

Covenant of peace for the Bangsamoro: a tri-audience ministry study

The Moro conflict is not primarily a military problem but a four-century covenant violation — the systematic dispossession of an indigenous Muslim people from their ancestral lands, governance, identity, and dignity — and its resolution demands not merely political negotiation but **covenantal restoration grounded in the justice traditions shared by all three Abrahamic faiths**. The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BARMM), established in 2019, represents the most significant political achievement toward resolution, yet the peace process has reached what the Third Party Monitoring Team called in August 2025 "a perilous juncture" with trust "at an all-time low since the signature of the CAB." This study presents a covenant-based framework drawn from the Torah/Tanakh as primary authority, with Quranic and Christian New Testament parallels, demonstrating that the three traditions converge on the same foundational truths: land belongs to God and cannot be permanently alienated; the stranger must be loved and protected; justice for the oppressed is a divine mandate; and peace without justice is no peace at all.

This document addresses all parties simultaneously. To the **Filipino government and BARMM leadership**: covenant governance demands impartiality, accountability, and fulfillment of sworn obligations.

To the **Moro people and Islamic leadership**: the maqasid al-shariah and the sulh tradition align with Torah covenant principles and demand both the pursuit of justice and the discipline of reconciliation.

To **international mediators and peace organizations**: the covenant framework provides a deeper foundation than secular rights discourse alone — one that speaks in the moral language each community already recognizes.

Part I: The wound — four centuries of covenant violation

How the Moro became strangers in their own land

Islam reached the southern Philippines through Arab, Indian, and Malay traders and Sufi scholars beginning in the 10th century. By **1450**, Sharif ul-Hashim had established

the **Sultanate of Sulu**, a sovereign state with Islamic governance, Sharia courts, and trade networks reaching China, Singapore, and the broader Malay world. By **1515**, Sharif Muhammad Kabungsuwan founded the **Sultanate of Maguindanao** in the Cotabato Valley. The **Confederate States of Lanao** — a unique decentralized federation of four Maranao states with 43 sultans governing by consensus — operated around Lake Lanao from approximately 1616. These were not tribal enclaves but fully functioning states with written legal codes, diplomatic relations, hereditary governance through the *salsila* (genealogical lineage), and sophisticated integration of Sharia and *adat* (customary law).

Spain arrived in 1565 and applied the term "Moro" — from the Spanish for "Moor," their Islamic enemies in the Reconquista — to Philippine Muslims. What followed was **over 300 years of Spanish-Moro warfare** (1565–1898), the longest resistance to European colonialism in Southeast Asian history. Sultan Muhammad Dipatuan Kudarat of Maguindanao (r. c. 1619–1671) repelled Spanish expeditions, expanded Moro maritime power, and declared holy war. Spain captured forts and burned towns but **never conquered the Moro heartlands**. The critical 1878 "Bases of Peace and Capitulation" between Spain and Sulu contained a deliberate translation fraud: the Spanish version claimed sovereignty; the Tausug version described a protectorate. This deception would be repeated across colonial eras.

The **United States** inherited Spain's claim via the 1898 Treaty of Paris, paying \$20 million for territories it did not control. The **Bates Treaty of 1899** with Sulu's Sultan Jamalul Kiram II promised non-interference with Moro religion and customs — then was **unilaterally abrogated in 1904**. What followed was military pacification of extraordinary violence. At the **Battle of Bud Dajo** (March 1906), 750 American troops slaughtered nearly **1,000 Tausug villagers** — men, women, and children — who had taken refuge in a volcanic crater to protest U.S. disarmament and tax policies. Mark Twain condemned the massacre. At **Bud Bagsak** (1913), General Pershing's forces killed up to 2,000 Moro defenders. The **Carpenter Agreement** (1915) stripped the Sultan of temporal authority, and the Jones Law (1916) incorporated Moro territories into the Philippine state without Moro consent. In 1935, 120 Lanao datus petitioned President Roosevelt for separate independence — their plea was ignored.

The most devastating transformation came after Philippine independence in 1946. Under Presidents Roxas, Quirino, and Magsaysay, the Philippine government implemented systematic **Christian settler migration programs** to Mindanao, relocating Huk guerrilla surrenderees and landless farmers from Luzon and the Visayas. The **Land Registration Act of 1902**, the **Public Land Acts** (1919, 1936), and post-independence homesteading laws imposed individual titling systems that invalidated communal ancestral ownership. The result was one of the most dramatic

demographic reversals in modern history: **Moro people went from approximately 76% of Mindanao's population in 1903 to 19% by 1990.** By 1981, Moros owned less than 17% of the land they had inhabited for centuries, mostly in remote and barren areas.

The birth of armed resistance

The **Jabidah Massacre** (March 18, 1968) — in which the Philippine military executed Muslim army recruits on Corregidor Island who had refused a covert operation against their fellow Muslims in Sabah — became the flashpoint of modern Moro resistance. Datu Udtog Matalam founded the Muslim Independence Movement; the campus activist Nur Misuari, radicalized by the massacre, would go on to establish the **Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)** in 1969–1972.

Anti-Moro violence escalated with the **Iliga militia** — Christian Visayan settlers who conducted 21 massacres between 1970–1971, killing 518 people, including the Manili Mosque massacre (65–79 civilians). The Iliga enjoyed military support and Marcos hosted their commander at the Presidential Palace. The **MNLF** became a 30,000-strong liberation army fighting for Moro self-determination, supported by Libya and recognized by the Organization of Islamic Conference. It was and remains a **legitimate national liberation movement**, never designated as terrorist by the United States or European Union.

