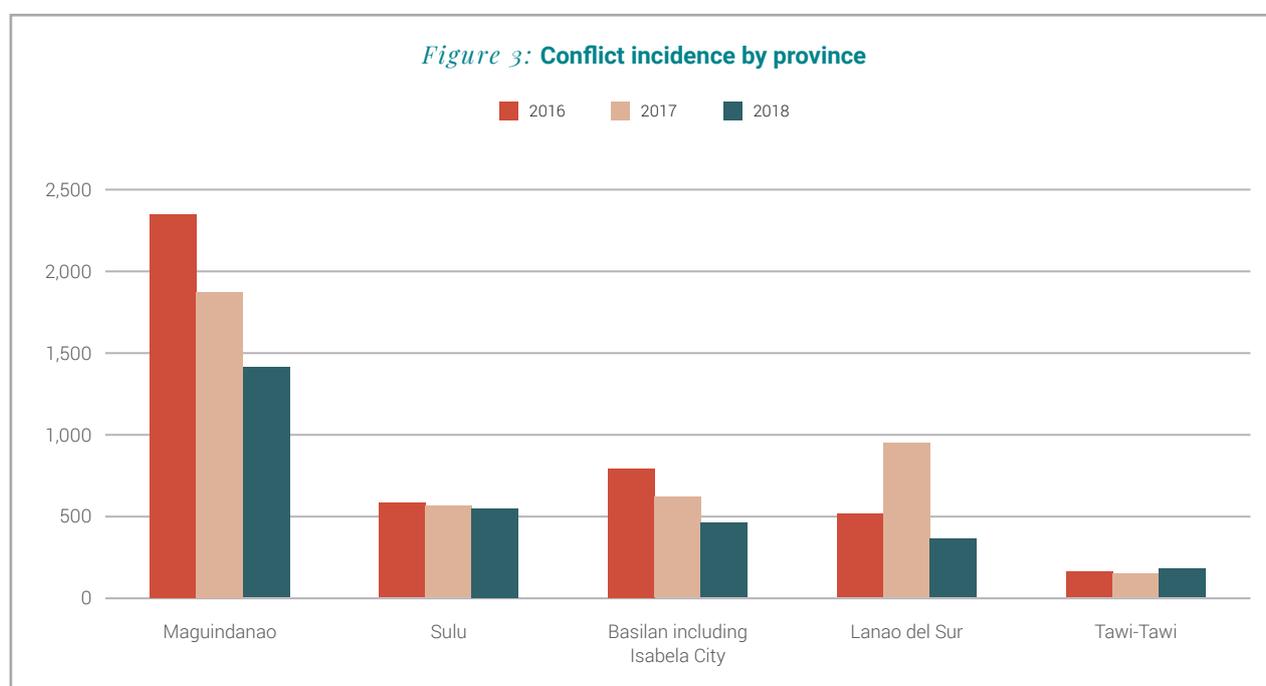
Less conflicts in the provinces

All provinces, except Tawi-Tawi, posted lower incident counts. Maguindanao, including Cotabato City, registered 1,420 incidents, a 25% reduction from the year before.² Cotabato City recorded 616 incidents, a 19% slide from 2017. Still, Maguindanao remained at the top spot in terms of conflict incidence.

Sulu occupied the second place for the first time, even if the number of incidents there fell by 8%. The island province surpassed Basilan and Lanao del Sur, the perennial second-placers in previous years.

Violence also went down in Basilan, including Isabela City, which registered a decrease of 26% from 2017. Meanwhile, Lanao del Sur had fewer military operations after the war in Marawi and posted a 60% reduction in violent incidents.

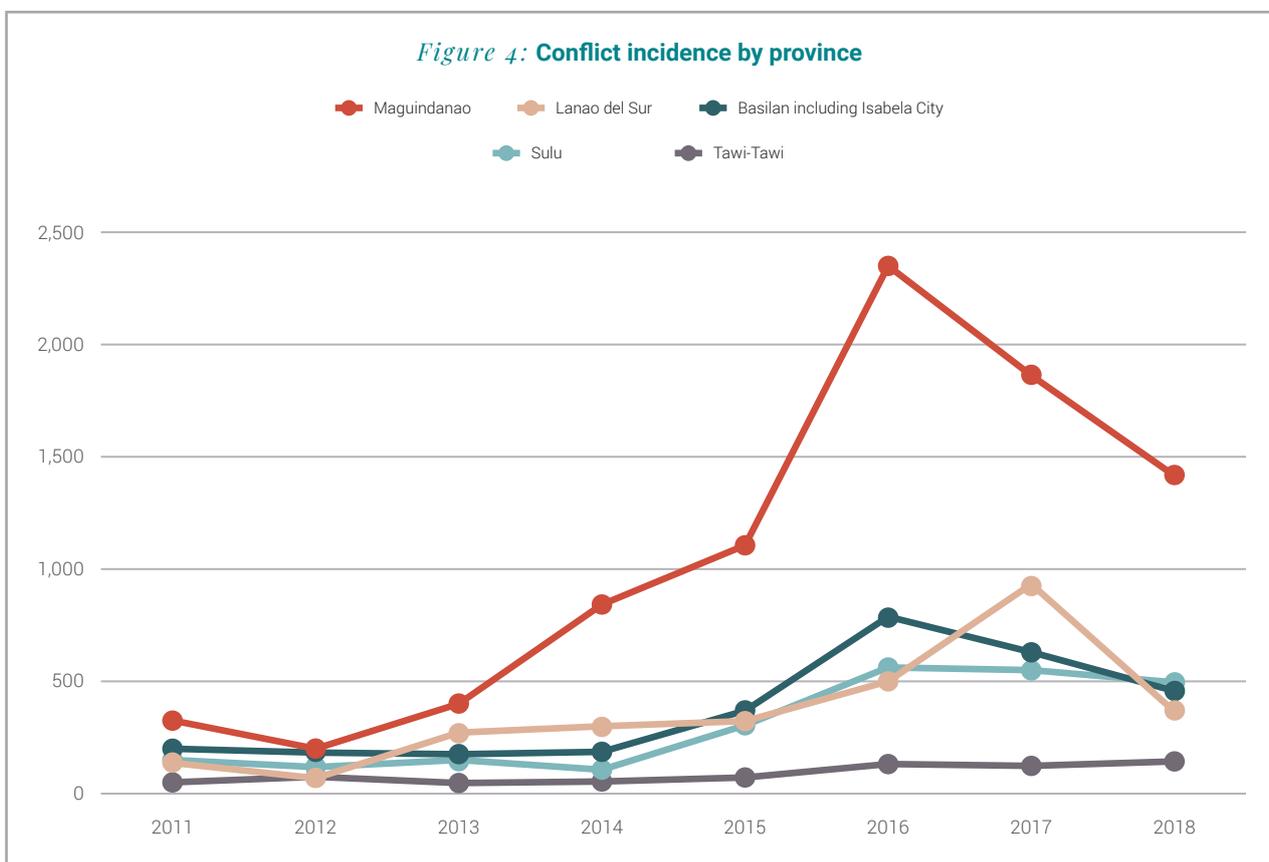
Tawi-Tawi was the only province where violent conflict increased, albeit by just 8%. This was mostly due to illegal drug-related incidents. **(See Figure 3).**



² Cotabato City's conflict statistics are reported as part of Maguindanao's. Cotabato City voted to join the BARMM in 2019. Isabela City chose not to and remains a part of the Zamboanga Peninsula. But its conflict statistics are reported as part of Basilan's as it is geographically part of the island and violence has the tendency to spill from the city to surrounding areas and vice versa. The 'ARMM' or 'Bangsamoro', in this report, refers to the five provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi and the cities of Cotabato and Isabela.

Maguindanao has been consistent in having the highest conflict incidence among the Muslim Mindanao provinces since 2011. Lanao del Sur ranked second in 2017 because of the events leading to and during the Marawi siege and fell to fourth place in 2018. The island provinces of Basilan and Sulu exhibited similar numbers except in 2016 when Basilan surpassed Lanao del Sur and placed second to Maguindanao.

Sulu demonstrated less dramatic trends compared to the other provinces due to the resilient presence of criminal, shadow economy, and violent extremist groups in the island. Tawi-Tawi remained a deviant case throughout 2011-2018, registering no sudden increases or declines in the number of violent conflict. (See Figure 4).

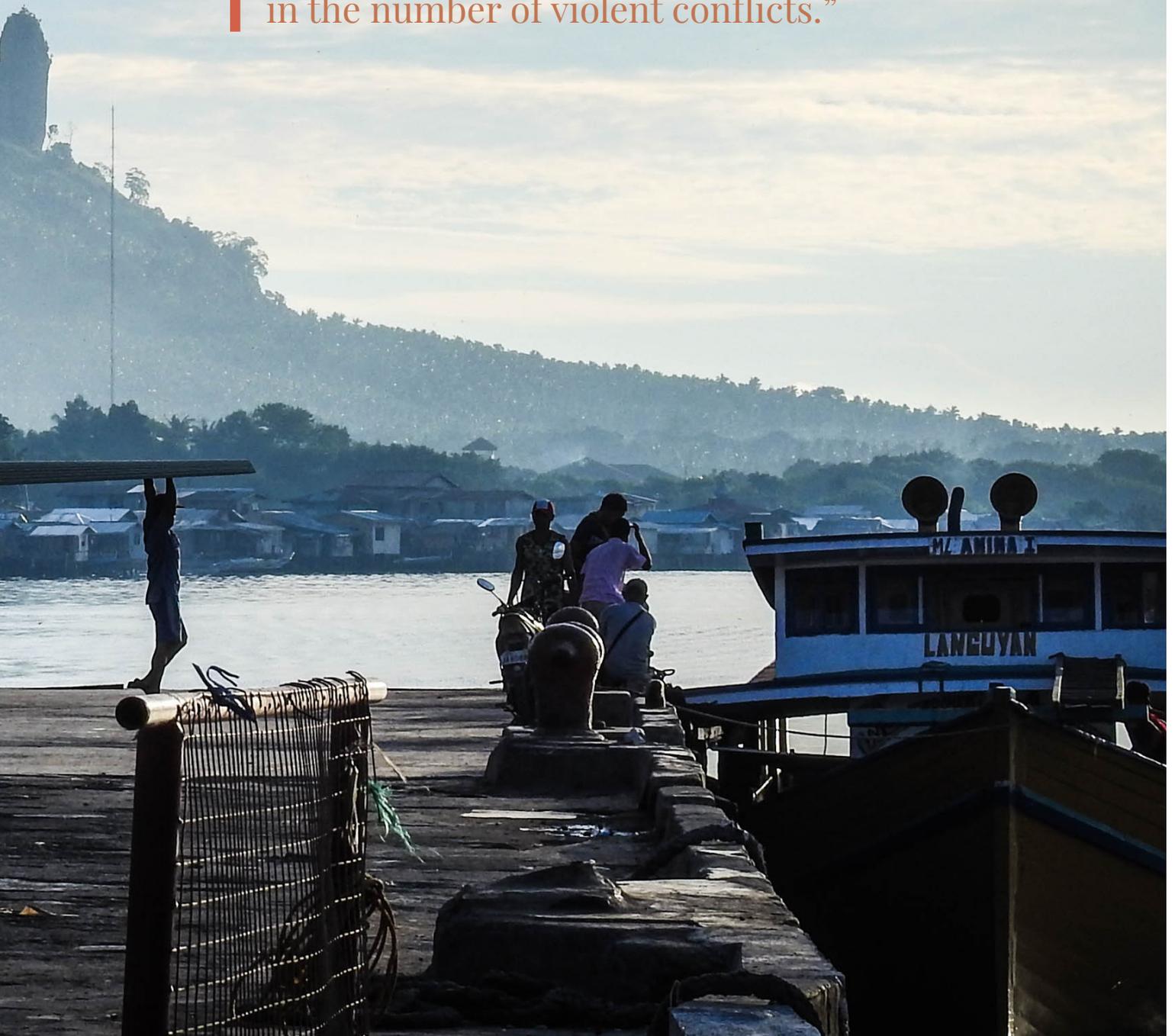




Morning scene at the port
of Bongao in Tawi-Tawi.

📷 **Ferdinandh Cabrera**

“Tawi-Tawi remained a deviant case throughout 2011-2018, registering no sudden increases or declines in the number of violent conflicts.”



Maps:

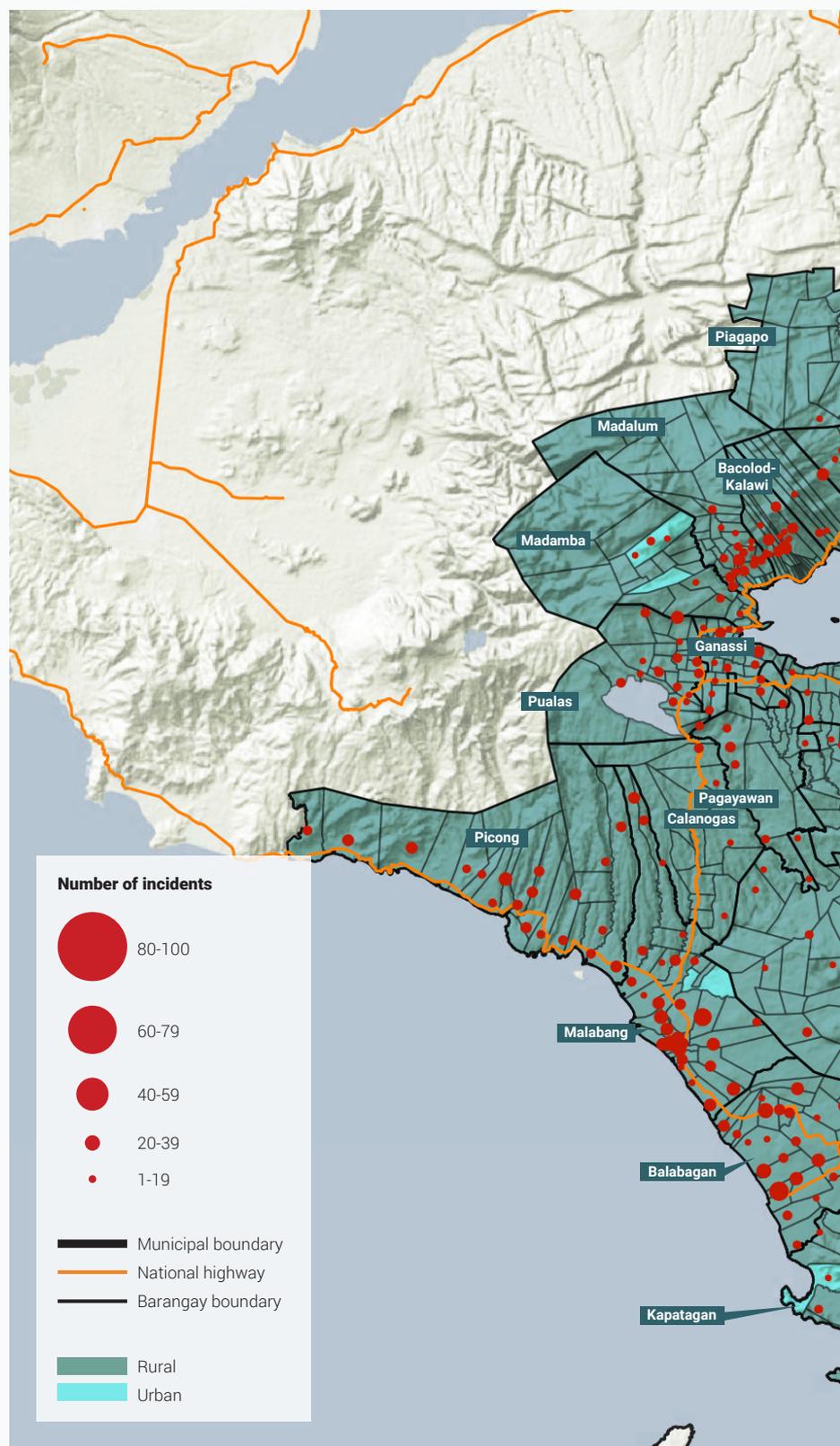
More violence in urban areas and rural barangay boundaries

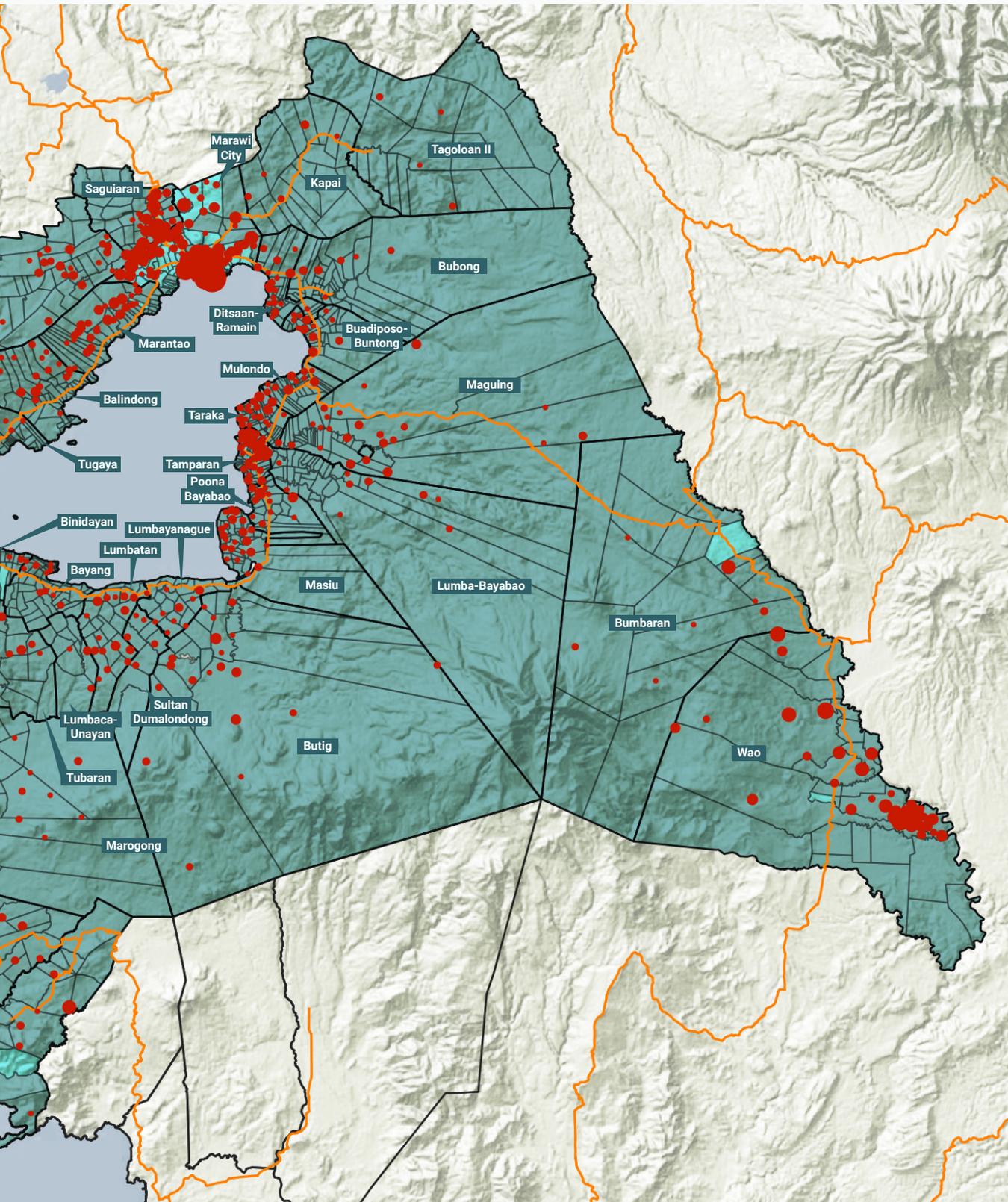
2011-2018 data show the high concentration of violent conflict in urban areas such as in cities of Marawi, Cotabato, Isabela and Lamitan, and town centers of Parang, Shariff Aguak, Jolo and Bongao.³ Urban conflict increased from 2016 to 2017 and slightly declined in 2018. Overall, urban conflict takes the large percentage share of incidents compared to rural conflicts.

Another notable observation is the clustering of violent conflict along the borders of rural barangays, whether these are within the same municipalities or straddling other municipalities of the Bangsamoro. Extremist violence figures in these areas, along with clan feuding, personal grudges, and shadow economy issues such as the apprehension of illicit firearms and illegal drugs.

³ The Philippine Statistics Authority classifies a barangay as urban when it has a population of 5,000 or more; at least one establishment with a minimum of 100 employees; five or more establishments with a minimum of 10 employees and a minimum of five facilities; or if there are facilities within a two-kilometer radius from the barangay hall, even if the facilities are not located within the barangay. (<https://psa.gov.ph/content/urban-barangay>)

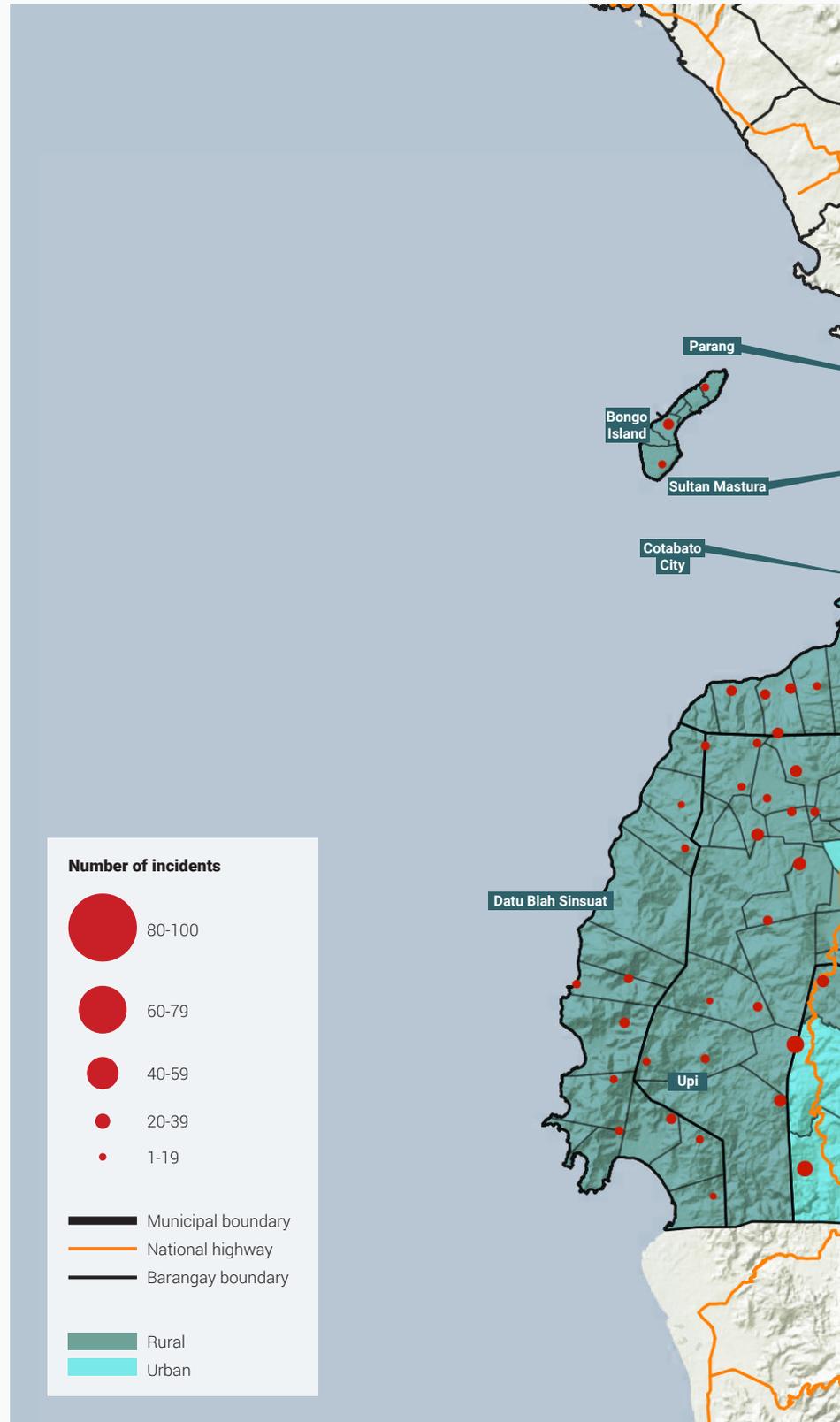
Map 1. Lanao del Sur





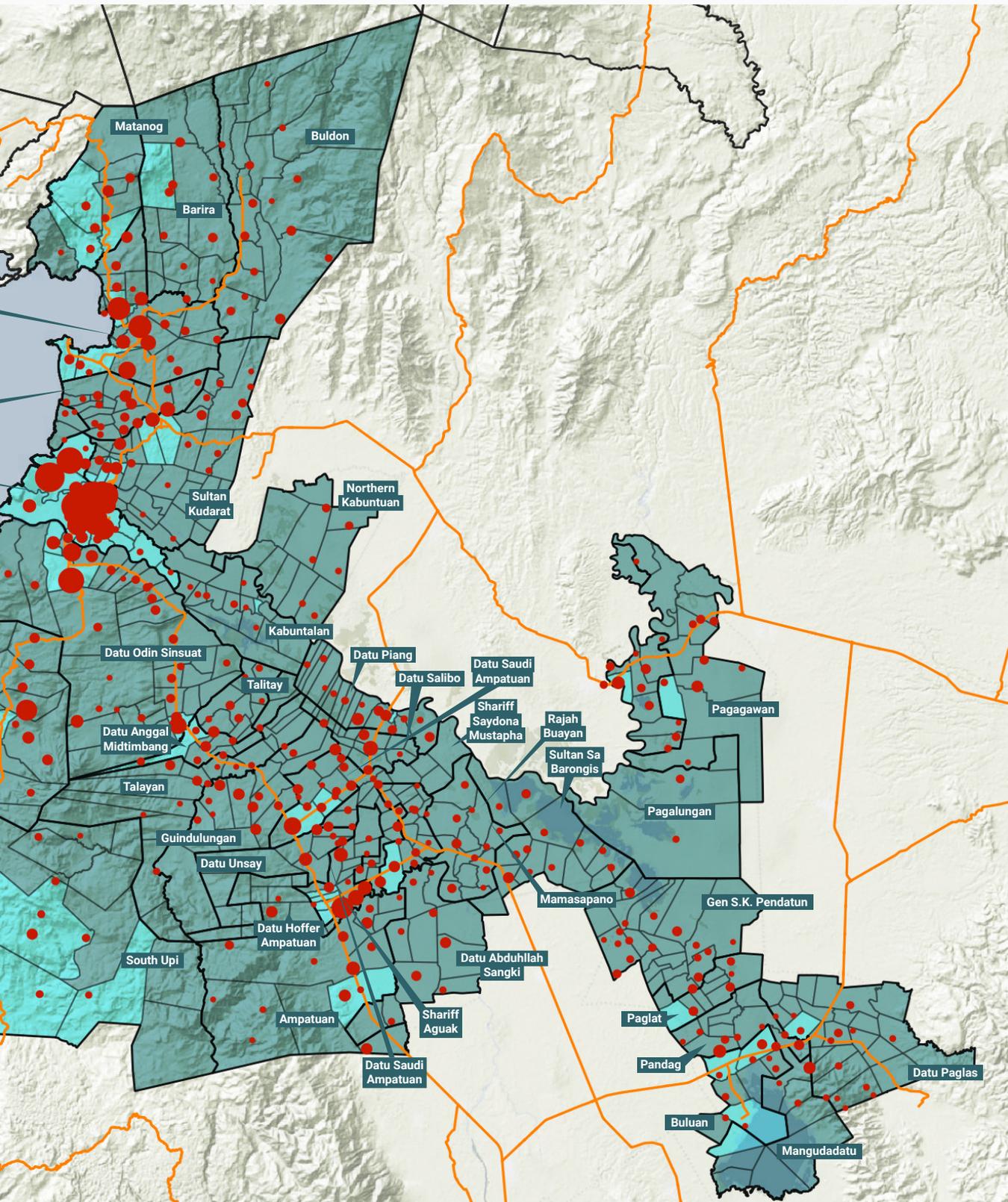
These observations underscore the need to craft conflict mitigation strategies in addressing the urbanizing nature of conflict and to establish inter-municipality alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and early response networks in resolving conflict and preventing the eruption of violence along the rural borders.

