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## **ACHIEVING CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION THROUGH RIDO SETTLEMENT TOWARDS PEACE AND RECONCILIATION**

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### **Abstract**

Rido or clan feuds had been very rampant in some towns of Maguindanao. This research study delves into the complex phenomenon of rido in Maguindanao del Norte, focusing on three specific cases within the municipalities of Buldon and Barira. Utilizing a qualitative research design with a case study method, the study investigates the causes, consequences, negotiation processes, and outcomes of rido conflicts. Data was collected through purposive sampling, interviewing 30 participants from feuding clans, local government officials, MPOS BARMM representatives, Armed Forces units, Maguindanao del Norte MPS officials, and other stakeholders. The researcher employed key informant interviews with local government officials and MPOS BARMM officials. In-depth interviews were conducted with other participants, where they were asked to narrate relevant stories about the rido conflicts. The findings revealed the profound impact of rido on the affected communities, leading to disruptions in daily activities, children ceasing to attend school, freedom of movement, and forced displacement. Initial settlements, often facilitated by religious leaders and sultans, were later reinforced by collaborative efforts involving various organizations such as LGUs, MILF, IRC, MNLF, and MPOS, play crucial roles in reinforcing agreements and ensuring compliance. The study emphasizes the importance of personal, relational, and cultural change goals in achieving sustainable peace. Recommendations include continuous education on conflict resolution, financial support from LGU, regular monitoring of settlements by involved organizations, and strict enforcement of firearms regulations by the Police Regional Office BAR. The study underscores the necessity of multifaceted interventions from powerful organizations to address the longstanding issue of rido in Buldon and Barira and pave the way for lasting peace in the region.

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**Keywords:** Conflict Transformation; Rido; Settlement; Peace; Reconciliation

## INTRODUCTION

Rido is a social phenomenon that has been disturbing the peace and order condition of some BARMM provinces such as Maguindanao Norte. This refers to clan feuds, and which have been, as reported by Torres (2007) constant threat to peace and stability across the autonomous territories. He says further, that in Southern Philippines, armed conflict displaces tens of thousands of people each year and *rido* is one of the causes of these displacements.

The Maguindanaoan society is stratified and clan-oriented, with those who are able to trace their ancestry directly to Maguindanao royalty accorded the highest rank. Communities usually consist of closely related families and are headed by an individual who bears the title of datu (Golinski, 2023). This strong clannishness is the driving force for the will to protect any member of the clan who is dishonored. Thus, the occurrence of clan feuds that last for decades.

Clan feuds cannot be easily stopped due to strong clannishness. Not only is it damaging to the local society but to the peace process that is currently going on. Conflict resolution therefore would not suffice.

Conflict transformation is the more appropriate process. It offers long-term solution and prevents the recurrence of violence in the future.

In the Philippines, including the BARMM, the usual causes of clan feuds are land conflicts and the struggle for political power. It is important to resolve and transform the situation of *rido* not only to stop the fighting but more importantly to mitigate the effects of the resulting displacement and the prevention of the development of a culture of war.

Lederach (2014) explains that as a framework, conflict transformation “aims to understand the circumstances surrounding the conflict and seeks to change the conditions that give rise to the underlying root causes of the conflict. The main goal of the conflict transformation as a framework is not simply resolution of the conflict, but positive change which is attained by realizing the four change goals; personal change goals, relational change goals, cultural change goals and structural change goals.

This paper intends to come up with three cases of *rido* in Maguindanao Norte; their causes and consequences, the negotiation processes and the results. These processes, or generally the whole mechanisms, could serve as models to other feuding clans and the mediating entities such as the Bangsamoro Government. More importantly, they could educate the public. In addition, this study could fill in the gap of the lack of mechanisms employed to popularize the processes undergone by the negotiators and the actors, so the public may know.

## Theoretical Lens

This study is anchored on John Paul Lederach’s Conflict Transformation Theory, given that the settlement of *rido* is understood to be a long process, culminating in the permanent closure of the clan feud if authentic peace should be attained in the BARMM.

As asserted by Lederach (2014), conflicts have three dimensions with each own descriptions and change goals and these should be well understood first, before resolving and eventually transforming the conflict. These dimensions

should be taken into consideration in seeing to it that healing takes place and the conflict will finally end, if the processes are followed through.

The personal dimension refers to changes in and desired for the individual, in the context of this study, the leaders and members of the clan. This includes the cognitive, emotional, perceptual and spiritual aspects of human experience over the course of conflict. The descriptive dimension suggests that individuals are affected by conflict in both negative and positive ways. For example, conflicts affect our physical well-being, self-esteem, emotional stability, capacity to perceive accurately, and spiritual integrity. The change goal is to minimize destructive effects of social conflict and maximize the potential for growth and well-being in the person as an individual human being at physical, emotional and spiritual levels.