The **Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)**, founded by Al-Azhar-trained scholar Hashim Salamat after his 1977 split from the MNLF, sought a more explicitly Islamic framework for liberation. It too is a **legitimate liberation movement** — never terrorist-designated — and now leads the BARMM government. These must be clearly distinguished from **terrorist splinter groups**: the **Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)**, founded in 1991, which devolved from an ideological movement into a kidnapping-for-ransom criminal enterprise with Al-Qaeda and later ISIS links (designated terrorist by the U.S., UN, and multiple nations; largely dismantled by 2024); the **BIFF** (Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters), a spoiler group that rejected the peace process and adopted ISIS ideology; and the **Maute Group**, an ISIS-affiliated clan militia destroyed after the 2017 Marawi siege. The 40-year Moro conflict has killed more than 120,000 people and displaced millions.

Part II: The covenants broken — the peace process and its fractures

Five agreements and the pattern of betrayal

The covenant violations of colonial powers gave way to a pattern of broken political agreements:

The **1976 Tripoli Agreement**, brokered by Libya's Gaddafi with OIC mediation, promised autonomy for 13 provinces. President Marcos violated it immediately, creating two regions covering only 10 provinces through a manipulated plebiscite. The **1996 Jakarta Peace Agreement** under President Ramos created the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), but ARMM became what President Aquino III later called a "**failed experiment**" — plagued by corruption, weak governance, clan politics, and failure to deliver development. The **2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB)**, facilitated by Malaysia under Aquino III, was the most promising breakthrough: 58 powers devolved to the Bangsamoro, a ministerial parliamentary system, fiscal autonomy, and a decommissioning track. But the **Mamasapano clash** of January 2015 — in which 44 elite police commandos were killed during a covert operation to capture a terrorist — destroyed congressional support. The Bangsamoro Basic Law died in the 16th Congress.

President Duterte revived the process. The **Bangsamoro Organic Law** (Republic Act 11054) was signed in July 2018 and ratified by plebiscite in January–February 2019. BARMM was inaugurated in March 2019, replacing ARMM, with MILF chairman **Al Haj Murad Ebrahim** as interim Chief Minister and an 80-member Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) exercising both legislative and executive powers. The BTA passed foundational codes, established 15 ministries, and began the normalization process. The region received **₱420.9 billion in block grants** (2020–2025) plus ₱5 billion annually in special development funds.

The current crisis: trust at its lowest point

As of March 2026, the Bangsamoro peace process faces its most serious crisis since the CAB was signed. **Three interlocking failures** threaten the entire enterprise:

First, the leadership rupture. In March 2025, President Marcos Jr. unilaterally replaced Chief Minister Murad Ebrahim with Abdulraof Macacua — a former MILF military chief — and replaced 22 BTA members, not all from the MILF's endorsed list. The International Crisis Group assessed in December 2025 that "mutual trust has sunk to a new low, and the MILF's cohesion is under unprecedented stress." The MILF Central Committee declared this "directly erodes the principle of autonomy."

Second, decommissioning has stalled. Of 40,000 MILF combatants, **26,145 (65.4%) have been decommissioned** along with 4,625 of 7,200 weapons through three phases. But in July 2025, the MILF suspended Phase 4 — the final 13,855 combatants — citing the government's failure to deliver socioeconomic commitments. The MILF

stated that "not a single one" of the decommissioned combatants had successfully transitioned to productive civilian life. The promised **Bangsamoro Police Force has not been created.**

Third, elections have been postponed three times — from May 2022 to May 2025 to October 2025 to an uncertain date in 2026 — eroding democratic legitimacy. The Supreme Court's September 2024 ruling **excluding Sulu from BARMM** (because Sulu voted against the BOL) triggered redistricting crises. The BTA passed a new districting law in January 2026, but whether elections can occur by the Court-ordered March 31, 2026 deadline remains doubtful.

Meanwhile, **BARMM remains the poorest region in the Philippines** — poverty incidence of **34.8%** among families (first half 2023), highest population growth rate (**3.43%**), lowest literacy rate (**81% basic, 64.7% functional**). Some 20% lack grid electricity; 28% depend on unimproved water sources. The **Marawi reconstruction** remains incomplete eight years after the 2017 siege: **8,200 people still live in temporary shelters**, and only 1,455 of 14,495 compensation claims have been paid. Clan conflict (*rido*) accounts for 35% of MILF-linked political violence, with over 150 incidents recorded since 2018.

Part III: The covenant foundation — Torah as primary authority

Shalom demands justice, not mere silence

The Hebrew word **שָׁלוֹם** (*shalom*), appearing 237 times in the Tanakh, derives from the root *sh-l-m* meaning "whole" or "complete." It encompasses wholeness, restoration, sufficiency, and harmonious relationship — **not merely the absence of war**. The verb form *shalam* means "to make restitution, to pay, to make good," appearing 14 times in Exodus 21–22 in contexts of restoring what was lost. As scholar Cornelius Plantinga wrote: "In the Bible, shalom means universal flourishing, wholeness and delight." The Talmud states: "The entire Torah is for the sake of the ways of shalom" (Gittin 59b).

Critically, **shalom is inseparable from justice** (*tzedeq/mishpat*). Isaiah 32:17 declares: "The work of righteousness (*tzedakah*) shall be peace (*shalom*)." Psalm 85:10–11 envisions the four covenant virtues — lovingkindness (*chesed*), truth (*emet*), righteousness (*tzedeq*), and peace (*shalom*) — meeting and kissing. Isaiah 59:8 diagnoses the root cause: "The way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice

in their paths." Jeremiah 6:14 condemns those who declare "'Peace, peace!' when there is no peace" — the false shalom of surface agreements that leave injustice intact.

Application to Bangsamoro: Every broken agreement in the Moro peace process — from the Tripoli Agreement to the stalled decommissioning — represents exactly this false shalom: declarations of peace without the substance of justice. A covenant solution must deliver *shalom shalem* — whole, complete peace — which requires addressing the root injustices of land dispossession, governance failure, and identity denial.