Map 2. Maguindanao

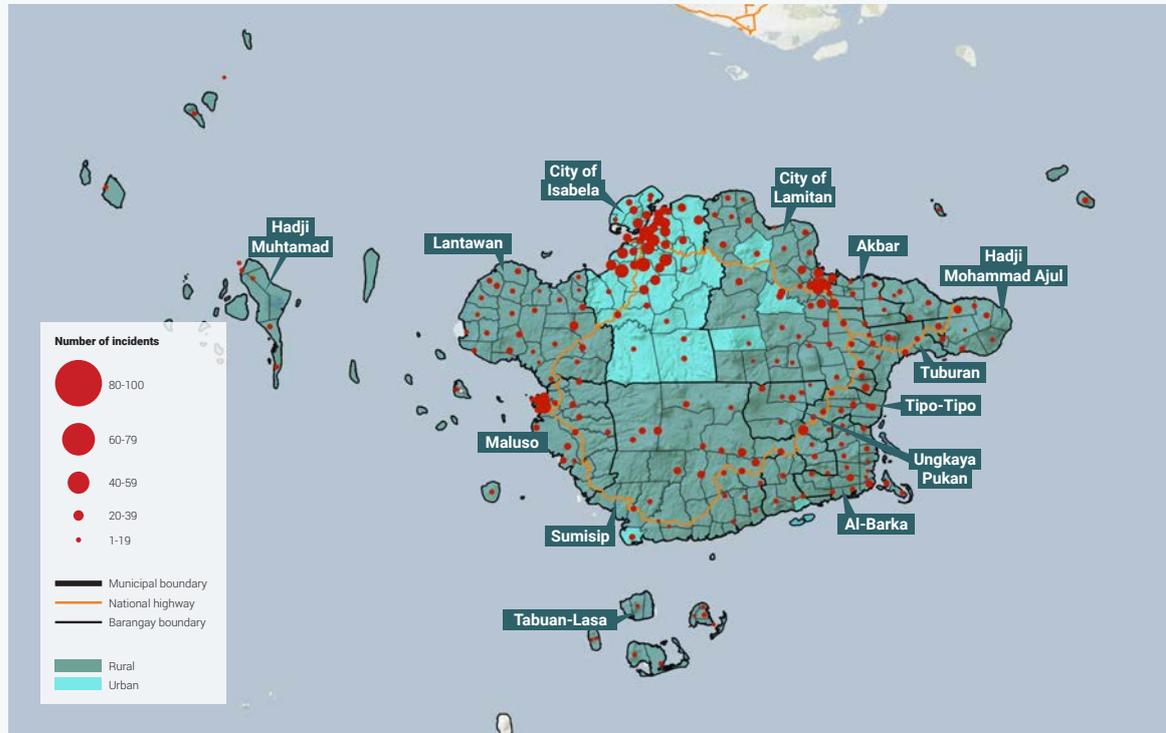


Sources

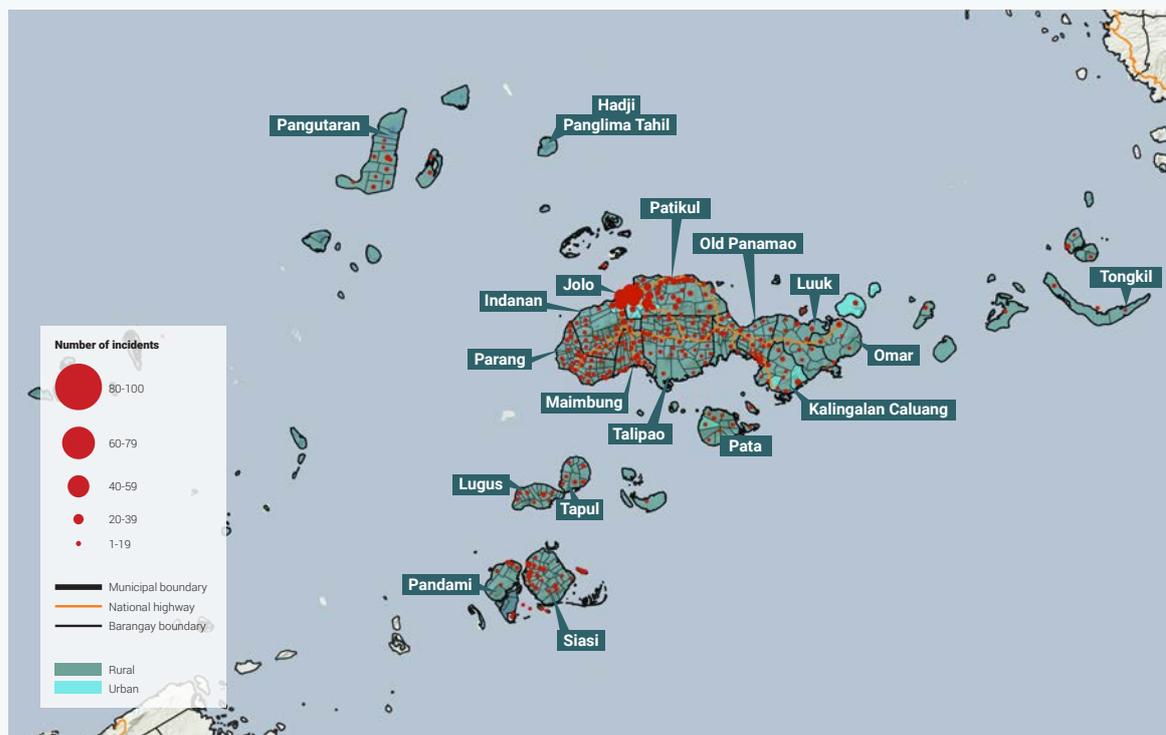
- Incidents: Conflict Alert
- Basemaps: Stamen terrain and ESRI
- Shaded relief
- Roads: Philippine Geoportal
- Boundaries: PSA and Philippine Geoportal
- Urban-Rural Classification: Philippine Stastical Authority (PSA)



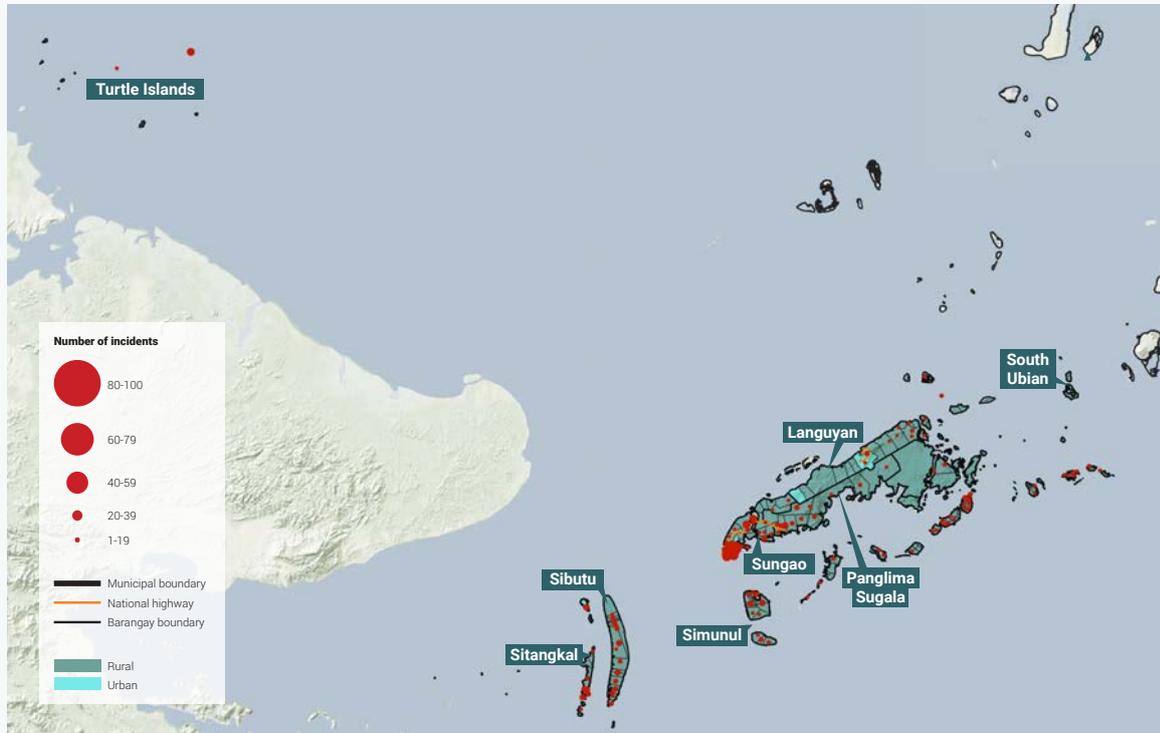
Map 3. Basilan



Map 4. Sulu



Map 5. Tawi-Tawi



Conflict incidence

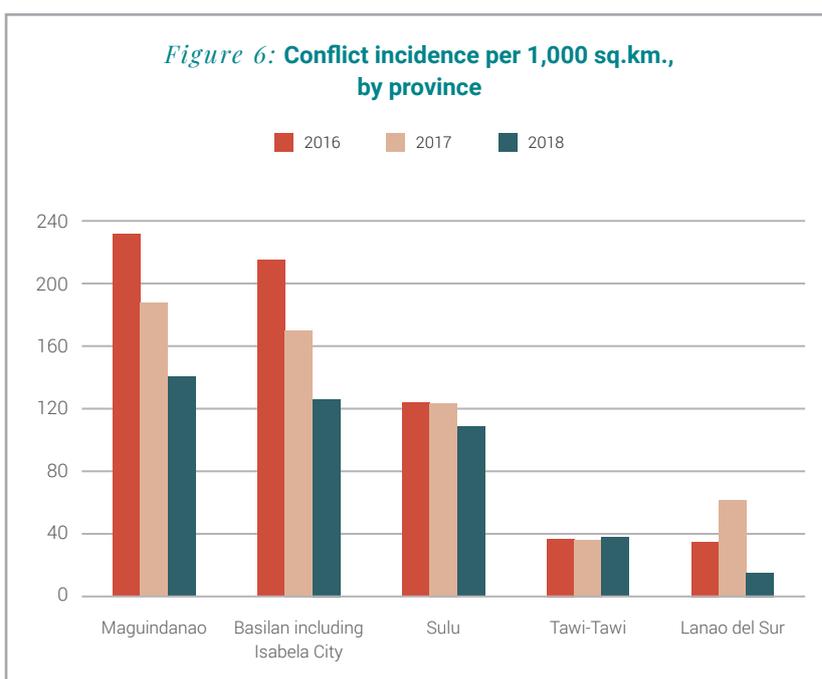
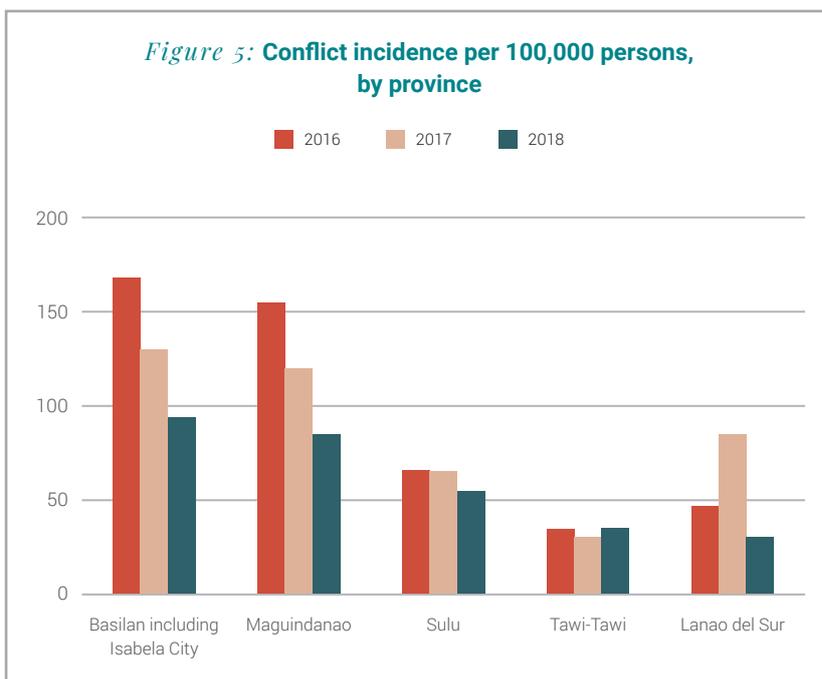
Decline in conflict incidence per capita and per square kilometer

Similarly, conflict per capita, or conflict incidence per 100,000 persons, declined in all provinces. People in Basilan had the highest risk of getting involved in violent conflict with 94 incidents per 100,000 persons, even though it only ranked third in number of incidents.

Maguindanao was second with 86 incidents, while Sulu ranked third with 57. Lanao del Sur placed last with 33 incidents per 100,000 persons, a steep drop from 86 incidents in 2017. (See Figure 5).

Conflict density, or conflict incidence per 1,000 square kilometers (sq. km.), similarly shrank, except that Maguindanao surpassed Basilan with 140 incidents per 1,000 sq. km. Basilan registered 127 incidents. Similarly, Tawi-Tawi placed ahead Lanao del Sur, with Tawi-Tawi posting 39 incidents and Lanao del Sur, 25. Sulu retained its rank on third with 112 incidents. (See Figure 6).

The 2011-2018 view on conflict per capita and conflict density showed that Basilan and



Maguindanao remained in worse shape than the other provinces. Basilan ranked first in conflict per capita, with an average of 81 incidents, and second in conflict density, with an average of 102 incidents. Meanwhile, Maguindanao placed second in conflict per capita, with 71 incidents, and was first in conflict density, with 106 incidents.

Conflict incidence per 100,000 persons declined in all provinces.

Despite Lanao del Sur ending up last in both conflict per capita and density in 2018, the province placed fourth as to the average across the 2011-2018 period, ahead of Tawi-Tawi, which remained in last place. (See Figures 7 and 8).

Figure 7: Conflict incidence per 100,000 persons, by province

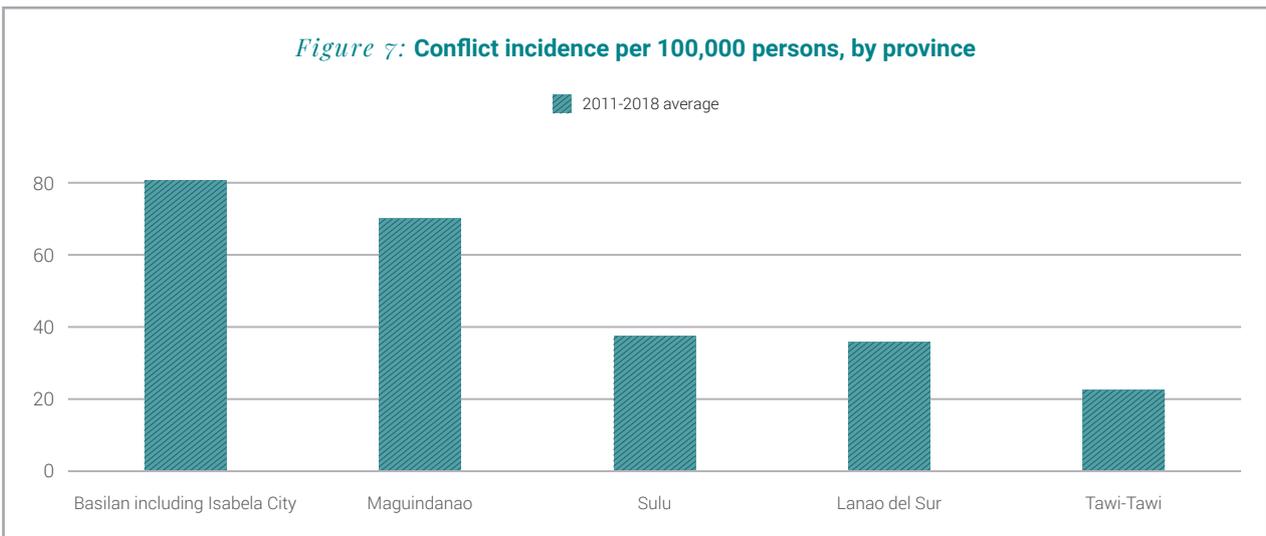
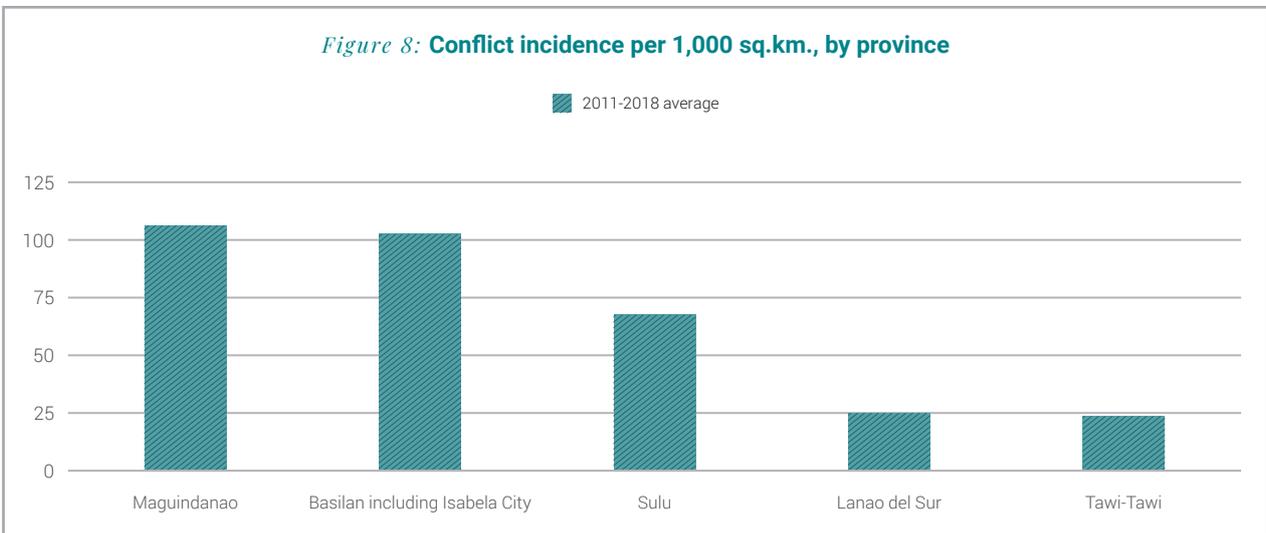


Figure 8: Conflict incidence per 1,000 sq.km., by province

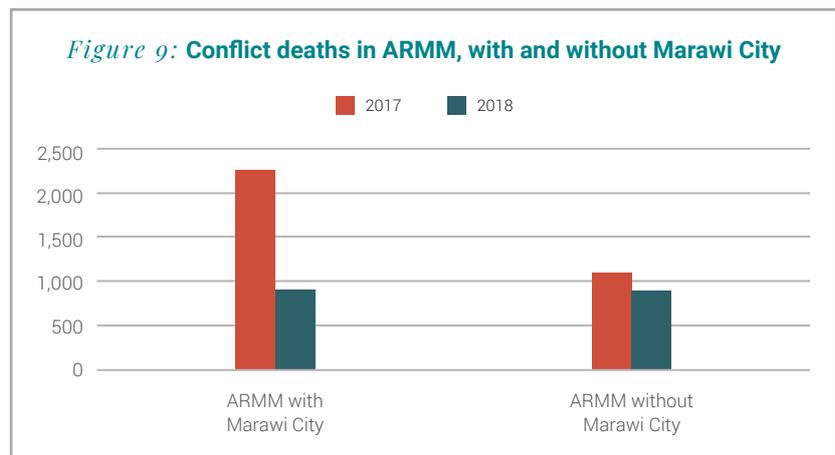


Human cost of conflict

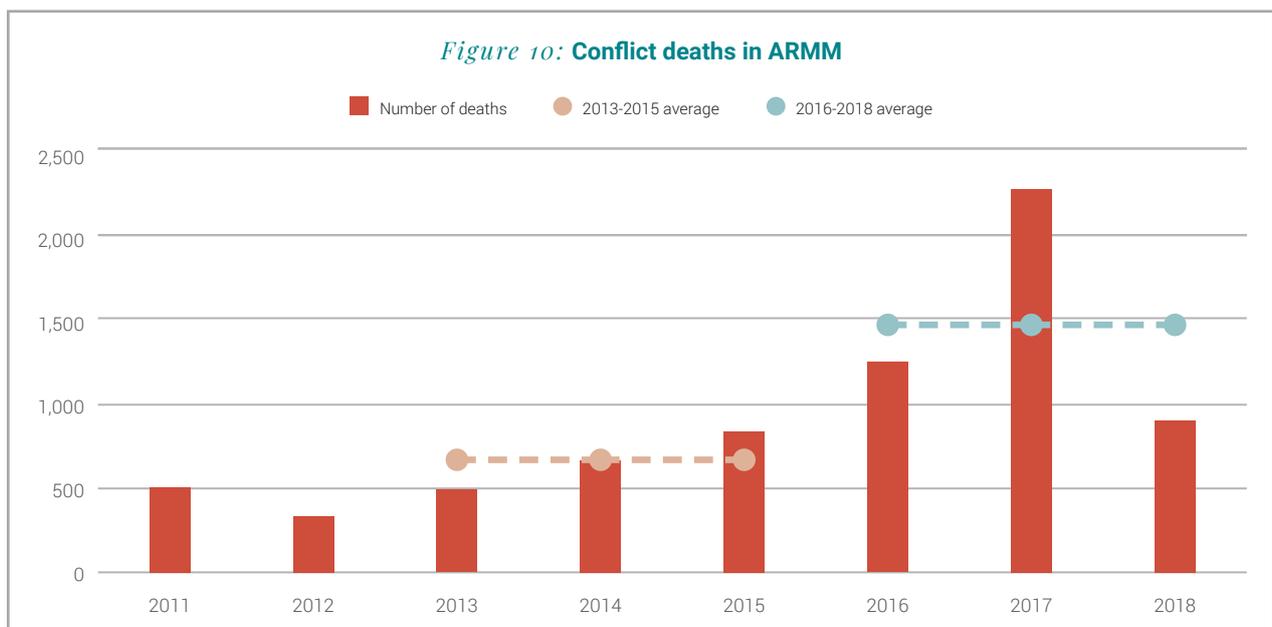
Plunge in conflict deaths



Conflict deaths plunged to 900 in 2018 or by 60% from the year before, due to the end of the Marawi war. If the number of deaths in Marawi were not counted, conflict deaths still fell by 18%. The difference in the decline rates emphasized the magnitude of the five-month siege to the overall trend of conflict deaths in the Bangsamoro. **(See Figure 9).**



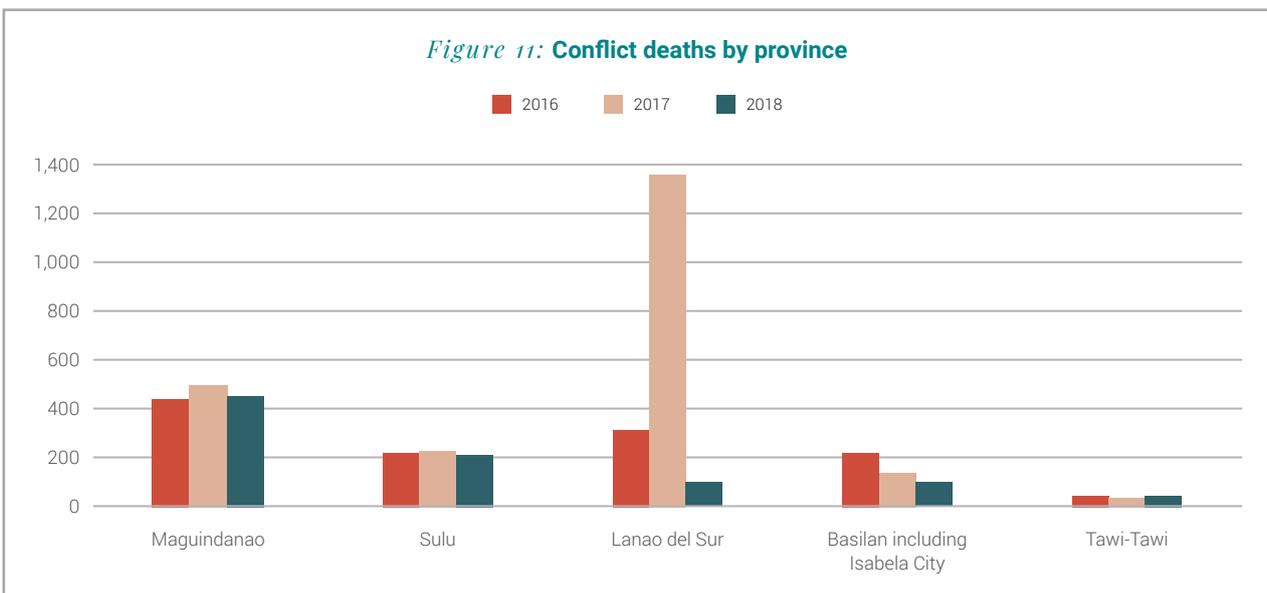
The 900 deaths in 2018 represented a sharp fall from the spikes in 2016-2017 but were higher than the 661 average in the 2013-2015 period. From 2016 to 2018, deaths averaged 1,467 or more than two times that in the previous three-year period. **(See Figure 10).**



Meanwhile, Maguindanao surpassed Lanao del Sur in the number of conflict deaths following the end of the war in Marawi that propped up Lanao del Sur in 2017. Fatalities in Maguindanao fell by 10%, followed by Sulu at 8%. After being on top in 2017, Lanao del Sur fell to third in absolute numbers and

experienced the biggest decline with almost 14 times less than a year prior. The long view from 2011-2018 shows the phenomenal increase in conflict deaths in Lanao del Sur from 2016

to 2017. The province recovered in 2018 as fatalities went down together with the rest of the Bangsamoro provinces. (Figures 11-12).



