WORKS OF FAITH-BASED LEADERS ON THE PRINCIPLES OF ISLAMIC LAW FOR PREVENTING AND TRANSFORMING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

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Abstract: This research described the works of Faith-Based Leaders in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) on Islamic law principles for preventing and transforming violent extremism to understand good leadership misconceptions of Islamic teachings and misunderstanding about the meanings of Jihad. However, the contribution of Ulama to this issue was that they were the successors, mediators, reconcilers, ambassadors, and arbitrators of Islam against violent extremists. The objective of Islamic law was to protect the public interest, and human dignity, spread peace and development of society, and comprehend the wisdom behind the Islamic teachings towards community, which were peace, order, harmony, tolerance, compassion, moderation, and moderation justice. This study aimed to safeguard vulnerable young people and adults from the threat those face from extremist or radicalized views. It places a duty on public sector organizations to prevent people from being drawn towards such views and ensures that support is in place for vulnerable people. This study was an effort of the Technical Working Group (TWG) of Faith-Based Leaders headed and managed by Anwar Radiamoda, which United Nations Development UNDP supported. This study also was mainly quantitative and explanatory, and it deals with significant and analyses the concepts of Jihad in Islam and Islamic Law in achieving peace and civilization. This study also gave awareness and information to the youth, researchers, learners, and Muslim Faith-based leaders in Lanao del sur and the Bangsamoro. Part of the main recommendations was that the government recognize the role of faith-based leaders and Ulama in peacebuilding and development and institutionalize the madaris in our county in general; and the Muslim areas in particular.

Keywords: the role faith-based leaders, ulama, Islamic law, prevention violent extremism

Abstrak: transformasi pembelajaran sangat dipengaruhi oleh kepemimpinan, supervisi, dan kinerja guru. Kepemimpinan memiliki peran yang sangat penting dalam mewujudkan transformasi pembelajaran, sedangkan supervisi merupakan kegiatan pembinaan tentang bagaimana membantu guru dalam meningkatkan pengajaran menggunakan e-learning, sedangkan kinerja guru adalah bagaimana melihat hasil kerja yang dicapai guru dalam mewujudkan transformasi pembelajaran. Penelitian ini mendeskripsikan karya-karya Pemimpin Berbasis Iman di Bangsamoro. Daerah Otonom

1 Bangsamoro People. The term refers to those who at the time of conquest and colonization were considered natives or original inhabitants of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago and its adjacent islands, including Palawan, and their descendants; whether or mixed or of full blood, shall have the right to identify themselves as Bangsamoro by ascription or self-ascription. Spouses and their descendants are classified as Bangsamoro. (BBL-Republic act No.6734).
Works of Faith-Based Leaders on the Principles of Islamic Law for Preventing and Transforming Violent Extremism


Kata-kata kunci: kepercayaan berbasis pemimpin, ulama, hukum Islam, mencegah ekstremisme kekerasan

I. Introduction

Some faith-based leaders are determined to refute this perception and would like to capitalize on their role to create a space for dialogue across conventional lines of division and develop shared materials to inform instruction in mosques and Islamic education Institutions. They also foster a better understanding of Islam as a peaceful religion. Faith-based institutions such as mosques, madrasahs, and Islamic centers are central institutions in local communities as they provide education, spiritual guidance, and a moral compass for the people.

This study deals with the important principles of Islamic law and the Islamic teachings including the definition, analysis, and significance. It also discusses the possibility of good governance, peace, and justice in our homeland in general and in Muslim areas in particular and the contribution of Islam. Furthermore, the Muslim faith-based leaders exert efforts to strengthen their work and roles in preventing and transforming violent extremism in our society. Among the key points of effort are the following:

1) The need to understand what we are trying to prevent – what is violent extremism?
2) The need to bring together existing networks and platforms of Muslim faith-based leaders and teachers in dialogue to come up with shared positive narratives as well as guidance and interpretation of Islamic doctrines;
3) The need for dialogue on the diversity of understanding and interpretation of Islamic teachings;
4) The need to correct misconceptions/misinterpretations of Islamic teachings misunderstanding of jihad;
5) There is no common curriculum among madaris, traditional madaris and no common
monitoring and evaluation of teaching and lessons in madaris;

6) Lack of funding support for madrasah teachers; and

7) The need to be creative in communicating positive and alternative narratives to address narratives espoused by violent extremist groups.

The Muslims in the Southern Philippines, since time immemorial, have been aspiring to become truly faithful Muslims by living under Islamic teachings. An essential part of Islamic teachings is Shariah or Islamic law. However, safety measures and stability are indispensable human needs. Human beings have been mindful of the need for security since the foundation of their life in this universe, and human beings have constantly and continuously expressed their attentiveness and awareness of this need in many ways. With the formation and progression of human society, he has expressed this and other needs by establishing state and forming laws. The objective of Islamic law is to preserve the purposes of Shariah, protect the public interest, and spread peace and development of society and humanity.