The relational dimension depicts the changes affected in and desired for the face-to-face relationships. Here issues of emotions, power, and interdependence, and the communicative and interactive aspects of conflict are central. For the descriptive perspective, transformation refers to how the patterns of communication and interaction in relationships are affected by conflict. It looks beyond visible issues to the underlying changes produced by conflict in how people perceive, what they pursue and how they structure their relationships. Most significantly, social conflict makes explicit how close or distant people wish to be, how they will use and share power, what they perceive of themselves and each other, and what patterns of interaction they wish to have. The change goal is to minimize poorly functioning communication and maximize understanding.

The structural dimension highlights the underlying causes of conflict, and stresses the ways in which social structures, organizations and institutions are built, sustained, and change by conflict. It is about the ways people build and organize social, economic, and institutional relationships to meet basic human needs and provide access to resources and decision-making. For the descriptive perspective, transformation refers to the analysis of social conditions that give rise to conflict and the way that conflict affects social structural change in existing social, political, and economic institutions. The change goal is to understand and address root causes of violent conflict; promote nonviolent mechanisms; minimize violence; foster structures that meet basic human needs and maximize public participation. This could refer to the actions done by the involved parties and the mediating entities such as the Bangsamoro Government, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police and the religious leaders.

The cultural dimension refers to the ways that conflict changes the patterns of group life as well as the ways that culture affects the development of processes to handle and respond to conflict. An example of this could be how the cultural practices are being affected when displacement happens due to *rido*. In its descriptive perspective, transformation seeks to understand how conflict affects and changes cultural patterns of a group, and how those accumulated and shared patterns affect the way people in a given context understand and respond to conflict. The change goal is to identify and understand the cultural patterns that contribute to the rise of violent expressions of conflict and identify cultural resources for constructively handling conflict.

The researcher chose this theory because it could serve as guide in documenting how the *rido* cases have been transformed. It could also give guidance of future action to sustain the temporary peace that has been attained due to the *rido* settlement process being undergone.

### Research Questions

The following specific questions will guide the researcher in gathering data to be used in describing the *rido* settlement processes and the results in terms of attaining peace in the areas where the fighting usually occurred:

1. What have been the parties in Maguindanao del Norte involved in the cases of *rido*? What have been the causes of these clan feuds?
2. What have been the effects of the *rido*? Who were the people affected? How long have they been affected?
3. How have the clan feuds been settled? What were the processes undergone? What was the participation of each of the mediating parties?
4. What have been the results of the settlement? What were the change goals of both parties and how were they attained? How were the conflicts transformed?

### METHODS

This study utilized the qualitative research design, specifically the case study method. This design enables the researcher to explore and provides deeper insights into real-world problems. Qualitative research gathers participants' experiences, perceptions, and behavior (Tenny, Brannan and Brannan, 2022). The case study method is a learning technique which facilitates the exploration of a real issue within a defined context, using a variety of data sources (Baxter et al., 2008). In general terms, the case study analyzes a defined problem consisting in a real situation and uses real information as methodological tool.

The data were gathered in the municipality of Buldon, province of Maguindanao Norte, specifically in the barangays of where the subject cases of *rido* occurred; namely; Cabayuan, Rumidas; and, Nuyo. Members of the only clan residing in Minabay of Barira were interviewed through phone.

Purposive Sampling was used. Only those who were expected to have good knowledge about the *ridos* that occurred in Buldon were asked to respond to the interviews and which included two (2) leaders and (3) members of at least three the feuding clans, two (2) local government officials of at least three (3) areas where the fighting occurred, two officials of the Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation Office of the BARMM, two (2) officials of the Armed Forces Unit assigned in Maguindano Norte, two (2) officials of the Maguindanao Norte Municipal Police Station, and three stakeholders (one from each area of the locale). There were total of 30 participants of the study.

The researcher employed the following data gathering techniques Key Informant Interviews were conducted with the local government officials and officials of the Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation Office of the BARMM Government.

In-depth Interviews were conducted with the rest of the study participants who will not be considered as key informants. They will be asked to narrate relevant stories or tell their stories about what happened.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 1. Parties Involved in the Cases of Rido

There were three sets of parties to the rido described in this paper. For anonymity, we refer to them as: (a) Clan A of Barangay Cabayuan, and Clan B of Barangay Rumidas; (b) Clan C of Barangay Cabayuan and Clan D of Barangay Nuyo; and, (c) Clan E of Barangay Rumidas, (all of these are barangays of Buldon) and Clan F of Barangay Minabay, Barira, Maguindanao del Norte.

