

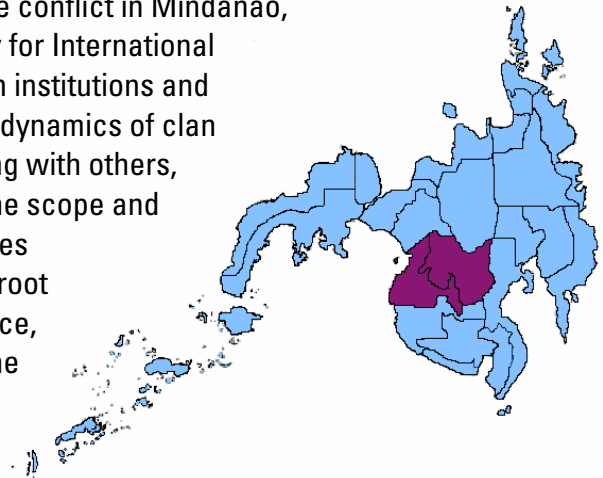


Executive Summary

Celebrated Cases of *Rido* Management in Maguindanao and North Cotabato

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In an effort to create a clearer understanding of the conflict in Mindanao, The Asia Foundation and the United States Agency for International Development supported Mindanao-based research institutions and non-government organizations in investigating the dynamics of clan violence, otherwise known as *rido*. This study, along with others, provides a comprehensive conflict map showing the scope and magnitude of clan conflicts in Mindanao. The studies highlight specific cases of conflict, exploring their root causes and conditions for escalation and recurrence, their interaction with state-related conflicts, and the potential for conflict resolution.



STUDY OVERVIEW

This study is focused on three case studies of conflict in Mindanao particularly in the provinces of Maguindanao and North Cotabato, which at one point or the other have threatened the peace and tranquility of the local communities. The UNYPAD study looked into the Mangansakan and Tayuan conflict, the Abas and Sinsuat conflict, and the Bagundang and Manduyog conflict. The study aimed to produce an in-depth understanding of these three controversial cases of endemic clan conflict and to identify a concrete basis for conflict resolution.

Future stakeholders in conflict resolution, like local and national leaders, peace-makers, policy makers, influential individuals, as well as the warring clans themselves, may use the results of this study as a tool to address the conflict. The end in view is to provide missing data and information in order to enhance peace efforts for conflict resolution in this part of Mindanao.

The research team mainly used focus group discussions and key informant interviews to gather data. In Maguindanao, this study covered Kabuntalan and Datu Odin Sinsuat, and in North Cotabato, the study was limited to Pikit and Midsayap.

FINDINGS

The Tayuan and Mangansakan conflict affected several barangays of Midsayap and Pikit in North Cotabato, causing massive displacement and loss of lives and properties. It lasted for more than ten years but cooled down without a formal settlement. The last encounter was in 1996. It is important to note that both parties have finally expressed their willingness to settle their conflict, and the UNYPAD will be facilitating the dialogues as the next stage phase of the project.

The root cause of the Abas and Sinsuat *rido* was political. Both sides suffered casualties, the conflict displaced civilians from several barangays of Datu Odin Sinsuat, and caused both loss of property and burning of houses. The conflict disrupted classes for a large number of students at the elementary, secondary and college level, especially at Mindanao State University, Maguindanao. Through the initiative of clan leaders and military officials, the *rido* was eventually settled, but the agreement was undocumented.

The Bagundang and Manduyog *rido* centered on ownership over the land of the 7th *Watamama* (*Tubotubo*) of Kabuntalan. *Watamama* was one of the royal titles used during olden times in central Mindanao. It is synonymous to Datu, Rajamuda, Diokolano, etc. Kabuntalan is one of the oldest ruling sultanates in mainland Mindanao. But now it only exists as one of the municipalities in Maguindanao province.

Both the Bagundang and Manduyog who were involved in the *rido* were married to the female descendants of the *Watamama*. The *rido* was settled through the efforts of the most influential personalities among the two clans. The important highlight of the interim peace agreement has been the prevention of assault from both sides. Since the agreement, the use of force by both sides has stopped. Nevertheless, there are still foreseeable problems in the future, as the root cause of the conflict was not properly addressed in the agreement. At the time that this research concluded, the title of the contested land still had not been registered in the name of the owners (all the legitimate heirs and heiress of *Watamama*).