Furthermore, to protect the five essential values: life, religion, honor, intellect, lineage, and property, development in civilization allows a person to fulfill his spiritual, intellectual, and material needs and promote every aspect of his life. This study attempts to find answers to the perception and awareness of Islamic Banking among college students in the Province of Lanao del Sur, Philippines and specifically searched for answers to the following questions:

1) What is the socio-economic profile of the respondents?
2) How are the respondents knowledgeable in Islamic Law and Faith-Based leaders’ role in preventing and transforming violent extremism?
3) What is violent extremism, and how to prevent and transform it?
4) What is the possible impact and intervention program in learning Islam and Islamic Law?
5) What are the possible implications of the study that can be drawn?

This study was conducted in selected places in Mindanao and the Bangamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, as follows: (1) Lanao del Sur, Marawi City and Lanao del Norte; (2) Magindanao (including SPMS box) and Cotabato City; (3) South Cotabato, Sarangani, General Santos City; (4) Zamboanga City and Zamboanga Peninsula (5) Basilan, Isabela City and Lamitan City; (6) Sulu, including municipality of Jolo; (7) Tawi-Tawi; and (8) Davao City. Selected Ulama and faith-based organizations in the above locales were included in the study.

The researcher selected representatives from the Ulama and Faith-Based Organizations in BARMM and other areas in Mindanao as the study respondents. The study applied purposive sampling techniques to select 466 respondents who participated in the research and focus group discussions. Interviews were also conducted with 34 respondents who served as key informants. The respondents included faith-based leaders such as Ulama and representatives of faith-based organizations in the different areas in the BARMM.

The research instruments used were four parts simplified survey questionnaire developed to be answered by respondents as a self-administered questionnaire. First, the questionnaire items focused on the Socio-Economic profile of the respondents in terms of their age, sex, civil status, occupation, education, and family background. The second part aimed to generate awareness and perceptions of the respondents regarding the principles of Islamic Law

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for preventing and responding to violent extremism. Third, this part sought the opinion of the respondents regarding the rulings of violent extremism in Shariah whereas; and the last part involved in focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

The prevent strategy is focused on safeguarding people from radicalization or extremism, including work to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. You can help to reduce the threat from terrorism, radicalization, and extremism by being vigilant, knowing what to report, and reporting it. Hence, there are many ways to prevent and transform violent extremism, such as a deep understanding of Islamic law, human rights in Islam, political system, good leadership, concepts of Jihad, peace education in Islam, and strong collaboration with Ulama and faith-based leaders in peacebuilding.

II. Islam And Shariah

Islam attaches great importance to knowledge and considers it as the basis of human development and the key to the growth of culture and civilization. “Shariah Islamiah” indicates a prophetic religion’s moral code and religious law. In this context, Shariah is all-embracing where it embodies acts of devotion (worship), commercial transactions (muamalah), political system (siyasah), marriage, or family laws (munakahat) as well as the concepts of offenses, crimes, and punishments (jinayat). Therefore, every Muslim needs to have a clear understanding of the basic components of Islam, which will make one ready to accept with complete responsibility the teaching of Islam.

Islam is derived from “silm” or “salam,” which means peace and tranquility through submission to Allah. It is the Religion of all Prophets of Allah, starting from Adam to Muhammad (peace be upon them). It is the belief in and utterance of the testifying of faith, the latter required of the person who is not already a moslem. It means voluntary submission to the will of Allah. The will of Allah is that man should pursue the beauty of life and avoid the ugliness of life and evil character. It is also defined as a complete way of life encompassing all life activities, including the hereafter. This study refers to peace, order, justice, tolerance, compassion, moderation, and a religion that is complete and made perfect by Allah the Almighty.3 The Islamic teachings include the Islamic message’s general contents, which are ideology, legislation, and social morals conducts. These are in order to achieve the following general objectives of Islam: (1) Strengthening the connection between man and his Creator; (2) Preserving life’s order; (3) Developing knowledge and connecting with the universe; and (4) Social and cultural construction.