The stranger covenant: love as obligation, not sentiment

The Torah's most repeated ethical command — appearing **36 times** according to the Talmud (Bava Metzia 59b) — concerns the treatment of the stranger (*ger*, גר). Three foundational texts establish the framework:

Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:33–34: *"When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native-born among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."*

Bemidbar (Numbers) 15:15–16: *"There shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, a statute forever throughout your generations. You and the sojourner shall be alike before the LORD. One law and one rule shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you."*

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:18–19: *"He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. You shall love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."*

Scholar Richard Friedman documented **52 instructions in the Pentateuch** demanding just, equal treatment of aliens — a concern he considers "unique to the Hebrew law codes," absent from other ancient Near Eastern codes. The *ger* enjoyed Sabbath rest, equal legal protection, gleaning rights, community tithes, equal wages, and participation in religious life. Jacob Milgrom (UC Berkeley) observed that from the divine perspective, Israel itself has the status of a *ger* on its own land: "For the land is Mine, and you are but aliens resident with Me" (Leviticus 25:23).

Application to Bangsamoro: This covenant creates a dual obligation. The Moro people are the indigenous inhabitants whose ancestral rights have been violated — they are the "native-born" (*eZRACH*) of Mindanao whose land was taken. But the Christian settlers who now constitute the majority in much of Mindanao are also

gerim — strangers — who must be protected under Torah law. The covenant framework does not require expulsion of settlers but demands that Moro ancestral primacy be honored while settler rights are protected. Both populations stand under the same divine law: "One law and one rule shall be for you and for the stranger."

Jubilee: the land cannot be permanently stolen

The Jubilee framework of Vayikra (Leviticus) 25 establishes the Torah's most radical economic principle:

Leviticus 25:23–24: "The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but strangers and sojourners with Me. In all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land."

Every 50th year, the shofar sounds on Yom Kippur, and "you shall proclaim liberty (*deror*) throughout the land to all its inhabitants" (25:10). Ancestral land returns to its original families. Debts are released. Those in bondage go free. The theological foundation is unambiguous: **God owns the land, and no human authority — not sultan, not president, not colonial power — can permanently alienate ancestral inheritance.** Ezekiel 46:18 reinforces: "The prince shall not take any of the inheritance of the people, thrusting them out of their property."

Scholar Jeffrey Fager wrote: "Since proper land distribution is seen as integral to an orderly world, unequal distribution of land is therefore not simply a matter of injustice; it is a symptom of social chaos." The theologian Christopher J.H. Wright explained that the Jubilee "stands as a critique not only of massive private accumulation of land and related wealth but also of large-scale forms of collectivism or nationalization that destroy any meaningful sense of personal or family ownership."

Application to Bangsamoro: The Land Registration Act of 1902, the Public Land Acts, and the post-independence settler programs accomplished exactly what Jubilee law forbids: permanent alienation of ancestral land through state power. The Moro went from possessing substantially all of Mindanao to owning less than 17% of the land. Jubilee does not demand that all settlers be displaced — it demands that ancestral domain rights be restored, that the dispossession be acknowledged as a covenant violation, and that a systematic process of land justice be implemented.

The prophets demand accountability

The Torah's prophetic tradition holds rulers accountable for injustice with uncompromising clarity:

Shemot (Exodus) 22:20–23: "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you afflict them at all, and they cry out to Me, I will surely hear their cry, and My wrath will burn."

Amos 5:24: "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 10:1–2: "Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees, and the writers who write oppression, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of My people of their right."

Mikha (Micah) 6:8: "What does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"

Amos confronted the elite who sold "the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals" (2:6). Isaiah condemned religious observance divorced from justice: "Is not this the fast I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness... to let the oppressed go free?" (58:6). Ezekiel charged the nation with "using oppression, robbing, defrauding the poor and the needy, and extorting from the stranger" (22:29). The prophetic indictment applies directly to every administration — Spanish, American, Filipino — that claimed sovereignty while dispossessing the Moro people.

Brit shalom: peace as everlasting covenant

The concept of **brit shalom** (בְּרִית שְׁלוֹם) — **the covenant of peace** — appears three times in the prophetic literature:

Bemidbar (Numbers) 25:12: "Behold, I give him My covenant of peace."

Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 34:25: "I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods."

Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 37:26: "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore."

Scholar Daniel Block explained that this description "offers one of the fullest explanations of the Hebrew notion of shalom. The term obviously signifies much more than the absence of hostility or tension. It speaks of wholeness, harmony, fulfillment, humans at peace with their environment and with God." A *brit* differs from a treaty or ceasefire in five ways: it involves **mutual obligations** binding all parties; it recognizes a

divine witness — the covenant carries transcendent authority; it is **comprehensive** in scope, addressing security, economy, ecology, and dignity; it is **restorative**, promising transformation rather than merely freezing the status quo; and it demands **accountability**, with violations carrying consequences.

Application to Bangsamoro: The CAB was structured as a political agreement. Elevating it to covenant status — *brit shalom* — would transform the moral obligations of all parties. Obligations would not be optional or subject to political convenience. The covenant would be witnessed not only by Malaysia, the OIC, and the international community, but by the God whom all three Abrahamic communities confess.

Governance under covenant: impartiality as divine command

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 1:16–17: *"Judge righteously between each man and his brother and the stranger. You shall not show partiality in judgment; hear out low and high alike. Do not be afraid of any man, for the judgment is God's."*

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:20: *"Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may thrive and occupy the land that the LORD your God is giving you."*

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks wrote: "Tzedek/tzedakah is almost impossible to translate, because of its many shadings of meaning: justice, charity, righteousness, integrity, equity, fairness and innocence." The repetition of **tzedek** emphasizes deliberation: the Talmudic sage Reish Lakish taught that judges must revisit each case rather than rush to judgment. The explicit inclusion of "the stranger" in Deuteronomy 1:16 means that **governance under covenant law must be impartial toward all populations**, including minorities within the Bangsamoro region.

