

The Influence of International Legal Frameworks on Peacebuilding in the Bangsamoro Region: An Assessment of Acceptance, Perception, and Application

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| Fazlurrashed S. Paslangan^{1,*} | Laniel Ryan P. Untong² |

^{1,2}Mindanao State University,
Maguindanao del Norte,
Philippines

*fazlurrashed.paslangan@gmail.com



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ABSTRACT

This study explores how International Humanitarian Law (IHL), International Human Rights Law (IHRL), and Islamic Law intertwine to shape peacebuilding in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Drawing on deep-dive interviews with eight influential leaders from state security forces, non-state armed groups, and regional governance bodies, the research uncovers a complex legal landscape where global standards meet deeply rooted faith. The findings reveal that while international frameworks are respected for their operational utility in limiting conflict and building trust, Islamic Law remains the heartbeat of the region's identity and the primary lens through which justice is understood. This acceptance, however, exists in a delicate balance—it is "identity-driven" yet "conditional," navigating the boundaries of the Philippine Constitution and the practicalities of regional autonomy. On the ground, this manifests in fascinating hybrid systems: non-state actors maintain discipline through religious guidance (Mursidin) and Sharia-based boards, while the regional government champions "Moral Governance" to align state duties with spiritual values. Ultimately, the study highlights that for human rights and humanitarian principles to truly take root, they must be contextualized within local religious and cultural narratives. By recommending the harmonization of these legal systems, the strengthening of Sharia courts, and community-led education, the research argues that the path to sustainable peace and social cohesion in Bangsamoro lies in honoring the resonance between international law and the Islamic faith to protect the dignity of every individual.

KEYWORDS

Bangsamoro, peacebuilding; Islamic law (Sharia); international humanitarian law; international human rights law; civilian protection; hybrid system, moral governance; legal harmonization, contextualization

INTRODUCTION

International legal frameworks such as the Geneva Conventions under international humanitarian law (IHL) and instruments of international human rights law (IHRL) provide normative and operational standards for protecting civilians and non-combatants during armed conflict. IHL regulates the conduct of hostilities and safeguards persons who are not or no longer participating in hostilities, while IHRL protects fundamental rights at all times, including during conflict and post-conflict transitions (International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC], 2020). Although their primary purpose is humanitarian protection rather than peace creation, adherence to these frameworks can indirectly support peacebuilding by

reducing civilian harm, limiting atrocities, and promoting respect for human dignity—conditions essential for reconciliation and stability (ICRC, 2020).

The influence of these frameworks becomes particularly meaningful when they align with local cultural and religious norms. In the Bangsamoro context, humanitarian principles rooted in IHL have been contextualized in local languages and linked with Islamic ethical teachings, improving community acceptance and understanding (ICRC, 2019). This normative resonance strengthens the potential of IHL and IHRL to shape responsible conduct among stakeholders during and after conflict.

Institutional developments within the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) also reflect the impact of these international norms. In 2024, the ICRC turned over an IHL handbook to the BARMM Parliament to support lawmakers in transforming humanitarian principles into regional legislation (ICRC, 2024). At the national level, legislation such as the Philippine law on crimes against IHL and human rights obligations provides the legal basis for accountability and civilian protection (Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nation [UN], 2022). Moreover, the Bangsamoro Internal Displacement Act of 2024 institutionalizes protection and durable solutions for internally displaced persons (IDPs), addressing one of the most persistent consequences of conflict in the region (UN Philippines, 2024).

Practical applications are evident in the work of regional institutions. For example, the Bangsamoro Human Rights Commission (BHRC) conducts capacity-building and awareness sessions on IHL and human rights for the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and other security actors, helping to integrate humanitarian norms into security operations (Bangsamoro Today, 2025). At the same time, ongoing peacebuilding efforts implemented with the support of UN and international partners—including reintegration of former combatants, strengthening of governance mechanisms, and community-level conflict-transformation initiatives—reflect humanitarian and human rights principles in their design and implementation (UN Philippines, 2023).

