



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila



Eighteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4585

**Introduced by HON. MUJIV S. HATAMAN of the Lone District of Basilan and
HON. AMIHILDA J. SANGCOPAN of Anak Mindanao (AMIN) Party-List**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Violent extremism has no place in a peace-loving society such as ours. It takes lives, hurts people, stunts progress and strikes fear into the heart of peaceful communities. It corrupts religious beliefs and distorts moral standards to serve a vicious end: that is to pursue a political cause through acts of terrorism.

The presence of violent extremism in the country undermines our peace and security, our human rights to live our lives free from fear, and our potential for sustainable development. We have to root out extremism and fundamentalism before they make terrorists out of our countrymen.

This bill seeks to institute measures to prevent and counter violent extremism, and encourage those engaged in it to return to the fold of the law, reintegrate into mainstream society and become productive citizens once more.

Over the past two decades, the international community has sought to address violent extremism primarily within the context of security-based counter-terrorism measures, which have proven insufficient to prevent the spread of violent extremism. Violent extremist groups continue to challenge our shared values of peace, justice and human dignity.

Prior to the enactment of Republic Act No. 11054, or the “Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao,” the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) has been plagued with the armed conflict between Moro separatist factions and the government forces. Aside from that, there is also the existence of extremist groups such as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) who uses skewed interpretation of the teachings of the Holy Quran to justify terror attacks, kidnapping, arson and other forms of violence.

To address these concerns, the previous regional government of ARMM strengthened its ties with peacekeepers that included units from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), local government units, youth, women, and religious sectors, and civil society organizations in order to maintain a peace and order in the region.

It likewise strengthened its programs in good governance and delivery of basic social services, and initiated the Program Against Violent Extremism (PAVE) for Peace, which aimed to encourage members of violent extremist groups in Basilan to surrender and reintegrate into society. These efforts led many ASG members in Basilan to voluntarily surrender and return to the fold of the law.

Presently, the National Government has two (2) existing programs for rebels. First is the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP), which seeks to contribute toward achieving the goal of permanent and peaceful closure of all armed conflicts with non-state armed groups, administered by the Department of the Interior and Local Government. The second is the PAyapa at MASaganang PamayaNAn (PAMANA) Program, which targets community-based development in conflict-affected areas, administered by the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process.

This proposed measure seeks to introduce a third program, which aims to establish the Program on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE). It is envisioned to be a national program similar to E-CLIP and PAMANA.

PCVE seeks to prevent and counter violent extremism and address the legal status and security of persons formerly engaged in violent extremism, as well as their economic, social and psychological rehabilitation needs, and provide immediate to long-term interventions for them and their families.

This bill is timely. The recent bombings in Sulu saw the escalation of atrocities carried out by local extremist groups. The bombing of a military camp in Indanan, Sulu is the first confirmed case of a Filipino as a perpetrator of a suicide bombing in the country. A Filipino suicide bomber was unheard of, until that incident on June 28, 2019. Two other recent bombings were perpetrated by violent extremist groups: one is in front of a public market in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat, on

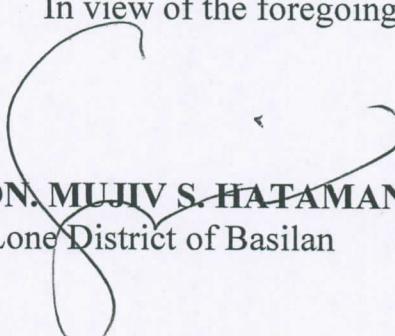
Sept. 7 where seven people were hurt, and the other in Indanan, Sulu, on Sept. 9, where the lone casualty was the perpetrator herself.

Hence, we must institute measures so that these atrocities will not further escalate. It is imperative for us to address the recruitment and radicalization of the Filipino youth by extremist groups. Strengthening good governance programs, improving delivery of basic social services and promoting the gains of the peace process could hopefully encourage the youth to refrain from joining extremist groups and remind them that their aspirations for freedom and autonomy will never be realized through violent means.

Preventing the radicalization of the youth is vital in our efforts against violent extremism. But winning back those who are already members of extremist groups and supporting them as they return to the fold of the law is equally important.

Engaging the various sectors in the communities, through the local government units, to reduce the appeal of violent extremism and to foster socio-economic development in the communities vulnerable to or affected by violent extremism. The reintegration efforts sought to be implemented by this measure could hopefully contribute to the end of violent extremism in the country.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


HON. MILLIV S. HATAMAN
Lone District of Basilan


HON. AMIHILDA J. SANGCOPAN
Anak Mindanao Partylist



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**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE PROGRAM ON PREVENTING AND COUNTERING
VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in
Congress assembled:*

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Preventing and
Countering Violent Extremism Act.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the declared principle of the State that
the maintenance of peace and order, the protection of life, liberty and property, and
the promotion of the general welfare, are essential for the enjoyment by all the people
of the blessings of democracy.