The prophetic horizon: nations flowing toward covenant peace

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 2:2–4 / Mikha (Micah) 4:1–4: *"It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains... and all the nations shall flow to it... For out of Zion shall go forth Torah, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations... and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."*

Micah 4:4 adds the vision of sufficiency: *"They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid."*

Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 47:22–23 expands the land-inheritance covenant: ***"You shall allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the strangers who dwell among you... You are to treat them as native-born among the children of Israel; they shall be allotted an inheritance with you among the tribes."*** This remarkable text extends permanent land rights to non-Israelite residents — full economic participation and territorial security for all peoples living together.

Part IV: The Quran as parallel witness

Where the Quran confirms the covenant

The Quran explicitly acknowledges the Torah (*Tawrat*) as prior divine revelation. The word *Tawrat* appears **18 times** in the Quran. Surah 5:44 states: "Indeed, We sent down the Torah, in which was guidance and light." Surah 5:48 describes the Quran as a *muhaymin* — guardian and criterion — over prior scripture, confirming its truths. Surah 5:68 commands: "O People of the Scripture, you are standing on nothing until you uphold the Torah and the Gospel." **The Quran positions itself not as a replacement but as a confirming witness.**

On the specific covenant principles that address the Moro conflict, the Quranic parallels are striking:

On human equality and the dignity of peoples: Al-Hujurat 49:13 — "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you." This directly parallels the Torah's vision in Ezekiel 47:22–23 of peoples inheriting alongside one another. Tribal diversity is divine design, not a problem to be solved through assimilation.

On justice transcending enmity: Al-Ma'idah 5:8 — "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness." An-Nisa 4:135 — "Be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives." Together these form a comprehensive justice ethic that parallels Deuteronomy 1:16–17 and 16:20: no personal bias, no communal bias, impartial judgment for native and stranger alike.

On religious freedom: Al-Baqarah 2:256 — "There shall be no compulsion in religion." Al-Mumtahanah 60:8 — "Allah does not forbid you from those who do

not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes — from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. These verses mandate *birr* (the same word used for filial piety) and *qist* (equity) toward peaceful non-Muslims — directly paralleling the Torah's *ger* protections.

On the sanctity of life: Al-Ma'idah 5:32 — "Whoever kills a soul... it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one — it is as if he had saved mankind entirely." The Quran itself frames this as a decree originally given to **the Children of Israel** — paralleling Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5 — then adopted as a universal principle. This shared origin testifies to the common covenant foundation.

On the imperative of peace: Al-Anfal 8:61 — "And if they incline to peace, then incline to it also and rely upon Allah." This is not merely permission to pursue peace but a direct command — paralleling the Torah's *rodef shalom* (pursuer of peace) principle.

Sulh and hudna as covenant instruments

Islamic jurisprudence provides two mechanisms directly applicable to the Bangsamoro peace process:

Sulh (صلح, reconciliation/settlement) is a contract (*akd*) to terminate or avert a dispute. Rooted in Quran 4:128 — "Reconciliation is best" — sulh functions through voluntary mediation, resulting in a binding agreement. It addresses rights of human beings (*huquq al-'ibad*) including tort, property, and inheritance disputes. Scholar Aida Othman (Harvard) traced sulh's development as a nominate contract alongside *qada'* (adjudication) and *tahkim* (arbitration) in Islamic legal history. Sulh is not a ceasefire — it is a **comprehensive settlement** that parallels the Torah's concept of *brit shalom*.

Hudna (هدنة, truce) is a temporary cessation of hostilities, paradigmatically exemplified by the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah (628 CE). Though initially appearing disadvantageous to the Muslims, the Quran itself described it as "a clear victory" (Surah 48:1) — because it enabled peaceful propagation and ultimately led to the peaceful entry into Mecca two years later. Hudna parallels the concept of graduated peacebuilding in the Bangsamoro normalization track: ceasefire leading to decommissioning leading to full political settlement.

The Constitution of Medina: precedent for multi-faith governance

The **Sahifat al-Medina** (622 CE) — drafted by Prophet Muhammad upon his arrival in Medina — is the most direct Islamic precedent for the BARMM governance challenge.

At the time, Medina's population was approximately **15% Muslim, 40% Jewish, and 45% non-Muslim Arab**. The constitution established:

- **One community** (*ummah*) encompassing all groups for purposes of mutual defense
- **Religious pluralism**: "For the Jews their religion, and for the Muslims theirs" (Clause 25)
- **Collective defense** against external threats
- **Arbitration** of disputes through agreed-upon mechanisms
- **Protection against injustice** as a communal obligation

L. Ali Khan (Washburn University) described it: "The first Islamic state was founded not in the shadow of swords but in the security of a social contract... establishing a Free State for a pluralistic community composed of Muslims, Jews, and pagans." This pre-dates the English Magna Carta by nearly six centuries. **The Constitution of Medina demonstrates that Islamic governance is historically and theologically compatible with multi-faith, rights-based constitutional order — directly relevant to BARMM, where Christians, Lumad, and Muslims must coexist under Bangsamoro governance.**

Maqasid al-Shariah: the five objectives align with covenant principles

The Maqasid al-Shariah — the higher objectives of Islamic law as articulated by Al-Ghazali (d. 1111) and systematized by Al-Shatibi (d. 1388) — identify five essential values that the Shariah exists to protect. Each maps directly onto the Moro conflict and aligns with Torah covenant principles:

- **Preservation of life** (*hifz al-nafs*): Over 120,000 killed in the conflict. Torah parallel: "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13); "If you afflict them at all, and they cry to Me, I will surely hear their cry" (Exodus 22:22–23).
- **Preservation of religion** (*hifz al-din*): The Moro struggle for recognition of Islamic identity, Sharia in personal law, and freedom to practice their faith. Torah parallel: No compulsion against the stranger's religious identity; "you shall love him as yourself" (Leviticus 19:34).
- **Preservation of intellect** (*hifz al-'aql*): BARMM has the lowest literacy rate in the Philippines (81% basic, 64.7% functional). Torah parallel: "For out of Zion shall go forth Torah" — the priority of teaching and learning (Isaiah 2:3).
- **Preservation of lineage/family** (*hifz al-nasl*): Hundreds of thousands displaced, families shattered, 8,200 Marawi residents still in temporary shelters. Torah parallel: the Jubilee's restoration of families to their ancestral land (Leviticus 25:10).