Despite these developments, significant challenges remain. The influence of international legal frameworks on peacebuilding depends on effective domestic implementation, institutional capacity, community awareness, and sustained cooperation among local actors. Since IHL itself is a protective framework rather than a peace-making tool, its potential to contribute to sustainable peace depends on complementary mechanisms such as transitional justice, inclusive governance, social healing, and development interventions (ICRC, 2020). This highlights the importance and timeliness of studying how IHL and IHRL shape peacebuilding processes in the Bangsamoro region—both their contributions and the gaps that continue to hinder long-term stability.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore how International Humanitarian Law (IHL), International Human Rights Law (IHRL), and Islamic law influence peacebuilding in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Conducted between June and December 2025, the research focused on the Bangsamoro Government Center in Cotabato City and nearby security headquarters. This location provided a unique socio-political backdrop where state, international, and religious legal norms coexist, offering a rich environment for examining complex normative interactions.

Using purposive sampling, the researcher engaged eight key participants representing the security sector such as Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP), government agencies such as Ministry of Public Order and Safety (MPOS),

Bangsamoro Human Rights Commission (BHRC), and Policy Research and Legal Services (PRLS), and non-state or religious actors such Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and Ulama (Muslim Religious Scholar). Data was gathered through semi-structured, face-to-face or virtual interviews using a researcher-made guide. These sessions were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim to ensure an accurate and authentic representation of the participants' specialized insights into legal implementation and peacebuilding.

The collected data underwent thematic analysis using descriptive, evaluative, and process-oriented lenses to categorize legal acceptance, perceive relevance, and map operational practices. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed triangulation and participant validation to maintain credibility and dependability. Furthermore, ethical considerations were strictly upheld by ensuring informed consent, participant anonymity, and the right to voluntary withdrawal, guaranteeing that the data is used exclusively for academic purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presented the qualitative data analysis gathered from the interviews with eight (8) key participants who responded to the central problems of the study. The participants were influential figures in their respective fields representing both state and non-state actors. These include individuals from AFP, PNP, MNLF, MILF, MPOS, BHRC, PRLS of the Bangsamoro Parliament, and BDI / Ulama (Islamic scholar). These participants possessed significant expertise and interest in the international legal frameworks and peacebuilding efforts in the Bangsamoro region.

The following outlined the results of qualitative data analysis from the identified significant statements, and its formulated meanings. The collected data was grouped into cluster themes, and then the emergent themes. The analysis was supported by the gathered review of related literatures.

Table 1. The Accepted International Legal Framework

Line No.	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes	Code
002	AALA- " <i>So, talaga po yung tatlo, IHL, IHRL at Islamic law. Pero pag-nandoon na tayo sa area na conflict areas, or yung area under the influence of the MILF, Islamic law talaga. Kasi ang assumption namin, pag-nandoon ang islamic law, kasama na si Human Rights at saka si IHL, saklaw na rin niyan.</i> "	Islamic law is considered the prevailing framework, especially in conflict-affected areas, seen as encompassing and providing the foundation for IHL and IHRL.	IHL, IHRL, and Islamic law	Acceptance is Conditional	101
003	AALA- " <i>Yung nakikita mo, na umihiral dito si Geneva Convention sa GPH-MILF Ceasefire Agreement, tino-tolerate po namin siya kasama si UNICEF, kasi yan naman yung para sa mga bata.</i> "	International frameworks like the Geneva Convention and UN principles (like those of UNICEF) are accommodated/ tolerated due to specific concerns, such as child protection, even if not the primary one.	IHL	Acceptance is Conditional	101

Line No.	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes	Code
029	RBAY- <i>"that is the very foundation of what they are advancing to preserve and to highlight the Islamic Law."</i>	The beliefs and aspirations of the Bangsamoro people are fundamentally rooted in and anchored to Islamic law/ <i>Sharia</i>	Islamic law	Identity-Driven Acceptance	102
030	RBAY- <i>"Although at the present, it is now being little by little embraced by the Bangsamoro people in BARMM... you can see that they are embracing little by little the international human rights law."</i>	There is a growing acceptance and integration of IHL by the population within the current BARMM context.	IHL	Acceptance is Conditional	101
055	RSEM- <i>"Actually, ang accepted law in the region pa rin ang Sharia. Ibig sabihin, so kung titingnan natin sa Bangsamoro, most acceptable sa kanila yung Sharia. Mas nanginibabaw pa rin yung Sharia law over other laws like human rights and IHL."</i>	<i>Sharia</i> law is the most accepted and is considered to prevail over other frameworks like IHL and IHL in the region.	Islamic law	Identity-Driven Acceptance	102
071, 072	HMUM- <i>"So far, yung tatlo na ito is very relevant sa Commission namin. Lahat ng activities namin always anchored sa Islamic human rights na batas. Gusto namain i-highlight na mayroon din naman sa Islam before pa yung mga westernized na or international framework na yan."</i> HMUM- <i>"Number one talaga na, wala talagang question is yung Islamic law."</i>	Islamic law is the undisputed primary framework and is highlighted as having inherent human rights principles that predate and inform international/Western concepts.	Islamic law, IHL, and IHL	Acceptance is conditional	101
123	PAMA- <i>"We cannot say it is anchored on a single International law. But probably it is anchored on a multi-layered legal framework... The Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro... domestic law, the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro, and the Bangsamoro Organic Law, and of course, the domestic law, which is the Sharia law, and our domestic laws in the Philippine Constitution."</i>	The legal landscape is not monolithic but a complex, multi-layered framework involving peace agreements, the BOL, <i>Sharia</i> , the Philippine Constitution, and international norms.	Islamic Law, IHL, and IHL	Acceptance is Conditional	101