A person, then, finds peace and tranquility when he enters into the fold of Islam. By accepting Islam, a person frees himself from the servitude of any other people and enters into a constructive relationship between him and Allah, between him and other people, and between him and other creatures. Likewise, he realizes his worth as a human being and understands his role in human life. Allah the Almighty said (Qur’an Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 208).4

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3 Ibid.,

The philosophical foundation of Islam is to have peace, tranquility, respect, and moderation. Islam is against and contrary to religious excesses, extremism, and prejudice. These are the forms of peace in Islam according to Asna in the book “Peace Education” in Aceh, Indonesia (Anwar M. Radiamoda translated the book from Bahasa Indonesia into English): (1) Peace in relation with Allah - It is peace within the context of connection with Allah, the Creator, who made peace very clear and relevant to the "fitrah" of man, bearing the witness on the existence of Allah when He created him; (2) Peace within one's self. This tranquility is being peaceful and free from contention between one's self and one's desires; (3) Peace between people - It is peace among fellow human beings and being free from conflict and discrimination and lives under justice, and (4) Peace connected with the universe - It is also peace within a society that lives following the purpose of Allah and the nature of creation (fitrah). Allah the Almighty said (Qur'an, Surah Yunus):

Translation: “Allah calls to the home of peace and guides whom He wills to a straight Path. For those who have done well is the honor of glancing at the countenance of Allah neither darkness nor dust nor any humiliating disgrace shall cover their faces. They are the dwellers of Paradise; they will abide therein forever.”

III. Jihad And Its Concepts
About the glimpse meaning of Jihad, it is "striving" or "struggling." It is used in Islam to refer to various efforts enjoined upon the believers. It is striving to do good deeds and defend Islam to spread peace and development. It is struggling to keep the commandments of Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) more important than loved ones, wealth, and one's self is the most basic form of Jihad prescribed on every Muslim. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, No one has truly believed until Allah, and His Messenger becomes more beloved than everything (English translation). Imam Al-Gazali mentioned in his book (Ihya Ulomoddin) that doing the righteous deeds prescribed by Allah is a Jihad. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was reported to have said, the best Jihad is the perfect Hajj (English Translation).

\[5 \text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 25-26}\]
\[6 \text{Al-Ghazali. Mohammad bin Muhammad, } \text{Ihya Ulumum Al-Din}, (Cairo: Isa Al-Babi Al-Halabi, n.d), \text{Vol. 2.}\]
\[7 \text{Ibid.}\]
On another occasion, someone asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) to join the *Jihad through arms*. The Prophet responded by asking him whether his parents were still alive and when he replied that they were, he said, Make *jihad* by serving them (English Translation).\(^8\) Allah the Almighty said (Qur’an, Ash-Shaff, 10-13):\(^9\)

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\text{يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَى تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ}
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Translation: “O you who believe! Shall I guide you to a trade that will save you from a painful torment? That you believe in Allah and His Messenger, and that you strive hard and struggle in the cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives, that will be better for you, if you but know!”

Wahbah explained that Islam does not allow transgression.\(^10\) In other words, Islam permitted fighting people (non-believers) who fight against and transgress you, but not those who did not transgress and drive you out to your lands and homes and doing just to you. As Allah the Almighty said (Qur’an, Surah Al-Mumtahanah, 8):\(^11\)

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\text{لا يَنْهَكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِّ الْذِّيْنَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوْكُمْ فِي الْدِيْنِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوْكُمْ مِنْ دِيْارَكُمْ}
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Translation: “Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loveth those who are just.”

The injunction of this verse applies to the non-believers (*dhimmi*) who live in an Islamic community. Thus, as Muslims, we should have a deep understanding of peace and Jihad associated with Islam. Hence, we should consider the ways and practices of the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) and his companions as our guide in implementing and performing different acts of worship.


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\(^8\) Ibid.,
the ethics of Jihad through arms, Allah has only allowed Muslims to fight in response to aggression. All groups of people who do not actively engage in an unjust war are protected from attack, and Muslims are only permitted to take up arms against those who have declared war against them, never as a means to force people into Islam and Muslim fighters must distinguish between combatants and non-combatants to limit human sufferings. Allah the almighty said (Qur'an, Al-Baqarah, 190):

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يَقْتَلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِيْنَ

Translation: “And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits, surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits.”

Khaliph Abu Bakr summarized the most important of these limitations in the form of ten rules:

“Yahya ibn Sa’id reported: Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, dispatched armies to Syria, and he said, “I give you ten instructions: Do not kill a woman, nor a child, nor an infirm elder. Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees nor tear down inhabited buildings. Do not slaughter sheep or camels, except for food. Do not burn or drown bees’ nests. Do not steal from the spoils, and do not act cowardly.”