- **Preservation of property** (*hifz al-mal*): Systematic land dispossession from 76% to 19% of Mindanao. Torah parallel: "The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine" (Leviticus 25:23).

The *maqasid* framework thus provides an **Islamic vocabulary for the same covenant obligations** the Torah establishes — making the Bangsamoro peace process intelligible as a shared Abrahamic project, not merely a political negotiation.

Where the Quran departs from Torah

Intellectual honesty requires noting points of departure. Islamic jurisprudence holds that certain Torah-specific rulings are superseded (*mansukh*) by Shariah — including specific Sabbath regulations, some dietary laws, and aspects of ritual practice. The doctrine of *tahrif* (alteration) holds that while the original Torah was divine revelation, certain passages have been altered over time — a claim Torah-observant communities reject. The Quran denies the crucifixion (4:157) and the Trinity, departing from Christian claims. On retribution, while Quran 5:45 replicates the *lex talionis*, it adds a mercy dimension absent from the literal Torah text: "But whoever gives up his right as charity, it is an expiation for him." These departures are real, but they do not undermine the convergence on the justice principles directly applicable to the Bangsamoro: **all three traditions agree that land cannot be permanently stolen, strangers must be protected, rulers must govern impartially, and peace requires justice.**

Part V: The Christian witness and the Philippine Church

Where the New Testament confirms the covenant

The Christian New Testament provides parallel testimony to the same covenant truths, rooted explicitly in the Torah:

The Jubilee proclamation. Luke 4:18–19 records Jesus reading from Isaiah 61 in the Nazareth synagogue: "***The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.***" The Hebrew word for "liberty" (*deror*) occurs almost exclusively in Jubilee contexts. Jesus is proclaiming the Jubilee of Leviticus 25 — the return of ancestral land, the release of the enslaved, the restoration of what was lost. This is not a metaphor. It is the Torah's economic and social program, affirmed by the one Christians call Lord.

The peacemaker covenant. Matthew 5:9 — "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." Romans 12:18 — "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." 2 Corinthians 5:18–20 frames reconciliation as a divine ministry: "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ... and he has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation."

Justice as lived covenant. James 2:14–17 — "What good is it, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds?... Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." Matthew 25:31–46 identifies service to "the least of these" — the hungry, the stranger, the imprisoned — as service to Christ himself. These passages parallel the Torah's insistence that covenant obligations must be enacted, not merely confessed.

Multi-ethnic vision. Revelation 7:9 — "A great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages." Galatians 3:28 — "There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free... for you are all one." This eschatological vision of multi-ethnic unity affirms Ezekiel 47:22–23 and Al-Hujurat 49:13: diversity is celebrated, not erased.

The Philippine Catholic Church as peacemaker — and as colonizer

The Philippine Catholic Church occupies a paradoxical position: it arrived as the religion of the Spanish colonizers who waged 300 years of war against the Moro, and it is the faith of the settler majority whose migration dispossessed Moro communities — yet progressive elements of the Church have become among the strongest advocates for Moro rights and Bangsamoro peace.

Cardinal Orlando Quevedo, Archbishop Emeritus of Cotabato and the first cardinal from Mindanao, co-founded the **Bishops-Ulama Conference (BUC)** in 1996 — a tri-religious body of 24 Catholic bishops, 26 Muslim ulama, and 18 Protestant pastors — and has spent decades building Muslim-Christian bridges. He received the Philippine government's Peace Award in September 2025 and now serves on the BARMM Council of Leaders. **Archbishop Fernando Capalla** (d. 2024) co-founded the BUC and was the first chair of the CBCP's Commission on Interreligious Dialogue. **Bishop Edwin dela Peña** of Marawi, after the 2017 siege, declared the Catholic cathedral would only be rebuilt when the mosques were rebuilt first.

The **Silsilah Dialogue Movement**, founded by Italian missionary Fr. Sebastiano D'Ambra in Zamboanga in 1984, has spent 40 years promoting Muslim-Christian dialogue through its Harmony Village interfaith center, theological college, and youth programs. **Catholic Relief Services** has worked 27 years in Mindanao peacebuilding, co-founded the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute, and supports the **Mindanao**

Peaceweavers coalition of seven civil society networks. The **Community of Sant'Egidio** served on the International Contact Group for the peace negotiations.

The **liberation theology tradition** in Mindanao, led by scholars like Brother Karl Gaspar, CSsR — who was imprisoned under Marcos and has lived nearly three decades with indigenous communities — has applied the "see-judge-act" pastoral cycle to Moro and Lumad land rights. Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) have organized grassroots advocacy, and the **Zones of Peace** movement — where communities declare their localities violence-free — has been described as "one of the most significant signs of hope" in Mindanao.

Where Christianity departs from Torah

Supersessionism — the theological claim that the Church replaces Israel as God's covenant people — enabled the colonial framework that justified subjugation of non-Christian peoples. Spanish colonizers carried to the Philippines what historian Peter Gowing called "a fanatical hatred of Moros" rooted in the Reconquista and the Crusades. The term "Moro" itself embodies this: Muslims were defined as enemies of Christendom. Christianized Filipinos were used to invade Maranao territory. The Inquisition framework treated Islam as heresy to be conquered.