Line No.	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes	Code
144	JGAM- <i>"First, you know, 'yung acceptance, maybe legally speaking, we can say, yes, it is accepted, because we can't do something about it, because we are under Philippines. Anchored to constitution, the legal order, not in adhered and we believe these are complemented in IHL and IHRL."</i>	International legal frameworks are legally accepted and adhered to primarily because the region is under the Philippine Constitution and legal order, with IHL and IHRL seen as complementary.	IHL, and IHRL	Acceptance is Conditional	101
145, 147	JGAM- <i>"However contextually informed the Islamic law because it I believe it is within the bounds of the BARMM autonomy and Sharia personal family law."</i> JGAM- <i>"reconciled... campaign for the BBL... they now understand why we cannot adopt the Islamic law or the Sharia law that Muslim communities perceive... sharia criminal law cannot be imposed here in Bangsamoro."</i>	The implementation of Islamic Law is contextually informed and limited, primarily to personal and family law (<i>Sharia</i> law), due to the reconciliation and non-imposition of perceived aspects like <i>Sharia</i> criminal law within the Philippine legal system.	Islamic law, IHL, and IHRL	Acceptance is Conditional	101

Legends

AALA	- Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)
RSEM	- Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)
PAMA	- Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)
RBAY	- Philippine National Police (PNP)
MHUM	- Bangsamoro Human Rights Commission (BHRC)
JGAM	- Ministry of Public Order and Safety (MPOS)

Analysis

The analysis of the significant statements from the table 1 shown two interconnected themes about the acceptance of international legal frameworks as influential on peacebuilding in the Bangsamoro region. These themes were identified as the Acceptance is Conditional and Identity Driven-Acceptance. This viewed a composite relationship between religious and international laws.

Theme 1: Acceptance is Conditional

This theme described the opinion that Islamic Law, particularly *Sharia*, is most accepted in Bangsamoro contexts mostly in conflict affected areas as the prevailing legal framework in the region. It is viewed as encompassing the principles of IHL and IHRL. The significant statement reflected where Islamic law is not merely a co-equal but a superior. It was mentioned by AALA;

"So, talaga po yung tatlo, IHL, IHRL at Islamic law. Pero pag-nandoon na tayo sa area na conflict areas, or yung area under the influence of the MILF, Islamic law talaga. Kasi ang assumption namin, pag-nandoon ang islamic law, kasama na si Human Rights at saka si IHL,

saklaw na rin niyan. “ (So, all three are accepted- IHL, IHRL and Islamic law. But when we are in that area, the conflict areas, or the area under the influence of the MILF, It's really Islamic Law. Because our assumption is, if Islamic law is present, Human Rights and IHL are already included, they're under its umbrella.) [line 002].

Al-Dawoody (2020) on his narrative supported this by asserting the full compliance between Islamic law and IHL, suggested that Islamic law inherently reflects international values, which could justify the belief that it naturally covers IHL and IHRL.

The historical priority of Islamic law on human rights principles over westernized international frameworks, viewed it as the undisputed primary law as emphasized by HMUM;

“So far, yung tatlo na ito is very relevant sa Commission namin. Lahat ng activities namin always ina-anchored sa Islamic human rights na batas. Gusto namain i-highlight na mayroon din naman sa Islam before pa yung mga westernized na or international framework na yan.” (So far, these three laws are very relevant to our Commission. All our activities always anchor in the law of Islamic human rights. We want to highlight that Islam also has human rights principles even before those westernized or international frameworks.) [line 071]; He added *“Number one talaga na, wala talagang question is yung Islamic law.”* (The number one, with absolutely no question, is Islamic law. Considering most of the people here are Bangsamoro and Muslim...) [line 072].