Based on the three cases of *rido*, the UNYPAD research team was able to define *rido* as the result of a misunderstanding and disagreement of two or more individuals of different families or clans, to the extent that when fanned by *Maratabat* (pride), it involves the mutual use of force and violence. Consequently, there begins a cycle of revenge, resulting in the wanton loss of lives and property on both sides.

The team was also able to categorize the different stages of *rido*: (1) the pre-*rido*/cold war, (2) the start of *rido*, (3) escalation, (4) settlement and resolution, (5) agreement, and finally (6) the transformational stage.

The causes of cold war were identified as misunderstanding or miscommunication, lack of coordination and respect, verbal threats and confrontation, and socio-political and economic domination. When the cold war bursts into a case of homicide, it will easily touch the *maratabat* of the clan, igniting friction between the clans; so the *rido* starts.

Escalation, the third stage of the *rido*, happens when there is revenge and multiple damages; when there is involvement of a third party or powerful groups; and when the local authorities neglect the *rido* or fail to reconcile the two warring clans.

Settlement and resolution stages are divided into pre-settlement and proper settlement. Pre-settlement is the time where the clans reach the realization and bargaining period, when their resources are draining out, and when they are already tired. Proper settlement can be started after all these conditions take hold. There shall be a dialogue and finally the forging of an agreement. Thereafter, the transformational stage takes place, when the trust and confidence of both parties are gradually restored.

The case studies on *rido* in Maguindanao and North Cotabato attempt to establish the dynamics of *rido* and the kind and process of settlement applied by qualified interveners and peacemakers. Findings can serve as a basis for leaders in the future resolution of *rido* cases, thus stopping the unnecessary loss of lives and damage to property.

Hence, the following conclusions were drawn with regard to understanding and settling such conflict.

The Role of Maratabat

Based on the analysis presented, the *rido* or endemic clan conflict may happen to any family or clan, anywhere, at any time—provided that the elements for a pre-*rido*/cold war exist. Though the Moro tribes are more prone to getting involved in *rido*, it could also happen among non-Moro tribes.

In the case of Moro tribes, the prevalence of *rido* could be blamed on the deeper sense of *maratabat*. It dictates that every member of the clan stand courageously and bravely in defense of *maratabat*. Once the *maratabat* is trampled upon, it calls for an instant unity among individual members of the clan, and the impulse of each is to give whatever resources he can muster. The whole clan often stands in the common belief that “when the little finger ails, the whole body feels it.” In other words, indifference to the clan’s call to action would mean that one is not a worthy part of it.

The realization period as pre-requisite to formal settlement of the rido

When mutual retaliation starts, there’s no more room for settlement. Both parties are blinded by strong emotions, as evidenced by their unscrupulous use of force, which

affects not only their enemies but also innocent civilians. Any initiative during this stage to settle the conflict will either go unacknowledged or unimplemented.

But *rido* has unique characteristics owing to the fact that the conflict itself is based on the common personal interest of the clan. No matter how powerful the parties are, there will come a time when they sober. This is the time when their energies and resources are weakening as a result of a large number of casualties and loss of property and damages on both sides. Therefore, this is the time when realization sets in, and the use of force gradually fades away.

This stage is subjective to the parties involved in the *rido*. There even comes a time when the two parties cease to attack each other but have no formal dialogue or even an initiative to settle the conflict. This was the case with the Mangansakan vs. Tayuan conflict, where the use of force stopped several years ago. Perhaps the anger and the pain gradually healed, since both parties have expressed their intention to avoid provocation to rekindle the bloody confrontation. Instead, they apparently want a formal settlement in order to totally cast away their fears and reestablish a harmonious relationship.

When this stage is reached, it is best to start the initiative for a formal dialogue in order to arrive at a formal settlement or agreement.

The Settlement

During the settlement period, it is important to determine the personalities to whom both clans have given their utmost trust. Likewise, the peacemakers should bear in mind that both parties have committed extreme offenses that totally betrayed the trust of the other side. The wisest course of action for the peacemakers is to be cautious and fair in every move during the dialogue process.

Rido is best prevented when the leaders are keen to determine the presence of pre-*rido*/cold war elements in the community. If the cold war is identified and resolved early, there is less chance for a *rido* to take place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conduct peace education seminars and training on the dynamics of *rido* and its settlement with the concerned LGUs and other leaders in the community.
2. Conduct an in-depth study on *maratabat* among the Moro tribes.
3. Conduct more research on traditional Moro methods of conflict settlement and resolution.

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