This is not merely historical. The settler migration programs that dispossessed the Moro were conducted by a nominally Christian state, and the settler majority in Mindanao has often opposed Bangsamoro autonomy. The tension between the Church as part of the settler population and the Church as an advocate for justice remains alive. As CRS's Myla Leguro observed: "Christians also have a moral responsibility to engage in the process to make sure that peace really endures for the Bangsamoro" — a recognition that Christians must support, not obstruct, the restoration of what their own community's expansion helped take.

The return to Jubilee-rooted justice — exemplified by the Jubilee 2000 movement that cancelled \$130 billion in debt through explicit appeal to Leviticus 25 — represents Christianity's recovery of the Torah covenant principles it had sidelined. The 2025 Jubilee proclaimed by Pope Francis explicitly invokes Leviticus 25:10, Isaiah 61, and Luke 4:18–19.

Part VI: Seven pillars of the covenant solution

Pillar 1 — Land justice grounded in Jubilee

The Torah declares: "The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine" (Leviticus 25:23). The Quran affirms: "To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth" (3:189). Both traditions establish that human sovereignty over land is stewardship, not ownership, and that ancestral domain cannot be permanently alienated by state action.

The covenant solution requires:

- **Formal acknowledgment** by the Philippine government that the Land Registration Act of 1902, Public Land Acts, and post-independence resettlement programs constituted systematic violation of Moro ancestral domain rights — a Jubilee reckoning with historical dispossession.
- **Completion and acceleration of the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) process** within BARMM, with BARMM authorities given primary jurisdiction over land administration as provided by the BOL, resolving the overlapping authority of NCIP, DENR, and DAR.
- **A land-sharing framework** inspired by Ezekiel 47:22–23: Christian settlers who have lived for generations in Bangsamoro territory are not to be expelled but recognized as *gerim* (sojourners) with protected rights, while Moro ancestral primacy over the territory is honored. "In whatever tribe the stranger dwells, there you shall give him his inheritance."
- **A moratorium on resource extraction** (mining, logging) in ancestral domains without the free, prior, and informed consent of indigenous Bangsamoro communities — applying Ezekiel 46:18: "The prince shall not take any of the inheritance of the people."

Pillar 2 — Governance covenant: impartiality and accountability

"Justice, justice shall you pursue" (Deuteronomy 16:20). "Be persistently standing firm in justice... even if it be against yourselves" (Quran 4:135). "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:17).

The BARMM parliamentary system was designed as a departure from the failed ARMM — a ministerial government with real devolved powers, fiscal autonomy, and accountability mechanisms. The covenant governance framework requires:

- **Fulfillment of election commitments.** The three postponements of BARMM parliamentary elections (from 2022 to an uncertain date in 2026) violate the covenant principle that governance authority derives from the consent of the governed. Elections must proceed without further delay.
- **Genuine autonomy.** The unilateral replacement of Chief Minister Murad Ebrahim in March 2025 violated the principle of Bangsamoro self-governance.

Deuteronomy 1:16–17 commands: "You shall not show partiality in judgment." Manila's interference undermines the entire autonomy framework.

- **Anti-corruption as covenant obligation.** BARMM's allegations of ₱6.4 billion in anomalous spending demand transparent investigation. **Proverbs 29:4 warns: "By justice a king builds up the land, but he who exacts taxes unjustly tears it down."** Corruption by Bangsamoro officials is as much a covenant violation as oppression by Manila.
- **The Constitution of Medina model** for multi-faith governance within BARMM: Christians and Lumad living within Bangsamoro territory must have protected representation, religious freedom, and equal justice — following the Medina principle that "for the Jews their religion, and for the Muslims theirs."

Pillar 3 — Identity and dignity: recognizing who the Moro are

"O mankind, We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another" (Quran 49:13). "You shall love the stranger as yourself" (Leviticus 19:34). "A great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language" (Revelation 7:9).

The Moro struggle is fundamentally about identity — the right to be Muslim, to speak their languages, to govern according to their traditions, to educate their children in their own way, and to be recognized not as a minority within the Philippine state but as a people with sovereign heritage predating that state.

The covenant solution requires:

- **Full recognition of Sharia** in personal law within BARMM, as already provided by the BOL, with robust implementation of the Sharia judicial system and training of *qadis* (Islamic judges).
- **Cultural heritage protection:** the sultanates of Sulu, Maguindanao, and Lanao, the *salsila* genealogical traditions, the *maratabat* honor system, and the rich body of Maranao, Tausug, and Maguindanaon oral literature and art forms.
- **Educational sovereignty:** BARMM's authority over education must address the region's **81% basic literacy rate** — the lowest in the Philippines — through culturally appropriate curricula that integrate Islamic education with modern learning, fulfilling the maqasid of *hifz al-'aql* (preservation of intellect).
- **Reclamation of the name "Moro":** Once a Spanish slur drawn from the Reconquista, the name was reclaimed in the 1970s as a badge of pride and identity. This self-naming must be honored by all parties.

Pillar 4 — Development as moral covenant obligation

"He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing" (Deuteronomy 10:18). "Whatever you did for the least of these, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40). "Whoever saves one life, it is as if he had saved mankind entirely" (Quran 5:32).

