



# OPE-P IN BRIEF

The 7th quarterly report submitted by the Lead Inspector General for Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines (OPE-P) summarizes the quarter's key events and oversight of the U.S. mission to support the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in their fight against ISIS-East Asia (ISIS-EA) and other terrorist organizations.

## First Suicide Bombing Committed by a Philippine National

pp. 7-8

- On June 28, a suicide attack by ISIS-EA on an AFP camp **killed 5 and wounded 22**.
- At least one of the 2 attackers was identified as a **native Filipino**.
- U.S. and Philippine officials are **reassessing previous assumptions** that the Filipino people are culturally averse to suicide bombing.
- The attack also **challenges the notion** that Philippine jihadists have adopted the ISIS "brand" while rejecting its **extremist ideology**.

## AFP Struggles to Combat ISIS-EA Kidnap-for-Ransom Operations

pp. 10-11

- On April 6, an AFP **rescue mission** for 3 hostages **freed 1**, but left **1 dead** and **1 in critical** condition.
- On May 31, a Dutch hostage held by ISIS-EA since 2012 was **killed attempting to escape** during a firefight between his captors and the AFP.
- On June 18, Philippine kidnap-for-ransom gangs **raided 2 fishing boats** and **abducted 10** crew members off the coast of Malaysia.

## U.S. Training of Philippine Partners Focuses on Counterterrorism

pp. 11-15

- **7,500 U.S. and Philippine troops** participated in an annual **training exercise**, which included maritime security, close air support, amphibious, and humanitarian/civic operations.
- DoS provided training to **Philippine law enforcement** in crisis response and critical infrastructure security.
- The AFP received and Philippine law enforcement requested **counterterrorism training from Israel**.

## Bangsamoro Government Faces Initial Challenges

pp. 15-17

- The new semi-autonomous regional government in the southern Philippines is led by **former militants** with little or **no governing experience**.
- The Bangsamoro government began its first months of work **without a budget or pay**.
- Successful self-governance could **defuse jihadist sentiments**, but failure could **embolden extremists**.
- Questions remain about how the Bangsamoro government will **integrate 40,000 former militants** into civilian life.

## DoD Modifies Order Governing OPE-P

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- The new order **removes the "contingency operation"** designation that had been in place since 2017.
- The DoD will **continue to use overseas contingency operations funds** for activities supporting OPE-P.

## Conflict Continues to Disrupt Local Communities

pp. 11-12

- Fighting between the AFP and ISIS-EA temporarily **displaced 51,000 residents**, most of whom were able to return home.
- USAID funding focused on **rebuilding communities** and **countering violent extremism**.
- Debris removal, unexploded ordnance, and contractor disputes continued to **delay reconstruction of Marawi**, leaving **66,000 displaced indefinitely**.

## Lead IG Oversight Activity

pp. 24-26

- Lead IG agencies completed 2 reports, including an audit that found DoD aviation training facilities were **inadequate to meet mission needs**.
- Lead IG and partner agencies coordinated on **2 open investigations** and had **4 oversight projects** ongoing.