ANALYSIS

Ask these discussion questions:

- If given a chance to personally witness any of these milestones in the Philippine Comprehensive Peace Process, which one would you want to witness? Why? Why not?
- Looking at these events, what do they tell us about the journey of the Philippine Peace Process? • What patterns or themes do you notice across the photos?

ABSTRACTION

A. "Peace Process" Defined

- A peace process refers to the "array of **political**, **diplomatic**, and **social negotiations and actions** aimed at resolving armed conflict and building sustainable peace. Beyond the main warring parties, effective peace processes should include **all relevant armed groups, political parties, and diverse social actors**—such as faith-based organizations, trade unions, professional associations, minority communities, and women's groups—both for and against the peace process" (Paffenholz, 2014).

- The ideal design of such a process balances effectiveness and inclusiveness, with careful consideration of who participates, at what stage, and in what format to achieve a quality and sustainable peace agreement (Paffenholz, 2014).

- Practical models of participation identified by Paffenholz (2014) include:
  - (1) direct representation at the negotiating table,
  - (2) observer status,
  - (3) official consultative forums parallel to negotiations,
  - (4) less formal consultations,
  - (5) participation through post-agreement implementation mechanisms,
  - (6) high-level civil society initiatives,
  - (7) public participation via public hearings, opinion polls, town hall meetings or signature campaigns,
  - (8) public decision-making through referenda or other elective forms, and
  - (9) mass action, street demonstration, rallies, etc.

- This framework provides a foundation for how we can understand the Philippine Comprehensive Peace Process

B. What Makes Philippine Peace Process "Comprehensive"?

- The Philippine Comprehensive Peace Process primarily aims to restore the torn fabric of society brought about by armed conflict caused by political, social and economic marginalization, historical injustices, loss of identity, among others.
- It is considered "comprehensive" as it is an amalgamation of
  - **conflict-sensitive and peace promoting (CSPP),**
  - **whole-of-society,**
  - **gender-responsive,**
  - **culturally sensitive and**
  - **empowering approaches** towards ending internal armed conflicts and the resolution of its root causes, transforming Philippine society characterized by justice, equity, harmonious pluralism, and full respect for human rights.

- As they happen simultaneously, the Comprehensive Peace Process draws heavily from Johan Galtung's (1976) three approaches to peace, making the process not just comprehensive but also

responsive to the various dimensions of conflict. These approaches are:

- **Peacekeeping (Stopping Violence)** - Peacekeeping focuses on halting violent conflict and preventing escalation. It is also maintained even after a peace agreement was forged. It is aimed to provide a conducive environment for peace agreement implementation In the Philippines this is seen through ceasefire agreements and security mechanisms. International monitoring teams and joint ceasefire committees were deployed to maintain stability while negotiations took place (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.).

- **Peacemaking (Negotiation and Political Settlement) -** Peacemaking addresses political conflicts through negotiation and diplomacy (Galtung, 1976). In the Philippine context, the government facilitated dialogues and agreements, which laid the foundation for political autonomy and self-governance of the Bangsamoro region (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education [OISE], n.d.).

- **Peacebuilding (Addressing Structural and Cultural Violence)** - Peacebuilding focuses on transforming structural inequalities and root causes of conflict (Galtung, 1976). The government implemented normalization programs, reintegration for former combatants, socio-economic initiatives, and transitional justice measures, aiming to build inclusive governance and equitable development in conflict-affected areas.

C. Evolution of the Peace Process Agency in the Philippines

- The Philippine Peace Process agency was established in response to the country's long-standing internal armed conflicts, particularly in Mindanao and areas influenced by ideological movements. These conflicts were rooted in deep-seated issues such as historical injustices, marginalization, and unresolved grievances**.**

1986	**The Turning Point: People Power Revolution** The turning point came after the 1986 People Power Revolution, as the new government faced widespread armed rebellion from various groups. There was a pressing need to pursue peaceful dialogues to prevent further violence and restore democratic governance.
1987	**Administrative Order No. 30 (11 August 1987)** Then President Corazon Aquino issued Administrative Order No. 30 last 11 August 1987 to formalize the government's peace efforts. This created a systematic and coordinated approach to peace, marking the beginning of structured national initiatives. **Creation of the Office of the Peace Commissioner (OPC)** Tasked to coordinate peace-related efforts across agencies, advise the President, and mobilize civil society in support of peacebuilding. This move reflected the government's recognition that peace is not merely the absence of conflict, but a process that requires inclusive dialogue, institutional coordination, and active citizen participation.

