

MONTHLY COUNTRY REPORT

PHILIPPINES

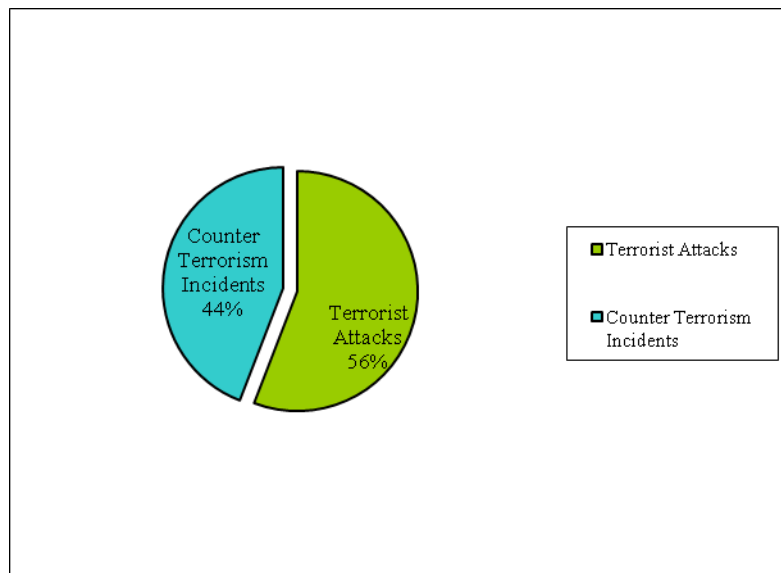
NOVEMBER 2009

While there has been a decrease on terrorist attacks this month compared to October, violence related to politics has been significant. On 23 November 2009, 64 people were killed in Maguindanao province highlighting the domination by guns, warlords and lawlessness in Philippine politics. Consequently, President Gloria Malcapagal-Arroyo was forced to declare a state of emergency in two provinces and one city. Thereafter, certain developments prompted the President to declare martial law in the province. Since the incident, the whole region has been in constant tension and nearby areas in high alert.

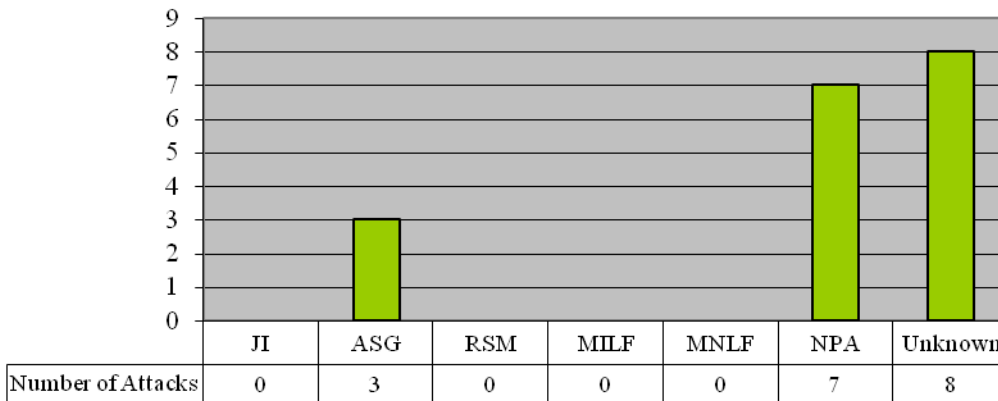
Terrorist Attacks	Counter Terrorism Incidents	Deaths					Injuries					Arrests	Surrenders	Abduction
		Mil	LEA	Civ	PM	T	Mil	LEA	Civ	PM	T			
19	15	11	8	4	4	17	5	3	8	0	3	18	25	4

*TA – Terrorist Attacks CT – Counter Terrorism; Mil – Military; LEA – Law Enforcement Agency; Civ – Civilian; PM – Paramilitary; T- Terrorist