Therefore, violent extremism is contrary to the concepts of Jihad and the real teaching of Islam, and the principles of Islamic Law. However, the process of extremism is different for each person, but some factors can lead to young people becoming radicalized. Sustaining the radicalization process is an extremist ideology that seems appealing and credible, often because it appears to make sense of the young person’s feelings of grievance or injustice. Personal weaknesses or local factors can make a young person more inclined to extremist messages. These may include a sense of not belonging, behavioral problems, issues at home; lack of self-esteem; criminal activity; and being involved with gangs. Meeting these needs through violent activities is not the answer. Learning how unmet needs could lead to radicalization is important. These needs can include the personal need for power, achievement, affiliation, importance, purpose, morality, and excitement.

In Islam, Jihad is striving to the utmost extent of one’s ability and power by exerting oneself in the way of Allah and doing one’s best with wisdom to preach the message of Islam to others; to protect people and their rights, and to promote peace, order, development, and to prevent violent extremism and radicalism. The Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) described the violent extremism when he said Translation: “O people! Avoid extremism and immoderation in "deen. The distraction of the people before you was hyperbole in religion”.

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14 Anas, Malik Ibn, al-Muwatta’ 918, Pentahqiq, Muhammad Fu’ad Abdul Baqi, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al ‘Ilmiyyah), t. th.
15 Narrated by Ahmad, 1/215; An-Nasaie, 288; and Ibn Majah, 3029.
When we speak of human rights in Islam, we mean that Allah has granted these rights. In Islam, human rights are conferred by Allah. No legislative assembly in the world or any government on earth has the right or authority to amend or change the rights conferred by Allah. Human rights in Islam stem from two foundational principles: Dignity and Equality.

a. Dignity – It is a fundamental right of every human being merely by virtue of his or her humanity. As Allah states in the Qur’an Surah Al-Isra’, verse 70.16

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَآ بَنِي ْٰٓا دَمَٰٓوَحَمَلْن هُمْٰٓفِىٰٓالْبَر ِٰٓوَالْبَحْرِٰٓوَرَزَقْن هُمْٰٓم ِنَٰٓالطَّي بَٰٓتِ

Translation: And indeed, We have honored the children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with At-Tayyibat (good and blessings), and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preferment.

2). Equality. Allah the Almighty clearly declares that in His sight, the only distinguishing factors between humans are righteousness and piety, Allah the Almighty said (Qur’an, Al-Hujarat, verse 13).17

يَأُيُوْهَا الْنَّاسُ إِنَّ آٓخَلَقْن كُمْ مِنْ ذَكْرٍ وَأُنثى وَجَعَلْنَكُمْ شَعَوبًا وَقَبَائلٍ لِّتَعَاوَنُواْ

Translation: “(O humankind! We have created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has At-Taqwa. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.)”

The diversity of humanity into many races and ethnicities is a testament to Allah’s majesty and wisdom. Therefore, racial superiority and discrimination are prohibited in Islam and contradict their essence. This concept is exemplified in the final sermon of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who proclaimed:

Translation: “No Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab. Nor does a white man have any superiority over a black man or the black man any superiority over the white man. You are all the children of Adam, and Adam was created from clay.”

Therefore, is the history of wars and conflicts due to a scarcity of natural resources, a lack of literacy, or forgetfulness of the teaching of religions that aim at establishing peace among peoples by ordering human life according to God’s will? Though we have very high

17 Ibid., p. 13.
achieved in science, it has not been the same in the areas of peace, justice, and human rights; and though the Qur’an constantly reminds Muslims to share what they possess, today millions live in conditions unsuited to their human dignity.

While Muslims have created great civilizations in the past, and the Al-Qur’an says they are a model for other people today - their educational, scientific, and economic development is in great crisis. Among the many reasons for this, the main one is their misunderstanding or misuse of Islamic teachings. More effective use of resources and greater attention to education, as commanded by the Al-Qur’an, would develop their countries spiritually and materially. Allah the Almighty said (Qur’an Al-A’imran, verse 110).

Translation: “You are the best of peoples ever raised for humankind; you enjoin Al-Ma’ruf (all that Islam has ordained) and forbid Al-Munkar (all that Islam has forbidden), and you believe in Allah. Furthermore, had the People of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) believed, it would have been better for them; among them are some who have faith, but most of them are Fasiqun (rebellious).”

Imam John Ederer explained that when people talk about humanity, they usually refer to two concepts; the reality of human beings and the compassionate benevolence we show our fellow humans. Islam has emphasized these two points in many ways, and one example is the nature of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) mission! Allah the Almighty said (Qur’an, Al-Anbiya’, verse 107).

Translation: “We have merely sent you as benevolence to everyone and everything (humankind, jinns and all that exists).”

Good governance, to be effective and sustainable, must be anchored in enthusiastic working accountability, consensus-oriented, equity that respects the rule of law, a free press, energetic civil society organizations, and effective and independent public bodies such as the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance, Prevention of Corruption Bureau and the Fair Trade Commission. The Commission is important in ensuring the promotion and protection of human rights and ensuring both transparency and accountability on the part of the government. Good governance requires transparency and efficiency also in different government agencies.