BARMM's poverty incidence of 34.8% (the highest in the Philippines), its 20% rate of households without grid electricity, 28% dependent on unimproved water sources, and 37% using unsafe sanitation are not merely development statistics — they are covenant violations. A people dispossessed of their land and governance, then left in poverty while their resources enrich others, have suffered what Isaiah 10:1–2 condemns: iniquitous decrees that **"turn aside the needy from justice and rob the poor of their right."**

The covenant solution requires:

- **Completion of Marawi reconstruction** as a moral emergency. Eight years after the 2017 siege, 8,200 people remain in temporary shelters and only 10% of compensation claims have been paid. This is unconscionable.
- **Infrastructure investment** commensurate with historical debt: roads, electrification, water systems, healthcare facilities, and schools, funded through the block grant mechanism and enhanced by international development support.
- **The "peace dividend" must be real.** The World Bank found that BARMM averaged 7.9% GDP growth during 2017–2019 and that approximately 892,000 people escaped poverty between 2018–2021 — evidence that peace produces prosperity. But if promises remain unfulfilled, "people will become disillusioned and stop believing in the peace process" (ICG, 2026).
- **Livelihood for decommissioned combatants.** The MILF's suspension of Phase 4 decommissioning because "not a single one" of 26,145 decommissioned fighters has transitioned to productive civilian life is a concrete failure of covenant obligation. The ₱100,000 transitional cash assistance is insufficient. Sustainable livelihood programs — agricultural support, vocational training, cooperative enterprise — must be dramatically scaled.

Pillar 5 — Reconciliation: truth-telling and reparative justice

"Speak truth to one another; render true and perfect justice in your gates" (Zechariah 8:16). "The ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18). "Reconciliation is best" (Quran 4:128).

There can be no shalom without truth. The Bangsamoro people have suffered four centuries of documented wrongs — from the Spanish-Moro Wars to Bud Dajo to the

Jabidah Massacre to the Ilaga militia to the Marawi siege. These are not abstract historical events; they are living wounds transmitted through generations.

The covenant solution requires:

- **A formal truth-telling process** — not necessarily a South African–style truth commission, but a mechanism through which the Philippine state officially acknowledges the historical record of dispossession, massacre, and marginalization. President Aquino III's 2013 acknowledgment of the Jabidah Massacre was a beginning; **the covenant demands completion.**
- **Reparative justice** modeled on the Jubilee principle: not merely compensation but **restoration** — return of what was taken, rebuilding of what was destroyed, healing of what was wounded. The stalled Marawi Compensation Board (1,455 of 14,495 claims paid) exemplifies the gap between promise and performance.
- **The *sulh* tradition** as a community-level reconciliation mechanism: facilitated mediation between Moro communities and settler communities, between rival clans, between former combatants and victims, following the Islamic principle that "**reconciliation is best.**"
- **Addressing *rido*** (clan conflict): Over 150 rido incidents recorded since 2018, accounting for 35% of MILF-linked political violence, represent internal wounds that must be healed alongside the external conflict. The Geneva Call's codification of rido norms for Maguindanaon, Iranun, and Maranao communities provides a starting point.

Pillar 6 — Security covenant: distinguishing liberation from terrorism

"I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely" (Ezekiel 34:25). "If they incline to peace, then incline to it" (Quran 8:61). "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9).

The security dimension of the Bangsamoro peace process requires three simultaneous commitments:

- **Honor the MILF's legitimacy.** The MILF is a liberation movement that chose peace, signed the CAB, decommissioned 26,145 combatants, and now leads BARMM governance. The Marcos administration's unilateral actions threaten to fracture the MILF's cohesion — and former peace negotiators have warned that MILF fragmentation could leave local commanders "more susceptible to radicalization or criminal activity." **The covenant demands that the government fulfill its normalization obligations**, including creating the Bangsamoro Police Force and completing decommissioning with adequate socioeconomic support.

- **Confront terrorism without collective punishment.** Abu Sayyaf, BIFF, and ISIS-affiliated groups must be opposed — but through targeted operations, not the imposition of martial law across all of Mindanao or the collective punishment of Muslim communities. The December 2023 bombing at Mindanao State University in Marawi, claimed by ISIS-East Asia, and the continued BIFF activity in central Mindanao require vigilance. But the prophetic tradition demands accountability for state violence as well: Amnesty International documented AFP destruction of civilian property, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, and unlawful killings during military operations.
- **Counter radicalization through justice, not only force.** Research by DAI/USAID found that family and social networks are the most important factor in radicalization, more than specific grievances. But poverty, failed governance, and perceived injustice create a "ripe environment for violent ideology" (RAND, 2020). The strongest counter-radicalization program is a successful peace process that delivers tangible improvements in people's lives. The *maqasid* framework applies: when life, religion, intellect, family, and property are all under threat, the conditions for extremism flourish. When they are protected, extremism withers.

Pillar 7 — The stranger covenant applied: protecting all who dwell in the land

Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:33–34 — "When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native-born among you, and you shall love him as yourself."

This pillar is addressed simultaneously to all three audiences:

To the Moro people and BARMM leadership: The Christian settlers who now live in Bangsamoro territory — many of them second and third generation — are *gerim* (strangers) who arrived through government programs, not through their own acts of conquest. The Torah commands their protection. The Constitution of Medina protected the Jewish tribes of Yathrib and guaranteed their religious freedom. BARMM governance must ensure that Christians within the region receive equal justice, religious freedom, representation, and economic participation. Moro ancestral primacy is honored — but not through oppression of the settler minority. **"One law and one rule shall be for you and for the stranger" (Numbers 15:16).**

To the Filipino government: The Moro people are the indigenous inhabitants of Mindanao who were made strangers in their own land by colonial and post-colonial policies. The Torah's repeated command — 36 times — to love and protect the stranger,

rooted in the memory of Egypt, applies with full force. **"You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 22:20).** The systematic dispossession of Moro ancestral lands was a covenant violation that demands redress.

To international mediators: The stranger covenant provides a moral framework more robust than secular human rights discourse alone — one that speaks in the language each community actually uses. International organizations should encourage all parties to ground their commitments in this shared Abrahamic ethic, recognizing that the Third Party Monitoring Team, the Independent Decommissioning Body, and the International Contact Group function as covenant witnesses in the tradition of Deuteronomy 19:15: "A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."