Buldon, the municipality to which Barangays Cabayuan and Rumidas belong, is 35.28 kilometers away from Cotabato City. It is politically subdivided into 15 barangays. The two barangays which are the places of origin of the two clans having feuds share a common boundary, hence there was close proximity. Minabay, Barira, which is the municipality of Clan F also shares a common boundary with Buldon. These are only three of the 53 relatively recent clan feuds in this municipality.

#### 1.1 Causes of Clan Feuds

##### **Case 1: Rido settlement between Clan A of Barangay Cabayuan, and Clan B of Barangay Rumidas;**

One member of Clan B killed a member of Clan A. *“Si Clan B na timbak nin si Clan A, bali na wounded pero sa katagalan namatay din pagkatapos ng isang (1) taon, yun ang pagsimula ng Rido ng mga pamilya na ito.”* (A member of Clan B shot a member of Clan A. (The subject person) was wounded but died after one (1) year. This was the beginning of Rido between these clans)

An in-depth interviewee revealed that the rido did not really start until the victim died.

*“Sabap ku maratabat na piyatayan su pamilya ami, na kinahanglan na sumaop kami. Na giyuto ad’na mapatay ami ku (Clan B), sumaop p’man su (Clan A) na daden na tadtat niyan.”* (It was due to pride (Maratabat) wherein one of our family members died, we need to revenge. Hence, every time we killed a member Clan B, they will revenge to Clan A and resulted to unending killing of each other’s clan members.)

*“Tumagal ito ng mga ilang taon. Walang makapahinto sa amin Mayron mga elders at mga taga barangay na namagitan pero hindi talaga kami huminto.”* (This went on for several years. No one could make us stop. There were elders and local government officials who attempted to intervene but we did not stop.)

Instead of listening to those who intervened, the fighting continued.

*“Ya kinatimbak ni Clan B kani Clan A na namaka seven (7) years den iganat saguna 2024, ruba e kina ledsu nu rido. Sabap na madakel bun mambu a pagari nu pamilya na apya anda*

*makapagilaya na sumaop siran, aden na mapatay ku miyembro u pamilya na suamaup p'man.*" (The shooting of a member of Clan B by a member of Clan A lasted about seven (7) years up to now 2024. This was the start of the conflict. Since, there are also lot of family members, wherever see each other they will retaliate, same with the other clan). *"Basta uman makapagilaya su pamilya na aden p'man pebpatay, na sabap ru na gaungkal p'man su kab p'ridoi."* (Everytime we see each other, it is expected that one will die, and the conflict will have reawakened again

However, due to the intervention of other individuals and organizations, the rido finally came to a halt.

The effects of the rido were massive.

*"Sa timpo na anto na masla e epekto nin, su mga wata na naka ubpa mangagi, apiya kaped sambayang na diden makadsambayang sa masgit ka galekan, basta langon, su kapeng galbek sa lupa, na daden, nya nin naunga na napobre su mga tao masla gaid e epekin ka dika makamantiyari."* (During the course of Rido, it has a huge effect, our children were forced to stop from studying, even going to Mosque to pray, we could not go out due to fear. Everything was affected We could not farm anymore. Consequently, we became poorer. It has really a big effect because we were not able to work for living).

Further, some of the relatives left the place. This is what one participant said:

*"Uway, su pagari ami a ped na mimbakwit, miyawa su mga pagubay ami ka galekan sa makararagit, sumiong siran sa ped a darpa."* (Yes, some of our relatives left our place and transferred to other place, even our neighbors opted to leave due to fear of getting involved.)

Recently, there were individuals and organizations that wanted to intervene and the settlement done became successful.

*"Pagkatapos, dahil sa pagsisikap ng mga elders, mga datu, lalong lalo na itong Reconciliation Council tapos su mga LGU, apiya su MPOS na nainvolve giyanamba I miyakadtabanga iyan, sabap sa kinapamikal iran na minioyog bun siran sa maresolve e problema anto."* (After the concerted efforts of the Elders, Datus, especially the Reconciliation Council, the LGU and even the MPOS was involved, the two parties agreed to stop and resolve the said Rido.)

The PNP was also instrumental in settling the dispute. This is what the participant said:

*"Su mga pulis na masla bun e nakadtabang ngiran, na kagina aden dimimanda na napressure su mga involved sa imasaden den su problema."* (The authorities specifically the PNP have a big help, some of the concerned filed case against the other and the other party were pressured hence, they agreed to settle said problem.)