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao needs good leadership that

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18 Ibid., p. 110.
moves in a sincere direction truly in their best long-term interest. However, it should be following the Sunnah of the Prophet Mohammad (peace be on him) and his guided followers and implementing the four basic principles that govern Islamic leadership, which is mutual consultation (shura), justice, and freedom of thought, and dealing one another with right application.\(^{22}\) Allah says in the following statement (Qur’an Ali’imran, verse 159).\(^{23}\)

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فِيَمَا رَحْمَةً مِّنَ اللّٰهِ لِنْتُ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فَظًا عَلَٰٓيْبَ الْقَلْبِ لَفَضَيْسَوْا مِّنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُٰٓعَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْٰٓلَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِىٰٓالََْمْرِ فَاِذَآٰعَزَمْتَٰٰٓٓ فَتَوَكَّلْٰٓعَلَىٰٓاللّٰهِِٰٰٓۗٓاِنَّٰٓاللّٰهَٰٓيُحِبُّٰٓالْمُتَوَك ِلِيْنَٰٓ
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Translation: “It is part of Mercy of Allah that you do deal gently with them. Were you severe harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you: so pass over their faults and ask for Allah’s forgiveness for them and consult them in affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust in him.”

In Islam, Political System should be tolerated in mind that Islam is an inherently political religion. In this sense, the state’s legitimacy is linked with its role as protector of the Muslim community and the full application of the Shari’ah law by "enjoying the right and forbidding the wrong." The political system of Islam is based on three principles: Oneness of Allah (Tawheed), Prophethood (Risala), and Caliphate (Khilafa).\(^{24}\)

**Tawheed** means that there is only one God, the Creator, Sustainer, and Master of the universe and all that exists in between, whether organic or inorganic. He alone has the right to command or forbid. Worship and obedience are to Him alone. In all its varied forms, no aspect of life – our organs and faculties, the apparent control we have over physical objects or the objects themselves - has been created or acquired by us, not in our own right. They are the bountiful provisions of Allah and have been bestowed on us by Him alone.

**Risalah** is the medium through which we receive the law of Allah. We have received two things from the source of the Al-Qur’an, which Allah has illustrated His law, and the authoritative interpretation and exemplification of that Book by Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) through word and deed, in his capacity as the representative of Allah.

**Khilafa** means “representation.” Man, according to Islam, is the representative of Allah on earth, His vicegerent; that is to say, under the powers delegated to him by Allah, and within limits prescribed, he is required to exercise Divine authority.

Consequently, good governance should be following the wisdom behind teachings of Islam, Iman, and Ihsan through good communications skills as Allah commanded Musa (Moses) (Peace be upon him) to adopt a soft and mild approach when He sent him along with his brother

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24 Ibid.,
Haroun (Aaron) to the Fir’aun (Pharaoh), (Qur’an, Surah Thaha, verse 43-44).

Translation: “Go both of you, to Fir’aun (Pharaoh). Verily he has transgressed. And speak to him mildly, perhaps he may accept admonition or fear Allah.”

Invoke the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious.” (Qur’an, Surah An-Nahl, verse 125).

Hence, it is not for us to decide the aim and purpose of our existence or set the limits of our world authority, nor does anyone else have the right to make these decisions. These rights rest only with Allah. This principle of the Oneness of Allah makes meaningless the concept of the legal and political sovereignty of human beings. No individual, family, or race can set themselves above Allah. Allah alone is the Ruler, and His commandments constitute the law of Islam.

Profile of the Participants:

- The majority of respondents (61.37%) were males.
- 42.70% of respondents were aged 36 years old and above.
- More than half (64.38%) were married.
- Around 45.06% were college graduates, and 41.63% were university graduates at the Arabic or Islamic academic level.

The majority of the respondents have good enough knowledge of Islamic Law, and they were hoping to work with National Government and the Bangsamoro homeland. However, their role as faith-based leaders was to eradicate violence and conflicts. In the notable traits and characters of Ulama, they were faithful/ righteous; successors (heirs) of prophets; ambassadors, preachers, and models of Islam; protectors/guardians of Islam against deviation, novelty (innovation), and violent extremism; bearers of truth and light, and arbiters and interpreters of Shariah and Islamic law, because they had a comprehensive understanding of Islamic knowledge. They led religious rites and manage Masajid (plural of masjid), and they are owners and administrators of Madaris (plural of madrasah).