Human cost of conflict

Deaths per capita and per square kilometer abate

As the war in Marawi and Lanao del Sur receded into the background, Maguindanao returned to the top in terms of conflict deaths per capita in 2018, followed by Sulu. The former registered 27 deaths while the latter had 24 deaths. Basilan placed third with 20 deaths. (See Figure 13).

All provinces likewise demonstrated declines in conflict over deaths per 100,000 sq. km. from 2017 to 2018, with the exception of Tawi-Tawi. Sulu came in highest with 47 deaths per 100,000 persons even though it ranked only second to Maguindanao in number of deaths. Maguindanao was second with 44 deaths while Basilan was third with 27 deaths.. (See Figure 14).

Figure 13: Conflict deaths per 100,000 persons

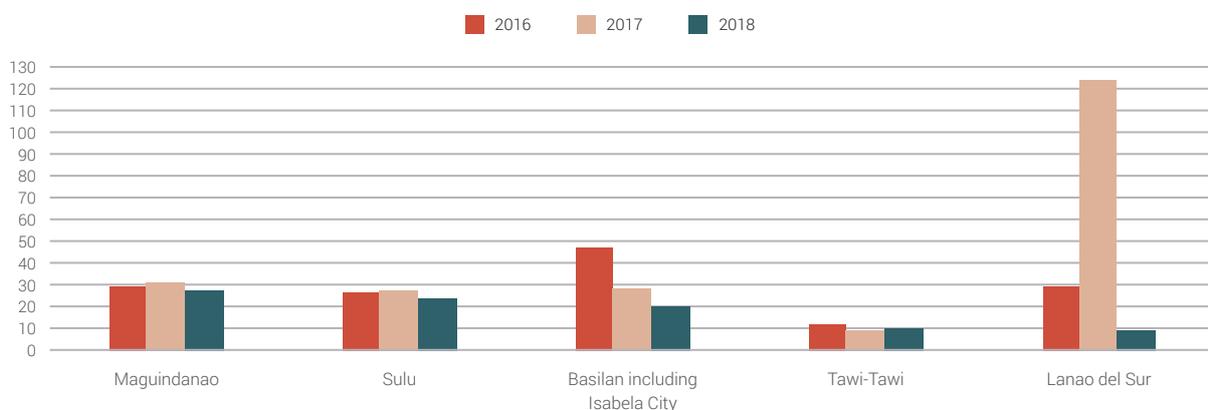
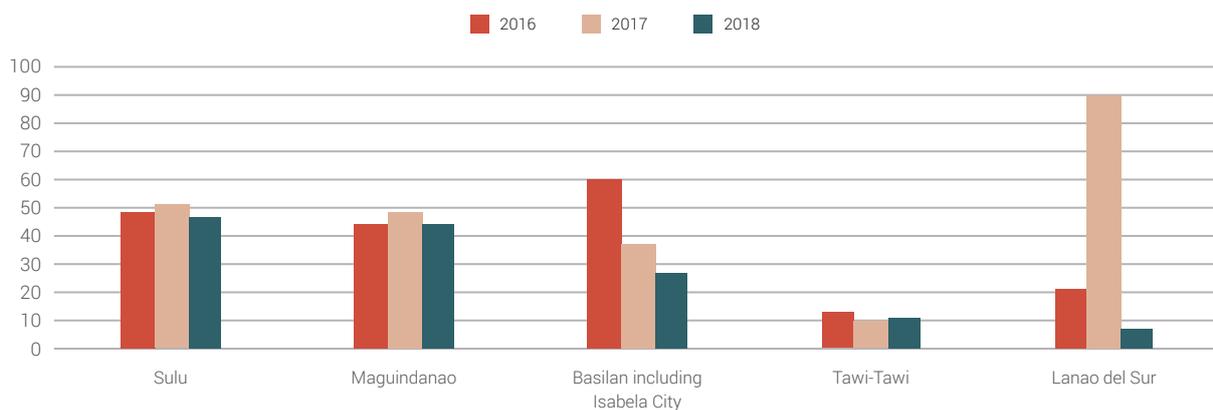
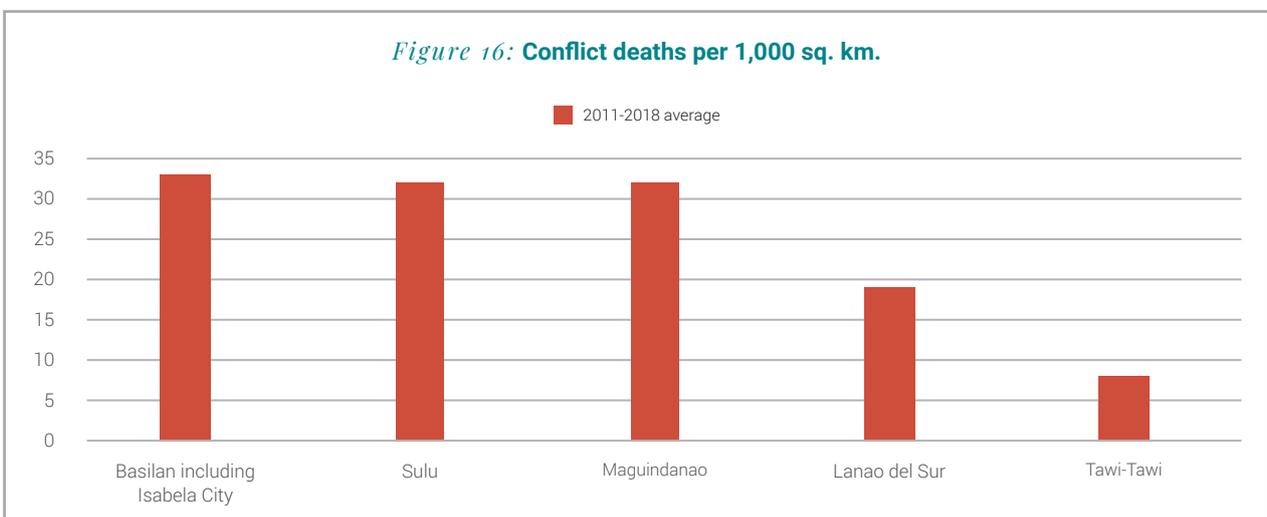
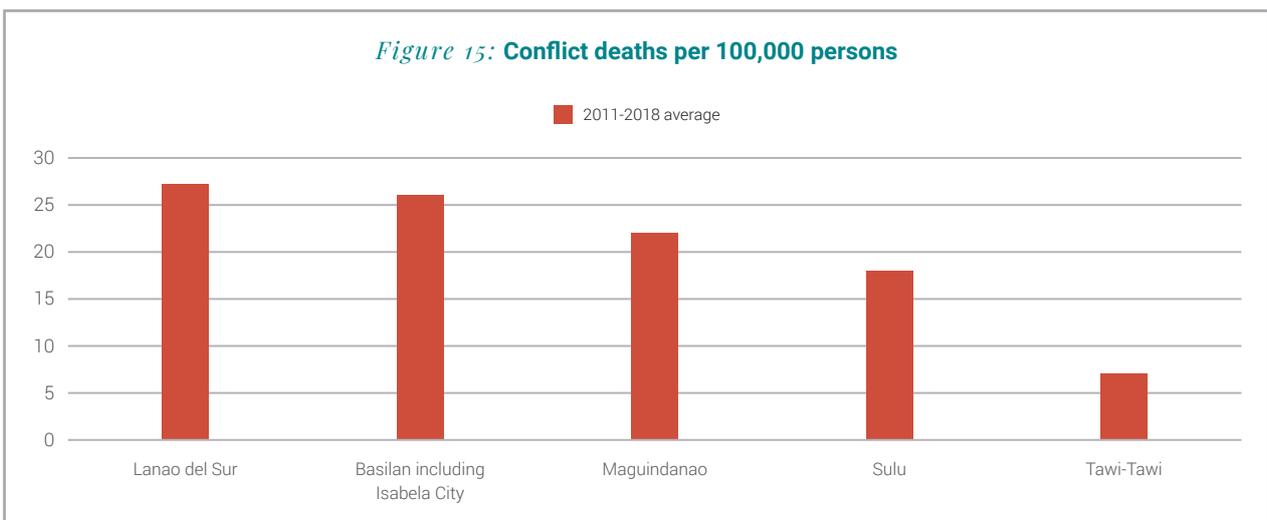


Figure 14: Conflict deaths per 1,000 sq. km.



Lanao del Sur’s 27 average conflict deaths per 100,000 persons from 2011 to 2018, will place it above the other provinces in the years to come. This is due to the intensity and magnitude of the Marawi war. Basilan was a close second with 26 deaths, while Maguindanao was third with 22. (See Figure 15).

The island provinces of Basilan and Sulu and the mainland province of Maguindanao had nearly identical 32-33 conflict deaths per 1,000 sq. km. on the average from 2011 to 2018. Lanao del Sur had a lower 19 deaths. (See Figure 16).



Box 1:

Detailed data with clearer causes: The Conflict Alert 2019 Report

Nikki Philline C. de la Rosa and Liezl PG. Bugtay

The Conflict Alert 2019 report is a milestone in the analysis of conflict data in the Bangsamoro. The report now provides more detailed data from the multi-causal tagging of violent conflict. Readers can get a clearer understanding of conflict because information on the triggers and causes of violence have improved considerably.

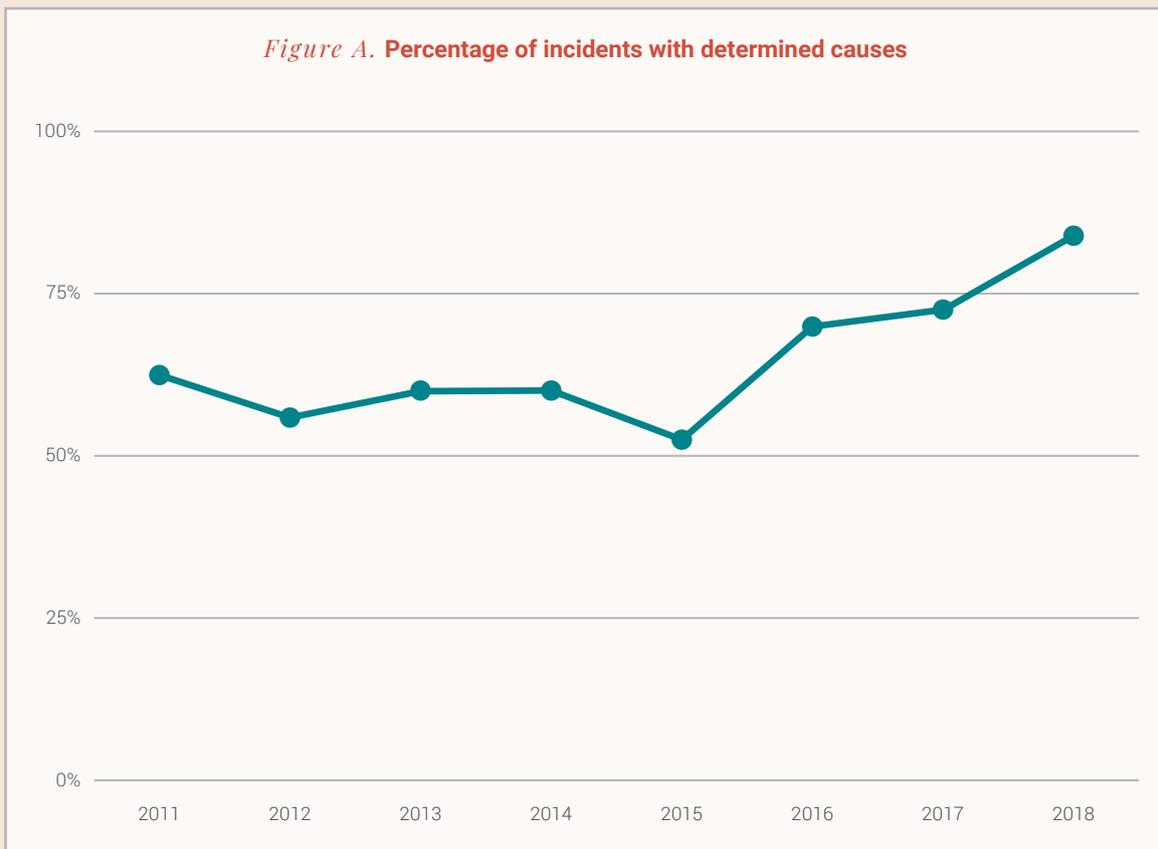
In 2015, we were able to determine the causes of conflict in 53% of conflict incidents harvested. By 2018, we were able to determine with certainty the causes behind 84% of all conflict incidents. This is the highest level of causal determination since

International Alert Philippines first established the conflict monitoring system. (See Figure A).

The corollary is that the number of incidents with undetermined causes fell by 31 percentage points to 16% in 2018 from 47% in 2015.

This reflects a vast improvement in the quality of police reports and affirms the context-specific knowledge and understanding of Alert's Multi-Stakeholder Validation Groups (MSVG) about conflict incidents in their localities.³

Figure A. Percentage of incidents with determined causes



³ The MSVG is a forum organized by Alert to harness various stakeholders at the community and local government level to assess conflict trends and perspectives, report on additional conflict incidents that are not in the media or police reports, and help determine the specific causes of conflict in instances where these are not included in the police and media reports.

Box 2:

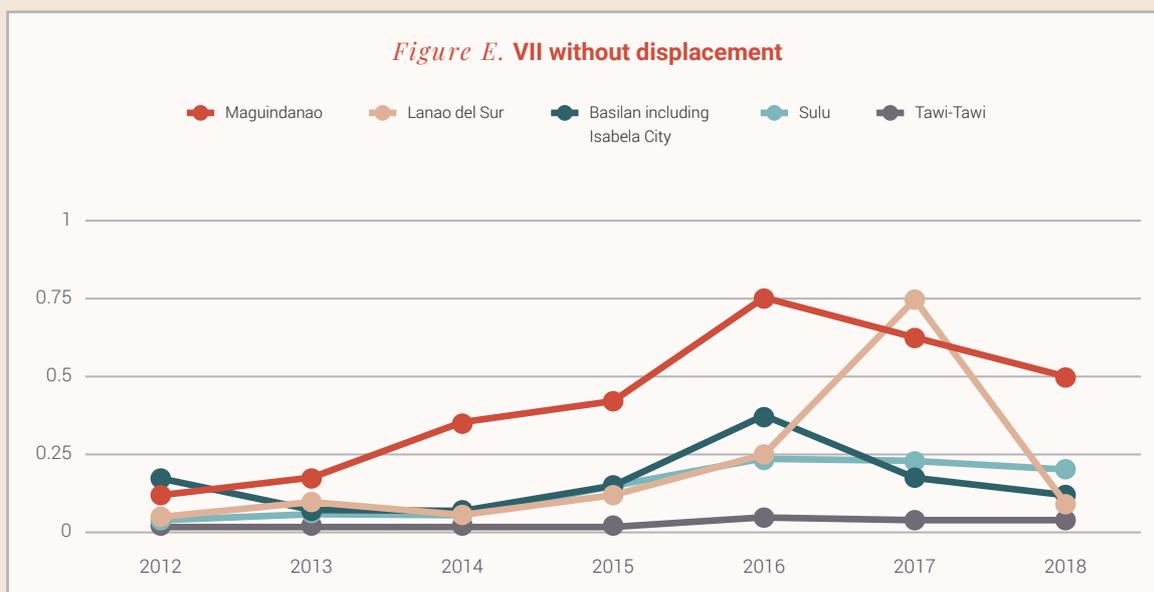
Maguindanao is first again in violence intensity

Angelo Casalan

The objective of the violence intensity index (VII) is to develop an evaluative tool to inform conflict transformation and prevention strategies, programming, and policy-making in the Bangsamoro. It compresses variables of violent conflict into a single scale, useful in improving, targeting, and setting priorities. The first variable is frequency or the number of violent conflict incidents. The second, magnitude, is measured through human cost, such as number of persons killed, wounded, and displaced.⁴

Indexing violence intensity without costing displacement revealed that across all provinces, except Tawi-Tawi, the index went down in 2018. This was consistent with the declines in conflict incidence and deaths. Maguindanao regained the top spot a year after the Marawi siege in 2017 when Lanao del Sur was on top. Maguindanao has had the highest VII without displacement, except in 2012 and 2017. Basilan had the highest level in 2012.

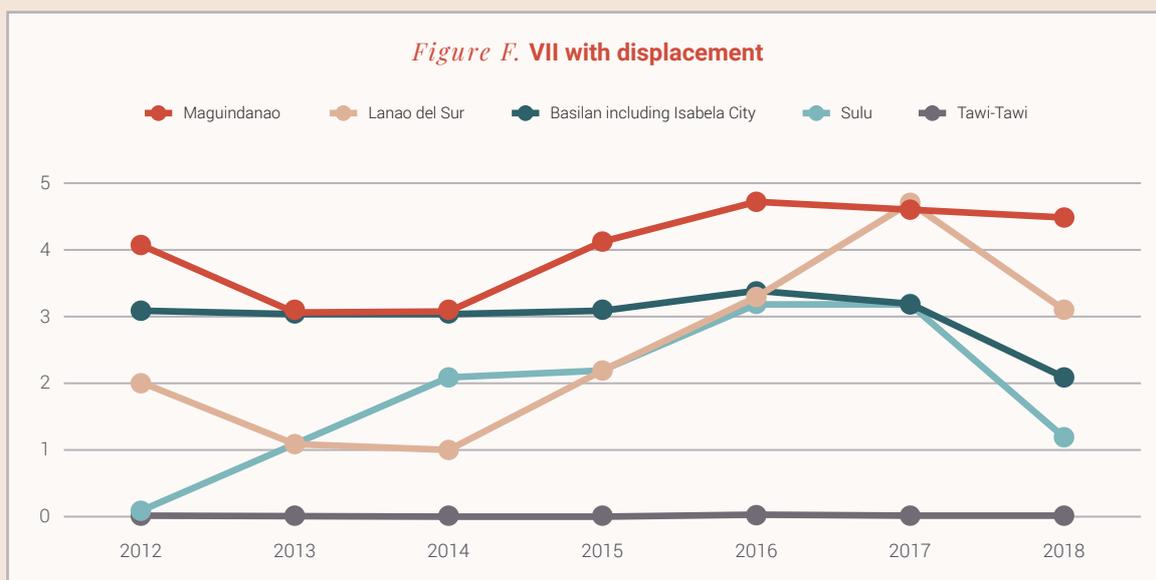
Sulu, Basilan, and Lanao del Sur had consistent VII levels from 2013 to 2015, although with a slight increase in 2015. In 2016, Basilan was second to Maguindanao and was diverging considerably from Sulu, afterwards declining faster than the latter by end of 2018. Tawi-Tawi consistently had low VII levels across the years. (See **Figure E**).



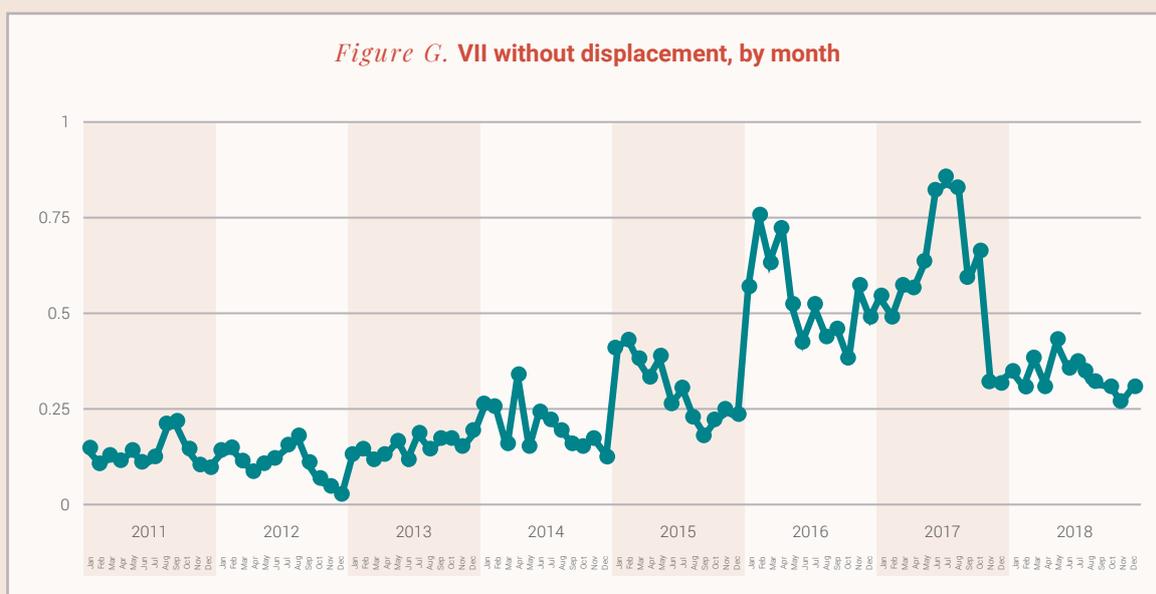
The Violence Intensity Index compresses variables of violent conflict into a single scale, useful in improving, targeting, and setting priorities.

⁴ E. Abasolo, Applying a Violence Intensity Index in the Bangsamoro, Quezon City: International Alert Philippines, 2014.

VII with displacement in 2018 reflected the same declines in conflict incidence and deaths. Maguindanao regained the top spot a year after the destruction and displacement in Marawi, followed by Lanao del Sur.⁵ (See Figure F). Lanao del Sur took a nosedive from 2017 due to the significant decrease in the number of displaced persons. Basilan and Sulu followed; these two had to deal with higher displacement of residents in 2018 due to armed clashes between the military and extremists.



A temporal check showed violence intensity generally ebbing in 2018 from the previous year, except for a spike in May during the barangay and *Sangguniang Kabataan* (SK) elections.⁶ However, the index regained its downward trajectory by end of 2018. (See Figure G).



⁵ Displacement data were sourced from UNHCR Philippines and Protection Cluster Philippines. The data showed the number of people displaced due to conflict in the ARMM fell to around 140,000 in 2018 from around 500,000 in 2017.

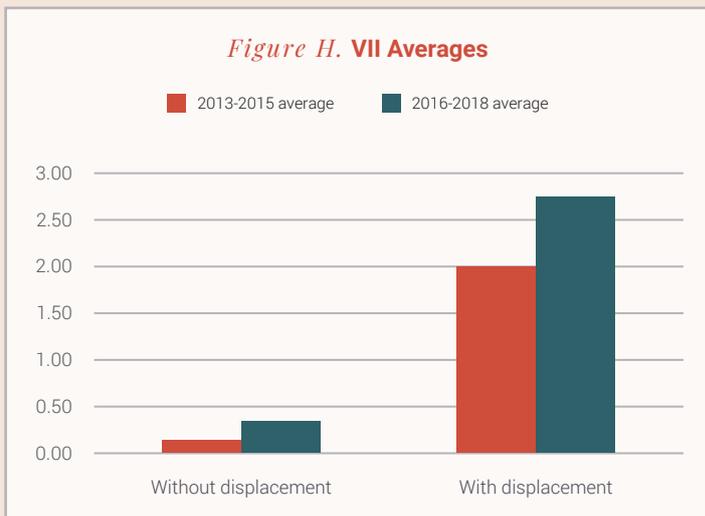
⁶ Youth council meant to represent the youth in each barangay (village) in the Philippines.

A return to the everyday life that people were used to may be impossible to attain, but policy makers can aim to improve living standards alongside ensuring violent conflicts and the resultant human cost are further reduced.