1992	Under the leadership of President Fidel V. Ramos, the Philippine government formally launched the Comprehensive Peace Process as a national priority. The government recognized the fragmented and ad hoc nature of previous peace efforts. There was a need to evaluate past peace initiatives and establish a comprehensive national peace policy to deal with the insurgencies holistically. **Issuance of Proclamation No. 10-A on 28 July 1992** Amended an earlier amnesty proclamation and led to the creation of the National Unification Commission (NUC). **Signing of the Executive Order No. 19, signed on 1 September 1992**

	The NUC was formally constituted through Executive Order No. 19, signed on 1 September 1992. As an ad hoc advisory body, it was tasked to recommend a general amnesty program and a viable peace process that could lead to a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace.
1993	**Foundation of the Government's Peace Policy Framework** By July 1993, the NUC submitted its recommendations, which became the foundation of the government's peace policy. **Executive Order No. 125, issued on 15 September 1993** Defined the government's official framework for peacebuilding. EO 125 also created the **Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP),** institutionalizing the government's commitment to pursue peace through structured dialogue, negotiations, and citizen engagement. OPAPP was then tasked to coordinate, manage, and supervise the comprehensive peace process. It absorbed the functions of the NUC and operationalized the "Six Paths to Peace" framework.  This institutional shift emphasized that achieving peace requires not only resolving armed conflict, but also addressing its root causes through systemic reforms, inclusive dialogue, and sustained national effort.
2000	**Challenges during the Estrada Administration** While Executive Order No. 125, s. 1993 provided the initial policy framework for the Comprehensive Peace Process, its implementation encountered difficulties during the Estrada administration, especially when the President declared an All out war in Mindanao on March 2000. For over two years, peace efforts struggled to gain momentum amid renewed tensions and limited progress

2001	**Renewed Commitment to Peace** A significant shift occurred in January 2001 with the rise of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo following the Second EDSA People Power Revolution. **Executive Order No. 3 (February 2001)** Enhanced and strengthened the existing peace policy framework. EO 3, s. 2001 reaffirmed the government's dedication to a just, comprehensive, and enduring peace and formalized her administration's Six Paths to Peace—a more holistic strategy emphasizing negotiation, reform, reconciliation, and public participation.
2010s	**Significant Breakthroughs and Critical Tests** During President Benigno S. Aquino III's and President Rodrigo Duterte's administrations, the Philippine peace process achieved significant breakthroughs but also faced serious challenges that tested its resilience.

Major Breakthroughs Major Incidents that exposed gaps

➢ **2012 –** Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB) signed with the MILF

➢ **2014 -** Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) signed, aiming to establish a new autonomous political entity to replace ARMM.

➢ The administration also advanced talks with the CPP-NPA-NDF through exploratory meetings, although no final agreement was reached (Simbulan, 2014)

➢ Confidence-building measures, such as establishing the Bangsamoro Transition Commission, were implemented to draft the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).

➢ **2018 -** President Rodrigo Duterte signed the landmark Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) on 26 July 2018. The law replaces the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) with the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, which would have greater fiscal autonomy, a regional government, parliament, and justice system.

➢**2013 Zamboanga Siege -** exposed the importance of continuous engagement with stakeholders like the MNLF while forging a parallel peace agreement with the other Moro front, leading to efforts to adopt a convergence approach in the Bangsamoro peace track (International Crisis Group, 2013).