Most of the respondents described the Muslims in the Southern Philippines since time immemorial have been aspiring to become truly faithful Muslims by living according to Islamic teachings. Muslim Faith-based Leaders or Ulama is a body of Muslim scholars recognized as having specialist knowledge of Islamic sacred law (Shariah) and theology (Aqeedah/ Usul ul

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Deen); they were educated in Islam and engaged in the several fields of Islamic Studies. The word “alim” (scholar) “faqeeh’ all carry the same meaning; they refer to one who strives to reach the sharie ruling and who can derive sharie rulings from evidence. According to local customary Meranaw meaning on Ulama, it refers to the Muslim scholars who graduated from Islamic University abroad.

1. Perceptions and Insights:

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<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Key Findings</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Do you agree that Jihad is equivalent to extremism?”</td>
<td>A large percentage (90.99%) of respondents disagreed that Jihad is equivalent to extremism. It implies that most respondents are aware and cognizant that Jihad is not equivalent to extremism because Jihad promotes peace, order, and development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Do you agree that time and place does not matter in performing Jihad by means of arms?”</td>
<td>Results showed that 74.68% of the respondents disagreed that time and place do not matter in performing Jihad through arms. This implies that they have good enough knowledge on the meaning of Jihad. The Jihad through arms is situational and follows the principles of Shariah.</td>
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<td>“Do you agree that the Marawi siege is the effect of extremism and militancy?”</td>
<td>The majority of the respondents (80.47%) agreed that the Marawi siege is the effect of extremism and militancy because of misrepresentation and misinterpretation of Islam coming from other ideologies.</td>
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<td>“Do you agree that the best way of achieving Islamic governance is through Militancy?”</td>
<td>A large percentage (74.46%) of the respondents disagreed that militancy is the best way to achieve Islamic governance. These results denote that most of the respondents have good enough knowledge about Islamic leadership.</td>
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<td>“Do you agree that Islam prohibits dealing with the non-believers?”</td>
<td>A large percentage of respondents (81.33%) disagreed that Islam prohibits dealing with non-believers. Indeed, Islam deals with anyone and protects them.</td>
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<td>“Do you agree that Islam is contradicting to extremism and militancy?”</td>
<td>All humankind with justice and fairness.</td>
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<td>“Do you agree that Allah commanded Muslim to destroy churches and buildings?”</td>
<td>The majority of the respondents (72.53%) agreed that Islam contradicts extremism and militancy. Islam prohibits disorder, immoderation, and oppression.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Do you agree that Islam is peace, security, and voluntary submission to Allah?”</td>
<td>Results indicate that 92.27% of the respondents disagreed that Allah commanded Muslims to destroy churches and buildings because this contradicted the values and teachings of Islam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Do you agree that Islam is peace, security, and voluntary submission to Allah?”</td>
<td>A significant percentage (95.06%) of the respondents indicated agreement that Islam is peace, security, and voluntary submission to Allah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>Key findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Do you agree that Peace Education is very significant?”</td>
<td>Almost all participants (96.57%) agreed that peace education is very significant for all communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Do you agree that peace education should be included in our school’s curricula?”</td>
<td>The majority of the respondents (95.71%) agreed that peace education should be included in school curricula for both government and private institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Do you agree that harmony and tolerance are parts of peace education objectives?”</td>
<td>Out of the total number of respondents, 93.35% agreed that harmony and tolerance are a part of the objectives and aims of peace education from an Islamic perspective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Do you believe that peace education in Islamic perspective will promote peace and tranquillity in our region?”</td>
<td>A large percentage of the respondents (96.14%) agreed that peace education from the Islamic perspective would promote peace, order, and tranquillity in the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Do you agree that peace education in Islamic perspective will promote moral values?”</td>
<td>A large percentage of respondents (97.85%) agreed that peace education from an Islamic perspective would promote peace and moral values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Do you believe that Islam totally contradicts violent extremism?”</td>
<td>The majority of the respondents (86.27%) agreed that Islam contradicts violent extremism because Islamic teaching is justice, tolerance, and moderation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Do you believe that Islamic leadership is a solution to eradicate violent extremism?”</td>
<td>The majority of the respondents (91.63%) believed that Islamic leadership is a solution to eradicating violent extremism and any conflicts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Questions**

- “Do you believe that Islam is peace and it governs all aspects of life?”
  - The majority of respondents (97.64%) believed that Islam is peace and tranquillity. It governs all aspects of life, including life after death.

- “Do you believe that Shariah and its principles will promote peace?”
  - The majority of the respondents (98.07%) believed that Shariah and its principles would promote peace and order.