The ARMM suffered an intensely violent period from 2016 to 2018. It will take years for it to recover from this episode. The VII, averaged over two periods, with and without the addition of data on displacement, was markedly high in 2016 to 2018 compared to when extremist violence had not yet carved a path of death and destruction through the region. (See Figure H).

The year 2018 may be regarded as the start of healing for BARMM, but the impact of the violence in 2016 to 2017 will linger, particularly among the people whose relatives were killed or wounded in the fighting or had to be uprooted from their homes. A return to the everyday life that people were used to may be impossible to attain, but policy makers can aim to improve living standards alongside ensuring violent conflicts and the resultant human cost are further reduced.

Figure H. VII Averages



A family encamped at a classroom in Maguindanao after fleeing violence in their village during the Armed Forces of the Philippines's all-out offensive against the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters.  Mark Navales



Conflict incidents and deaths

Fewer flashpoints but deadlier outcomes



Despite the sharp fall in incidents in 2018, the average number of incidents was a high 3,804 from 2016 to 2018. This compares with an average of 1,622 from 2013 to 2015. (See Figure 17). The 2016-2018 average signifies a much higher bar not seen in the past, not even during the Estrada government’s total war against the MILF in 2000.

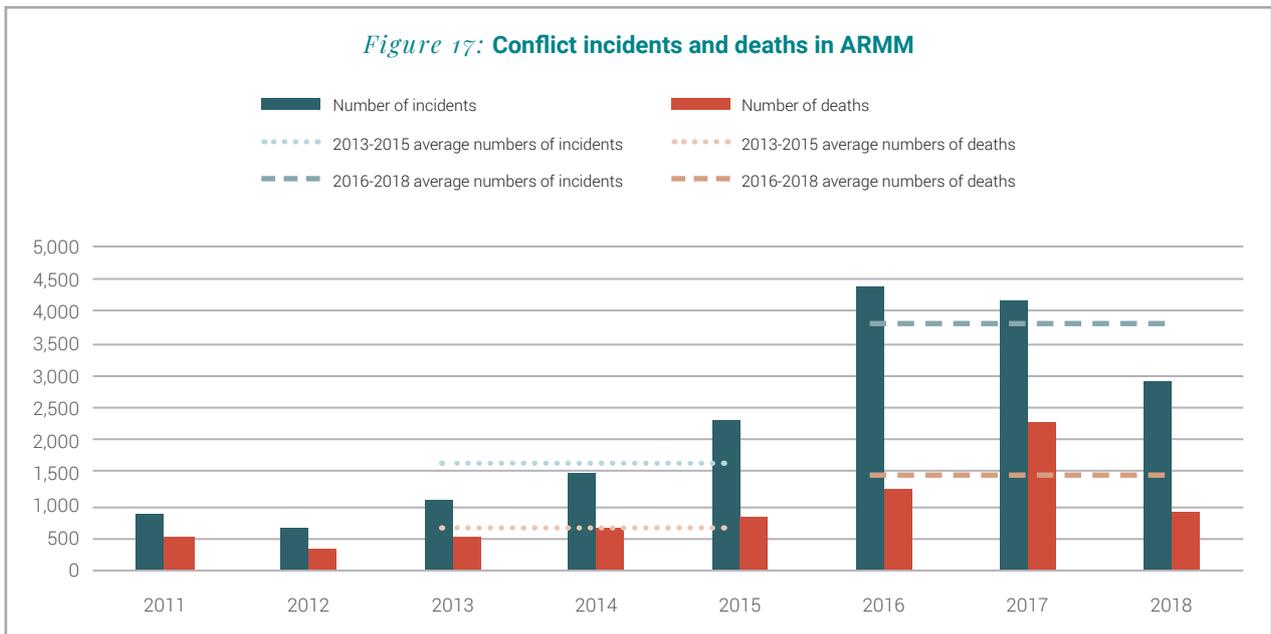
In short, the Bangsamoro is not out of the woods yet.

Conflict deaths followed the overall trends in conflict incidence across the years except in 2017 when incidents fell but deaths rose due to the shift from individual to collective violence

seen in the war in Marawi. The 1,467 average number of deaths from 2016 to 2018 surpassed the 661 average from 2013 to 2015.

The lower number of conflict incidents and deaths in 2018 demonstrated a retreat from the most violent years (2016 and 2017) in the Bangsamoro, as lesser violence resulted from fewer gun battles and explosions and as extremists engaged in sporadic clashes against government troops.

Comparing conflict incidence and conflict deaths by province shows Maguindanao returning to the top position in terms of conflict incidence

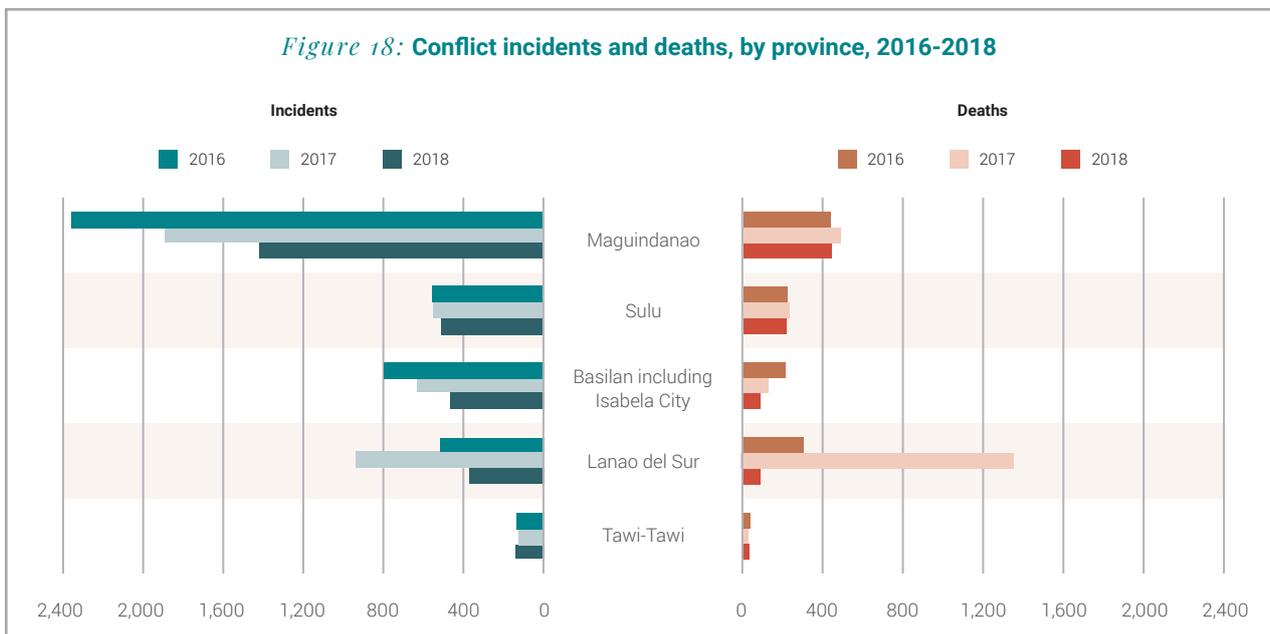


and conflict deaths in 2018. Sulu moved to the second spot for both, a leap from being fourth in incidence and third in deaths the year before.

Basilan retained its third ranking for incidence and fourth spot for conflict deaths in the past two years. Lanao del Sur, where a drastic decline in violence was recorded in 2018, placed fourth in incidence and third in conflict deaths, with only one fatality separating it from Basilan. Tawi-Tawi continued to rank last in terms of incidence and deaths from 2017 to 2018. **(See Figure 18).**

The lower number of conflict incidents and deaths in 2018 demonstrated a retreat from the most violent years (2016 and 2017) in the Bangsamoro.

Figure 18: Conflict incidents and deaths, by province, 2016-2018



Conflict incidents and deaths

Martial law as deterrent

The empirical explanation for the plunge in conflict incidents and deaths is the imposition of martial law in Mindanao beginning in 2017. It allowed the State to wield its coercive power in Mindanao, particularly in the Bangsamoro.

The military and police confiscated loose firearms. They installed checkpoints that discouraged the movement of armed groups and the carrying by people of firearms outside their homes. Fewer gun battles have been recorded in urban areas such as Cotabato, Marawi and Isabela cities, and those outside the Bangsamoro such as Iligan, Zamboanga, Kidapawan, and General Santos cities.

The implementation of martial law differed across the five provinces. In Maguindanao, the police strictly enforced curfew hours. Cotabato City increased police visibility in the barangays and strictly monitored the entry of people and vehicles at checkpoints at its borders.⁷

In Sulu, an increase in military checkpoints and the narrower distance between checkpoints made it difficult to transport firearms. In Basilan, the military maintained a heavy presence and resorted to lockdowns during emergencies, such as the bombing in Lamitan City in July 2018. It also intervened in instances of extortion by the ASG from contractors of government projects.



⁷ MSVG meeting on 19 March 2019 in Maguindanao.

The military and police confiscated loose firearms. They installed checkpoints, which discouraged the movement of armed groups and the carrying by people of firearm outside their homes.



Government security forces conduct inspections at a checkpoint at the boundary of Cotabato City and Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao.  Mark Navales

The military's crackdown on the ASG in Sulu and Basilan resulted in more surrenders among members in 2018 compared to the previous year.

In Lanao del Sur, military and police checkpoints closely monitored the traffic of persons and vehicles going to Marawi City from Iligan City. Curfew hours were strictly implemented, with Marawi residents complying by trying to finish their business before it got dark. The military reinforced troops in the province during important events such as the barangay and SK elections in May and the special elections in Marawi in September.

Tawi-Tawi also saw an increase in military presence, which reassured tourists, who then took the opportunity to visit the islands. Operations against illegal drugs were relentless in 2018 in Bongao and other towns as part of efforts to improve peace and order.⁸

Police and media reports put the number of firearms captured at 1,766; bombs used in incidents or confiscated during checkpoints and raids at 194; and bladed weapons brought or used in conflict incidents at 90. These numbers were lower compared to 2017.

⁸ MSVG meeting on 19 March 2019 in Maguindanao and news reports.

Causes of conflict incidents and deaths

The toll from extremist violence

Identity-related and political conflict emerged as the top causes of deaths in 2018, consistent with the trend in the past two years. Most of the deaths were due to extremist violence, that is both identity-based and politically-motivated.⁹

Amidst the overall decline in conflict incidence and deaths, shadow economy related incidents rose by only 7% in

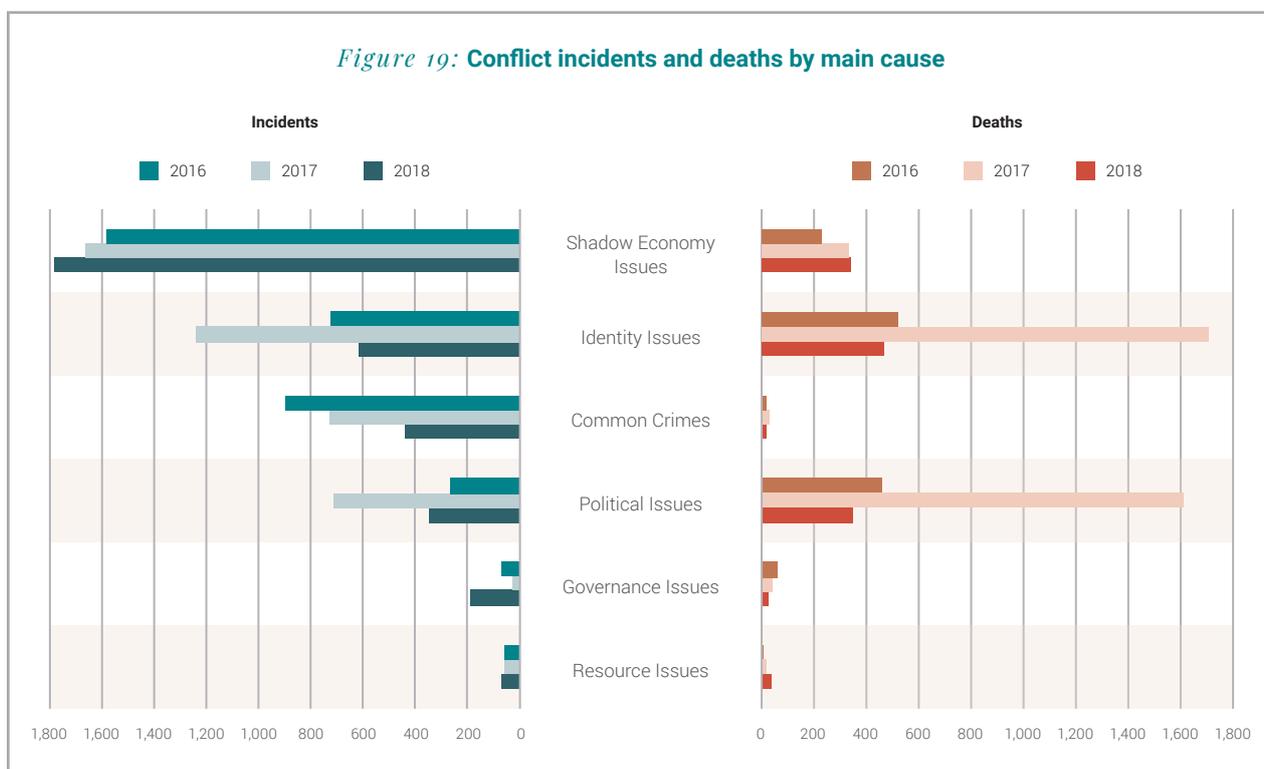
conflict incidence and 2% in conflict deaths and ranked third in terms of cause of deaths despite the overwhelming number of shadow-economy related incidents.

Resource-related conflict was deadlier compared to common crimes or governance-related violence, with casualties higher by 89% in 2018 from 2017. Land-related feuds accounted

for more than half of resource-related deaths that year.

Meanwhile, governance-related conflict incidents increased nearly seven times in 2018 from the previous year. However, there were less deaths in 2018. (See Figure 19).

A more granular analysis using the subcategories within the main causes indicates



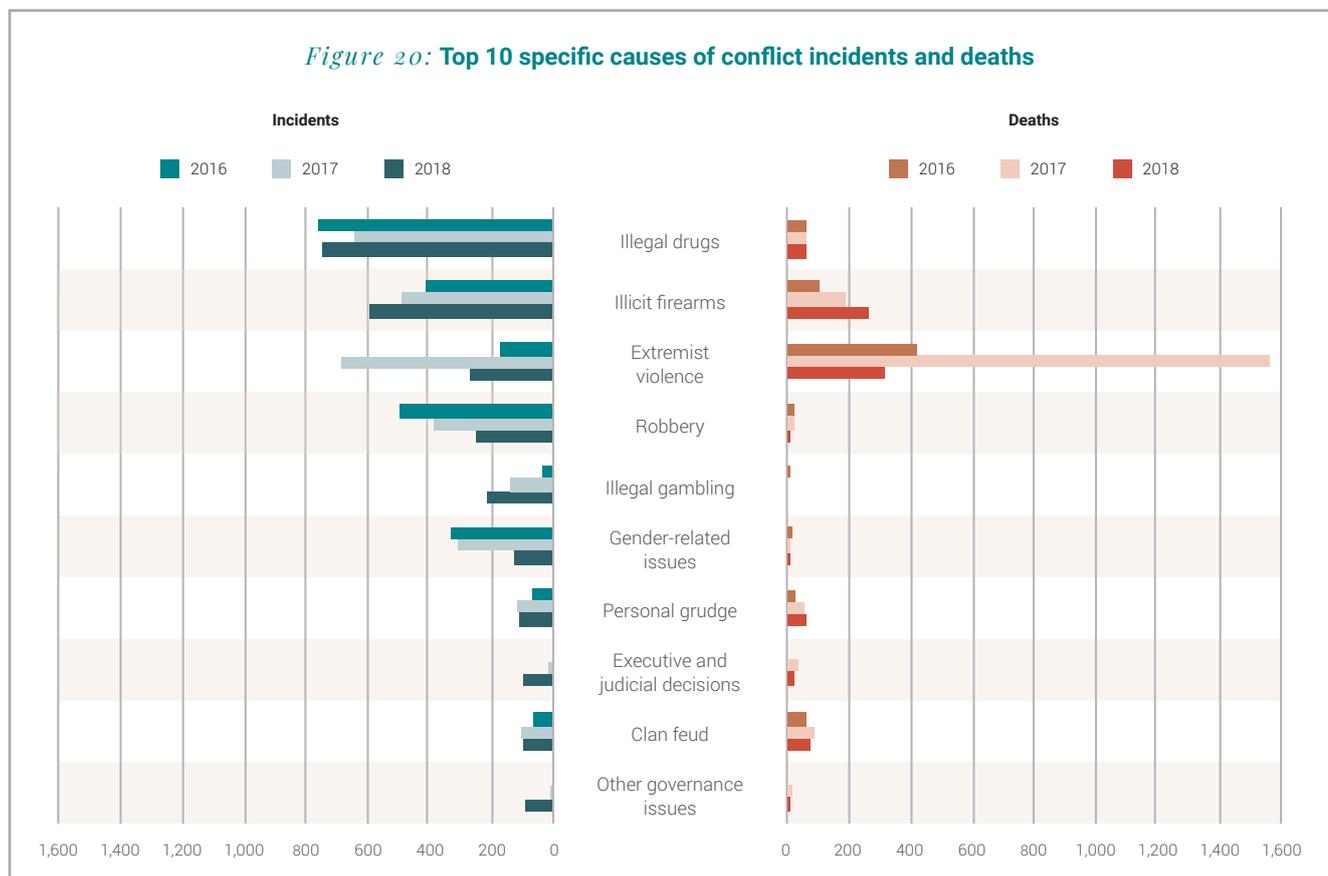
⁹ Extremist violence is tagged as both an identity issue and a political issue. Multiple tagging is employed for incidents with more than one cause to accurately portray the multi-causal nature of violent conflict in many cases.

that extremist violence remained the deadliest despite a decline in incidence by 62% and deaths by 80%. Still, extremist violence came out as the main cause of conflict deaths in 2018, followed by incidents involving illicit weapons. (See Figure 20).

Meanwhile, deaths due to clan feuding or rido and personal grudges, which are identity-based conflicts, remained significant as the third and fourth most common causes of deaths, respectively. The number of deaths from clan feuds remained almost the same as in 2017 while the death toll from personal grudges increased slightly. The number of casualties from both causes registered below 100.



Figure 20: Top 10 specific causes of conflict incidents and deaths



Box 3:

Residual conflict in post-siege Marawi

Liezl PG. Bugtay and Nikki Philine C. de la Rosa

Many displaced residents remain in temporary shelters two years after the end of the Marawi siege. The long dry spell resulted in illnesses among children and limited supplies of drinking water while the rainy season has brought flooding in evacuation camps. Residents are unable to visit their properties inside the 'most affected area' or MAA, the commercial center that was pounded to dust during the five-month war. The process of rehabilitation and rebuilding is yet to begin.

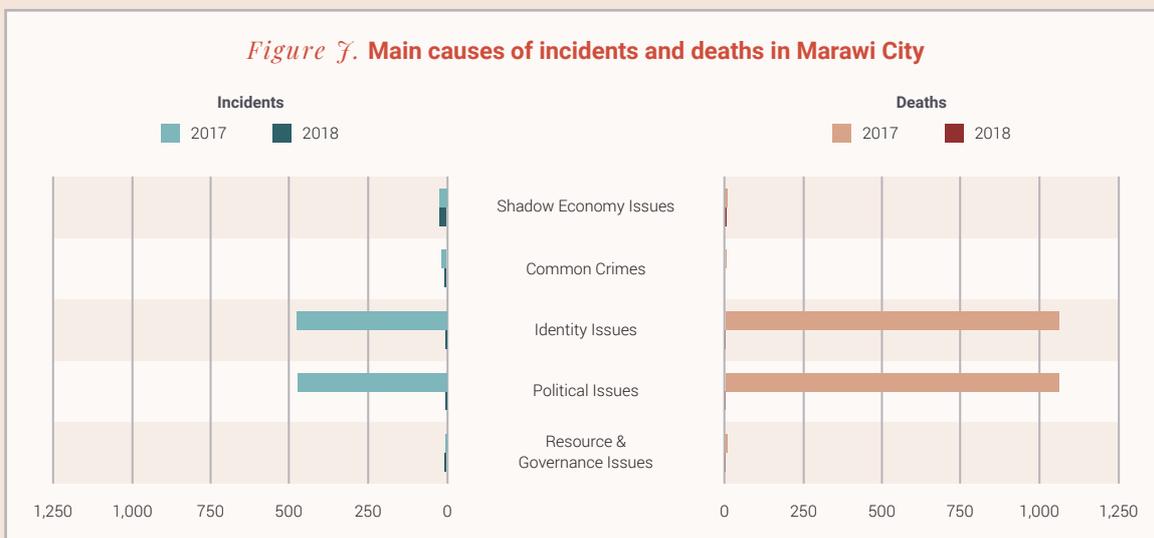
The grievance and frustration of residents are turning into a source of tensions and horizontal conflicts, belying the relative stability painted by the 2018 data.

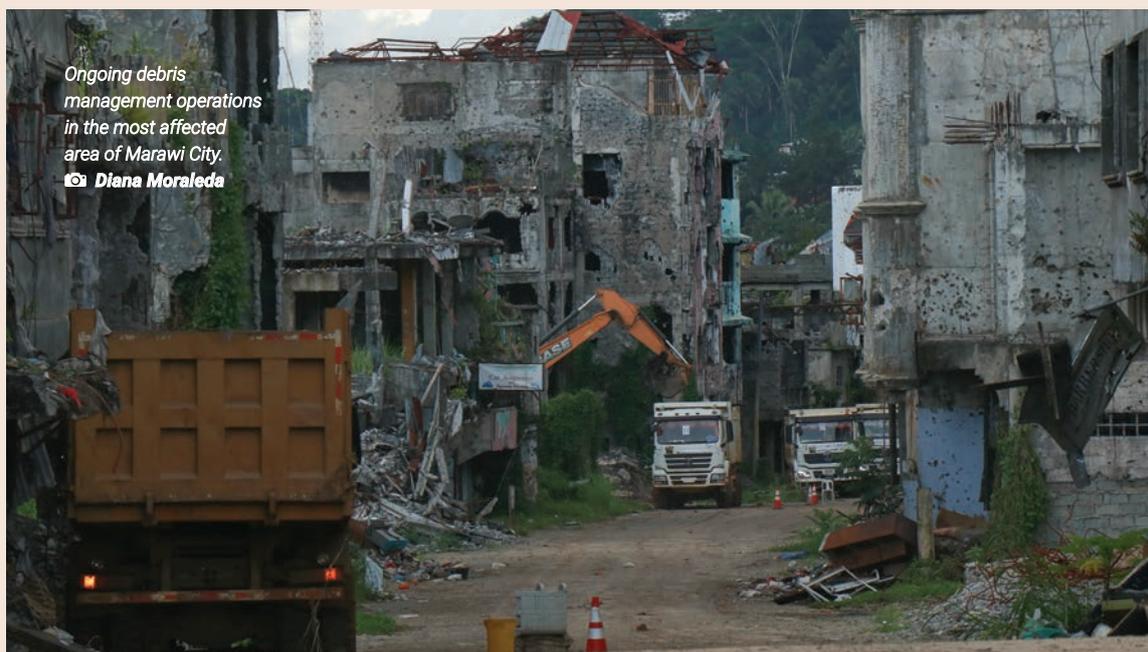
Conflict incidents in the city plunged to 72 in 2018 from 532 in 2017. (See Figure I). Most of these were due to shadow economy issues, particularly illegal drugs and firearms. Shadow economies also caused most of the deaths in 2018. (See Figure J).

Figure I. Monthly conflict incidence and deaths in Marawi City



Figure J. Main causes of incidents and deaths in Marawi City





Ongoing debris management operations in the most affected area of Marawi City.
 © Diana Moraleda

The lethal combination of identity and political issues that resulted in the killing of more than 1,000 persons and the displacement of more than 350,000 individuals in 2017 has seemingly disappeared. But has it?

Reports from International Alert Philippines' Critical Events Monitoring System (CEMS) provide evidence of the growing tensions and pressures related to the delays in the rehabilitation process plus the gradual return of extremist groups outside the city.¹⁰

There is a sense of disquiet over being excluded from government assistance programs especially among former residents in the MAA. There is anxiety and increasing distrust among surrenderers from violent extremist groups and their relatives who sided with the government but have yet to receive financial assistance and compensation for the weapons they surrendered to the military and police.

The vulnerable conditions faced by the poor and displaced in Marawi are reinforced by newly emerging

threats from revenge killings, a resurgence in extremist violence, as well as residual clan violence following the recent 2019 midterm elections.

Every day brings news of sightings of armed men linked to Dawla Islamiya in the outskirts of Marawi and other Lanao del Sur towns. There have also been near-encounters brought about by the long queues in the many checkpoints along the highways of the province.

People insist that martial law has helped curb sources of violence in the city, most importantly the ability of people to access weapons and engage in the illicit drugs trade. The outrage about the delays in rehabilitation, plus the grievances against those responsible for the deaths of family members and the destruction of property, will continue to shape the city's conflict dynamics in the years to come.

The local and provincial governments face a slippery slope where conflicts are always present and resources are inadequate to prevent violence from spreading.

¹⁰ International Alert Philippines set up the CEMS to gather real-time reports on tensions and violent conflicts in communities in the Bangsamoro. Reports are transmitted through SMS or VHF radio, stored in a database, and processed for deployment of context-specific responses by key stakeholders on the ground. Members of International Alert's Early Response Network (ERN) provide and also use the reports. They are independent and autonomous individuals and members of groups with grassroots reach, to monitor disputes and harness traditional, formal, and hybrid institutions and arrangements to defuse or resolve violent conflicts. Among them are women, youth leaders, and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Officers. Monthly CEMS bulletins can be accessed at www.conflictaert.info

Maps:

Extremist violence spills over

Extremist violence exploded in 2016 and reached its peak levels in 2017 during the Marawi siege. Apart from Marawi, the map shows high incidence of extremist violence in the towns of Datu Salibo, Shariff Aguak, Datu Unsay Ampatuan, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Shariff Saydona Mustapha and Datu Hoffer Ampatuan, or more popularly called as SPMS Box. It also spiked in the island provinces, particular in Sumisip, Basilan and Jolo and Patikul in Sulu.