This was the manner of settlement by the other entities as revealed by a key informant:

*"Actually, su Rido siya r'kitanu sa Bangsamoro bago gaimasad na aden pidtarun a blood money, aden uto na su suspect na mayto e*

*kagaga nin, upama nya minggay na let us say 240 Thousand nya bu pirak niyan na magatus ngibo na endaw kuwan e blood money antu a labi duwa gatus ngibo? na entuba ru e nakadtabang e LGU, nakadtabang e IRC, apiya MPOS na nakadtabang bun.*” (Actually, in the Bangsamoro, before a Rido will be settled, we have what we called Blood Money, and there are instances that the suspect cannot afford to produce the required amount, let us say the required blood money is 240 thousand and the suspect has only 100 Thousand, where would he get the remaining more than amount).

After the blood money was paid, there were measures to be done to enable both clans to maintain non-violence through attaining their personal, relational and cultural change goals.

*“Sabap na sa giyaba a Rido na miya ayos den, taman sa su mga Elders, mga Datu n miyakadarpa na, kiyamaran p’man su pidtaru ka kamumuslimi sa dala kapamagukag ka ebpapagarya bun ku Agama Islam.”* (Since this Rido has been settled in fact the Elders, the Datus who attended, they went back again to the teaching of Islam on Unity, that we are all relatives in Islam).

*“Bali su mga kahanda a kasaup na miyada den, minisambi na kagkakalimuwa, kadsasabara agu kapamagayon”* (Well, the objective to revenge has been eradicated and changed into loving each other, patience and unity).

The intervening individuals and organizations saw to it that both parties signed an agreement not to engage in fighting again.

*“Aden mabager a agreement a naka pirma e duwa ka embala ento tapos apeg nu mga witness, su mga local mediators, su LGUs, su Mayor, su Vice Mayor, su mga Konsehal, tapos apiya sya sa BARMM su Ministry of Public Order and Safety na nakad signature bun, su mga military.”* (We have strong agreement, where the two parties signed with the local Mediators, LGUs like the Mayor, Vice Mayors and the Councilors, and even the officials of the BARMM in-charged which is the Ministry of Public Order and Safety, and even Military also signed.)

*“Guna su maayos den na mapya, naka pangagi su mga wata, apiya kapedsembayang na makadsambayang kaden sa Masjid, di taden gakirkan, su penggalbek sa lupa na makang galbek den ka diden mangandam sa ambusen, entuba resulta nin, naka pangingkawagin sa mapya, naka pangagi su mga wata.”* (After settling, its good, our children were able to go to school, we can already go to Mosque for prayer without fear, the farmers can go farming and no fear for ambush, and the result is that we can have better way for living, our children were able to school freely).

*“Isa a kiyasambiyon ku gagaisa a kahanda ami na makuwa na mada su sakita ginawa ku RODOI. Ku miyuna na amayka pamakapagilaya kami na gararangitan name su umani isa, agu pedtimbaka kami. Ugaid na saguna na kiyapamagayunan name den na di kami den mamong sa apiya tuna e klase nya ah guligaw.”*

(One of the personal change goals that we have attained is to lessen our anger against the other party. Before, when we would see

any of them, we would be so angry that we would always fire at any of them. Now, we have vowed not to engage in any form of violence again).

*“Para makuwa ami su mapiya a kahanda na pedtalabuk kami den sa mga pakaragiyan ah su pamilya ami na maimbita. K’na kami ba tanto ah miya close, medyo keep distance pen ugaid na mapya den uto ka amayka ka pamagubay kami na pedsalam kami den sa umani isa”.*

(As attainment of the relational change goal, we have attended some affairs where our families and their families were invited. We are not really that close, we still keep a distance but at least, when we are near each other, we can now greet them).

*“Kap’Rido aya na maytu bu na gaumbal den a adat. S’kami na pagunutan name giya ba adat, ugaid na imantu na di ami den tindegan giya ba a pakabinasa a adat. Sabap kna bus u pamilya e kabinasa ka taman ku kalukesan. Su epekto nya na miya kalala, sabap na su languno nu pagari na diden makanggalbek, sabap rug a apektuwan su uyag uyag. Kadakelan saya na madakel a tao maka awa ku inged.”*

(Rido has become almost a cultural practice. We stick to our cultural practices but probably, we will not uphold anymore this harmful practice. It does not harm the family only but the whole clan. The effects are far reaching, to the point that the members of the clan cannot work properly anymore, thus, affecting the source of living. More often, displacements of large number of residents occur).