➢**2015 Mamasapano Clash -** Claimed the lives of 44 SAF troopers, 17 or 18 from the MILF and BIFF combatants, five civilians, and the death of the terrorist bomb maker Zulkifli Abdhir, the target of the operation, underscored the need to uphold existing peace mechanisms to maintain trust with the MILF (OPAPP, 2016). It also severely strained public trust in the peace process and stalled congressional deliberations on the BBL (Santos, 2015)

➢**2017 Marawi siege -** Highlighted the urgency of implementing the CAB and passing the Bangsamoro Organic Law to address long standing grievances through meaningful autonomy

	(International Alert, 2017) While the government brought the Bangsamoro peace process to its most advanced stage, it faced challenges in sustaining political consensus and addressing parallel peace tracks. These events collectively underscored the need to recalibrate the peace process toward inclusivity, coordination, and sustained conflict transformation.
2021	**A Broader and More Integrated Peace Agenda** In December 2021, under President Rodrigo Duterte, the Executive Order No. 158 was signed **Executive Order 158, s. 2021** Reorganized and renamed OPAPP into the **Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity (OPAPRU).** This shift reflected a broader and more integrated peace agenda. The comprehensive peace process expanded its scope to not just negotiating peace agreements but also ensuring the implementation of signed accords, local peace engagements, and post conflict transformation. It formalized structures such as the Government Peace Negotiating Panels (GPNPs) and Government Peace Implementing Panels (GPIPs) to manage both dialogue and implementation phases. It also tasked OPAPRU with coordinating

	programs like PAMANA, conducting regular peace dialogues, recommending policy reforms, and aligning government efforts.
2024 - PRESENT	**Ongoing Challenges** Despite these advances, OPAPRU remains a temporary body created through an executive order and does not have permanent regional offices. In response to the resurgence of localized conflicts and the need to ensure continuity in peace efforts, the creation of a **Department of Peace and Reconciliation (DoPR)** is currently being explored, with a possible enabling statute to be enacted by Congress. **A Proposed Creation of a Department of Peace and Reconciliation (DoPR)** This move aims to institutionalize peacebuilding through: ➢ Permanent mechanisms for conflict resolution; ➢ Comprehensive, integrated and holistic approach in peacebuilding; ➢ Strengthened fiscal capacity for national and localized operations; ➢ Increased global solidarity and peace diplomacy; ➢ Sustained legacy and leadership in peace governance. The proposal to create the DoPR reflects the importance of embedding peace work in national governance structures—a necessary step to prevent recurring conflicts, address root causes like poverty and injustice, and ensure that the Philippines contributes meaningfully to the global pursuit of sustainable peace as a model in peacebuilding.

D. Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity (OPAPRU)

- The Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity (OPAPRU) is the lead government agency tasked with steering the nation's pursuit of long-lasting peace. It is mandated to manage, direct, integrate, and supervise the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Process, ensuring that peace initiatives across various fronts are cohesive and sustainable.

- **OPAPRU Vision and Mission**
  - Vision: A just and lasting peace for the nation and for all Filipinos
  - Mission: Manage, direct, integrate, and supervise the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Process including initiatives that promote and reinforce national reconciliation and unity

- **OPAPRU Core Values**
  - Integrity - being true to what we say that we will do and the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles
  - Inclusivity - the openness and constant reaching out to our constituencies, stakeholders and partners knowing that their contributions and perspectives are needed for peace to be sustainable
  - Justice - the dedication of our service towards the achievement of sustained peace and development lifting those furthest behind and the marginalized towards the betterment of every Filipino

- **Five-Point Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity (PRU) Agenda, which operationalizes its work across multiple fronts:**
  1. Completion of peace agreements with the MILF and MNLF towards healing and reconciliation in the Bangsamoro;
  2. Ending of armed conflict with the CPP-NPA-NDF by expanding the transformation programs for local peace process and forging political settlement;

3. Completion and sustainment of the gains of the signed peace agreements with the RPM P/RPA/ABB and CBA-CPLA;
4. Enhancement of the resilience for peace of communities and vulnerable groups through social healing and peacebuilding approaches in support of the peace processes; and 5. Enhancement of the delivery of CSPP-compliant interventions in addressing the root causes and drivers of conflict through convergence and complementation in support of the peace processes.

- **Principles of the Comprehensive Peace Process:** The Executive Order No. 158, s. 2021 provides for the strengthened policy framework of the comprehensive peace process and mandates the continuing implementation, coordination, integration, monitoring and evaluation of all government initiatives on the peace process, reconciliation and unity. This and the management and supervision of the Comprehensive Peace process observes the following principles:

  - **Conflict-Sensitive and Peace Promoting (CSPP):** The principle aims to address the drivers and root causes of conflict through Peacebuilding interventions, programs, and activities to consolidate peaceful relations, to strengthen viable political, socio-economic, and cultural institutions to be capable of handling conflicts, and to enhance capacity of other mechanisms to create or support the necessary conditions for sustained peace.