The deadly outcome of extremist violence from 2016 to 2018 is clearly visible in the municipalities of Butig, Tipotipo and Piagapo, where more people died, even though these towns did not figure in the top 10 list of municipalities with most violent incidents.

The map also shows scattered incidents outside the usual hotspots of extremist groups. They spread across the borders of Maguindanao, North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat, and in towns located along the Lanao Lake.

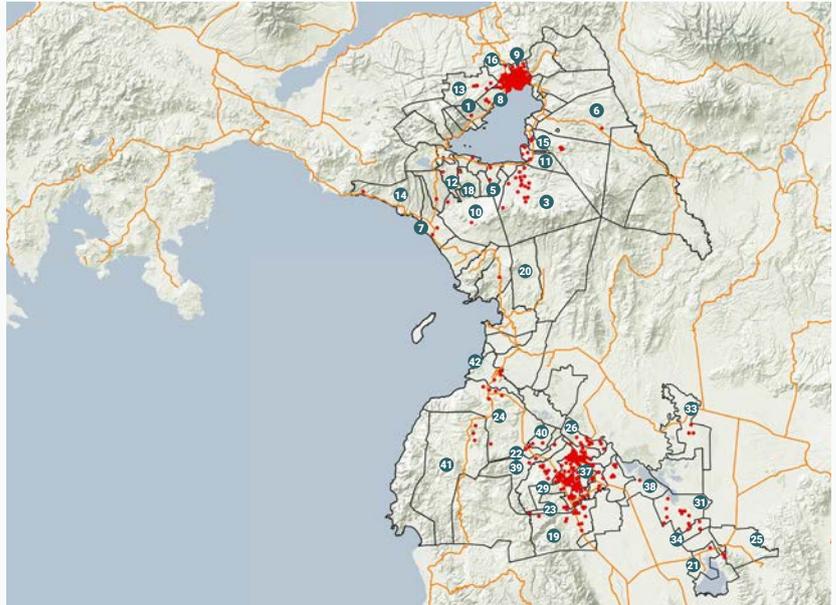
Legend

- 1 incident due to violent extremism

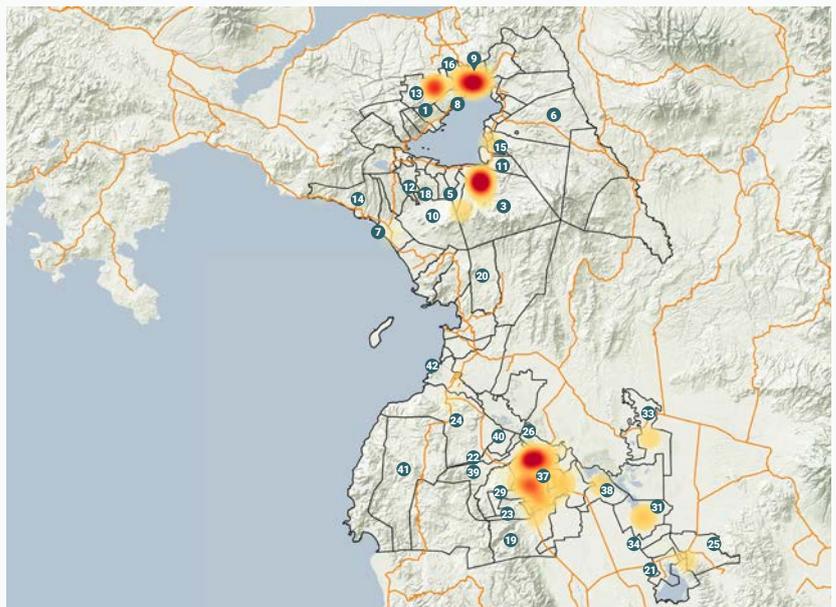
Number of deaths due to violent extremism

1 10 20 50 100 200

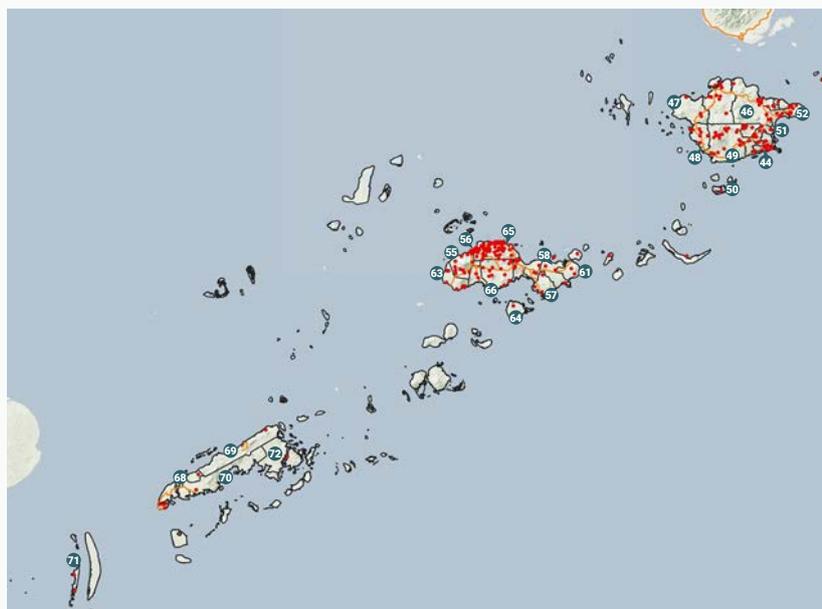
Map 6. Violent extremist incidents in Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur



Map 7. Deaths due to violent extremism in Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur



Map 8. Violent extremist incidents in Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi



Municipalities and cities

Lanao del Sur

- 1 Balindong (Watu)
- 2 Binidayan
- 3 Butig
- 4 Lumbaca-Unayan
- 5 Lumbatan
- 6 Maguing
- 7 Malabang
- 8 Marantao
- 9 Marawi City
- 10 Marogong
- 11 Masiu
- 12 Pagayawan (Tatarikan)
- 13 Piagapo
- 14 Picong (Sultan Gumander)
- 15 Poona Bayabao (Gata)
- 16 Saguairan
- 17 Sultan Dimalondong
- 18 Tubaran
- 19 Ampatuan
- 20 Barira
- 21 Buluan
- 22 Datu Anggal Midtimbang

Maguindanao

- 23 Datu Hoffer Ampatuan
- 24 Datu Odin Sinsuat (Dinaig)
- 25 Datu Paglas
- 26 Datu Piang
- 27 Datu Salibo
- 28 Datu Saudi-Ampatuan
- 29 Datu Unsay
- 30 Gen. S.K. Pendatun
- 31 Guindulungan
- 32 Mamasapano
- 33 Pagagawan
- 34 Paglat
- 35 Rajah Buayan
- 36 Shariff Aguak (Maganoy)
- 37 Shariff Saydona Mustapha
- 38 Sultan Sa Barongis (Lambayong)
- 39 Talayan
- 40 Talitay
- 41 Upi
- 42 Cotabato City

Basilan

- 43 Akbar
- 44 Al-Barka
- 45 Hadji Mohammad Ajul
- 46 Lamitan City
- 47 Lantawan
- 48 Maluso
- 49 Sumisip
- 50 Tabuan-Lasa
- 51 Tipo-Tipo
- 52 Tuburan
- 53 Ungkaya Pukan
- 54 Isabela City

Sulu

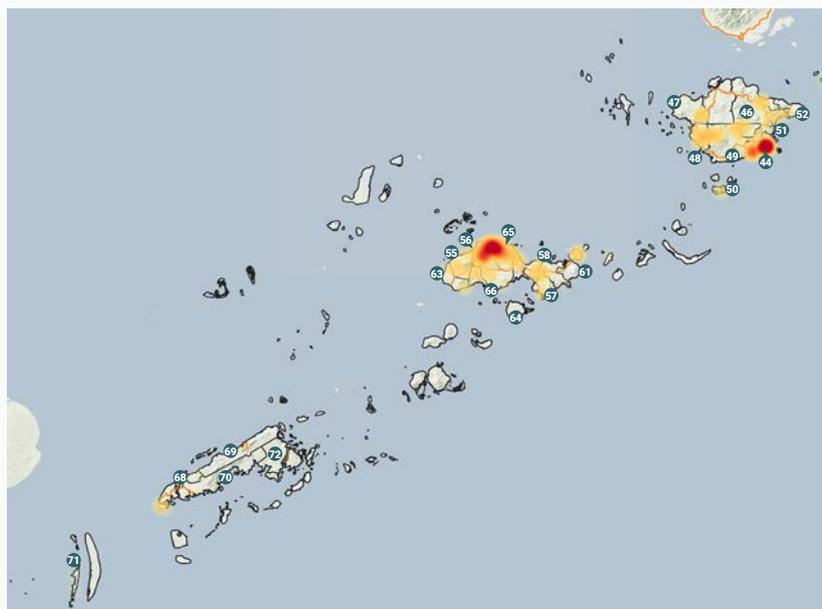
- 55 Indanan
- 56 Jolo
- 57 Kalingalan Caluang
- 58 Luuk
- 59 Maimbung
- 60 Old Panamao
- 61 Omar
- 62 Panglima Estino (New Panamao)
- 63 Parang, Sulu
- 64 Pata
- 65 Patikul
- 66 Talipao
- 67 Tongkil

Tawi-Tawi

- 68 Bongao
- 69 Languyan
- 70 Panglima Sugala (Balimbing)
- 71 Sitangkai
- 72 Tandubas
- Turtle Islands*

* Not captured on map

Map 9. Deaths due to violent extremism in Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi



Causes of conflict incidents and deaths

The deadly combination of political and identity-based violence

Over the 2011-2018 period in the Bangsamoro, shadow economy issues were the most common cause of violent conflict, comprising 44% of total incidents with known causes. These mostly came from the anti-illegal drug campaign, and the campaign against illicit firearms, and illegal gambling.

The year 2016 witnessed the emergence of extremist violence resulting in the significant increase in identity-based violence. Key actors included the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, the ASG, the Maute Group, and the various Dawla Islamiya sub-groups. Along with extremist violence, gender-related violence, personal grudges, and clan feuding further intensified identity-based violence. However, the number of identity-related conflicts was only half the number of shadow economy incidents from 2011 to 2018.

Common crimes mostly trailed shadow economy issues before 2017 but ranked third as cause of violent conflict by 2018. Cases of robbery, child abuse, and fist fights or mauling incidents often connected to alcohol intoxication were among the top examples of these incidents.

Political issues ranked fourth. They included extremist violence, competition over elective positions, and conflict between and among rebel groups. The number of rebellion-related conflict drastically declined to single-digits starting 2016, in contrast to 2011 to 2015 when rebellion-related violence topped the list of political issues.

Governance issues placed fifth, with the serving of warrants of arrest by authorities often turning violent. Resource issues remained in last place with cases of land-related feuding. **(See Figure 21).**

Political issues claimed the most lives from 2011 to 2018, followed by identity issues. More had died from extremist violence in contrast to election-related violence or clan feuding.

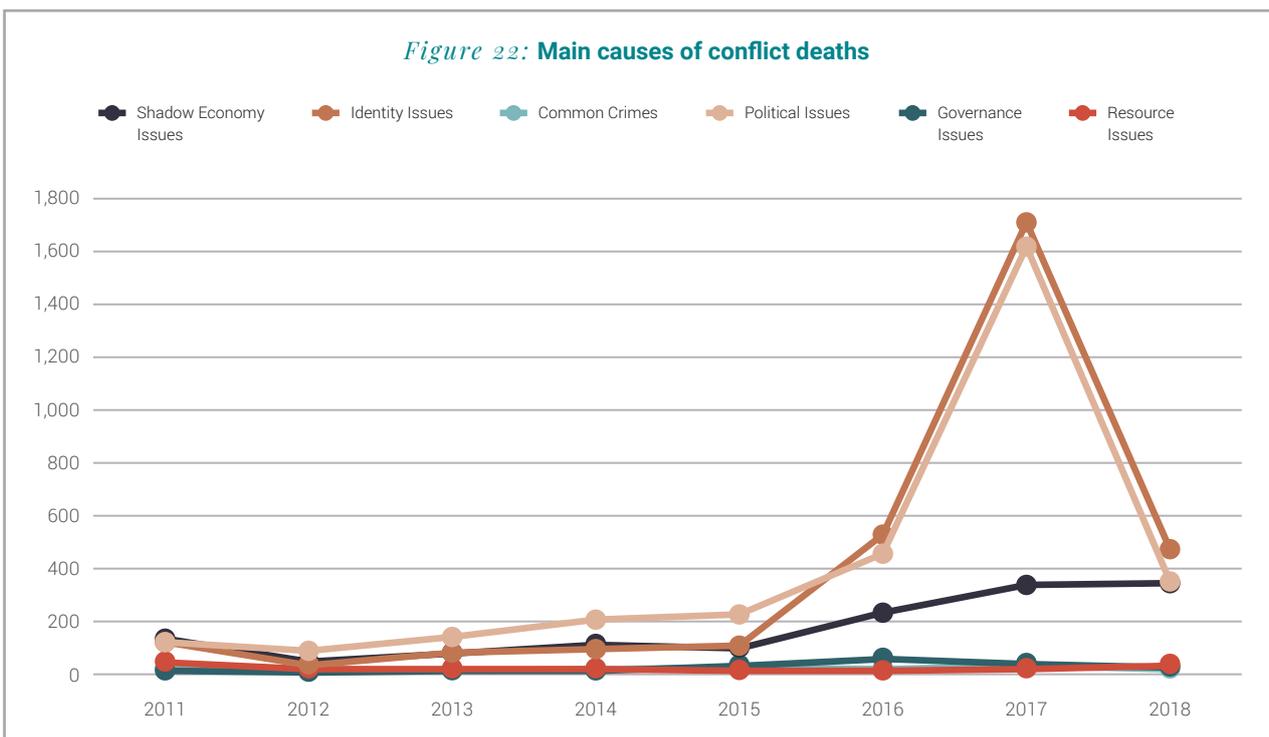
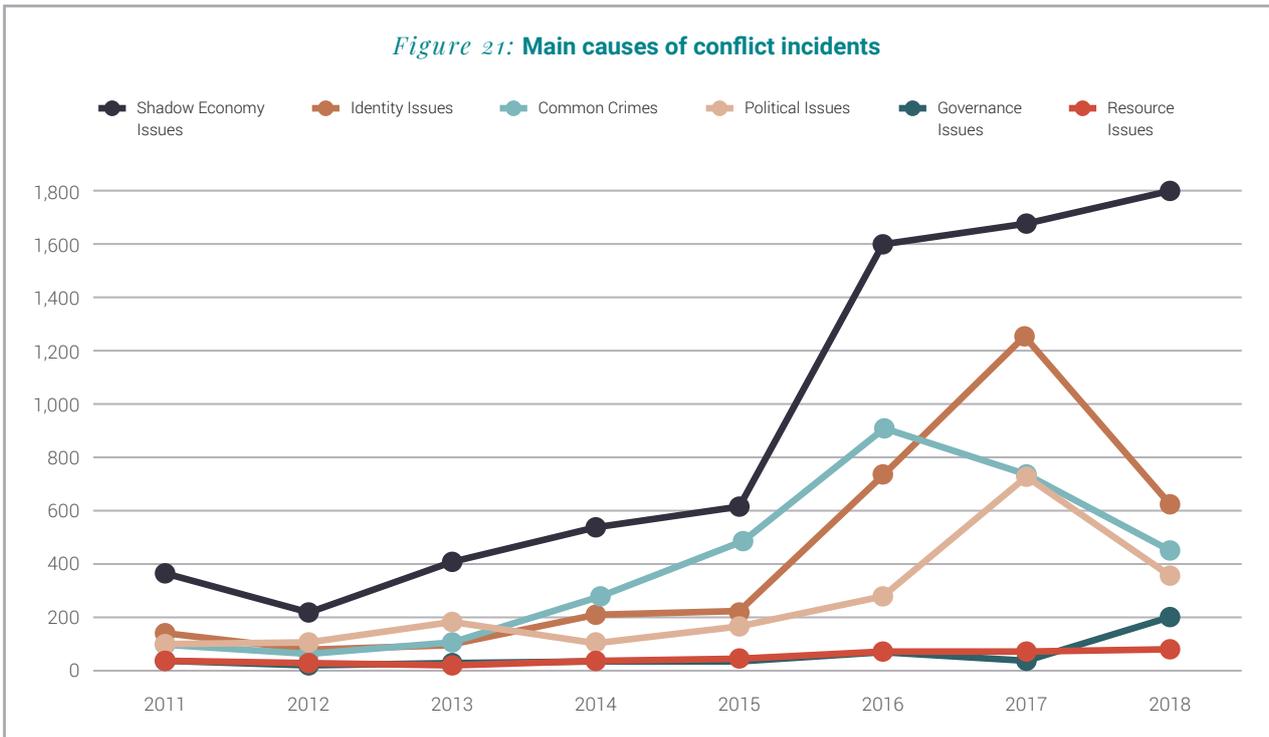
The 2011-2018 data demonstrates the shift from rebellion being the deadliest until 2015, to extremist violence beginning 2016 and claiming a staggering 2,300 lives by 2018. Meanwhile, the



Philippine Marines secure the vicinity of an ISIS camp they captured in the town of Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat. © Mark Navales

death toll from shadow economy-related conflict was roughly half of the aforementioned leading causes of conflict deaths. Illicit firearms-related violence accounted for 67% of shadow-economy deaths from 2011 to 2018.

Governance issues, resource issues and common crimes were also less deadly compared to the top three causes of deaths over the eight-year period. (See Figure 22).



Why counting gender-based violence counts

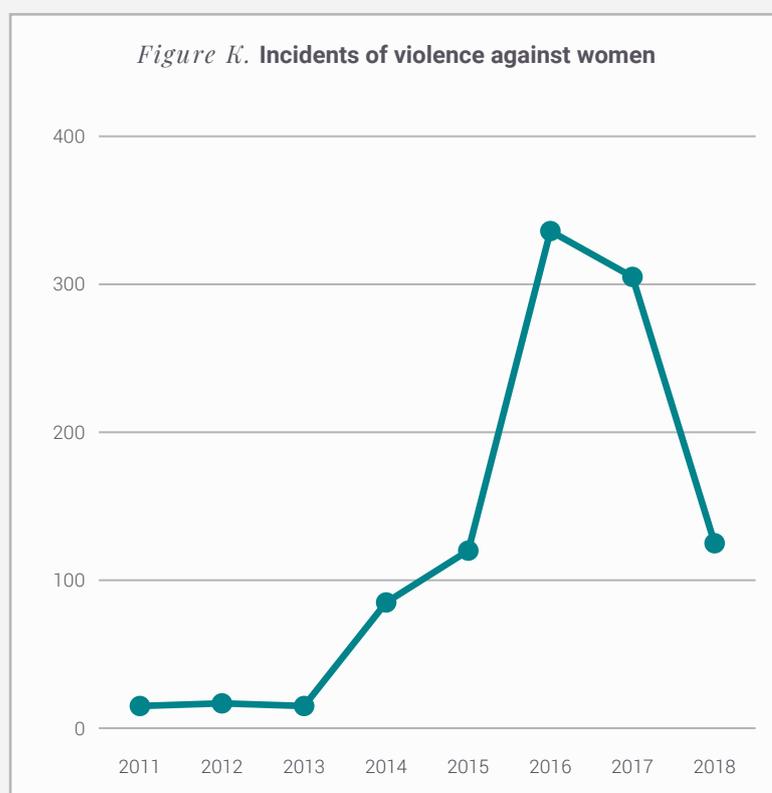
A granular database on gender poverty and violence ought to provide the best evidence of the human toll that the twin burdens of poverty and violence bring upon women. Yet such a database at the subnational level does not exist, and much less at the national level.

Declining gender-based violence in the Bangsamoro

Liezl PG. Bugtay

Sudden spikes and uneven accounts of gender-related violence and conflict have always been the case since Conflict Alert began harvesting data on gender violence beyond what was available in police reports. The 2011-2018 database shows when the spikes occurred and when they also went down fast.

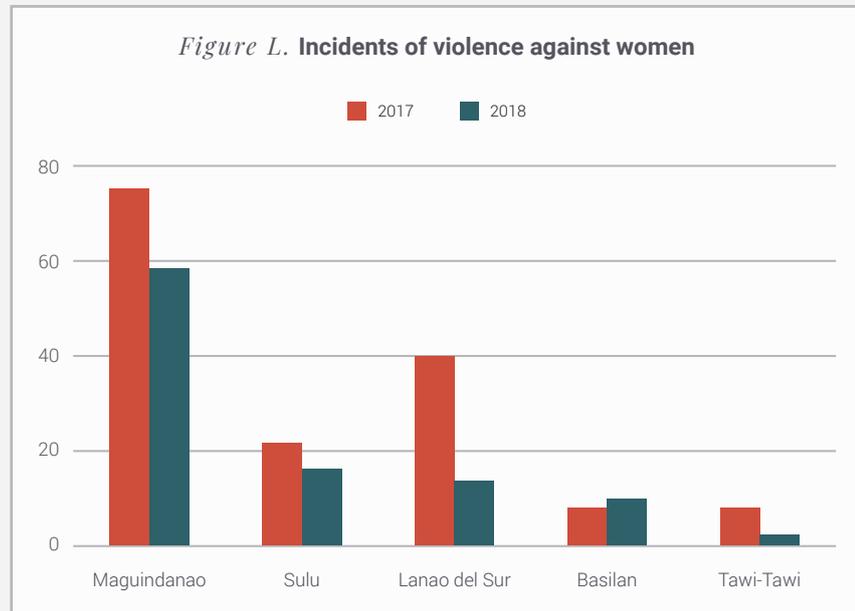
The numbers began to rise in 2014 and peaked in 2016, after the ARMM government launched the implementing rules and regulations of the Gender and Development Code in 2015. The numbers have been going down since then. In 2018, gender-related violent incidents dropped again to 124 from 306 in 2017, which may be partly attributed to the general decline reduction in of the violent conflict incidents in the region. (See [Figure K](#)).



¹¹ Isabela City PNP's list of incidents accessed by Conflict Alert did not contain a sheet for cases on violence against women, unlike in 2017. Cotabato City PNP's list covered only cases from August to December 2018.

The drop in the data is partly the consequence of not being able to secure data from Isabela City and Cotabato City at the local level.¹¹ However, the drop is also due to real declines in gender-related violence across the region.

Most of the gender-based violence is reported in Maguindanao, followed by Sulu and Lanao del Sur in 2018. Basilan posted an increase of 25%, in contrast to other provinces that recorded declining numbers from 2017 to 2018. (See **Figure L**).



Female high school students gather outside their campus in Datu Piang, Maguindanao.
 © **Martin San Diego**

Counting the costs of gender-related violence: The unintended effects of the VAWC law

Liezl PG. Bugtay and Nikki Phylline C. de la Rosa



The 2015 Census of Population indicate that women comprised more than half of the population in the Bangsamoro as a whole, across age, marital status, religious affiliations, and household population. The dominant number of women translates into a bigger number of women who are economically disadvantaged as well. More women in the Bangsamoro are considered poor compared to

men, according to a study of the Philippine Statistical Authority.¹²

Gender poverty impacts the family, as well as gender-based inequality. Women take on major roles in certain sectors without the commensurate and equivalent income streams that men receive. Women also invest in education more than men, and are often employed in the public sector, but

their education and positions in government translate into few powers beyond the household.¹³

Finally, the large number of women also translates into a higher chance of being victimized by violence and crime. Conflict Alert data showed an increase in violence against women in the Bangsamoro from 2013-2016, and how more women are getting involved in violent

¹² Men figured in most occupation groups particularly in the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sector where the number reached more than half a million while women comprised only around 60,000 in this sector.

¹³ Men take up 69% of agricultural jobs while women dominated the services sector at 59%. More women are employed as managers and become professionals than men. Public sector jobs are also dominated by women. Finally, more women pursue higher education, and high-school and college completion rates are far higher than men.



Beneficiaries of the government's conditional cash transfer program, also known as Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program or 4Ps, gather in an activity in Malabang, Lanao del Sur.
 © Ferdinandh Cabrera

conflict such as clan feuding, land conflicts, and political violence, including violent extremism.¹⁴

A granular database on gender poverty and violence ought to provide the best evidence of the human toll that the twin burdens of poverty and violence bring upon women. Yet such a database at the subnational level does not exist, and much less at the national level. The gender statistics from government portals that are available online are

inadequate and limited in terms of scope and reliability.

To be sure, there is more evidence available regarding the economic conditions of women—the outcome of many surveys and case studies that were undertaken prior to the creation of various welfare programs such as the conditional cash transfer scheme, micro-credit and other women's livelihood programs.

Indeed, where a yawning gap exists is in the availability of statistical time-series data on violence against women in the Bangsamoro. Addressing this problem is both an institutional as well as technical challenge.

Silencing the violence

Data on violence against women (VAW) comprises a whole chapter in the National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). The study is conducted every five (5) years, the most recent one in 2017.¹⁵ The 2017 survey showed aggregate numbers except for specific distribution by age group, wealth quintile, ethnicity and region. In the ARMM, a sample size of 569 women were interviewed based on the eligibility requirements stipulated in the Women Safety Module, one of the NDHS tools employed for the survey.

The study showed that the Bangsamoro consistently placed last in all variables used to examine incidents and cases of violence against women. Should this be a cause for celebration, or a matter of serious concern?

Looking at the statistical data available and assessing the difficulties in accessing data from the DSWD, one is inclined to believe that the results are spurious, and thus a matter of serious concern. It is likely that gender-related violence is grossly understated, and not the least because of the

¹⁴ Refer to Conflict Alert 2018 Report

¹⁵ Conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority with technical support from the United States Agency for International Development.

methodology employed and the institutional barriers that exist.