The State recognizes that attaining a just, comprehensive and lasting peace
under the rule of law, is a basic foundation for economic development and national
prosperity. The State further recognizes that violent extremism undermines peace
and security, human rights and sustainable development. The State affirms the

importance of instituting measures to prevent and counter violent extremism, and encourage those engaged in violent extremism to return to the fold of the law by providing them with assistance upon their surrender. The State must promote social inclusion and cohesion, and must engage relevant government agencies, local communities and non-governmental actors in developing strategies to address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism. The State must empower the youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders, and all other concerned groups of civil society, and must adopt tailored approaches to counter recruitment to this kind of violent extremism.

Towards this end, the State shall establish a comprehensive, integrated, and community-based program to prevent and counter violent extremism, and address the legal status and security of persons formerly engaged in violent extremism, as well as their economic, social and psychological rehabilitation needs. The State shall also provide immediate to long-term interventions that are supported by institutions to ensure effective implementation and attainment of the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 3. *Program to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism.* – To achieve a permanent and peaceful resolution to the armed conflicts involving members of violent extremist groups, there is hereby established a Program to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism (PCVE), hereinafter referred to as the PCVE Program. The PCVE Program seeks to:

- a) Encourage persons engaged in violent extremism to surrender and facilitate their return to mainstream society and become productive citizens;

- b) Ensure that returnees do not resort to violent extremism again or rejoin violent extremist groups;
- c) Stop the cycle of violence by preventing the radicalization, recruitment and mobilization of individuals into extremist groups who engage in violent extremism;
- d) Capacitate government agencies and local government units (LGUs) in the implementation of components of the PCVE Program including reintegration efforts;

- e) Establish linkages with relevant non-government or civil society organizations in implementing the PCVE Program and reintegration efforts, and in developing strategies to address conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism;
- f) Provide an avenue for reformation and reintegration of those who surrender; and
- g) Provide an avenue for healing and reconciliation among those affected by violent extremism consistent with the principles of human rights and justice for all.

For purposes of this Act, *reintegration* refers to a process where (i) persons formerly engaged in violent extremism or returnees voluntarily disarm and undergo mainstreaming into civilian and productive life; and (ii) the socio-economic well-being, including their safety and security, psycho-social and legal impediments of those who surrender, are attended to by the government.

SEC. 4. *Framework*. – The following framework shall be observed in the implementation of this Act:

- a) ***Return.*** – The process in which persons engaged in violent extremism voluntarily surrender to any government agency including a military unit, law enforcement agency, or the LGU together with their firearms, and subject themselves to a profiling activity to acquire any relevant information;
- b) ***Reform.*** – The process in which the returnees are provided with psychosocial debriefing, reformation seminars, teambuilding activities, and relevant exposure in order to reframe their belief systems; and
- c) ***Reintegrate.*** – The process in which the returnees are given the opportunity to return to their communities, and provided with the necessary assistance in order to start a decent living through livelihood, educational, medical, housing, and food assistance.

SEC. 5. *Scope.* – To attain the objectives of this Act, the benefits granted under the PCVE Program shall be provided to persons who were former members of the *Abu Sayyaf Group*, *Maute Group*, and other violent extremist groups, as well as their immediate family members, as may be determined by the Inter-Agency Committee constituted under Section 6 of this Act. Returnees must have surfaced on the date of the approval of this Act and expressed their desire to return to the fold of the law and become productive members of society.

SEC. 6. *Inter-Agency Committee.* – An Inter-Agency Committee is created for purposes of implementing the PCVE Program. The Inter-Agency Committee is composed of representatives from the following:

- 1) Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and its attached agencies namely, Philippine National Police (PNP), National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF), National Youth Commission (NYC), and Philippine Commission on Women (PCW);
- 2) Department of National Defense;
- 3) Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD);
- 4) Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP);
- 5) Department of Justice;
- 6) Department of Health;
- 7) Department of Education;
- 8) Department of Trade and Industry and its attached agency, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)
- 9) Philippine Information Agency;
- 10) LGUs where extremist groups operate; and
- 11) Non-government organizations (NGOs) engaged in promoting peace and social development in conflict-affected areas.

The Inter-Agency Committee is chaired by the representative from the DILG, and to be co-chaired by the representatives from the DSWD and DND. Representatives from the Executive Department shall be those with rank not lower

than Undersecretary while those representing the LGUs shall be authorized by their respective local chief executives to make decisions on their behalf. The chairperson may request other representatives of government agencies and stakeholders to be part of the Inter-Agency Committee.

NGOs who are represented in the Inter-Agency Committee must be registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission, certified by the Philippine Council for NGO Certification, and accredited by the DSWD.

