

# Women and Armed Conflict

**9.1 Lawlessness and a general situation of conflict beset indigenous communities, putting a heavy stress on women.**

A perennial scourge for Lumad inhabitants living on the borders between Christian and Muslim communities is becoming prey to armed bandits engaged in cattle rustling, theft, and extortion.

**9.2 "Rido" between families or clans is a constant source of violent conflict in Moro communities.**

In the ARMM and in bailiwicks of local Moro landlords and politicians, intermittent conflicts arising from family or clan feuds or *rido*, a source of tension and general lack of peace in the area. These sporadic clashes often lead to killings and the evacuation of civilians who fear being caught in the crossfire. At high risk in this ritual of revenge are the female members or children of the family involved who may be kidnapped or taken hostage as a way to dishonor or get back at the opponent's family.

**9.3 The lack of faith in government and the worsening poverty in the uplands have attracted many men to rebel causes.**

Alienation from mainstream development processes and the general lack of employment have drawn increasing numbers of Moro and Lumad men into rebellion, leaving the responsibility of family maintenance in the hands of women. The New People's Army claims it gets most of its recruits from young unemployed Lumad men, while Islamic rebel groups continue to draw adherents, especially among the youth.

**9.4 Rebellion in the countryside makes indigenous women unwilling hosts to roving armies.**

Lumad and Moro women are constantly subjected to harassment as a result of the continuing war between government troops and rebel forces. Roving government soldiers accuse them of being rebel sympathizers and demand they participate in their anti-insurgency campaigns while rebel groups pressure them into supporting their causes and paying revolutionary taxes.

**9.5 Under extreme pressure from government soldiers and in the midst of destruction wrought on their villages by the military, the Moro women seek to protect their men.**

Lumad and Moro women are constantly subjected to harassment as a result of the intermittent clashes between government troops and rebel forces. Moro women assume multiple roles: wives and mothers protecting their rebel husbands and sons; nurses who tend to the wounded; couriers who smuggle information, food, and medicine; and caretakers who look after the survival needs of the young and the elderly.

**9.6 Even as Moro women stand by their men in their struggle for the defense of their homeland and communities, they are also the strongest proponents of peace.**

Because women are so victimized by war, many of them have joined groups such as the Mothers for Peace, Bangsamoro Women's Solidarity Forum, and other similar associations to call for a just and lasting peace in Mindanao.