Part VII: Where the three traditions converge and where each must repent

The convergence

The three Abrahamic traditions agree on the foundational principles required to resolve the Bangsamoro conflict:

| Covenant principle | Torah/Tanakh | Quran | New Testament |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Peace requires justice | Isaiah 32:17; Amos 5:24 | Al-Ma'idah 5:8; An-Nisa 4:135 | James 2:14–17; Matthew 25:31–46 |
| Land belongs to God | Leviticus 25:23 | Al-Imran 3:189 | Luke 4:18–19 (Jubilee) |
| The stranger must be protected | Leviticus 19:33–34; Deut. 10:18–19 | Al-Mumtahanah 60:8; Al-Hujurat 49:13 | Matthew 25:35; Galatians 3:28 |
| Rulers must govern impartially | Deut. 1:16–17; 16:20 | An-Nisa 4:135; Al-Ma'idah 5:8 | Romans 13:1–7; Revelation 7:9 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Life is sacred | Exodus 20:13; Exodus 22:22–23 | Al-Ma'idah 5:32 | Matthew 5:21; Matthew 25:40 |
| Peoples are created for coexistence | Ezekiel 47:22–23; Isaiah 2:2–4 | Al-Hujurat 49:13 | Revelation 7:9; Galatians 3:28 |
| Reconciliation is a divine mandate | Zechariah 8:16; Micah 4:1–4 | An-Nisa 4:128; Al-Anfal 8:61 | 2 Corinthians 5:18–20; Matthew 5:9 |

Where each tradition must examine itself

Judaism/Torah tradition must acknowledge that later rabbinic interpretation narrowed the Torah's universal *ger* protections — redefining *ger* primarily as a convert to Judaism rather than all resident aliens. The Talmudic Sages, as scholars Ophir and Rosen-Zvi (2018) documented, "created a binary model of Jew versus Gentile" that replaced the biblical category of resident alien. Recovery of the Torah's original universal scope — as advocated by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks and others — is essential for the covenant framework to serve as a genuine instrument of peace across communities.

Islam must confront the reality that extremist groups — Abu Sayyaf, BIFF, the Maute Group — have claimed Islamic justification for terrorism, kidnapping, and the murder of civilians, including the five-month destruction of Marawi, an Islamic city, in the name of an "Islamic state." The maqasid al-shariah — which prioritizes preservation of life, religion, intellect, family, and property — condemns these acts absolutely. The Quran's "no compulsion in religion" (2:256) and the command that "hatred of a people" must not prevent justice (5:8) stand as direct rebuke to violent extremism. Moro Islamic leadership must continue to clearly distinguish the legitimate liberation struggle from terrorist perversion — as both the MNLF and MILF have done.

Christianity must reckon with its colonial legacy most directly. Spanish Christianity provided the ideological framework for 300 years of war against the Moro. The Reconquista mentality was transplanted from Iberia to the Philippines. American Protestantism collaborated with colonial pacification. Post-independence Catholic settler migration dispossessed indigenous Muslims. Supersessionism — the claim that the Church replaces Israel and by extension all prior religious communities — enabled the treatment of Muslims as pagans to be conquered rather than peoples to be respected. The Philippine Catholic Church's progressive elements have done extraordinary work through the BUC/MiRLeC, Silsilah, and liberation theology — but the broader Christian

community in Mindanao must undergo a deeper Jubilee reckoning with its role in the dispossession of the Moro people.

Conclusion: the shofar sounds — will the parties hear?

The Bangsamoro peace process stands at a crossroads. The International Crisis Group's December 2025 assessment — "mutual trust has sunk to a new low" — is a warning, not a verdict. The covenant framework presented in this study offers a path forward that transcends the limitations of purely secular political negotiation, speaking in the moral language that each party's own tradition recognizes as authoritative.

Three urgent actions emerge from the covenant analysis:

First, the government must honor its covenant obligations. The unilateral replacement of BARMM leadership, the failure to create the Bangsamoro Police Force, the inadequate support for decommissioned combatants, and the repeated election postponements are not mere policy failures — they are covenant violations that echo the pattern stretching from Marcos's betrayal of the Tripoli Agreement to the present. **"They have healed the hurt of My people superficially, saying 'Peace, peace!' — but there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14).**

Second, the MILF must maintain covenant discipline. The suspension of Phase 4 decommissioning is understandable given the government's failures, but the covenant framework demands that both parties continue to pursue peace even when conditions are imperfect. The Treaty of Hudaibiyah — which initially appeared disadvantageous to the Muslims but which the Quran declared "a clear victory" — teaches that strategic patience in pursuit of peace can achieve what armed resistance cannot. Internal MILF cohesion must be maintained; fragmentation would betray the 120,000 who died for the cause.

Third, the international community must serve as covenant witnesses. The TPMT, IDB, Malaysian facilitator, and international donors are not neutral observers — they are, in the framework of Deuteronomy 19:15, witnesses whose testimony establishes the truth. Their August 2025 warning that the peace process has reached "a perilous juncture" must be heeded, and their monitoring role must be strengthened, not diminished.

The Torah concludes the Jubilee legislation with a simple declaration of authority: "For the children of Israel are servants to Me; they are My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 25:55). The

Quran echoes: "To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth" (3:189). The New Testament affirms: "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it" (1 Corinthians 10:26). All three traditions agree: the land, the people, and the peace belong to God. No sultan, no president, no colonial power, no extremist group has the authority to permanently violate what God has covenanted.

The shofar of Jubilee calls for the return of what was taken. The question is whether the parties will hear.

***"And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid."* — Mikha (Micah) 4:3–4**

***"And if they incline to peace, then incline to it also, and rely upon Allah."* — Al-Anfal 8:61**

***"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."* — Matthew 5:9**