    - Conflict sensitivity means ensuring that development initiatives or undertaking do not

have any negative impacts or do not escalate tension between parties in conflict (Africa Peace Forum et al., 2004, as cited in OPAPRU, 2009). Conflict sensitivity is the ability to: understand the context in which they operate, understand the interaction between their intervention and the context; and act upon the understanding of this interaction in order to avoid negative and maximize the positive impacts (2004, as cited in OPAPRU, 2009).

- Furthermore, OPAPRU (2009) also defined Peace Promotion as a regular peace planning process which involves deliberate integration of peace and conflict sensitivity principles into local development planning processes. It ensures that development efforts do not only avoid causing harm but actively contribute to building and sustaining peace in communities affected by conflict (OPAPRU & UNDP, 2013).

- **Whole-of-Society:** Under this principle, there shall be continuing consultations, engagements, and dialogues on both national and local levels to build consensus for a whole-of-society peace agenda (OPAPRU, 2022).

  The Whole-of-Society Approach is a peace and development strategy that recognizes the need for inclusive, multi-sectoral collaboration in addressing the root causes of conflict. It moves beyond a purely military or government-centered perspective and calls for the active participation of all sectors—government agencies, civil society, faith-based organizations, the private sector, academia, media, local communities, and even former combatants—in building and sustaining peace.

  This approach assumes that genuine peace cannot be imposed from the top but must be co-created by a society that shares the responsibility for justice, equity, and reconciliation.

- **Empowering** ensures all sectors of society actively foster peace. The principle recognizes the usual victims of armed conflict as agents for peace and recovery, and not just beneficiaries of interventions. This is also about helping them lead their own healing and reconstruction process.

Under this principle, the Philippine Peace Process recognizes the usual victims of armed conflict not merely as passive beneficiaries of aid, but active agents of peace and recovery. The government shall mobilize and facilitate their meaningful participation—especially that of vulnerable groups—towards social healing, reconciliation, and sustainable development (OPAPRU, 2022).

Empowering communities means enabling them to lead their own healing and reconstruction processes, ensuring that peacebuilding is inclusive and locally driven. Coordination under this approach is both horizontal and vertical. Horizontally, it brings together stakeholders across various sectors to ensure that peace and development initiatives are inclusive and responsive to local needs.

Vertically, it aligns national policies with regional, provincial, municipal, and even barangay level mechanisms, ensuring consistency and continuity from the highest levels of government down to the grassroots.

- **Objectives of the Comprehensive Peace Process:** As further stated in the Executive Order No. 158, s. 2021, the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Peace Process should be anchored on the following objectives:

- **Embedding Peace, Reconciliation and Unity in the Social Fabric.** There shall be direct and meaningful engagements with the rebel groups and the affected communities at the grass-roots level in order to reach a peaceful settlement and achieve a more permanent resolution to conflict.

  Peacebuilding initiatives shall: (1) address the legal status and security of former rebels; (2) ensure the protection of non-combatants and reduce the impact of the armed conflict in affected communities; (3) provide for community-based assistance services that cater to the economic, social and psychological rehabilitation needs of former rebels, demobilized combatants, and civilian victims of the internal armed conflicts, especially women and children;

- **Enhancing Resilience for Peace.** Peace agreements shall be strictly implemented, and the enabling environment necessary to realize their goals shall be actively pursued. Peace advocacy and peace education programs, and the implementation of various confidence building, healing and reconciliation measures to improve relationships of trust within divided and broken communities, and between citizens and their government institutions, will be at the core of peacebuilding strategies; and,

- **Social, Economic and Political Reengineering.** There shall be government initiatives and mobilization of different sectors of society in addressing the root causes of internal armed conflicts and social unrest through the passage and implementation of key social, economic and political reforms requiring administrative action, new legislation or constitutional amendments.