These claims of inherent rights within Islamic law complemented the views of Mhlanga (2008), who places IHRL specifically the UDHR as the basis of customary law, suggesting a possible philosophical convergence or competing claim to foundational mandate.

While Islamic law is primary in belief, its practical, governmental implementation is restricted to specific domains such as personal and family law, cannot impose criminal Sharia law due to reconciliation with the Philippine legal system. This statement emphasized by JGAM;

“However contextually informed the Islamic law because it I believe it is within the bounds of the BARMM autonomy and Sharia personal family law. What I'm trying to say is, the community accepted the legal frameworks. However, there is a part of Islamic law” [line 145]; She added *“during our campaign for the BBL (Bangsamoro Basic Law), from the 16th Congress to the 17th Congress when we were campaigning to communities, especially to diaspora communities. They now understand why we cannot adopt the Islamic law or the Sharia law that Muslim communities perceive. It's about whether they will cut hands, or if they will stone or behead, etc. Through our campaigns, they understood the reason why it is not fully implemented in the Philippines. And I think, we were campaigning at that time for the people to have an informed decision-making, and I think that they were campaigning at that time for the people to know that the sharia criminal law cannot be imposed here in Bangsamoro.”* [line 147].

This limitation emphasized the complexity of implementation from the case study of Herbolzheimer (2015) related to the trust-building in the Bangsamoro region including peace negotiations, showing that Islamic law acceptance is politically and legally constrained within the larger state framework.

International frameworks are not fully contained as primary but are accommodated for specific humanitarian purposes, such as child protection. AALA said;

“Yung nakikita mo, na umihiral dito si Geneva Convention sa GPH-MILF Ceasefire Agreement, tino-tolerate po namin siya kasama si UNICEF, kasi yan naman yung para sa mga bata.” **(What you have seen, we tolerated the principles of Geneva Convention in the GPH-MILF Ceasefire Agreement, and even UNICEF, because they have protection for the children.)** [line 003].

This acceptance of IHL and UN principles supported by the views from Herbolzheimer (2015) about the importance of IHL in Mindanao peace negotiations, indicating that IHL is an operational necessity for peace, even if not the preferred ultimate legal source.

The government sector observed a societal, slow-burn integration of IHRL within the BARMM. RBAY said;

"Although at the present, it is now being little by little embraced by the Bangsamoro people in BARMM... you can see that they are embracing little by little the international human rights law." [line 030].

This is consistent with the statement of Mhlanga (2008) regarding the establishment of the UDHR as foundational to customary international law, suggested that the general global pressure for IHRL acceptance is gradually penetrating the regional consciousness.

The Bangsamoro legal order defined as a complex structure encompassing peace accords, domestic law, Constitution, regional law such as BOL, and Islamic law. PAMA stated;

"We cannot say it is anchored on a single International law. But probably it is anchored on a multi-layered legal framework- The Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro... domestic law, the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro, and the Bangsamoro Organic Law, and of course, the domestic law, which is the Sharia law, and our domestic laws in the Philippine Constitution." [line 123].

This statement is supported by the case study of Herbolzheimer (2015) that the role of IHL in the peace process, as the agreements and the BOL are the very mechanisms that create this multi-layered legal synthesis.

The International legal frameworks are accepted primarily due to the political and legal reality of being under the Philippine Constitution as emphasized by JGAM on her statement;

"First, you know, the acceptance, maybe legally speaking, we can say, yes, it is accepted, because we can't do something about it, because we are under Philippines. Anchored to constitution, the legal order, not in adhered and we believe these are complemented in IHL and IHRL." [line 144].

The acceptance is a matter of constitutional adherence on IHL and IHRL as complementary rather than primary. This mandatory acceptance aligned with the obligations as viewed from the thesis of Mhlanga (2008), established for states under customary IHRL. The statement *"we can't do something about it"* suggested a lack of acceptance implying compliance is externally imposed. These differences of opinion inherent nature claimed for the principles of Islamic Law.

