



ASIA/PHILIPPINES - "Love of God and Love of neighbor": Joint Letter of Bishops and Ulama for peace in Mindanao

Cotabato (Agenzia Fides) - Bishops and Islamic religious leaders are committed together to promote and build peace in the society of southern Philippines is what the joint Letter said published by the "Bishop Ulama Conference," BUC on the occasion of the "Week for Peace in Mindanao" which began on November 29 and ends today, December 5. The Letter, sent to Fides Agency, is titled "Love of God and Love of neighbor: a challenge for Mindanao." At the basis of everything, the text says, there is "a common mandate for Christians-Islamic-indigenous" to "love God/Allah/Magbabaya, the neighbor and nature which guides them into harmonious/peaceful living." The religious leaders agree that "often, conflicts are due to politics and economics under the guise of religion," which then, in its authenticity, is a factor of peace.

Bishops and ulama Muslims say they will continue their awareness activities of promoting peace in Mindanao, supporting "the Framework Agreement" between Muslim rebels and the Philippine government last October. On 3 and 4 December, on the occasion of the "Week of Peace", the BUC has organized a forum entitled "A journey toward fullness", dedicated to explore themes and issues related to the framework agreement for Mindanao. The assembly of religious leaders outlined a "road map" for peace in Mindanao through the promotion of "formative and character-building projects whereby an interactive knowledge and understanding of faith, culture and dialogue is experienced in the spirit of dialogue, in order to build genuine harmony and peace in individuals and communities."

The BUC was founded in 1996 as "the Forum of Dialogue", then became institutionalized in stable Conference. In past years it was also actively involved in the process and in negotiations for peace in the southern Philippines (PA) (Agenzia Fides 05/12/2012)