*“ Sabap saya na di iran kinggulalan su mga adat tiran ku darpa ah gasungan iran”* (This prevents them from practicing their culture in the internal displacement center). *“Sabap sa giyaba na miyaugget ah na kanggulula, lagidu gaumbal den na adat tanu.*

*Ugaid na su kat’reen sa giyaba ah Kap’Rido na makadtabang sa makadtabang sa kambalingan na mapiya ah Adat saya sa Maguindanao”.* (Because this has been going on, for so long, it has almost become part of the culture. By stopping rido, the clan can contribute something to the restoration of this beautiful Maguindanaoan culture).

## **Case 2. Rido Settlement between Clan C of Barangay Cabayuan and Clan D of Barangay Nuyo.**

The data were sourced from representatives of Clan C and Clan D.

*“S’kame p’man e representatives u mga ridoi a su Clan C a taga Brgy Cabayuan agu su Clan D a taga Brgy Nuyo ru tanan sa Buldon, Maguindanao del Norte”* (We are representatives of the families having Rido the Clan C of Brgy Cabayuan and Clan D of Brgy Nuyo all of Buldon, Maguindanao del Norte.)

*“Kanu year 2000, na su wata a mama e Clan C na tinimbak na wata mama e Clan D, giyutuba e giyasapan na kiyapatay niyan”* (In



the year 2000, son of Clan C shot by the son of Clan D that resulted to his untimely death).

“Sabap sa piyatayan kami (Clan C) sinumaup kami mambu ku Clan D taman sa miyakadtitimbaka kamin den” (Because one of the clans (Clan C) died, we also revenged against Clan D and consequently, this resulted to massive fighting”).

The exchange of revenge continued for a year. This was the duration of the escalation. “*Guden mapatay a watama e Clan D su watamam e Clan C, giyuto den, giyaredsuan su kaperido taman sa miyararagit su mga pagari sa miyaka pira ragon.*” (After killing by the son of Clan D the son of Clan C, the Rido has begun and escalated with other relatives for a couple of years).

The effects of the rido had been massive. Both clans were heavily affected:

“*Sabap saya na miyatay niyan su siyaupan a pamilya, miyararagit pen su mga karabao matay sabap sa crossfired. Su kauyagan sa dita pakanggalbek sabap sa kagirekan ta.*” (Due to this conflict, the family of the victim revenged and was able to kill another members of the suspect, even the carabaos were killed due of the firefight of these clans. The economics is affected, the farmers cannot work due to fear of being killed).

The police and the military had a very crucial role in stopping the exchange of fires between the two clans:

“Amayka adena report ah giyaya pamilya na midtimbaka p’man, na su mga pulis agu su mga sundaro na b’responde agu iran kasaparan su kapedtimbaka.” (Whenever a report will reach to them (Police and Military) that these clans engaged in firefight, the police and military responded to stop the said firefight).

The barangay officials were asked to intervene and they responded immediately. The settlement of the conflict was a result of the immediate investigation of the barangay government officials. In the investigation they found out that the main reason was simply “mistaken identity”.

“*Guden kiyatawan na su tuminimbak b’sen ku wata e Clan C na k’na pidtibaba ka sabapiyan na mistaken identity, su mga BLGU u Brgy Nuyo agu Brgy Cabayuan na miyangilay sa ukit sa bitiyaran ka k’na mambu pidtibababa su kiyatimbak run nu wata e Clan D.*” (After discovered that the shooting of the son of Clan C was unintentional because this was due to mistaken identity, the BLGUs of Brgy Nuyo and Brgy Cabayuan looked for all possible means to settle this chaos).

For the settlement of the conflict, there were organizations who helped:

“*Ya mikadtabang para ma settle a giayaba Rido na su Brgy LGUs, Municipal LGU, MILF, MNLF aya mala na su mga military ka amayka pedtimbaka den na siran e sumong ru su military agu su mga pulis para pat’reinin siran.*” (The Brgy LGUs, Municipal LGU, MILF, MNLF played significant role in settling this RIDO especially

the military and police because they were the responders whenever a firefight transpires to stop it).

There were measures done to enable both clans to maintain non-violence in the individual, relational and cultural perspectives aspects.

*“Su mga Sultan agu su mga Ustadz na mimbibitiyara sa ayusin naya ka k’na mapiya sa Muslim e ebpapataya.”* (The Sultans, Religious leaders tackled this problem with them and came up with an objective to settle this problem because according to them it is not good that Muslims will kill each other).

There was a signed agreement after other entities came to help in the settlement:

*“Gu mapasad den ka ayusin su Rido na ya kiyapamagayunan na mumbal sa agreement. Mabager a agreement ka kiya pirman na LGU, representative a MILF, MNLF, mga sundaru, mga pulis agu su embala a pamilya, agu su mga Datu na piyaka pirma saya. Ya agreement na diden kadsarumanan ka entain e manibaba na ya niyan den RIDOI na su languno miyamirma agu su governo den.”* (After talking about this problem, it was agreed to put into writing by having an agreement. A strong agreement because this was signed by the LGU, representative from MILF, MNLF, AFP, PNP, the two involved parties and the Datus. The agreement stated that this must be stopped, and must not be repeated again, because whoever starts the chaos, their enemy will be those who signed the said agreement.)