A. "Design a Peace Process" Group Task

Instructions:

- Divide participants into 4–5 groups.
- Present the following scenario:
  - "A conflict-affected province experiences recurring armed encounters between government forces and an armed group. Communities suffer from displacement, poverty, historical land disputes, youth radicalization, weak government services, and distrust between civilians

and authorities. Women, Indigenous Peoples, and local religious leaders are demanding inclusion in peace discussions."

- Each group acts as a peace advisory team tasked to design a "comprehensive peace process" for the community.
- Groups must answer the following guide questions:
  - Why is military action alone insufficient to solve the conflict?
  - What root causes of conflict must be addressed?
  - Who should participate in the peace process?
  - What forms of participation can be used?
  - What interventions fall under:
    - Peacekeeping
    - Peacemaking
    - Peacebuilding
  - What makes your proposed response "comprehensive"?

B. Peace Process Timeline Race

Instructions:

- Ask them to form pairs. Each pair gets one blank timeline and a shuffled set of Peace Agency cards where the names of various agencies in history were printed or written.
- Explain the challenge: "In the next 5 minutes, you and your partner will organize the development of the lead peace agency in the Philippine Peace Process chronologically on your timeline. After that, indicate which specific policy or legal instrument (Executive Order or Administrative Order) was used to create such an agency. Discuss as well how such a peace agency created an impact on the Philippine Peace Process. Which pair/s finish first correctly wins the game."
- Give 5 minutes to complete the timeline. Encourage them to talk through each peace agency together and recall their prior knowledge.
- After 5 minutes, call time. Ask the winning pair/s to briefly share their answer to the class. • End with a Wrap up. Reinforce the correct sequence by quickly showing a correct version of the timeline and emphasizing the evolution of the lead peace agency.

Peace Agency Cards (chronological, make sure it is shuffled when given):

- Office of Peace Commissioner
- National Unification Commission
- Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
- Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity
- Department of Peace and Reconciliation

C. "If I were a Presidential Peace Adviser…"

Instructions:

- In this activity, participants will assume the role of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity and analyze real-world conflict situations using the framework of the Philippine Comprehensive Peace Process and Executive Order No. 158.
- Participants will formulate conflict-sensitive and peace-promoting responses by identifying the role of OPAPRU, the applicable EO 158 principles and objectives, and the appropriate peacebuilding interventions needed to address the situation.
- Each group will receive one conflict situation/scenario.
    - **Scenario 1 – Community Distrust**
      A conflict-affected municipality recently experienced armed encounter. Residents distrust government institutions, displaced families remain in evacuation centers, and youth are vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups.
    - **Scenario 2 – Reintegration Challenges**
      Former combatants returned to their communities but face discrimination, unemployment, and lack of access to services.
    - **Scenario 3 – Exclusion in Peace Consultations**

Women, Indigenous Peoples, and religious leaders complain that they were excluded from local peace consultations.

- **Scenario 4 – Rising Online Misinformation**
  False information about the peace process is spreading online, creating tensions between communities and local authorities.
- **Scenario 5 – Weak Coordination**
  Several government agencies are implementing separate peace-related programs, but there is poor coordination and duplication of interventions.

- As the Peace Adviser, each group must complete the matrix below.

Conflict Situation/Issue	Action/s that I will undertake as the Peace Adviser	EO 158 Principle Observed	EO 158 Objective Addressed	Proposed Peacebuilding Intervention
Example: Communities displaced due to armed encounters	Coordinate humanitarian response and spearhead a local peace dialogue	Conflict-Sensitive and Peace Promoting (CSPP)	Enhancing Resilience for Peace	Community dialogue, ceasefire coordination, psychosocial support, livelihood assistance

- Guide Questions - While completing the matrix, groups should consider:
  - What should OPAPRU do?
  - What agencies/sectors should it coordinate with?
  - Why is OPAPRU important in this situation?
  - Which principle is being applied?
    - CSPP
    - Whole-of-Society
    - Empowering Approach
  - How is it demonstrated?
  - Which objective is addressed?
    - Embedding Peace, Reconciliation and Unity
    - Enhancing Resilience for Peace
    - Social, Economic and Political Reengineering
  - Why?
  - What concrete peacebuilding actions should be implemented?

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