For example, there are certain inherent weaknesses in utilizing surveys for the aim of understanding gender-related violence. Using survey methods are highly subjective. They fail to consider the consequent problems of reliability that comes when sensitive questions are asked.

Many communities in Muslim Mindanao, including women's leaders and groups consider the subject matter taboo, and would resist any attempt at getting the real score about violence against women. It is likely that many would refuse to speak on the issue or will paint a different reality from what exists.

It is also unexplainable why access to the existing quantitative data on the types, causes, manifestations, and costs of gender-based violence that is already available in many police reports, including reports in the possession of DSWD, is not open for analysis. Access to these data is allegedly restricted due to the confidentiality provisions in the Philippines's Violence Against Women and their Children (VAWC) Law.

Continuing challenge in accessing data on gender-based violence

It is indeed ironic that the same law that should promote, protect, and uphold the rights of women and their protection from abusive and violent behavior is being used as the same rationale behind efforts to withhold access to data or to shield vital information from analysis.

The confidentiality provision of RA 9262, the VAWC Law, stipulated clearly that *"all records pertaining to cases of violence against women and their children including those in the barangay shall be confidential and all public officers and employees and public or private clinics to hospitals shall respect the right to privacy of the victim. Whoever publishes or causes*

to be published, in any format, the name, address, telephone number, school, business address, employer, or other identifying information of a victim or an immediate family member, without the latter's consent, shall be liable to the contempt power of the court".

This provision was used to restrict the access of researchers to data on gender-violence that is available in the general police blotter reports. Access is restricted even if the researcher provides strict and written guarantees and commitments that data use is quantitative rather than qualitative in nature, or that the identities, location, and other details will be redacted from the reports.¹⁶

As a result, in-depth analysis of the effect of gender-based violence in the Bangsamoro through cross-tabulations and correlations using gender-related issues could not be undertaken. Researchers and the general public are thus deprived of vital information that can inform policies and development programs for abused women.

Ways forward

The policies that restrict access to gender-related violence conceals the conditions that can explain violence against women. Hence, there should be no barriers to accessing quantitative data that can be used to test association and causality between gender-violence and other variables. The dataset will ensure that the public will know the real score and recognize the serious risk of violence and abuse that women face especially in conditions of violent conflict.

Building the capacity of data gatherers and teams from government offices at different levels can be easily provided. The capacity of local governments to respond to gender-based violence will be most critical, and a national response to the problem will be important. The VAWC law held the promise of changing and removing the conditions of violence that many women face. This can only be guaranteed by allowing access to the information needed to make change work.

¹⁶ Section 48 letter D of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 9262 mandates to "ensure the confidentiality of identity of the victim-survivor and all other parties directly involved with the case under investigation. For this purpose, the WCPD officer must maintain a separate blotter on crimes committed under the Act. Under no circumstances shall any police officer allow media access to information concerning VAWC reported to PNP". (Source: <https://pcw.gov.ph/law/republic-act-9262>)

Female-headed households and violent conflict: New conflict dynamics in the Bangsamoro

Nikki Philline C. de la Rosa and Angelo Casalan

The birth of a new war against violent extremists globally and locally has triggered renewed debates about the causes of violent extremism (VE).

There are those who believe that violent extremism owes much to the spread of a similar and violent ideology using the same strategies perfected by Al Qaeda years ago. Extremist groups simply metamorphosed from one to the other. There are others who trace the roots of violent extremism to poverty, inequality, and economic marginalization (Graff 2010).¹⁷ Instead of religious ideology, young men and women saw terrorism as the result of economic deprivation and marginalization (UNDP 2017).¹⁸

The reigning argument is clearly the first one—that violent extremism is mainly the outcome of contagion, bad neighborhoods, or wars-next-door.¹⁹ It explains why most state-led initiatives are designed to counter violent extremism, instead of preventing it, and why there is more emphasis on politico-military responses.

To find out more, International Alert Philippines examined the thesis that extremist violence is more, rather than less, endogenous than previously assumed. Alert began by determining the type of household that was most affected by extreme poverty. Thereafter an assessment of the association between poor households and violent conflict was undertaken. Finally, an examination of the links between poor households and violent extremism was conducted. The study included 55 localities (cities and municipalities) in ARMM, all recording at least one VE incident based on Conflict Alert data in 2017.

¹⁷ Graff, Corinne (2010) "Poverty, Development, and Violent Extremism in Weak States," in Susan Rice, Corinne Graff, and Carlos Pascual, *Confronting Poverty: Weak States and US National Security*. Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

¹⁸ Chatterjee, Siddharth. (17 October 2017). "Driven to extremes: poverty fuels violent extremism." UNDP Kenya.

¹⁹ Contagion, "bad neighbourhoods," and "war-next-door" theories suggest that violent extremism is an ideology and belief system that is not intrinsic to the Philippines but is being propagated by violent actors outside the country and their local partners and networks.

²⁰ The said relationship is statistically significant (at 0.05 level) with a p-value of 0.04 and correlation coefficient of 0.28.

²¹ Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) Poverty Incidence Small Area Estimates for 2015: <https://psa.gov.ph/content/psa-releases-2015-municipal-and-city-level-poverty-estimates>

Female-headed households

In the course of the study, Alert stumbled upon a potentially significant gender link to violent conflict when the data pointed to female-headed households (FHHs) as the poorest households in Muslim Mindanao. Localities with higher poverty incidence are correlated with higher share of female-headed households.²⁰

What this meant was that an examination of the links between poverty and terrorism or violent extremism may be explored by looking at the links between female-headed households and violent conflict in general, and to violent extremism particularly.

A Pearson test of association was conducted to examine whether there was a positive or negative relationship between the set of variables above. The Pearson test allows an exploratory quantitative analysis of relationship or association between variables without having to determine causality at the outset.

Data on female-headed households in Muslim Mindanao was harvested from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) National Household Targeting Office. Meanwhile, poverty data was gathered from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), while conflict data was harvested from the Conflict Alert database.²¹ Data on female-headed households was only available for 2017 as multi-year panel data has not been consolidated by the DSWD.

Initial analysis: Female-headed households and violent extremism

Using correlation analysis, it was revealed that localities with more poor households, on average, saw more incidents of VE. Conversely, localities with fewer poor households observed fewer incidents of VE.

The relationship between the number of poor female-headed households and overall conflict incidence in ARMM localities was also examined. The examination showed a similar positive relationship between female-headed households and overall conflict, i.e., *ARMM localities with a higher share of poor female-headed households compared to other localities were observed, on average, to have higher overall conflict incidence.* Localities with lower share of female-headed households compared to other localities were observed to have lower overall conflict incidence.

However, looking at the relationship of incidents of VE and the number of poor female-headed households yielded a different result. ARMM localities with higher share of poor female-headed households compared to other localities were observed, on average, to have relatively lower violent extremism incidence than other localities. The negative relationship is evident in localities of which share of female-headed household exceeds 15 percent. Therefore, when overall violence, not just violent extremism, is correlated with the share of poor female-headed households, the case is reversed.

Statistical significance

All the findings remain statistically non-significant. On the positive relationship between poor households and violent extremism, the correlation coefficient is 0.10 and the p-value is 0.48, indicating a statistically non-significant relationship. On the positive relationship between female headed households and violent conflict in general, the correlation coefficient is 0.13 and p-value is 0.33, indicating a statistically non-significant correlation. Finally, on the negative correlation between female headed households and violent extremism, the coefficient is -0.09 and the p-value is 0.52, also showing a statistically non-significant correlation.²²

The statistically non-significant finding should not be a source of concern because scientific conclusions should not only be based on whether a p-value passes a specific threshold. P-values can only measure the incompatibility of the data with a specified statistical model (Pearson correlation), but does not itself supply a good measure of evidence regarding a hypothesis.²³

A more important basis is the correlation coefficient that the study shows. The general rule is that the closer the value of the coefficient to zero or the smaller it is, the weaker the relationship is between the variables that are examined. Conversely, the higher or the farther the absolute value of the coefficient from zero is, the stronger the relationship is.

Since none of the coefficients in this analysis show a value ranging between -0.01 and 0.01, we can conclude that the correlation between the variables continues to exist.

Conclusion

The situation of female-headed households (FHH) is a valuable gender link in the context of studying violence in ARMM. Moving forward using qualitative methods and case studies is needed to understand the variation in outcomes, such as why the effects of FHH on violent conflict varies when a distinction is made between overall violence and violent extremism.

There are a couple of plausible explanations that Alert is examining that may yield the answers, including the absence or presence of an aggressive male role model that affects youth susceptibility to ideological or political capture, the conditions of protracted hardship and discrimination that poorer households experience, and the psychological push factors that induces participation or rejection of violent actions.

Finally, female-headed households in the Bangsamoro are among the poorest households in the region and in the country. The study shows that they shape and are shaped by violent conflict, including violent extremism.

Hence, urgent actions must be taken to mitigate their conditions by strengthening their access to government health, housing, and medical services including the provision of welfare goods that go beyond conditional cash transfer schemes and the like. The creation of a multi-disciplinary, inter-agency and multi-stakeholder body at the local government level will go a long way in preventing them and their children from being harnessed by various threat groups.

²² Raw data and visualization are available upon request from International Alert Philippines.

²³ American Statistical Association (ASA), (7 March 2016). "Statement on Statistical Significance and P-values."

Box 4:

Resolving land conflicts in the Iranun Corridor

Ruel J. Punongbayan

The Iranun Corridor is home to the Iranun ethnic group and, sits in the province of Maguindanao, near the boundaries of the provinces of Lanao del Sur and North Cotabato. Composed of the municipalities of Parang, Barira, Buldon and Matanog, it cradles Camp Abubakar, now renamed Camp Iranun, which was the largest settlement and stronghold of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the 1990s and early 2000.

The conflict landscape in the Corridor has changed over the years. Violent conflicts except in Parang, were minimal from 2011 to 2018. Out of 36 municipalities with recorded violent conflict in Maguindanao province, Matanog, Barira and Buldon placed below the top ten most violent municipalities. In fact, said municipalities never saw conflict incidence surpass 30 incidents annually.

Conflict incidence has been declining in the area from 2015 to 2018, with the most recent 35% nosedive in 2018 being the most sudden. (See **Figure M**). There were times in the past when conflict spiked, such as in 2013 following the signing of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro. The increase from 2012 to 2013 is mostly caused by illicit firearms and clan feuding, while common crimes, gender-related conflict, and damage to

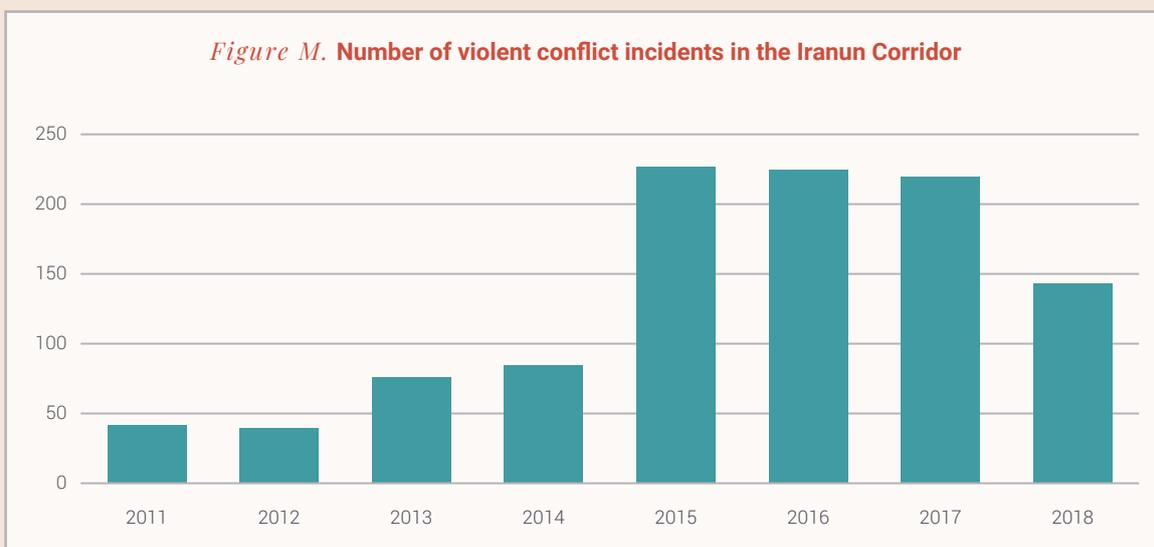
property contributed to the steep increase from 2014 to 2015.

Several factors lead to the outbreak of resource-based conflicts, and the Iranun corridor is no stranger to these factors. Overlapping claims of land ownership and boundary disputes are generally the primary causes. These can turn very violent when land grabbing eventually occurs. These problems continue to persist, creating violent disputes between Muslim and Christian settlers and indigenous peoples.

From 2011, local governments in the Iranun Corridor established and strengthened alternative dispute resolution mechanisms (ADRM) that combined formal and informal conflict resolution practices. The ADRMs are composed of community elders, traditional leaders, barangay officials, women representatives, local non-government organizations, mayors, police officers, military personnel, and in some municipalities, MILF officials, who mediate among feuding parties.

ADRM have contributed to the decrease in the number of land conflicts. In the past, land disputes erupted into violent conflicts that were prolonged

Figure M. Number of violent conflict incidents in the Iranun Corridor





A farmer and his produce at Camp Iranun in Maguindanao.
 © Froilan Gallardo

by a cycle of revenge killings perpetrated by clans involved in the dispute.

Aside from the ADRMs initiated by the Iranun LGUs, the Maguindanao provincial government and the Philippine Army were instrumental in coming up with strategies in the reconciliation of warring families across municipalities. Both parties are crucial to the composition of the Iranun Reconciliation Council, a mechanism established by Alert's local Iranun NGO partner, the Tabang Ako Siyap ko Bangsa Iranun Saya ko Kalilintad ago (TASBIKka Incorporated). TASBIKka brought, together the ADRM of the four municipalities to settle inter-municipality disputes.

The Iranun Corridor experience on conflict mediation and settlement, particularly on land, presents a valuable input in crafting the framework of land governance in the Bangsamoro.

The BARMM transition is the most opportune time to create coherence in land governance and to harmonize mandates and roles of various government agencies specifically on how overlaps

of multiple land-related agencies and policy inconsistencies will be addressed. The principal recommendation is to establish a Bangsamoro Land Commission that will design a pluralistic institutional framework for land governance. Such a framework would allow the productive use of the resource, accommodate customary institutions in land governance and traditional institutions of dispute resolution, and devolve the management functions of land classification, registration and development to local government units.

The BARMM and LGUs can work together on other immediate priorities for land governance. These include mapping tenure arrangements; auditing land tenure improvements; completing cadastral surveys in the BARMM and areas that will be encompassed by the Bangsamoro; developing a just compensation formula to settle disputes; raising legal consciousness about land issues among the people; and identifying parcels of land that can be immediately distributed to the landless, such as settlement areas and military reservations that lie idle.²⁴

²⁴ Gulane, J. T. (2014). Land governance in the Bangsamoro. Policy Brief. Quezon City, Philippines: International Alert Philippines.

Causes of conflict incidents and deaths

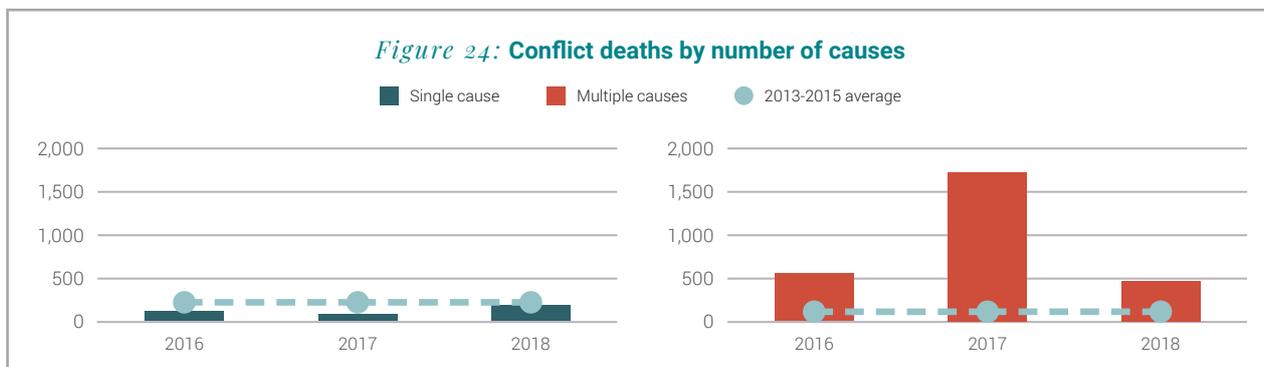
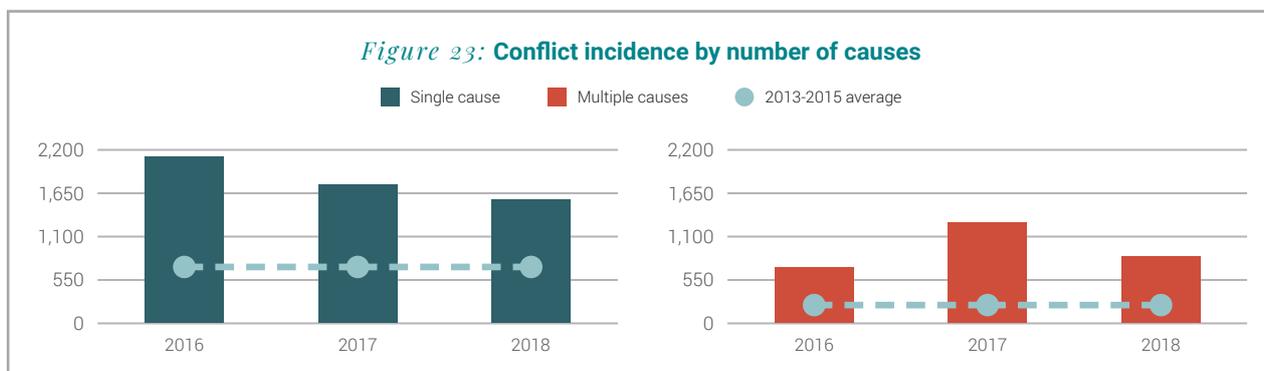
Single and multiple causality of conflict

The number of single and multi-causal incidents fell in 2018 from the year before. However, the total 869 incidents with multiple causes recorded in 2018 was still above the 2013-2015 average of 223 incidents. The dramatic rise in multi-causal incidents was observed starting 2016 and was amplified in 2017 when incidents multi-tagged as political and identity surged and comprised 54% of multi-causal incidents that year. (See Figure 23).²⁵

Conflict deaths from multi-causal incidents dropped by 72% in 2018 from a year earlier. However, the 482 deaths in 2018 were much more

than the 2013-2015 average of 98 deaths a year. Meanwhile, deaths from single-cause incidents more than doubled in 2018 from 2017 due to illicit firearm-related incidents, as shooting incidents remained more common than extremism-related bombings. The 188 deaths due to single-cause incidents were lower than the 216 that averaged from 2013-2015. (See Figure 24).

Nevertheless, the ratio of deaths per incident showed that multi-causal conflict remained deadlier in 2018. Fifty-five (55) people died per 100 multi-causal incidents compared to 12 deaths per 100 single-cause incidents.



²⁵ International Alert Philippines, Conflict Alert 2018: War and Identity, Quezon City: International Alert Philippines, 2018, pp. 30-31, <http://conflicalert.info/publication/war-and-identity/>

Causes of conflict incidents and deaths

Top three multi-causal conflict incidents

The top three most common combinations of conflict causes in 2017 remained the same in 2018.

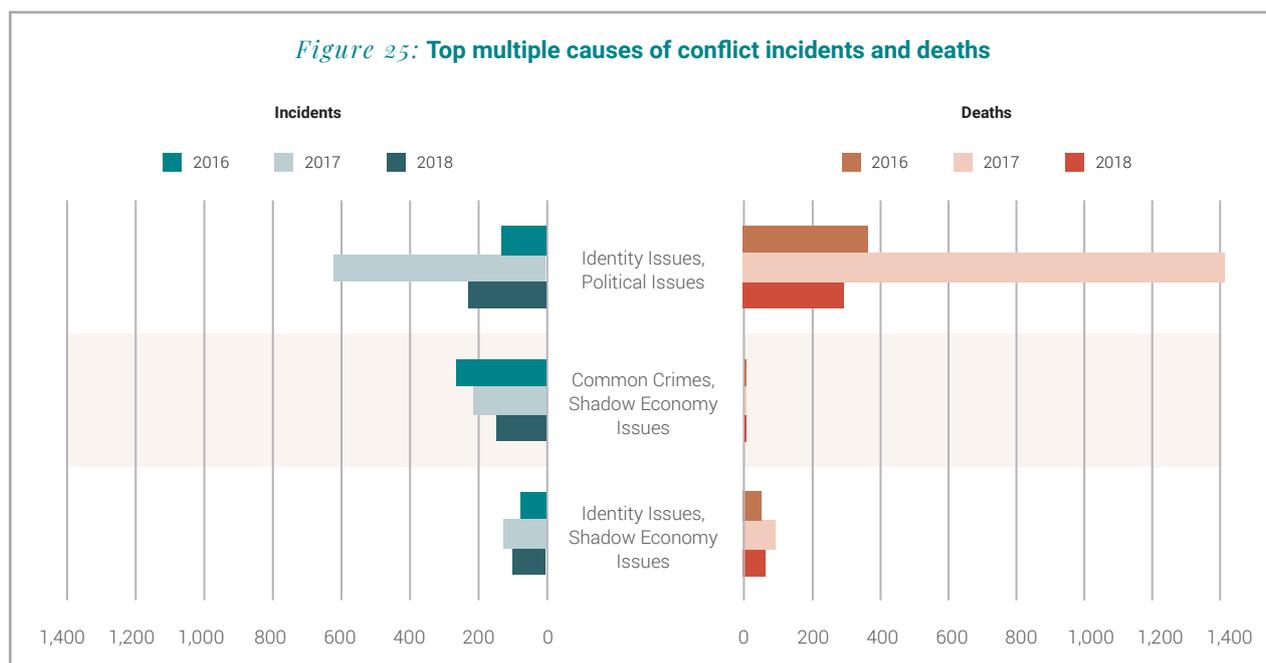
Identity combined with political issues, or extremist violence, remained the top cause of conflict in terms of incidence and deaths in 2018. These were followed by conflicts between and among rebel groups with political identity involved and clan feuding related to elections.

Common crimes combined with shadow economy issues saw a 31% decline but remained in second place. Most of these were a combination of robbery and carjacking of both motor vehicles and motorcycles.

Identity combined with shadow economy issues was the second deadliest despite placing third

in terms of incidence. The use of illicit firearms in clan feuding and violence emanating from personal grudges comprised around 94% of conflict deaths under this category. (See Figure 25).

Identity combined with political issues, or extremist violence, remained the top cause of conflict in terms of incidence and deaths in 2018.





Women plant rice seedlings in
Mamasapano, Maguindanao.
© Keith Bacongco

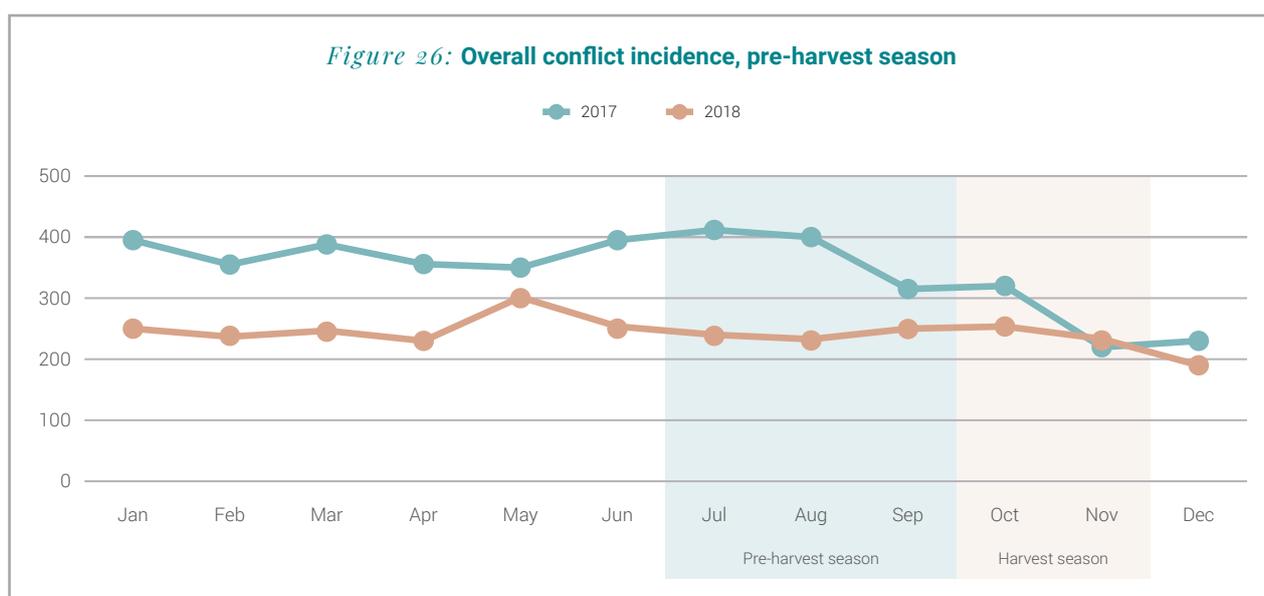


Temporal behavior of conflict

The eight-year monthly overview of temporal conflict showed a steady decline in incidents following the end of the Marawi siege in October 2017 and the continued implementation of martial law in 2018.

Conflicts normally ebb by harvest time, which provides relief from the ‘lean’ months of the preharvest period.

Identity combined with political issues remained the top cause of conflict in terms of incidence and deaths in 2018. Of these, extremist violence posted the highest numbers followed by conflicts between and among rebel groups and clan feuding related to elections. (See Figure 26).



