



OPE-P IN BRIEF

The 8th 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.

ISIS-EA Remains a Limited Threat

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- Limited funding, network cohesion, internal leadership, and support from ISIS-Core contribute to ISIS-EA's **inability to conduct large-scale attacks**.
- Attacks this quarter involved an **improvised explosive device** at a marketplace and **minor clashes** with the AFP.
- **Foreign fighters** have not been a major factor since 2017, but suspected terrorists from Jordan and Sweden were **arrested** in the Philippines this quarter.
- ISIS-EA leaders joined other global affiliates in **renewing loyalty pledges** to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi prior to his death in October.

AFP Adapts to ISIS-EA's Employment of Suicide Tactics

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- Philippine jihadists have not historically used suicide tactics, but **5 terrorists** carried out or attempted **3 suicide attacks** so far this year.
- AFP troops **avoided any casualties** in one attempted suicide bombing by employing **lessons learned** from recent suicide attacks.
- The AFP is continuing to **review security protocols** in light of this new trend.

Conflict and Other Disasters Continue to Displace Civilians

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- Conflict involving ISIS-EA, local clan feuds, and natural disasters resulted in **29,000 new IDPs**.
- USAID-funded projects increased **access to clean water for 14,400 IDPs**, but damage to Marawi's water network has left many without a reliable water supply.
- The Philippine government completed **new temporary housing** for IDPs but **lacks a long-term plan** to resettle them.

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

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- Bilateral training exercises focused on **special operations, aviation, and amphibious assault vehicle** capabilities.
- Personnel from select AFP special operations teams travelled to the U.S. for **intelligence** and **unmanned aircraft system** training.
- DoD advisors provided technical advice to support the **institutional development** of the AFP's joint **Special Operations Command**.
- Senior DoD and AFP leaders agreed to more than **300 security cooperation activities** in FY 2020, an increase from 281 in FY 2019.

Unexploded Ordnance Delays Marawi Reconstruction

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- Of the 353,000 internally displaced persons (IDP) resulting from the 2017 Marawi siege, **66,000 remain displaced** due to extensive infrastructure damage.
- **Disputes between the Philippine government and contractors** have impeded the clearance of unexploded ordnance, which remains a barrier to reconstruction.
- The Philippine government has repeatedly **extended its estimate** of when unexploded ordnance will be removed.

Lead IG Oversight Activity

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- The DoS OIG issued an audit report which identified shortcomings in **monitoring and oversight of \$41 million** in foreign assistance to the Philippines.
- Lead IG and partner agencies have **7 ongoing oversight projects** related to OPE-P, including audits and evaluations of counterintelligence activities, mobile medical teams, and DoD acquisitions.