

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.'s  
MEDIA INTERVIEW IN SUMISIP, BASILAN**

Municipality of Sumisip, Basilan

March 2, 2024

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**PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.:** Although the ceremonies that we had here is really very simple, it is symbolic of a very important day because this is a testament to the commitment of all stakeholders to peace.

And we --- but as I said in my speech --- when we talk about peace, it does not only mean the cessation of violence. What it also means is that we continue --- that we, the national government and the local governments and the autonomous government, all work together to make sure that the livelihood and the progress will come to Basilan and all of the other provinces who were once areas of conflict. And this is the most important thing.

And that is why, it is very significant also. I'm the first President to be able to come here because this was ground zero in the time of the fighting. And so, it is a very clear landmark on the progress we have been making in bringing peace to Southern Philippines.

REPORTER: [off mic]

**PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.:** Well, Mindanao has a different effect of the El Niño, in various ways. Although up in Luzon and in the Visayas, especially Western Visayas, we have a very very large effect of drying up in water supply; dito naman, dito sa South, nagkakabaha naman tayo. So, we have a different response.

So, we will continue to do that. And what we are trying to do, especially now, because we are trying to develop the livelihood, the agri-fisheries, as I mentioned. All of these things will need a good supply of fresh water for irrigation and also fresh supply of water for consumers, and that infrastructure will now have to start to build.

REPORTER: Mr. President, is this the first time that you witnessed this kind of destruction of weapons and do you have any plan to --- I mean, do you expect that this will be also replicated in other provinces in Mindanao?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.:** Well, no it's not the first time that I have seen this. We have been... this is an ongoing process and it doesn't need to be replicated in other provinces. It's ongoing. This is continuously ongoing under the auspices of the United Nations, the EU, all of our partners abroad as observers, to look and see the decommissioning of weapons continues. So, patuloy lang.

We are still ongoing in the process and we are still trying to bring those who are still fighters to come down from the mountains and to join society. And we, for our part, will continue to support everything that they need in terms of housing, in terms of livelihood, in terms of schools, in terms of infrastructure. And that's the role that we will play.

REPORTER: Sir, you had a meeting with the governors of BARMM. Can you share to us what are 'yung mga napag-usapan?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.:** Well, the governors of BARMM are coming together to come to --- to formalize an alliance --- it is already existing --- but to formalize an alliance to make it very clear the support that the governors will bring to the autonomous government, to BARMM. And I think that is also another very important step in the continuing road to peace.

All right. Thank you.

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