



ASIA/PHILIPPINES – An "Interfaith Muslim-Christian Council" begins in the home of Abu Sayyaf

Jolo (Agenzia Fides) - After a year of preparation work, the "Interfaith Council of Leaders-Sulu" has officially started, the small string of islands in the southern Philippines, known for being the home and the basis of the "Abu Sayyaf" terrorist group. This was reported to Fides by the Center for Muslim-Christian dialogue "Sisilah", based in Zamboanga city (island of Mindanao), promoter of the new Council, expressing satisfaction for what is defined "the beginning of something great".

As explained in the note sent to Fides, the new Council, which includes local Christian and Muslim leaders, has the task to "promote a better understanding in the relations between Christians and Muslims in this province" and will work "for the common good of the community". The experience of a local interfaith Council had already started in Mindanao and then on the island of Basila, giving good results with regards to social and religious harmony. In a statement sent to Fides, the leaders say: "We, members of the Interfaith Council of Sulu, led by the Almighty, moved by the spirit of dialogue and peace, inspired by the movement for dialogue 'Sisilah' that promotes values such as respect, trust, understanding and openness, are committed to: strengthening our faith, and to work together –Muslims and Christians - against violence, corruption and injustice in our community; to act as a forum that will facilitate to clarify issues regarding peace, order, development and the environment; to preserve our function as a group that promotes the culture of dialogue, the path to peace, serving our community as mediators between citizens and the state or other bodies on matters of politics, economics and other social issues". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 28/08/2013)