Theme 2: Identity-Driven Acceptance

This theme recognized that International legal frameworks such as IHL and IHRL are accepted into the Bangsamoro legal system, not as a replacement, but as an identity-driven accepted in the regional government under the Philippine Constitution and through the various peace and ceasefire agreements. The foundation of Bangsamoro armed groups aspirations is related directly to the preservation of Islamic Law. According to RBAY;

"In fact, iyan ang pinaka-foundation ng kanilang ina-advance to preserve and to highlight yung Islamic law and the observance of the practices inside that." (in fact, that is the very foundation of what they are advancing to preserve and to highlight the Islamic law and the observance of the practices inside that.) [line 029].

These statements supported by the argument from Zoli (2012) for treating Islamic law as a global player, highlighted its role as a fundamental identity and legal system within the global security discourse.

This emphasized the local preference for Islamic law, clearly placing it in a dominant position over international frameworks. RSEM stated;

“Actually, ang accepted law in the region pa rin ang Sharia. Ibigsabihin, so kung titingnan natin sa Bangsamoro, most acceptable sa kanila yung Sharia. Mas nanginibabaw pa rin yung Sharia law over other laws like human rights and IHL.” (Actually, the accepted law in the region is still Sharia. Meaning, if we look at the Bangsamoro, Sharia is the most acceptable to them. Sharia law still prevails over other laws like human rights and IHL.) [line 055].

The argument of its general statement aligned with the real connection between Islamic law and the self-determination efforts of the Bangsamoro people.

The following outlined the results of qualitative data analysis from the identified significant statements, and its formulated meanings. The collected data was grouped into cluster themes, and then the emergent themes. The analysis was supported by the gathered review of related literatures.

Table 2. The Perception on the Relevance of International Legal Frameworks in Promoting Peace

Line No.	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes	Code
005	AALA- <i>“So, dito po namin madalas ginagamit yung IHL sa vertical conflict. Meaning, Moro against government.”</i>	IHL is a practical and recurring framework used by non-state actors in conflicts against the government.	Practical Application in Conflict and Peacebuilding	Legitimacy is Operational	201
006	AALA- <i>“Kasi ang beliefs po namin, that's very relevant in the Islamic law and rules of engagement o protocol of war.”</i>	The relevance of International legal frameworks is affirmed when they align with and are contextualized by Islamic law.	Alignment with Cultural and Religious Norms	Relevance Needs Context	202
033	RBAY- <i>“...they started to open up their mind to a wider perspective about peace while they respect much yung implementation of Islamic law.”</i>	A growing acceptance of a broader concept of peace is observed, which coexists with respect for Islamic law.	Alignment with Cultural and Religious Norms	Relevance Needs Context	202
057	RSEM- <i>“We use IHL and HRL for the amicable settlement.”</i>	IHL and IHRL are employed as tools to facilitate peaceful, non-confrontational resolution of issues.	Practical Application in Conflict and Peacebuilding	Legitimacy is Operational	201
076	HMUM- <i>“...the basic principle na nilalaman itong framework na ito is malaki naman talaga yung naitutulong niya sa mga state actors natin, particularly the duty bearers... is respect for human rights parin talaga.”</i>	The frameworks guide state actors in fulfilling their duties, promoting restraint and preventing the abuse of authority by prioritizing respect for human rights.	Mechanisms for Restraint, Accountability, and Peacebuilding	Laws Limit Conflict	203
077	HMUM- <i>“...it is proven by our annual activities. Nakalagay talaga siya sa aming human rights</i>	Educational efforts are more effective when IHL principles are explicitly linked to existing	Alignment with Cultural and Religious Norms	Relevance Needs Context	202