- “Do you agree that convergence group of Ulama can help preventing Violent Extremism?”
  - A majority (92.92%) of the respondents agreed that a convergence group of Ulama could help prevent and respond to violent extremism.
### 2. Perceptions and Insights:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the focus issues of violent extremist groups for recruitment?</th>
<th>Why do people become violent extremists?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondents shared that violent extremist groups focused on the following issues to support recruitment:</td>
<td>Respondents shared the following reasons why some people become violent extremists:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats against Islam</td>
<td>Due to lack of knowledge about Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A broad ideological objective such as fighting modernity and re-establishing the caliphate or Islamic State</td>
<td>Lack of parental guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social grievances</td>
<td>Wrong belief and misleading ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identity</td>
<td>Poor governance and militarization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cultural oppression</td>
<td>Endemic corruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Popularity</td>
<td>High levels of social marginalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal relationships</td>
<td>Economic gain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discrimination and social injustices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Due to radical ideology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do people become radicalized?</th>
<th>What are the works and roles of faith-based leaders?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>According to respondents, people become radicalized through the following:</td>
<td>According to respondents, faith-based leaders can fulfill the following roles and works:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Erroneous understanding of Islamic teaching</td>
<td>• Correct the wrong interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The draw of social networks</td>
<td>• Engage in dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sense of belonging</td>
<td>• Teach peace education in madrasah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Educate mothers and widows on the dangers of violent extremism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wrong interpretation of The Al-Qur'an and Sunnah</td>
<td>• Conduct symposia, conferences, and seminars on the prevention of violent extremism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of social justice people are treated dishonestly and unjustly</td>
<td>• Islamic values and Islamic principles should be the priority of preachers in their khutba and class discussions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Political interest</td>
<td>• Conduct and engage in interfaith and intrafaith dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Influence of social media among youth</td>
<td>• Adviser to the Umara (leaders) on how to protect the community from the danger of violent extremism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recruitment</td>
<td>• Discuss with community leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Due to poverty</td>
<td>• Provision of Islamic books that contain peace, tolerance, harmony, love, and respect for neighbors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Human rights violations</td>
<td>• Violation of Armed Forces of the Philippines during operations against civilians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cultural threat perceptions</td>
<td>• Social grievances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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What are the principles of Islam to prevent and respond to violent extremism?

Respondents identified the following Islamic principles to prevent and respond to violent extremism:
- Proper understanding of Jihad
- Peace education
- Objectives of Shariah or Islamic law
- Principles of limitation in war
- Protection of non-combatants and non-combatants’ properties
- Rights of neighbors
- Respect of others
- Islamic leadership
- Rules of engagement in Islam
- Dialogue, tolerance, and harmony

What do you think are the solutions to violent extremism and suicide bombing?

According to respondents, the following are possible solutions to violent extremism and suicide bombing:
- Unity against violent extremism
- Provision of Islamic books that contain peace, protection of non-combatants in times of war and peace, tolerance, harmony, love, and respect for neighbors
- Implementation of public services by local government officials
- Ulama-government – cooperation and collaboration among political leaders through dialogue involving all sectors in the community, most especially the faith-based leaders
- Interfaith and Intrafaith dialogue
- Peace education in the Islamic perspective
- Islamic education, Islamic awareness, and Islamic symposia to correct the wrong understanding about Islam and wrong interpretations of the Al-Qur’an and the Sunnah.

What is the Shari’ah concept towards violent extremism?

Below are some of the responses from participants concerning the Shariah concept towards violent extremism:
- Shariah bringing peace while violent extremism destroying the image of Islam
- Shariah’s ultimate objectives are to preserve and protect human life, faith, intellect, progeny, and resources, while violent extremism is the opposite.
- Shariah prohibits killing innocent people and non-combatants, while violent extremism is the opposite.
- Shariah prohibits indiscriminate attacks, while violent extremism is

What can you do to prevent violence extremism in your community?

Respondents shared the following inputs on steps that can be done to prevent violent extremism in their communities:
- Strengthen Islamic Education and promote awareness on the danger of violent extremism through social media, class discussions, khutba, and so forth.
- Engage in dialogue with my fellow Muslim scholars, elders, security sectors
- Educate Muslim youth both in school and out of school youth
- Educate parents on how to protect their children from the danger of violent extremism ideologies
- Promote and teach peace education, and correct the wrong interpretation of Jihad
- Cooperate with others to prevent violent extremism in my community
- Strengthen our relationship with the leadership and the military in the community
- Continue the advocacy to protect and preserve Islam against the violent extremism ideologies.
killing people indiscriminately.

- Shariah is the divine law suitable for all, while violent extremism follows the law of satan. According to Shariah, violent extremism is Haram, and their acts are satanic.