As a result of the settlement, the clans vowed to attain some personal, relational and cultural change goals:

*“Bali su mga kahanda a kadsaup na miyada den, minisambi na kagkakalimuwa, kadsasabara agu kapabagayon”* (Well, the objective to revenge has been eradicated and changed into loving each other, patience and unity).

*“Gu den maayos na mibpapagarya, ka giyaya ped kuwaya na pakiwatan ku bes, na imamtu na pegkakalimuwa kami den. Sabap ru makin migkabag’r su kabpapagarya.”* (After settling this conflict, I found out that this companion of in this interview is my nephew, we are loving each other. In fact our relationship as relatives became stronger.)

The cultural change goals were also considered:

*“ Miya pamikir ami ah su Kap’Ridoi na gaakpektuwan niyam su adat saya sa Maguindanao. Mapya ah adat b’tad, di mapakay ah mabinasa sabap sa kap’Ridoi. Sabap sa amayka da baya Rido, na saya kami bu ku darpa ami, di ami minggulalan su mga adat ami. Upama na kag kanduri. Di baya minggulalan saya sa mga evacuation center atawa na amayka bamag’na ta.”* (We have realized that the rido had been affecting even the practice of our own Maguindanaoan culture. It is a beautiful culture, it should not be destroyed by rido. When there are no displacements due to rido, we can stay in our community and continue to practice our culture. For example, the practice of holding of kanduli. You cannot practice this in evacuation

centers or when you are somewhere hiding.”) “Aya pen isa run na mapasang man na kad selebret upama ade’n na miya successful ku pamilya, amayka gararangitan ta, atawa masasakit ah ginawa ta sabap sa ade’n na miyakurang ku pamilya.” (For one thing, it is difficult to celebrate success when you are feeling angry or hurt or when you are mourning.)

### **Case 3. Rido settlement between Clan E and Clan F**

The data were sourced from representatives of Clan E of Rumidas, Buldon and Clan F of Minabay, Barira.

*“S’kame p’man e representatives u mga ridoi a su Clan E a taga Brgy Rumidas, Buldon, Maguindanao del Norte agu su Clan F a taga Brgy Minabay sa Barira, Maguindanao del Norte.”* (We are representatives of the families having Rido the Clan E of Brgy Rumidas, Buldon, Maguindanao Norte and Clan F of Brgy Minabay, Barira, Maguindanao del Norte”).

This is their explanation of how the rido began:

*“Su giyaba a Rido na mikadsabap sa maratabat, ka si Clan E na kiyasenditan sa galbek a dikun pe’man ga b’nanaran. Sabap ru binunu e Clan F na kiyadsabatapan na miyatay.”* (This Rido started due to claim of Maratabat, accordingly Clan E was accused by Clan F of committing violation to Maratabat which is being denied and not true. This resulted to the killing of Clan E).

The effects of the rido were serious and far reaching. Even the people’s way of life was affected:

*“Sa timpo ah RiDO, na magidsan e epekto niyan , su mga wata na naka ubpa mangagi, apiya kaped sambayang na diden makadsambayang sa masjid ka gagil’ekan, basta langon na kiya epektuwan, su kapeng galbek sa lupa, na daden, nya nin naunga na napobre su mga tao masla gaid e epekin ka dika makamantiyari”* (During the course of Rido, the effect are just the same, our children were forced to stop from studying, even going to Mosque to pray, we cannot go due to fear, everything is affected, no more farming, the result was we became poorer, it has really a big effect because we were not able to look for leaving).

The authorities have been quickly responding. This is necessary to prevent loss of lives and damage to properties which are the usual effects of *rido*.

*“Su mga pulis na masla bun e nakadtabang ngiran, na kagina aden dimimanda na napressure su mga involved sa imasaden den su problema. Siran man e partner nu IRC para sa giyaba a concerns.”* (The authorities specifically the PNP has big help, some of the concerned filed case against the other and the other party were pressured hence, they agreed to settle said problem. They are the partners of IRC in addressing this type of problems).

With the coordination of the Iranun Reconciliation Center (IRC), other organizations such as the Local Government, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and the Moro national Liberation Front, escalation of the conflict was managed.