Line No.	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes	Code
	<i>education every year. Kasi mas napapadali talaga kung nakikita, for example, yung dalil sa Quranic verses na related dun sa mga principles na kapaloob dito sa IHL.”</i>	Quranic verses, increasing moral acceptance and impact.			
078	<i>HMUM- “...my recommendation talaga is always align siya dun sa kung maging culture sensitive tayo, i-align natin dun para mas deep yung atake dun sa ground. Mas tatanggapin nila.”</i>	For deeper acceptance and effective ground-level impact, the frameworks must be culturally sensitive and aligned with local principles.	Alignment with Cultural and Religious Norms	Relevance Needs Context	202
125	<i>PAMA- “It’s very relevant. As I said, for us in the military, we are very religiously observing the International legal principles... it is also anchored in International legal frameworks.”</i>	The frameworks provide a vital, accepted foundation for the military’s conduct and serve as the basis for agreements observed by non-state actors.	Practical Application in Conflict and Peacebuilding	Legitimacy is Operational	201
149	<i>JGAM- “very relevant, because when you work on peace building, it should be, number one, based on justice, based on trust...”</i>	The relevance of the frameworks lies in their potential to establish fundamental conditions for peace: justice and trust.	Mechanisms for Restraint, Accountability, and Peacebuilding	Laws Limit Conflict	203
150	<i>MPOS- “...the harm is limited... the person is entitled or has the right to access humanitarian aid... there is a room for ceasefire.”</i>	IHL acts as a crucial limiter of violence, ensuring the protection of human dignity, humanitarian access, and creating space for de-escalation.	Mechanisms for Restraint, Accountability, and Peacebuilding	Laws Limit Conflict	203
174	<i>LGUS- “...they want their law to be in accordance with the international norms... So, it is very helpful if you follow them.”</i>	Non-state actors have proactively demonstrated their acceptance and adoption of international norms (anti-landmines, child soldiers) to establish credibility and gain international respect.	Practical Application in Conflict and Peacebuilding	Legitimacy is Operational	201

Legends

AALA	- Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)
RSEM	- Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)
PAMA	- Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)
RBAY	- Philippine National Police (PNP)
MHUM	- Bangsamoro Human Rights Commission (BHRC)
JGAM	- Ministry of Public Order and Safety (MPOS)
LGUS	- Bangsamoro Darul Ifta` (BDI)/ Ulama (Islamic Scholar)

Analysis

The significant statement from the table 2 shown a strong and consistent perception of the International legal frameworks in the Bangsamoro region. The following are the findings based on the emergent themes: Legitimacy is Operational, Laws Limit Conflict and Relevance Needs Context.

Theme 1: Legitimacy is Operational

This theme highlighted the perceived practical application of the international legal frameworks, where state and non-state actors actively utilized IHL and HRL in their operations, and peace efforts to gain legitimacy. IHL is a practical and recurring framework used by NSAG such as MILF and MNLF in conflicts against the government. AALA stressed out;

“So, dito po namin madalas ginagamit yung IHL sa vertical conflict. Meaning, Moro against government.” (So, this is where we often use IHL, in vertical conflict. Meaning, Moro against the government.) [line 005].

This shows that IHL is not merely a theoretical idea, but a customary rule of war used by those who engaged in conflict. This aligns with the practical focus of IHL reflected from the article Droege (2025) more about lessening the evils of war.

The international legal frameworks are peace-focused application beyond just regulating conduct during hostilities. RSEM said;

“...we use IHL and HRL for the amicable settlement.” [line 057].

IHL and IHRL are utilized as tools to facilitate peaceful, non-confrontational resolution of issues.

The frameworks have acceptable foundation for the conduct of the military. PAMA said;

“It's very relevant. As I said, for us in the military, we are very religiously observing the International legal principles... it is also anchored in International legal frameworks.” [line 125].

The relevance of the laws as a common principle are acceptable legal basis for both state and NSAGs. NSAGs have proactively demonstrated their application of international norms (e.g., anti-landmines, child soldiers) to establish credibility and gain international respect. LGUS said;

“...they want their law to be in accordance with the international norms... So, it is very helpful if you follow them.” [line 174].

This perception is helpful to a strategic, practical need for legitimation in the global arena.

Theme 2: Relevance Needs Context

This theme belief that the international legal frameworks acquired positive perception and relevance aligned with its internationality and context in the Bangsamoro region. The IHL and IHRL are affirmed when they align with and are contextualized by Islamic law. This contextualization is crucial for NSAGs like the MILF and MNLF. According to AALA;

“Kasi ang beliefs po namin, that's very relevant in the Islamic law and rules of engagement o protocol of war.” (Because our belief is that it's very relevant in Islamic law and rules of engagement or protocol of war.) [line 006].

This aligned with the concept of Islamic peace diplomacy mentioned from the policy research of Seeth (2023), where religious-cultural context like Indonesia's moderate Islam is leveraged to promote tolerance and a positive global perception.

A broader concept of peace coexists with respect for Islamic law. RBAY said;

“...they started to open up their mind to a wider perspective about peace while they respect much yung implementation of Islamic law.” (... they started to open their mind to a wider perspective about peace while they respect much the implementation of Islamic law.) [line 033].