The harvest period, which usually starts in September, was marked by violence. There were more robberies and attacks by extremist groups. Conflicts normally ebb by harvest time, which provides relief from the ‘lean’ months of the pre-harvest period. This trend had held in 2017, with the pre-harvest season markedly violent compared to other periods, as the war raged in Marawi.

The holy month of Ramadan, which started in May up to June in both 2017 and 2018, saw less incidents in 2018 (244 incidents) compared

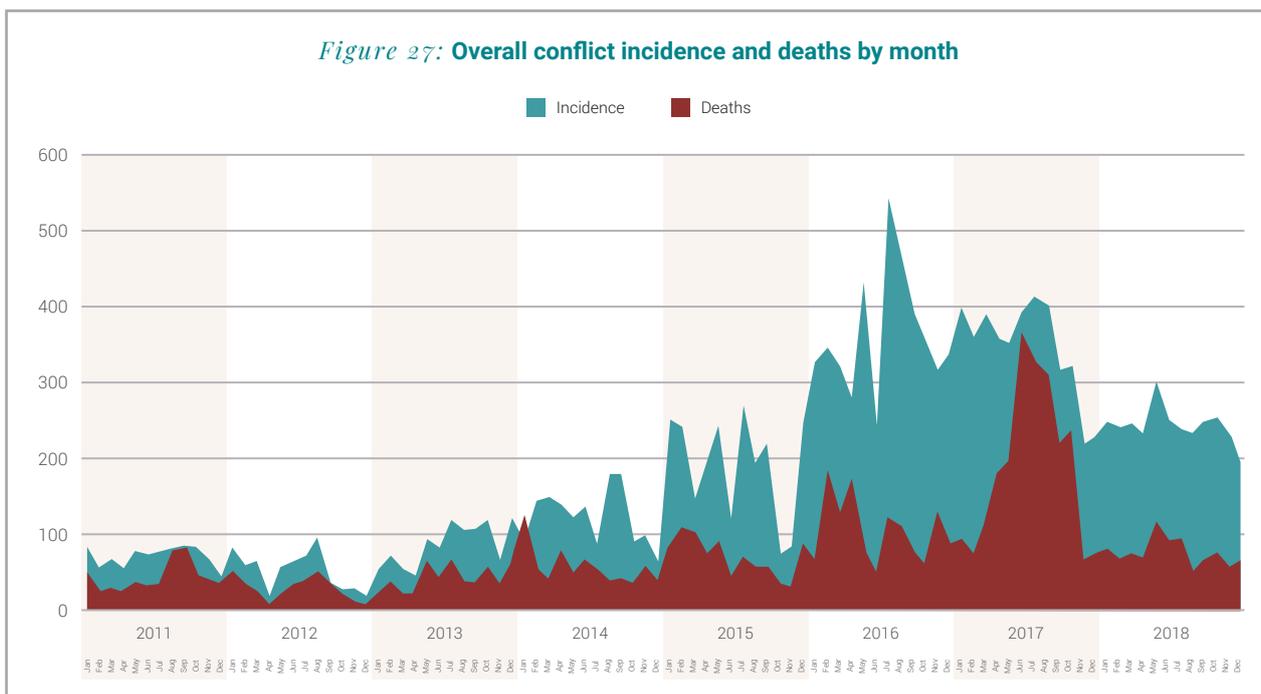
to 2017 (389 incidents). Ramadan in 2017 had coincided with the first two months of the Marawi war.

The rest of 2018 saw a more stable and secure environment. The campaign for the ratification of the BOL kicked off towards the end of the year, and security was heightened as part of preparations for the January 2019 plebiscite, which followed the declining levels of conflict incidence in the last quarter of 2018.

Further examination of temporal trends showed a widening gap between incidence and deaths since 2015, except during the months of the Marawi siege when at one point, both incidence and deaths merged. Conflict deaths in the Bangsamoro peaked during the months of the siege (May to October 2017), but were relatively

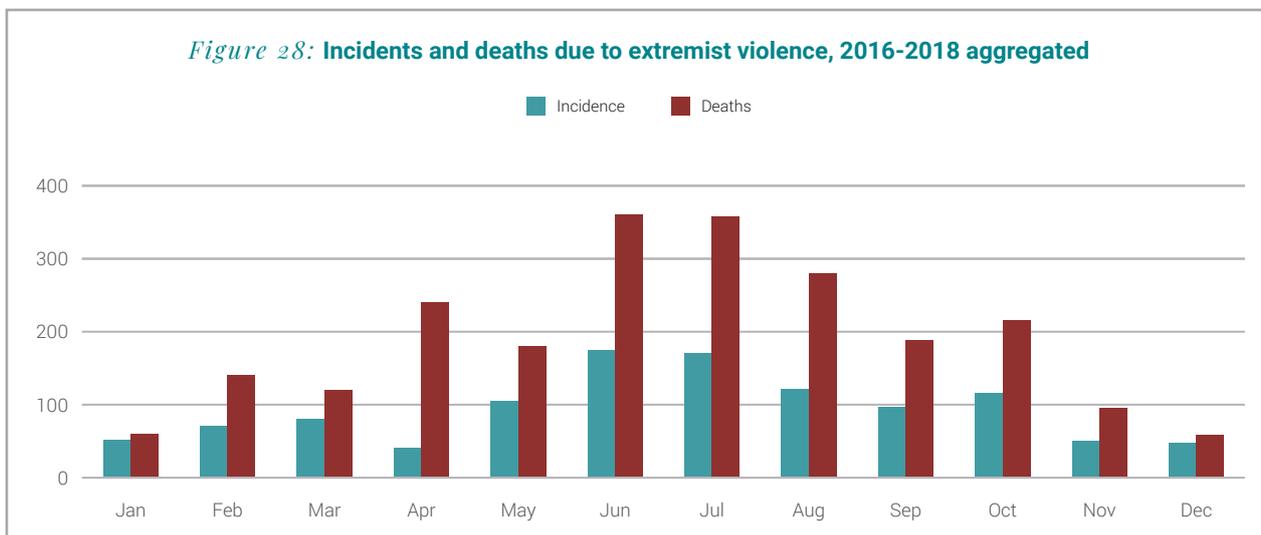
low even during the first few months of the war on drugs in the latter half of 2016. The post-Marawi siege showed the number of deaths due to conflict approaching 2015 levels and were strikingly lower than the first six months of 2016. (See Figure 27).

Figure 27: Overall conflict incidence and deaths by month



Meanwhile, incidence of and deaths from extremist violence were highest in June and July over the 2016-2018 period, and lowest in January and December. Almost 60% of these incidents were clashes. (See Figure 28).

Figure 28: Incidents and deaths due to extremist violence, 2016-2018 aggregated



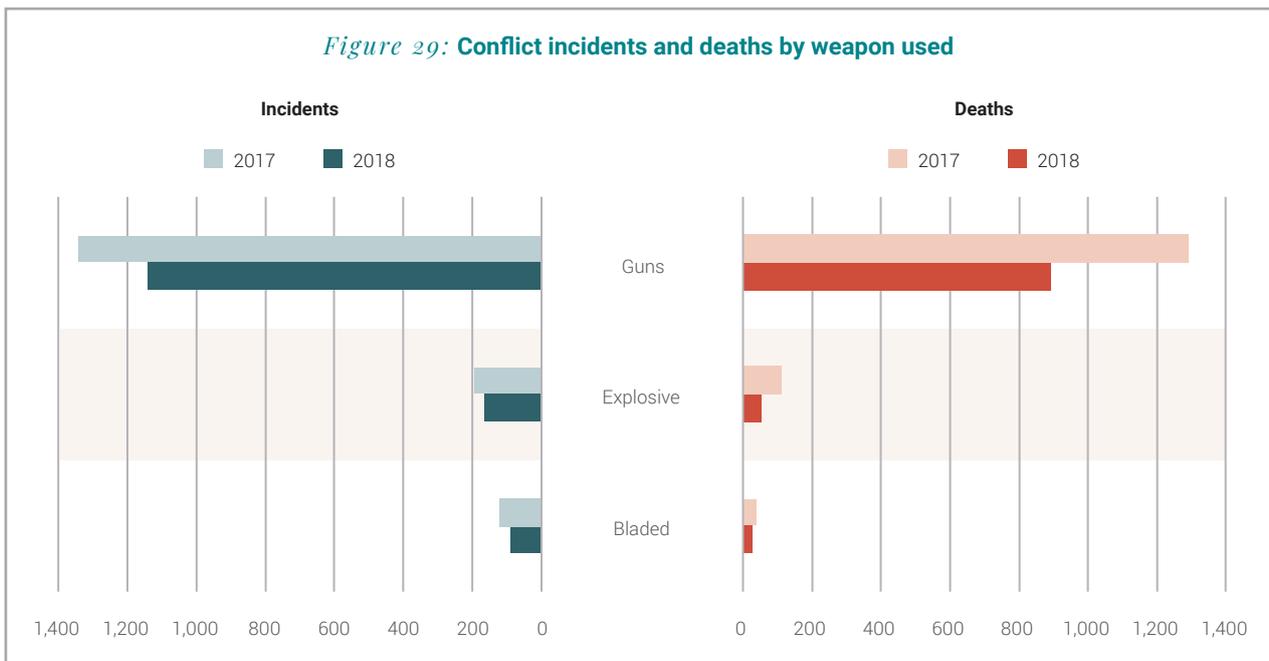
Use of weapons in conflict

The police made more arrests for illegal possession of firearms in 2018, although the total number of gun-related incidents fell by 15% from a year earlier. Gun-related deaths declined by 31%.

There were also less incidents where explosives were used. Such incidents involved the confiscation of bombing materials during raids, arrests of suspected violent extremists, and cases of actual explosions. (See Figure 29).



Figure 29: Conflict incidents and deaths by weapon used

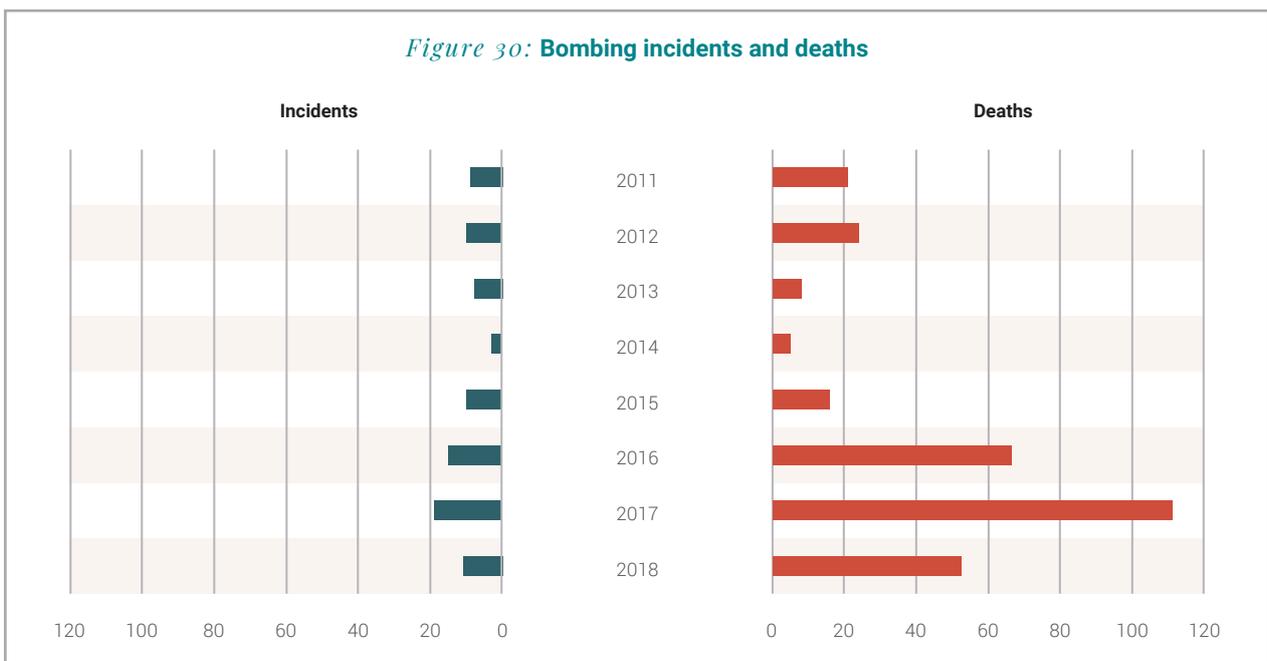




Bomb experts and scene of the crime operatives inspect the periphery of a shopping mall in Cotabato City where suspected militants linked to ISIS detonated a homemade bomb on December 31, 2018 that killed two and wounded dozens. Mark Navales

Bombing incidents in 2018 were less deadly with five deaths per incident, slightly down from the six deaths in 2017.²⁶ Nonetheless these ratios remained higher compared to four deaths per incident in 2016, and roughly two deaths for every bombing incident prior to 2016. (See Figure 30).

Figure 30: Bombing incidents and deaths



²⁶ This figure is different from incidents in which explosives were confiscated or their use had failed to result in deaths. Only bombing incidents that were deadly were counted. More deaths per fatal bombing incident may mean that bombers were becoming more strategic in wreaking havoc.

Box 5:

War makes states: How war contributed to the statebuilding project in Muslim Mindanao

Nikki Philline C. de la Rosa and Angelo Casalan

Conflict scholars often see the relationship between wars and statebuilding with a political or governance lens. War has been described as merely the “continuation of politics by other means,” and often identified as the collective, coordinated, and targeted use of violence aimed at changing power relations between groups, organizations, and states.²⁷

Other scholars would use the administrative and governance lens to describe the dynamics between wars and statebuilding.²⁸ They argue that the management of large bureaucracies and the complex hierarchies of modern-day states owe much to the same systems of command and control used by the military in disciplining soldiers and leading troops into battle. The thesis suggests that the hierarchical chain of command in the military and its commanding heights are the same capacities and experiences needed in administering and managing state bureaucracies.

Yet there is a third aspect that needs to be highlighted. Wars can also produce economic outcomes that reward the statebuilding project. Indeed, in more recent studies, war has also been described as the “extension of economics by whatever means.”²⁹

The contribution of wars to revenue generation is one way of illustrating this link. History tells us that states and governments secured the means to provide protection for its citizens through revenue generation in the form of legalized extortion or taxation. The creation of a fiscal bureaucracy and the collection of taxes enabled the provision of state-supplied goods and services.



Philippine Army officers stand guard over the ruins of Marawi during the groundbreaking ceremonies of the city's rehabilitation process.
 © **Martin San Diego** (Image has been slightly altered to remove misleading elements.)

²⁷ C. Von Clausewitz, *On War*, originally *Vom Kriege* (3 vols.), Berlin: 1832–34. The edition cited here was edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 75, 87, 89, 605.

²⁸ C. Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime”, in P. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer, and T. Skocpol (ed.), *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985; A. Du Pisani & G. Lamb, “The Role of the Military in State Formation and Nation-Building: An Overview of Historical and Conceptual Issues”, in *Demilitarisation and Peace-building in Southern Africa Volume III*, Ashgate, 2018

²⁹ D. Keen, *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agenda in Civil Wars*, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Reiner Publishers, 2000

A photograph showing two soldiers in full combat gear, including helmets, vests, and rifles, standing on a dirt path. They are looking towards a body of water in the background. The town behind the water is heavily damaged, with many buildings reduced to rubble. The sky is overcast.

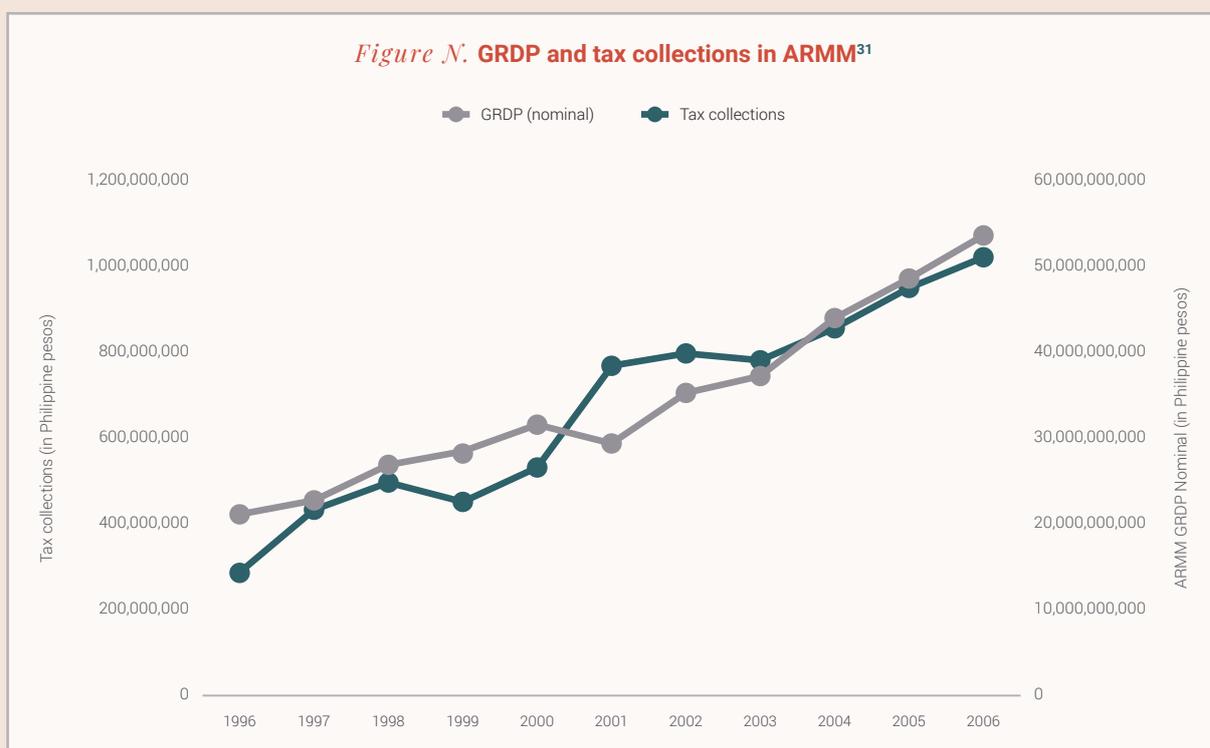
“Wars can also produce economic outcomes that reward the statebuilding project.”

To be sure, recent studies have contested the continuing relevance of the war making to statebuilding thesis by suggesting that the intensity of war and the initial economic endowments of an area are important factors that must be taken into consideration. For example, without denying the

effects on revenue extraction, Rasler and Thompson (2017) argued that the more appropriate specification for the war making-state making relationship is that “intensified wars make stronger states and stronger states make intensified war.”

The caveat above is important to consider even though the study itself admits that the conclusion mainly applies to inter-state rather than intra-state wars, and that the intensive violence and the presence or absence of economic growth prior to war is a critical element only in determining the *sustainability* of revenue extraction, but not the *occurrence* of it.

Indeed, an earlier study that examined the contribution of intra-state war to revenue generation in Muslim Mindanao showed how tax revenues were increasing in the region despite a drop in regional economic output a year after the 2000 total war between the government and Moro rebels.³⁰ The study showed how the influx of financial resources for military spending and for rehabilitation and rebuilding enabled a bigger tax take than was previously the case. **(Figure N)**



A more recent analysis of the relationship between revenue generation and regional economic output reflects a somewhat similar dynamic. The Conflict Alert 2019 team conducted a study of ARMM taxes and regional economic output, as measured by the gross regional domestic product (GRDP) from 2014 to 2018.³² This time the relationship was a positive one, showing a steeper increase in both the GRDP and tax collections during the height of the war in Marawi and other places in Muslim Mindanao in 2017.

Two puzzles emerge from the data:

³⁰ F. Lara, *Insurgents, Clans and States: Political Legitimacy and Resurgent Conflict in Muslim Mindanao*, Philippines, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2014

³¹ Chart is from F. Lara (2014)

³² GRDP is the aggregate of gross value added of all resident producer units in the region: http://nap.psa.gov.ph/technotes/grdp_tech.asp
All data on GRDP is from Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)

³³ Data is from the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR)

The relationship between revenue generation and regional economic output was a positive one, showing a steeper increase in both the GRDP and tax collections during the height of the war in Marawi and other places in Muslim Mindanao in 2017.

One, why was GRDP growing in the ARMM while war was raging in the highly urbanized mainland provinces of Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao?

Two, why were taxes increasing despite the war?

The empirical explanation lies in the type of taxes collected.³³ Revenue generation came in the form of a “tax remittance advice” (TRA) or the specific tax that the

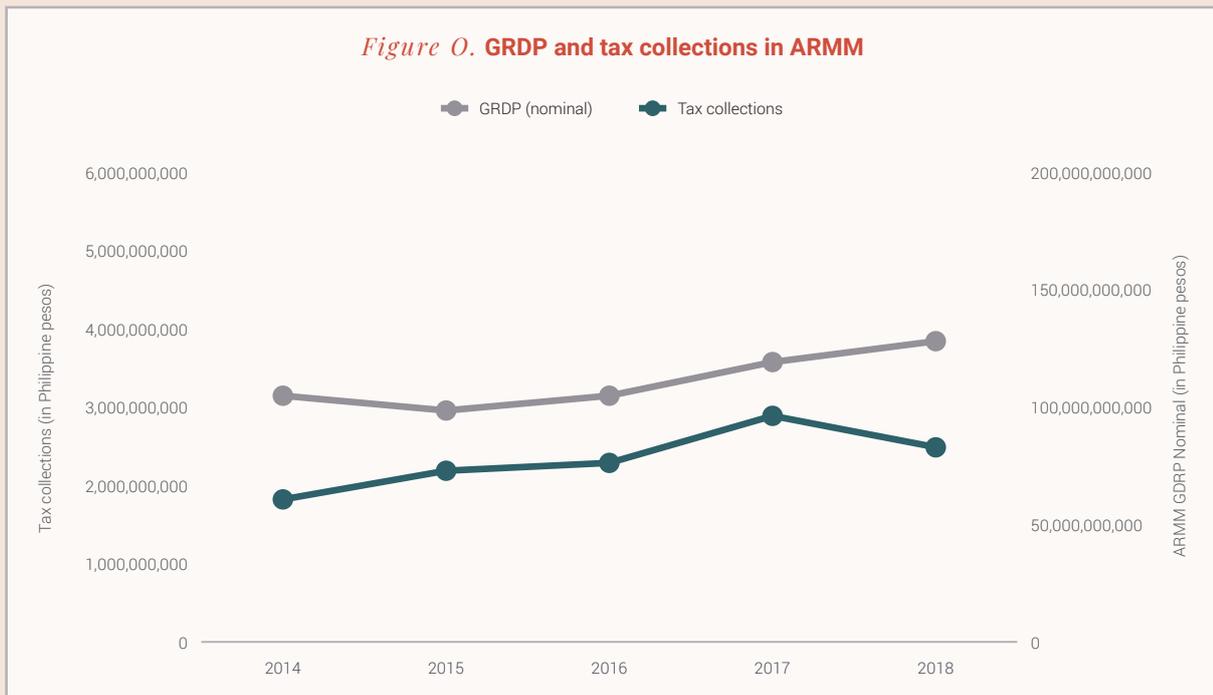
national government immediately collects from domestic or foreign funded infrastructure projects for the subsequent and planned reconstruction of destroyed areas and facilities. Other taxes include those collected from humanitarian and development spending, including military spending in conflict areas.

Meanwhile, Muslim Mindanao’s economic output growth was slowing by the end of 2018,

but TRAs remained higher than previous levels from 2014 to 2015. **(Figure O).**

These figures highlight the possibilities for statebuilding created by the post-Marawi security situation and provides ample time for the BARMM and the transition authority to undertake immediate and doable reforms in the economic and political infrastructure of the region.

Figure O. GRDP and tax collections in ARMM





Youth run with new toys at a festival in Sumisip, Basilan. Sumisip is a conflict hotspot and has been a constant witness to firefights between government troops and the Abu Sayyaf Group. **📷 Martin San Diego**



Conclusions and Implications

“**W**ar makes states,” according to the conflict scholar Charles Tilly, and nowhere is this more apparent than in Muslim Mindanao.³⁴ The thesis resonates in the recent war in Marawi and other flashpoints across Muslim Mindanao that led to the deployment of a massive security force that produced a fragile peace, which in turn benefitted the statebuilding project of a nascent Bangsamoro region.

The Conflict Alert 2019 report highlights the effects of war on the statebuilding project because it is germane to an understanding of the relationship between protection and security on the one hand, and development and peace on the other. This understanding is critical and strategic for the future of the Bangsamoro autonomous region.

Hence, the first conclusion we can get from the data is that the imposition of martial law was the single most important reason behind the fragile peace that people in Muslim Mindanao currently enjoy. The role of martial law in preventing the carrying and use of weapons in public and its consequent impact on horizontal and vertical violence is unassailable and has become the most resonant and recurring explanation for the decline at the local level.

Of course, there are other likely explanations for the plunge in violent conflict. Scholars have pointed to at least three

³⁴ C. Tilly, *War Making and State Making as Organized Crime*, in P. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer, and T. Skocpol (ed.), *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.



Civilians willfully submit to inspection at a military checkpoint at Mapandi Bridge in Marawi City. © Najib Alyhar Zacaria

other reasons that can account for a dramatic decline in violence in the Bangsamoro during the past two years: one, a decrease in the general population of the conflict-affected areas; two, an expected statistical return to 2015 levels from the 2016-2017 conflict outliers; and three, the significant entry of commercial investments, enterprises, and welfare goods in the area.

Conflict Alert 2019 examined these other explanations and eventually ruled them out because the evidence showed that (a) the population of the region continued to increase, especially among the youth and the economically active segments; (b) there was no significant influx in investments, businesses and jobs since 2015, with ARMM giving the lowest economic output, as measured by gross regional domestic product, among the six Mindanaoan regions from 2016 to 2018; and (c) nor was there a statistical return to pre-2016 levels of violence given the higher mean counts for conflict and costs in 2018.³⁵

Indeed, violent conflict has not returned to 2015 levels, which makes it difficult to situate the 2018

decline as simply a return or rebound from the conflict outliers in 2016 and 2017. From 2013 to 2015, the average number of conflict incidents was less than half the average from 2016 to 2018.