SEC. 7. *Powers and Functions.* –As the coordinating body that supervises and implements the PCVE Program, the Inter-Agency Committee shall exercise the following powers and functions:

- a) Formulate a strategic communications plan and guidelines for the implementation of the PCVE Program;
- b) Address issues on the implementation of this Act at the national and local levels;
- c) Coordinate with LGUs to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the PCVE Program;
- d) Provide capability assistance to LGUs;
- e) Prepare a coordination, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting mechanism that may be used by government agencies in determining the responsiveness, effectiveness and sustainability of the PCVE Program;

- f) Call upon the assistance and cooperation of government agencies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders for the effective implementation of this Act;
- g) Conduct periodic review and update the strategic communications plan, implementing guidelines, and other mechanisms to ensure the responsiveness and effectiveness of the PCVE Program; and
- h) Submit bi-annual reports on the implementation of this Act to the House Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, and the Senate Committee on Peace, Unification and Reconciliation, which include an account on the utilization of funds and a validated list of actual participants or beneficiaries of the PCVE Program.

SEC. 8. *Components of the PCVE Program.* – The benefits and assistance to returnees and their families under the PCVE Program include the following:

- a) Safety and security guarantees by the LGU and law enforcement agencies in cooperation with the AFP within a period determined by the Inter-Agency Committee;
- b) Support to relocation or housing services wherein arrangements are made to ensure the safety of the returnees and their families;
- c) Immediate assistance in an amount to be determined by the Inter-Agency Committee to help the returnees and their families while their enrollment to the PCVE Program is being processed;

- d) Livelihood assistance in an amount to be determined by the Inter-Agency Committee to improve the socio-economic conditions of the returnees and their families by enhancing their capability to access and acquire necessary assets to engage in and maintain thriving livelihoods;
- e) Reintegration assistance in an amount to be determined by the Inter-Agency Committee as a support to the receiving unit of the AFP or PNP to defray the subsistence costs and other incidental costs while the returnee is in the custody of the receiving unit and the returnee's enrollment in the Reintegration Program is being processed;
- f) Educational and training assistance for the returnees and their family members taking into account diverse social and cultural settings and emphasizing respect for human rights and diversity, fostering critical thinking, and developing their behavioural and socio emotional skills that can contribute to peaceful coexistence and tolerance;
- g) Enrollment in the National Health Insurance Program administered by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation;
- h) Assistance in registering with government entities, including registration with the local civil registrar, to acquire birth or marriage certificates, and acquisition of postal identification card or other government-issued identification card to affirm the returnee's identification in society;
- i) Healing and reconciliation initiatives to provide psycho-social support to returnees, their families and communities; and

j) Other assistance as may be determined by the Inter-Agency Committee and sourced out from partner institutions or agencies including capacity building, skills training, provision of shelter and legal assistance, among others.

SEC. 9. *Strengthening Good Governance in LGUs and Engaging Communities.* – In order to create an enabling environment for civil society, reduce the appeal of violent extremism, and to foster socio-economic development in the communities vulnerable to or affected by violent extremism, the State must promote good governance, uphold the rule of law and eliminate corruption. The LGUs shall engage communities through the following:

- a) Developing joint and participatory strategies, including with civil society, to prevent the emergence of violent extremism, protect communities from recruitment and the threat of violent extremism, and support confidence-building measures at the community level by providing appropriate platforms for dialogue and the early identification of grievances;
- b) Adopting community-oriented policing models and programs that seek to solve local issues in partnership with the community;
- c) Developing early warning systems, and local and family-based mentorship programs focusing on vulnerable individuals or groups or those who have been convicted of or charged with offenses related to violent extremism;
- d) Providing medical, psychosocial and legal service support in communities affected by violent extremism;

- e) Encouraging civic and professional associations to reach out to communities that are vulnerable or affected by violent extremism; and
- f) Supporting the establishment of networks of civil society organizations, youth, women's organizations, and those of religious leaders to enable them to share good practices and experiences in order to improve their works in their respective communities and promote intercultural and interfaith dialogue to address the causes of violent extremism.

SEC. 10. *Assistance from Government Agencies.* – The appropriate government agencies shall extend the following assistance to the Inter-Agency Committee:

- a) Provide the needed materials, equipment, implements, technology, and other requirements to returnees, through the LGUs, as may be determined by the Inter-Agency Committee;
- b) Require the regional or provincial offices to support the LGUs in the implementation of the PCVE Program at the provincial, city, or municipal level;
- c) Include in their annual budgets the funds necessary for the implementation of the reintegration efforts under this Act; and
- d) Enter into agreements with other entities necessary to fully implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 11. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged to the current year's appropriations for

the DSWD. Thereafter, such amount necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 12. ***Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the Inter-Agency Committee shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 13. ***Separability Clause.*** – If any provision or part of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 14. ***Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders or issuances, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 15. ***Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,