*“Guden makinig gu mga gaunutan su giyaba a problem na miyangiluba siran sa ukit ya masla na su IRC ya mapuro nyan na si Sir Yusoph Palawan sa ayusin agu diden pakaslan”* (After hearing by the community leaders of this problem, especially Iranun Reconciliation Council (IRC) headed by Sir Yusoph Palawan they looked for all possible means to address the said problem with the aim not to escalate).

*“Ya mikadtabang para ma settle a giayaba Rido na su Brgy LGUs, Municipal LGU, MILF, MNLF aya mala na su mga military ka amayka pedtimbaka den siran sumong den ru su military agu su mga pulis para pat’renin siran.”* (The Brgy LGUs, Municipal LGU, MILF, MNLF played a significant role in addressing this Rido especially the Military because the Military and Police immediately responded whenever any firefight will be happened to break said incident.)

The religious leaders and the sultans were also instrumental in the settlement of the conflict. Just like the previous settlements, they would always say that it is not good to kill fellow Muslims:

*“Su mga Sultan agu su mga Ustadz na mimbibitiyara sa ayusin naya k k’na mapiya sa Muslim e ebpapataya.”* (The Sultans, the Religious leaders, tackled these problems and came into objective to settle this problem because according to them its not good that Muslims will kill each other”).

There were positive results out of the settlement:

*“Guna su maayos den na mapya, naka pangagi su mga wata, apiya kapeddsambayang na makadsambayang kaden sa Masjid, di taden gakirkan, su penggalbek sa lupa na makang galbek den ka diden mangandam sa ambusen, entuba resulta nin, naka pangingkawagin sa mapya, naka pangagi su mga wata.”*

(After settling, it is good, our children were able to go to school, we can already go to Mosque for prayer without fear, the farmers can go farming and no fear for ambush, and the result is that we can have better way for living, our children were able to go to school freely).

To ensure compliance of what were agreed, everything was put into writing:

*“Aden mabager a agreement a naka pirma e duwa ka embala ento tapos apeg nu mga witness, su mga local mediators, su LGUs, su Mayor, su Vice Mayor, su mga Konsehal, tapos apiya sya sa BARMM su Ministry of Public Order and Safety na nakad signature bun, su mga military.”* (We have strong agreement, wherein the two parties signed the said agreement, other signatories were the local Mediators, LGUs like the Mayor, Vice Mayors and the Councilors, and even the BARMM which is the Ministry of Public Order and Safety, and even Military also signed).

The people and organizations who helped settle the conflict especially the Religious leaders and the Sultans urged the conflicting parties led them into realizing their personal, relational and cultural change goals.

*“Bali su mga kahanda a kadsaupa na kiyaterenan den, minisambi na kagkakalimuwa, kadsasabara agu kapabagayon.”* (Well, the objective to revenge has been stopped and changed into loving each other, patience and unity).

*“S’kami a tupo u g’yaba a clan (Clan E) na miyamagayon den sa malu itago sa usto su gyaba a Maratabat sabap sa aya niyan kapagunga na marata ah kambe’betad. K’na ba man ma’lbud e kambalingan ku mapya relasyo ku Clan F. Ugaid na miya pamikirami na su kabinasa ami ku tupo (clan) iran na, tupo ami bun na pembinasan nami. Ped pe’n run na, kadsabapan pen na kabkabinasa u mga adat b’tad ami, sabap sa dita den minggulalan su lima wakto saya sa Masjid agu di pakapangundaya sa kasung sa mga pakaragyan ku inged.”*

(We, the members of this clan (Clan E) have decided that we will do away with so much pride because it leads us to bad consequences. It may not be easy to restore our relations with those of Clan F. We have realized, that by destroying their clan, we also cause a destruction to our own clan. Aside from that, we also cause disruption to the practice of our own culture because we cannot regularly pray in the mosques and we cannot anymore attend freely the cultural celebrations”).

Clan F representatives said the same things about relational and cultural change goals aside from the personal change goals mentioned above. They were saying the same things because they were given advice at the same time in the same place.

## Discussions

It is a common knowledge that the clan feuds have been wrecking havoc in many “Muslim” communities. This is very sad especially that the Iranuns and other “Muslim” groups are by nature good people. The researcher knows this by heart, being a Muslim himself.

The participants themselves showed awareness of the consequences of rido. They mentioned displacement and the resulting inability to practice the mandates of their faith. In addition, some of the involved even left their communities to avert being involved in further destruction. Their children cannot pursue their studies because they had to prevent themselves being seen by the members of the other clan.

The revelations by the members of the clans affirm what Ala-ay, et. al. (2013) said on the consequences of rido. Out-migration is one. Members of the conflicting clans leave their place to be able to live a normal life somewhere else. This may be good for those who have good financial resources because they establish houses, engage in business in other places and send their children to school. But this may be difficult for those who are hard in life.