Despite the evidence, there are those who will say that this is the result of the CAB and the enduring ceasefire between the State and the various armed fronts in the region. There will be arguments about how this represents *flowers from the rubble* or the outcomes of renewed efforts to build peace before and after the war in Marawi.³⁶ Others will hang their hats on the legitimacy of the Bangsamoro project and the longings of people in Mindanao for a lasting peace under a new and autonomous political authority.

We cannot write off these claims and alternative explanations though we do wonder why it is difficult to accept an empirical and plausible narrative that already stares us in the face. This narrative comes from the voices of people from the ground, that is, the residents of Marawi, the indigenous peoples of the Iranun corridor, the traders of Tawi-Tawi, the businessmen from

³⁵ Philippine Statistics Authority. Annual Labor Force Participation, Employment, Unemployment and Underemployment Rates by Region 2017 and 2018 and GRDP Tables: <https://psa.gov.ph/regional-accounts/grdp/data-and-charts>

³⁶ Taken from C. De Quirós, *Flowers from the rubble: Essays On Life, Death And Understanding*, Manila: Anvil Publishing, 1990.



Cotabato City, and the farmers near the Liguasan Marsh. They also point to the impact of martial law and the significant differences between the political settlements that accompanied military rule in 2017, from the atrocious and repugnant conditions during the martial law of the 1970s.

The second conclusion is that the collapse in the incidence and costs of violent conflict that brought about a fragile peace has created positive conditions for development planning and action in the short term. In short, war shapes and is shaped by the development that follows.

One way of looking at the role that war plays in the statebuilding project is to demonstrate how the commanding heights of state bureaucracies are built along the same command and control doctrines that govern the provision of security and protection. Another way of looking at the impact of war is to examine the revenue streams that are released during times of violent conflict.

In the year 2000 war, tax revenues grew even as the GRDP fell because the tax streams generated by the rebuilding of infrastructure and other development projects plus the value-added taxes on consumer items served to enhance revenue generation. Something similar is happening now though, in the current scenario, both GRDP and tax collections had risen— in the case of taxes, relative to the 2014-2015 period—despite the intense conflict of the past three years. (See Box 5: War Makes States)

In sum, the possibilities for statebuilding created by the new security environment buys ample time for the BARMM and the transition authority to undertake immediate and doable reforms in the economic and political infrastructure of the region.

Third, the rise in multi-causal conflict that is primarily based on identity reveals the serious cleavages and divisions within Mindanao society that undermined political authority and



Workers constructing a flood control structure along the bank of the Mandulog River.
 © Maureen Laçuesta/
 International Alert

paved the way for violent extremism to flourish.

In fact, new fissures being created by the rise in violent extremism and the deficit in legitimacy that continues to hound the transitional authority, even with the passage of an organic law. Multi-causal conflict demonstrates how political violence and shadow economy-related conflict are increasingly complexed with violent extremism, indicating how extremist groups have tapped these types of conflict as an opportunity to capture rents and political influence.

It is important to recognize that the political legitimacy of previous Bangsamoro regimes was based on a careful distribution of rents and the

benefits that went with them. It explains why certain regimes were known for their investments in land and agribusiness, infrastructure and rights of way, drugs and weapons, and cross-border trade, etc.

This explains why the composition of the Bangsamoro parliament and the appointed members of the transition authority are already under scrutiny and why ethnic and other identity-related tensions are growing over the apportioning of positions, departments, and budgets.

The newly emerging literature on political settlements have pointed to continued processes of bargaining with elites and the need to secure buy-in to these bargains from the citizens of the Bangsamoro.³⁷ This process is evident in Maguindanao but less in Sulu and may indicate the sort of political violence that may be expected in the transition.

The conclusion's implications on peacebuilding and development are obvious.

One, unless a political settlement is reached on the critical issue of illicit weapons, the withdrawal of the huge military presence in the region may destroy the fragile peace and reverse the gains of the past two years. The normalization process and the so-called decommissioning of combatants and weapons will have, at best, a limited and negligible effect on the peace and security situation in the region. It will not weaken armed challenges to the State from rival holders of the means of coercion.

The normalization component of the transition does not guarantee lasting peace and security and is in fact hobbled by other institutional barriers such as the liberalization in the ownership and carrying of firearms

³⁷ See the following: F. Lara Jr., *Insurgents, Clans, and States: Political Legitimacy and Resurgent Conflict in Muslim Mindanao, Philippines*, Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2014; T. Parks and W. Cole, *Political Settlements: Implications for International Development Policy and Practice*, Occasional Paper No. 2, The Asia Foundation, 2010; J. Di John and J. Putzel, *Political settlements*, Issues paper, Birmingham, UK: Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, 2009; M. Khan, *Political Settlements and the Governance of Growth-Enhancing Institutions*, Monographs, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, July 2010; and W. Evans, *A Review of the Evidence Informing DFID's "Building Peaceful States and Societies" Practice Paper*, Paper 1: *Political Settlements, Peace Settlements, and Inclusion*, Research and Evidence Division Evidence Products, London: DFID, 2012.



Moro Islamic Liberation Front supporters gather in Cotabato City to campaign for the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law.  Mark Navales

under Republic Act 10591 and the traditional dependence on clans and other armed groups for the protection of lives and property.

The narrative that the decommissioning project will contribute significantly to a further reduction in violence is flawed and is ignorant of the multi-causal nature of violent conflict and the conflict strings that can be unleashed by revenge killings and clan feuding.

In these conditions it may be more plausible and realistic to allow the MILF to delay the demobilization of its forces so it can prevent its combatants, who possess highly marketable skills, from being harnessed by criminal groups and deadly shadow economies, including violent extremists. The threat of defection to other armed groups is real, and any shift to livelihoods or employment in the bureaucracy cannot replace the loss of power or prestige that combatants currently enjoy.

Two, a plebiscite does not cement the 'right to rule' and neither will the reference to one united Bangsamoro. The rise in identity-based conflict is a pattern in many conflict-to-peace transitions and is often a signifier of dissatisfaction, discrimination, and exclusion that local citizens experienced under previous political authorities in Muslim Mindanao who did not represent the voices of all ethnic and social groups adequately.

The BARMM needs to prevent the reproduction of the same anxieties and fears that undermined previous regimes by taking stock and recasting decisions, policies, and processes that hamper the construction of legitimacy, especially in the island provinces of Sulu and Basilan.

The statebuilding challenge is crystal clear—protection and security must be paramount. The new regional authority and legislature will have to generate enough political legitimacy and credibility in Muslim Mindanao that will allow people to transfer their dependence for protection and security away from local strongmen, clans, and the armed Fronts, and towards the State at all levels.

Three, the new types of violence and the newly emerging and complex set of actors and alliances that affect peace, security, and development programs require more informed and intelligent yet nuanced approaches to institutional change and development intervention.

For example, information gathering, management, and dissemination must be targeted to formal and informal, including traditional authorities who can prevent violent flashpoints and conflict strings. Security operations must be sensitized to tensions arising from ethnic cleavages and clan dynamics. Early responses to violent conflict should dive deeper into informal institutions and traditional practices of conflict settlement that contain facets of restorative justice.

The Bangsamoro is in a sweet spot at the moment. But it is still locked in a world where alliances between criminal and extremist groups have not been wholly destroyed, where new internal and cross-border alliances between extremist groups are increasing, and where transition-induced violence continues to grow.

Data Tables

Table 1: Number of conflict incidents and deaths in ARMM, 2011-2018

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2011-2018 Total	2013-2015 Average	2016-2018 Average
Incidents	867	643	1,059	1,500	2,306	4,363	4,140	2,910	17,788	1,622	3,804
Deaths	508	330	491	664	827	1,241	2,261	900	7,222	661	1,467

Table 2: Number of conflict incidents by province, 2011-2018

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2011-2018 Total
Maguindanao	327	202	401	847	1,114	2,359	1,886	1,420	8,556
Lanao del Sur	137	78	285	306	420	514	941	373	3,054
Basilan including Isabela City	203	184	174	185	380	796	630	468	3,020
Sulu	147	118	150	107	332	559	553	508	2,474
Tawi-Tawi	53	61	49	55	60	135	130	141	684

Table 3: Conflict incidence per 100,000 persons, 2011-2018

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2011-18 Average
Basilan including Isabela City	49	44	40	41	83	169	130	94	81
Maguindanao	26	15	29	60	76	154	119	86	71
Sulu	20	16	19	13	40	66	64	57	37
Lanao del Sur	14	8	28	30	40	48	86	33	36
Tawi-Tawi	14	16	13	14	15	34	32	35	22

Table 4: Conflict incidence per 1,000 sq.km., 2011-2018

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2011-18 Average
Maguindanao	32	20	40	83	110	233	186	140	106
Basilan including Isabela City	55	50	47	50	103	216	171	127	102
Sulu	32	26	33	24	73	123	122	112	68
Lanao del Sur	9	5	19	20	28	34	63	25	25
Tawi-Tawi	15	17	14	15	17	37	36	39	24

Table 5: Conflict deaths with and without Marawi City, 2017-2018

	2017	2018
ARMM with Marawi City	2,261	900
ARMM without Marawi City	1,092	890

Table 6: Conflict deaths by province, 2011-2018

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2011-2018 Total
Maguindanao	203	92	177	342	364	444	497	449	2,568
Lanao del Sur	90	48	108	106	184	310	1,358	99	2,303
Sulu	86	71	115	96	142	221	231	213	1,175
Basilan including Isabela City	111	108	70	99	115	220	137	98	958
Tawi-Tawi	18	11	21	21	22	46	38	41	218

Table 7: Conflict deaths per 100,000 persons, 2011-2018

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2011-18 Average
Lanao del Sur	9	5	11	10	18	29	124	9	27
Basilan including Isabela City	27	26	16	22	25	47	28	20	26
Maguindanao	16	7	13	24	25	29	31	27	22
Sulu	12	9	15	12	17	26	27	24	18
Tawi-Tawi	5	3	6	5	6	12	9	10	7

Table 8: Conflict deaths per 1,000 sq.km., 2011-2018

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2011-2018 Average
Basilan including Isabela City	30	29	19	27	31	60	37	27	33
Sulu	19	16	25	21	31	49	51	47	32
Maguindanao	20	9	17	34	36	44	49	44	32
Lanao del Sur	6	3	7	7	12	21	90	7	19
Tawi-Tawi	5	3	6	6	6	13	10	11	8

Table 9: Conflict incidence by main cause, 2011-2018

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2011-2018 Total
Shadow Economy Issues	355	207	400	525	604	1,584	1,661	1,782	7,118
Identity Issues	128	70	97	203	211	722	1,241	612	3,284
Common Crimes	89	56	95	273	480	898	728	440	3,059
Political Issues	92	96	173	101	160	269	716	349	1,956
Governance Issues	31	8	18	29	34	76	29	195	420
Resource Issues	29	17	15	27	36	63	61	76	324

Table 10: Conflict deaths by main cause, 2011-2018

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2011-2018 Total
Political Issues	120	84	140	203	223	457	1,617	346	3,190
Identity Issues	122	35	80	96	109	525	1,709	469	3,145
Shadow Economy Issues	134	49	79	113	102	228	336	343	1,384
Governance Issues	12	6	11	15	34	61	41	27	207
Resource Issues	47	18	19	20	14	11	19	36	184
Common Crimes	19	11	13	22	24	22	34	20	165

Table 11: Top 10 specific causes of conflict incidents and deaths, 2016-2018

	Incidents			Deaths		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Illegal drugs	759	643	746	63	61	61
Illicit firearms	411	489	598	101	189	264
Extremist violence	169	689	265	417	1,563	311
Robbery	495	386	251	17	15	7
Illegal gambling	32	137	213	1	0	0
Gender-related issues	336	306	124	14	2	6
Personal grudge	62	119	113	27	56	63
Clan feud	65	104	98	59	80	70
Executive and judicial decisions	0	12	98	0	29	17
Other governance issues	0	8	90	0	12	6

Table 12: Number of multi-causal and single-cause conflicts and number of deaths from these incidents

	Incidents			
	2013-15 average	2016	2017	2018
Single-cause incidents	696	2,122	1,752	1,577
Multi-causal incidents	223	698	1,277	869
	Deaths			
	2013-15 average	2016	2017	2018
Single cause	216	110	86	188
Multiple causes	98	554	1,739	482

Table 13: Top multiple causes of conflict incidents and deaths, 2016-2018

	Incidents			Deaths		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Identity Issues, Political Issues	132	622	232	369	1,413	296
Common Crimes, Shadow Economy Issues	262	216	149	7	6	6
Identity Issues, Shadow Economy Issues	81	123	102	56	96	70

Table 14: Overall conflict incidence by month, ARMM

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Jan	85	85	56	91	253	329	396	248
Feb	58	61	74	145	242	348	356	241
Mar	68	67	56	151	146	322	389	246
Apr	57	19	47	142	195	277	358	229
May	79	58	96	123	247	436	351	301
Jun	75	66	83	140	121	243	394	251
Jul	78	73	120	88	275	543	412	238
Aug	82	98	107	181	193	472	402	232
Sep	86	37	109	181	226	390	316	248
Oct	85	29	122	92	75	353	321	253
Nov	69	30	65	100	85	314	218	232
Dec	45	20	124	66	248	336	227	191

Table 15: Overall conflict deaths by month, ARMM

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Jan	50	51	22	125	85	60	93	80
Feb	23	35	37	54	109	185	71	66
Mar	29	24	21	38	102	118	115	75
Apr	24	7	21	78	71	174	181	67
May	38	19	64	45	90	79	199	116
Jun	33	33	38	66	38	43	366	91
Jul	33	39	66	53	70	122	328	94
Aug	79	51	37	39	56	111	312	49
Sep	81	34	36	41	56	76	216	66
Oct	46	20	56	34	34	57	237	75
Nov	37	11	31	57	29	129	67	55
Dec	35	6	62	34	87	87	76	66

Table 16: Number of incidents and deaths due to extremist violence by month, 2016 to 2018 Total

	Incidents	Deaths
Jan	51	58
Feb	71	137
Mar	78	121
Apr	41	241
May	106	182
Jun	177	362
Jul	168	358
Aug	122	278
Sep	98	187
Oct	116	214
Nov	49	95
Dec	47	58

Table 17: Number of conflict incidents and deaths by weapon used

	Incidents		Deaths	
	2017	2018	2017	2018
Guns	1,343	1,141	1,290	891
Explosives	193	166	112	53
Bladed	121	90	39	25

Table 18: Bombing incidents and the number of deaths from these incidents

	Bombing incidents	Deaths due to bombing
2011	9	21
2012	10	24
2013	8	8
2014	3	5
2015	10	16
2016	15	67
2017	19	112
2018	11	53

*Accounts only bombing incidents that resulted in deaths.

Table A: Percentage of incidents by causal determination, 2011-2018

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Percentage of undetermined	36%	43%	40%	40%	47%	35%	27%	16%
Percentage of determined	64%	57%	60%	60%	53%	65%	73%	84%

Table B: Percentage of incidents with determined and undetermined causes, 2018

	Percentage
Single cause	54%
Multiple causes	30%
Undetermined	16%

Table C: Percentage of incidents with determined and undetermined causes, 2011-2018

	Percentage
Single cause	46%
Multiple causes	21%
Undetermined	33%

Table D: Most common manifestations of deadly conflict incidents undetermined causes, 2011-2018

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Grand Total
Shooting	195	151	231	263	304	429	182	103	1,858
Stabbing/Hacking	13	7	13	17	23	21	16	10	120
Ambuscade, assault and clash combined	4	4	5	7	8	20	11	4	63

Table E: VII without displacement by province, 2012-2018

	Maguindanao	Lanao del Sur	Basilan including Isabela City	Sulu	Tawi-Tawi
2012	0.09	0.03	0.11	0.06	0.01
2013	0.18	0.10	0.07	0.08	0.01
2014	0.33	0.10	0.08	0.08	0.01
2015	0.43	0.16	0.13	0.17	0.01
2016	0.75	0.25	0.36	0.24	0.04
2017	0.63	0.75	0.21	0.23	0.03
2018	0.50	0.12	0.13	0.22	0.03

Table F: VII with displacement by province, 2012-2018

	Maguindanao	Lanao del Sur	Basilan including Isabela City	Sulu	Tawi-Tawi
2012	4.09	2.03	3.11	0.06	0.01
2013	3.18	1.10	3.07	1.08	0.01
2014	3.33	1.10	3.08	2.08	0.01
2015	4.43	2.16	3.13	2.17	0.01
2016	4.75	3.25	3.36	3.24	0.04
2017	4.63	4.75	3.21	3.23	0.03
2018	4.50	3.12	2.13	1.22	0.03

Table G: VII without displacement by month, 2011-2018

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Jan	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.26	0.41	0.57	0.54	0.35
Feb	0.10	0.14	0.14	0.25	0.43	0.76	0.49	0.31
Mar	0.13	0.11	0.11	0.15	0.38	0.64	0.57	0.38
Apr	0.11	0.08	0.12	0.34	0.33	0.73	0.57	0.32
May	0.13	0.11	0.16	0.15	0.38	0.52	0.63	0.43
Jun	0.11	0.12	0.12	0.24	0.26	0.42	0.82	0.36
Jul	0.12	0.15	0.18	0.22	0.30	0.52	0.84	0.38
Aug	0.20	0.17	0.15	0.19	0.22	0.44	0.83	0.33
Sep	0.21	0.10	0.17	0.15	0.18	0.46	0.58	0.31
Oct	0.14	0.06	0.17	0.15	0.22	0.38	0.66	0.31
Nov	0.10	0.05	0.15	0.17	0.24	0.57	0.32	0.27
Dec	0.10	0.03	0.19	0.13	0.23	0.49	0.32	0.31

Table H: VII averages with and without displacement, 2013-2018

Time period	VII	
	with displacement	without displacement
2013-2015 average	2.00	0.13
2016-2018 average	2.77	0.30

Table I: Conflict incidents and deaths in Marawi City by month, 2017-2018

	2017		2018	
	Incidents	Deaths	Incidents	Deaths
Jan	23	4	4	0
Feb	10	7	1	0
Mar	14	2	5	1
Apr	14	7	5	0
May	54	121	7	1
Jun	130	319	7	2
Jul	98	241	4	1
Aug	55	139	6	1
Sep	56	135	9	0
Oct	72	183	7	0
Nov	6	11	9	4
Dec	0	0	8	0

Table J: Conflict incidents and deaths in Marawi City by main cause, 2017-2018

	Incidents		Deaths	
	2017	2018	2017	2018
Shadow Economy Issues	51	50	13	8
Resource & Governance Issues combined	5	12	12	2
Common Crimes	33	10	5	0
Political Issues	445	8	1,135	1
Identity Issues	447	8	1,135	2

Table K: Incidents of violence against women in the ARMM, 2011-2018

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Gender Related Issues	14	17	14	85	121	336	306	124

Table L: Incidents of violence against women by province, 2017-2018

	2017	2018
Maguindanao	75	58
Sulu	23	16
Lanao del Sur	40	14
Basilan	8	10
Tawi-Tawi	8	3

Table M: Number of violent conflict incidents in the Iranun Corridor 2011-2018

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2011-2018 Total
Iranun Total	42	41	76	84	229	227	220	143	1,062

Table N: GRDP and tax collections in ARMM, 2014-2018

	GRDP (nominal)	Total tax collection	Tax Remittance Advice (TRA)
2014	104,835,839,704	1,831,800,953	1,216,997,119
2015	99,576,138,000	2,190,182,385	1,452,781,953
2016	105,246,996,000	2,296,281,121	1,605,110,544
2017	119,282,762,000	2,865,603,162	2,132,751,879
2018	128,710,725,000	2,500,788,844	1,560,296,300

*All in Philippine pesos

Methodology

Conflict Alert tracks and analyzes violent conflict, defined as incident/s where two or more parties use violence to settle misunderstandings and grievances, and/or defend and expand their individual or collective interest (e.g. social, economic, political resources and power, etc.)

Data Sources. Key sources of data are the incident reports from the Philippine National Police (PNP) and media reports from 14 local and national newspapers. Multi-Stakeholder Validation Groups (MSVGs), composed of people in the community with knowledge of local conflicts are a third source of data and analysis. MSVG members' backgrounds range from security provision, crime prevention, conflict research, and crime monitoring, to peacebuilding, local governance, policy formulation, journalism, and grassroots knowledge.

The multiple data sources - police, media and the community - make Conflict Alert the largest repository of data and analysis on subnational conflict in Mindanao.

Stepwise process

Data Gathering. Incident reports are collected from the regional, provincial, and city offices of the PNP. Reports from 14 national and local newspapers are gathered.

Data Sorting. Incidents are classified into violent and non-violent. Only the violent conflict incidents are encoded and subjected to analysis.

Data Encoding. At the first stage, trained encoders record all details of the incidents using an online encoding form. They determine the cause or causes of the incidents as provided by the police and newspaper reports. They check for links between newly encoded incidents and previously recorded incidents, or for conflict strings. They geotag the incidents.

Duplicate entries are voided using a search facility. At the next stage, data reviewers check the encoded data, in particular, the cause or causes of the incidents and conflict strings. At the third stage, a second reviewer makes random checks to further ensure data quality.

A distinct feature of Conflict Alert is the multi-tagging of incidents to capture their **multi-causality**. This sharpens the analysis of conflict triggers and promotes understanding of conflict dynamics. Multi-tagging, however, creates a discrepancy between the number of reported

incidents and the number of causes. For example, an incident involving illegal drugs and weapons, both shadow economy issues, is counted as one incident in the database. But as to cause, it is counted as one incident under illegal drugs and another incident under illicit weapons.

Conflict Alert also enables identification of conflict strings. **Conflict strings** refer to episodes of violence arising from a discrete incident with one or multiple causes.³⁸ It can also emerge when the singular source of violence at the outset triggers other issues or causes of conflict. The database is able to track how a single incident is reproduced through violent confrontations or retaliatory actions. For example, politically-motivated conflict can induce an episode of violence that fuses with shadow economy or ethnic and clan identity issues, as it spirals out of control.

Data Validation. Multistakeholder Validation Groups (MSVG) contribute to both the recording and analysis of conflict incidents. They add details such as the cause or causes of the conflict, if these are not provided by police and newspaper reports. Members also add incidents they know of that they did not find on the list. They use the meetings to discuss conflict trends to enhance the analysis of the data.

An MSVG is a multistakeholder body that draws together different individuals with distinctive expertise to examine and validate conflict data, determine the cause/s of conflict, identify conflict strings, and enrich data analysis. Three MSVGs have been established to cover three geographical clusters: Zamboanga-Basilan-Sulu-Tawi Tawi (Zambasulta); Maguindanao; and

Lanao del Sur. They are convened bi-monthly by academic partners Western Mindanao State University and Notre Dame University.

Data Analysis. Data are tabulated and analyzed according to conflict incidence, density, causes, strings, and trends. In addition, the severity (frequency) and magnitude (or cost in terms of people injured, killed and displaced) of violence are examined using Alert's **Violence Intensity Index** to help pinpoint priorities and interventions in conflict-affected areas.

At this stage, cause or causes of violent conflict are doubly checked to see patterns or trends. Related incidents are examined for conflict strings.

Data Visualization. The findings are presented using visual tools such as charts, graphs, and tables. Incidents are also mapped, providing locational context to the incidents. Users of the Conflict Alert website may generate their own charts, graphs, tables, and maps using its charting and mapping tools.

Data Dissemination. Results are presented to key stakeholders such as government agencies, local government units, civil society groups, academic institutions, private institutions, and the security sector. The whole dataset is also stored in a comma-separated values or CSV files and written up in reports that are uploaded to the Conflict Alert website and made available to the public for free.

³⁸ De la Rosa, N.P.C., Disrupting Conflict Strings in Sub-National Contexts: Experience from Muslim Mindanao, Philippines, Paper delivered at the WHO and University of Cambridge Global Violence Reduction Conference 2014, 18-19 September 2014 at King's College, Cambridge, United Kingdom

Definition of Terms

Violent conflict. An incident where two or more parties use violence to settle misunderstandings and grievances and/or defend or expand their individual or collective interests. Violence entails the use of force or physical violence, or the threat to use force or physical violence.

Vertical conflict. These are separatist or non-separatist armed struggles against the State, including terrorist actions that destabilize a State. Rebellions, insurgencies and extremist violence fall under vertical conflict.

Horizontal conflict. These are conflicts between individuals, families, clans, ethnic groups, rival insurgent factions, political parties, private armed groups, among others.

Causal categories. Conflicts are categorized according to their main cause and specific cause. The main causes of conflict are shadow economy issues, common crimes, political issues, identity issues, resource issues, and governance issues. Under each main cause are specific causes. Conflict Alert presently has 59 specific causes of conflict.

Shadow economies. These pertain to the informal or underground sectors of the economy that tend to fuel violent conflict. In Mindanao, these include the illegal drug and illicit firearm trades, kidnap-for-ransom, cattle rustling, smuggling, illegal gambling, carjacking, and human trafficking.

Common crimes. These are cases of robbery, damage to properties, and violent conflict triggered by alcohol intoxication, among others.

Political issues. These include vertical conflict such as rebellion and extremist violence, and horizontal conflict caused by electoral competition, abuse of power and authority or political repression, and violent struggles between rival insurgent groups for politico-military control.

Identity issues. These include clashes between families and clans, violence arising from personal grudges between individuals, and gender-based violence. Religious conflict, an identity issue, is closely linked to extremist violence, a political issue, and manifests as brutal acts targeting individuals or groups holding different beliefs.

Resource issues. These are conflicts over ownership, use, and control of land, water and other natural resources.

Governance issues. These are violent struggles for government resources and rents, including conflicts due to bidding processes, violent responses to lawful actions and processes, and other government-related transactions and/or development projects.

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