### IV. Closing

From the above discussion, the Faith-Based Leaders have an effective catalyst for peace and development; Islamic law and its objectives preserve human dignity and social civilization. It should be clear that good governance is an ideal that is difficult to achieve in its totality. Very few countries and societies have come close to achieving good governance in its totality. However, to ensure sustainable human development, actions must be taken to work towards this ideal to make it a reality.

Most of the respondents described the Muslims in the Southern Philippines since time immemorial have been aspiring to become truly faithful Muslims by living according to Islamic teachings. Muslim Faith-based Leaders or Ulama is a body of Muslim scholars recognized as having specialist knowledge of Islamic sacred law (Shariah) and theology (Aqeedah/Usul ul Deen); they were educated in Islam and engaged in the several fields of Islamic Studies. The word „alim (scholar), faqeeh all carry the same meaning; they refer to one who strives to reach the Sharie ruling and who can derive sharie rulings from evidence. According to local customary Meranaw meaning on Ulama, it refers to the Muslim scholars who graduated from Islamic University abroad.

In general, the respondents described that violent extremists hijack Islam and distort its true teachings and spirit because of poverty, discrimination, alienation, and little knowledge of Islamic law. They are interpreting Islam based on their hidden and personal agenda. They think that by doing violence, they are serving Allah. They considered their actions as the greatest form of Jihad. Thus, violent extremism is a form of extremism that overlooks and enacts violence with ideological or deliberate intent, such as religious or political violence.

Hence, Islam is a religion of peace, harmony, tolerance, compassion, and moderation. It is not of extremes. It provides for man's rational needs as well as for his spiritual requirements. It encourages the spirit of zuhd (asceticism), but not to the exclusion of the beauties and material attraction of this world. The Qur'an emphatically orders the Prophet and all Muslims as Allah said (Qur'an Surah Al-Qasas, verse 77).27

> وَابْتَغِيْمَا اِلَيْكَ اللّٰهُ الْدَّارَ الْأَخْرَةَ وَلاَ تَثْبِتْ نَصْبًإ مِّنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنْ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللّٰهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِيْ أَلْفَاسَادًا فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُحْبِبُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

Translation: “But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget thy portion in this world, but do thou good. As Allah has been good to thee, and seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land; for Allah loves not those who make mischief.”

Following the findings and their implications, it is evident that there is more to do to fully address the social issue of violent extremism. Hence, the following recommendations of the researchers and the respondents:

A. Recommendation from the Technical Working Group

1) Establishment or creation of the Ulama Advisory Council to advise the National government on matters affecting Islam.
2) Establishment of AGAMA arbitration council in every Muslim barangay headed by the Ulama.
3) The book should be among one of the main references for the curricula of public and private schools.
4) The book should also be translated into different dialects in the Philippines, such as Tagalog, Tausug, Meranaw, Maguindanao, and Arabic.
5) The book should be used as a guideline for government agencies to prevent and confront Violent Extremism programs.
6) There is a need for a representative or member from the Ulama to the National Textbook Board.
7) There is a need for a representative from the Ulama to the Supreme Court and the Shariah Academy.
8) There should be an Ulama member to the board of the Al-Amana Islamic Bank or any Islamic finance and banking institution in the country.
9) The decision of Islamic law should follow the principles of four schools of thought as stated in article 6, Paragraphs I and II of the PD 1083.
10) The appointment of chaplains in the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police should be in consultation with or by recommendation of legitimate Ulama organizations such as United Imam of the Philippines, Darul Iftah, Shariah Center of the Mindanao State University, and MAHIR Foundation, Inc.

B. Recommendation from the Respondents

1) Support from LGUs to madrasa is needed. Very good examples are the following: Davao City and General Santos City.
2) There is a need for creating the office on Faith-Based Organizations to advise the Chief Minister and the BARMM government on building community relationships, Intra-faith, and interfaith dialogue.
3) Support for widows and orphans of former combatants is needed to prevent violent circles.
4) The development of VE-affected areas in the BARMM should be a priority.
5) Both parties should implement the agreement to prevent youth from joining a violent extremist group.
6) Integration of peace education curriculum in all schools (public and private).
7) Integrated human rights-based doctrine and oversight to ensure security, interventions adhere to human rights norm including women, peace and security agenda in policies and actions.
8) Creation of livelihood for out-of-school youth and unemployed, especially to needed vulnerable individuals.
9) Rehabilitate the internal displaced-person (IDP”s) properly.
10) Provide scholarship to vulnerable individuals such as orphans and provide a sustainable livelihood for widows.
11) The majority of the respondents recommended to the National Government and the Bangsamoro Parliament to realize and to recognize the role of faith-based leader and the Ulama in peacebuilding and to collaborate with them in the different agencies in the Philippines and to institutionalize the madaris in our county in general; and the Muslim areas in particular.
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