Number of Incidents



Terrorist Attacks by Group Distribution for November 2009

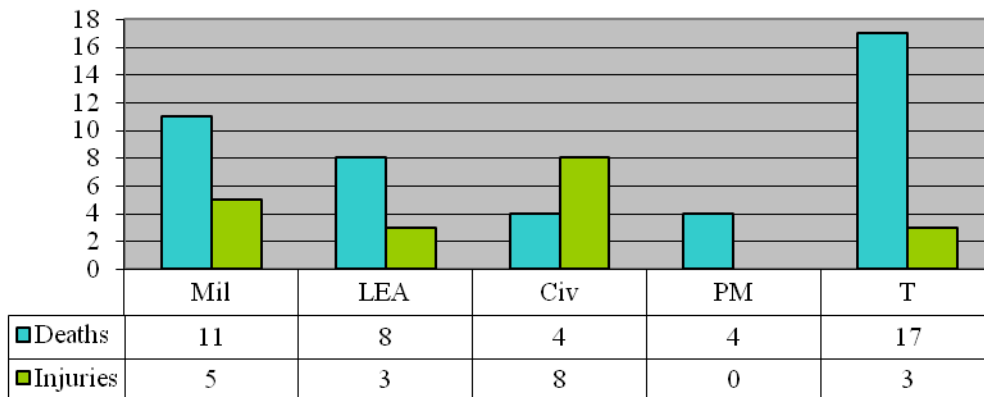


JI – Jemaah Islamiyah
 ASG – Abu Sayyaf Group
 RSM – Rajah Solaiman Movement

MILF – Moro Islamic Liberation Front
 MNLF – Moro National Liberation Front
 NPA – New People’s Army

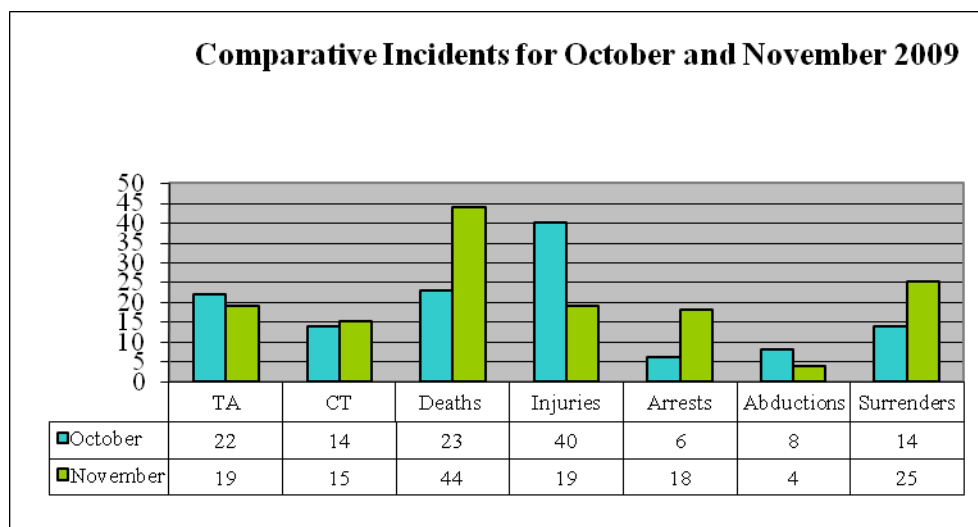
On 3 November, the Philippine authorities accused the 113th Base Command of the MILF of being responsible for the kidnapping of Irish priest Fr. Michael Sinnott, who was seized by armed men in Pagadian City last 11 October. Fr. Sinnott was released a month later. Secretary Ronnie Puno of the Department of Interior and Local Government indicated that the police investigators managed to pinpoint MILF allies Al Ashree’s group, based on eyewitness testimonies and “certain evidence” that have been recovered. The MILF rejected the challenge to surrender Al Ashree to the authorities because according to chief negotiator Mohagher Iqbal, there were no mechanisms under the peace talks for them to produce their men implicated in criminal activities.

Breakdown of Casualties for November 2009



MILF vice chair for political affairs Ghazali Jaafar said that the peace negotiation with the Philippine government would resume on 8 December in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He also extended an invitation to the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to visit Mindanao and see the situation after fighting erupted following the failed signing of a deal that would have led to the setting up of a Bangsamoro homeland.

On 16 November, the two panels (Philippine government and MILF) met with the prospective members of the International Contact Group (ICG) in Kuala Lumpur. It was agreed that the governments of Turkey and Saudi Arabia will be invited to join the ICG, which was formed to assist and provide technical support and recommendations in the peace process.



In the wake of the massacre of 64 people in Maguindanao province, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo declared martial law in the province on 5 December 2009. In so doing, the declaration has suspended the writ of habeas corpus in the province except “for certain areas,” enabling the military to make arrests without court intervention. This constitutes the first declaration of martial law in the Philippines since 1972, when then-president Ferdinand Marcos imposed military rule over the entire country. The present administration claims that the peace and order in the province has deteriorated to the extent that local judicial systems and other government mechanisms are not functioning and thus endangering public safety. The step was taken in order avert the escalation of “lawless” violence in the province and pave the way for the swift arrest of the massacre suspects.

Meanwhile, security forces have taken into custody several local government officials including clan patriarch Andal Ampatuan Sr. and his three sons Zaldy, Governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), and his brothers, acting Governor Sajid Ampatuan and Shariff Aguak mayor Anwar.

According to palace officials, the state of martial law imposed on Maguindanao will not affect the peace talks between the government and the MILF. The MILF has been informed in advance about the matter through “back channeling” efforts, before announcing the declaration of martial law. This was affirmed by Ghadzali Jaafar who said that the martial law will not affect their peace efforts with the government.