The Non-violent Peace Force (2015) shared a similar observation. It says that vengeance running deep is an established fact especially in remote areas. Further, it observes that for years, sometimes generations, a mother would live in constant fear not knowing when the foe will choose to strike, or who among her sons will be killed next. For years, a family member will participate in a

deadly game of hide and seek. The game ends when the family line is exterminated.

Actually, some participants said the rido made their living difficult. Understandably, repeated displacements would disrupt their livelihood and may exacerbate poverty. Ala-ay, et al also mentioned that resources could be diverted for the purchase of weapons. Any clan engaged in rido would strengthen their capacity and fortify themselves in all angles to be able to fight squarely or to create hesitance in the other party to attack.

Unson (2017) described Buldon as the Maguindanao town known for having the most cases of bloody decades-old clan feuds throughout the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (now BARMM) but currently there were no more active ones. Also, he mentioned that the last four of 53 rido in Buldon were settled amicably on August 21 by Mayor Abolais Manalao, representatives of Gov. Esmael Mangudadatu and officials of the Police Provincial Office and the Army's 6th Infantry Division.

The participants of this study said, that the first round of settlement was done by the religious leaders and sultan. This is an affirmation of the study conducted by Asia Foundation (2014) on the settlement of the rido that transpired among the Maguindanaoans, Iranuns and Maranaos that the settlement of rido were usually done through customary laws, that means settlements by religious leaders and sultans.

However, settlement of conflicts cannot be fully realized if the involved parties do not change by themselves. Without the "Constructive Change" that Lederach (2013) mentioned in his Conflict Transformation Framework, authentic change cannot happen. Considering that change cannot happen in an instant, the term used here are "change goals" that the parties to the conflict vowed to realize. Transformation is a process. If the process is consummated, personal, relational and cultural changes may authentically happen. Rido may eventually disappear as a practice.

### **Summary of findings**

In the town of Buldon, Maguindanao, rido became rampant for some time. This study presents three cases of rido; (a) Clan A of Barangay Cabayuan, and Clan B of Barangay Rumidas; (b) Clan C of Barangay Cabayuan and Clan D of Barangay Nuyo; and, (c) Clan E of Barangay Bagy Rumidas, (all of these are barangays of Buldon) and Clan F of Barangay Minabay, Barira, Maguindanao del Norte.

The study sought to describe the consequences of the rido, how the settlements of the three cases were done, and what were the personal, relational and cultural change goals that the conflicting parties intended to realize. Interviews were done to gather the data.

The consequences of the rido included: (a) the parties not being able to do the usual activities they were used to doing; (b) their children stopped going to school; (c) they cannot simply loiter around freely; and, (d) some left their homes and transferred to other places.

In all three, the first settlement was done by the religious leaders and the sultan. Later, other groups came to help such as the LGU, MILF, IRC (Iranun Reconciliation Council), MNLF and others. Even in the settlement of the religious leaders and sultan, fighting already stopped.

The personal change goals, relational change goals and cultural change goals were set after the first settlement. These were strengthened by the signing of the agreement supervised by the LGU, MILF, MNLF, MPOS, the military and the police. As of now, the fighting has stopped.

### **Implications**

Rido in Buldon has been going on for decades. However, they have not stopped despite of interventions by the local government, the military and the police.

In these three cases, there were not only the first set of settlement by the people mandated by customary laws like the customary leaders. Iranuns have high respect on them. The advices were necessary for their personal, relational and religious change goals, without which, Lederach (2013) says in his Conflict Transformation framework, no Constructive Change can happen.

But the reinforcement by other stronger organizations really helped fortify the agreement. For one, the MPOS, is mandated by the BARMM government. Stoppage of rido is crucial to the peace process in which the MILF is involved. This implies that the resolution and transformation of conflict is not a simple, one-shot activity. It should go through a process and that, there can be no authentic change without the interventions of powerful organizations such as the police, the military, local government officials, Iranun Reconciliation Council, the MPOS, and the customary leaders such as the religious leaders and the sultans. By themselves, these customary leaders cannot also be fully effective.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the researcher recommends the following:

1. The constant education by the elders, religious leaders and the sultans and datus on how personal, relational and cultural changes can help curb rido. This should be done in collaboraton with the Iranun Reconciliation Council. Financial Assistance ought to be provided by the LGU to realize this.
2. The regular monitoring of the compliance of the settlement by the IRC and the other organizations involved such as the MPOS, the MILF, the LGU and others.
3. The strict implementation of the ban on unlicensed firearms by the Police Regional Office, Bangsamoro Autonomous Government.

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