

Bangsamoro region seeking investors from Malaysia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia

The newly established Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) is wooing investors from Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey to invest in the region.

Malaysia's role as peacemaker will be elevated to investor and participant in the development of the region while Turkey's aid is sought in the development of other sectors like agriculture etc.

The interim chief minister of the BARMM, Murad Ibrahim is encouraging the international business community to consider investing in the newly established region

Speaking to Arab News, Murad says plans were afoot to hold an investors' forum. "We are just finalizing our development plan."The aim he says is to send signals to the world that the situation in Mindanao is improving, adding that a recent meeting with an official from a Saudi delegation to the region had given him great encouragement.

“He gave his commitment that he will help convince the business community in Saudi Arabia to try to invest in the BARRM. He even asked for our development plan so he can present it to them,” Murad says.

“I could see they are really interested, especially given Saudi shortages of animal feeds. They need suppliers and they’re looking at us as a possible source. We have the potential to produce halal food, too so we can supply halal products as well.”

“It is very important for investors to come, in order to create job opportunities and also for the international community to see that something is happening on the ground,” Murad said.

Last month, Murad led officials at a meeting with Malaysian representatives to discuss the possibility of strengthening development ventures in the region.

Malaysia is a major supporter of the Bangsamoro struggle.

The establishment of the new region in the conflict-ridden region in the Philippines came under a peace deal brokered by Malaysia early this year.

Under the deal – aimed at combatting militant groups aligned to the Islamic State (IS) in southern Philippines – the rebels abandoned their goal for a separate state.

Broader Autonomy

They are now enjoying broader autonomy.

The Bangsamoro region is the new regional and political entity established under a peace agreement between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Philippines government.

It is designed to provide enhanced self-governance to the Muslim-majority provinces.

Murad said there is now relative peace in the region. “In fact, gradually many investors are now coming here to visit. So, I think it’s because of the situation, we now have relative peace in the area and they’ve also seen the conduct and turn out of the plebiscite (last January). There was overwhelming support from the people,” he says in an interview with the Saudi paper in Cotabato.

Lawyer Wencilito Andanar, Malacañang’s special envoy to Malaysia, accompanied a Malaysian delegation on a two-day

visit to Cotabato City.

The Malaysian Embassy's Charge D'Affaires Rizany Irwan Muhammad and Assistant Trade Councilor Irvin Francis, as well as officials of the Malaysian Chamber of Commerce and Industry headed by its president, Edward Ling accompanied the delegation.

Murad cited the need to "elevate the strategic partnership between BARMM and Malaysia from being peace partners to being development partners."

He told reporters: "Helping BARMM as a brother and a relative is part of Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad's 'prosper-the-neighbors' policy."

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