The process of opening to international ideas does not necessitate the abandonment of local legal frameworks, rather, they are seen as complementary.

Efforts on education are more effective when IHL and IHRL principles are explicitly linked to existing religious teaching from the *Quran* and *Hadith*, increasing moral perception and acceptance. HMUM stated that;

“...it is proven by our annual activities. Nakalagay talaga siya sa aming human rights education every year. Kasi mas napapadali talaga kung nakikita, for example, yung dalil sa Quranic verses na related dun sa mga principles na kapaloob dito sa IHL.” (...it is proven by our annual activities. It is really included in our human rights education every year. Because it is really easier when they see, for example, the proof/evidence, the Quranic verses that is related to the principles contained in the IHL.) [line 077].

This connection provides a moral and religious basis for adherence, making the frameworks more than just external mandates.

For deeper acceptance and effective at the ground-level impact, the frameworks must be culturally sensitive and aligned with local principles. HMUM said;

“...my recommendation talaga is always align siya dun sa kung maging culture sensitive tayo, i-align natin dun para mas deep yung atake dun sa ground. Mas tatanggapin nila.” (...my recommendation is always to align it with, if we are to be culture-sensitive, we align it with Islamic principles, so the approach on the ground is deeper. They will accept it more.) [line 078].

This is to ensure the frameworks take root and become genuinely internalized by the community

Theme 3: Laws Limit Conflict

The theme focused on the role of the laws as a driver for accountability, which promoted limitation among weapon bearers. It is fundamentally necessary for establishing justice and trust for sustainable peace. The international legal frameworks guided the security sectors in fulfilling their duties, promoting restraint and preventing abuses of authority by prioritizing the respect for human rights. HMUM stated;

“...the basic principle na nilalaman itong framework na ito is malaki naman talaga yung naitutulong niya sa mga state actors natin, particularly the duty bearers... is respect for human rights parin talaga.” (...the basic principles contained in this framework really help our state actors, particularly the duty bearers... is still respect for human rights.) [line 076].

This is directly addressing the concerns over security and perception to threat as noted from the survey conducted by Hoddie & Hartzell (2024), as accountability of state actors is a key to perceive security.

The relevance of the frameworks lies in the potential to establish fundamental condition for peace which is justice and trust. According to JGAM;

“very relevant, because when you work on peace building, it should be, number one, based on justice, based on trust...” [line 149].

Without a legal framework to enforce the law, peacebuilding efforts are likely to fail. IHL on the other hand acted as a limiter of violence, ensuring the protection of civilian lives and dignity, and humanitarian access. JGAM said;

“...the harm is limited... the person is entitled or has the right to access humanitarian aid... there is a room for ceasefire.” [line 150].

This ability to mitigate suffering is a practical path to building trust among warring parties, a concept that aligned with Droege's article (2025) about observation that the focus of IHL was on alleviating suffering from the potential impact of war to the civilians and those who no longer participating in war.

The following outlined the results of qualitative data analysis from the identified significant statements, and its formulated meanings. The collected data was grouped into cluster themes, and then the emergent themes. The analysis was supported by the gathered review of related literatures.

Table 3. Application of the Principles of the International Legal Frameworks

Line No.	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes	Code
008	AALA- <i>"Dito sa Central Committee, meron din kaming tinatawag na Jihad Executive Councilor. Tumitingin sa pagitan ng halal at sa haram. Pwedeng gawin at saka hindi."</i>	The MILF Central Committee has a body, the Jihad Executive Councilor, that determines permissibility (halal) and prohibition (haram) of actions based on Islamic principles.	Internal Islamic and Disciplinary Mechanisms	Internalization of Legal and Ethical Principles through Islamic Doctrine and Organizational Discipline	301
009	AALA- <i>"At dito naman sa military, meron din kaming Mursidin- taga-turo at gabay."</i>	The MILF military structure includes Mursidin (religious teachers/guides) who provide religious instruction and moral guidance to their forces.	Internal Islamic and Disciplinary Mechanisms	Internalization of Legal and Ethical Principles through Islamic Doctrine and Organizational Discipline	301
010, 011	AALA- <i>"During the height of our struggle, meron kaming tinatawag na military disciplinary board."</i> AALA- <i>"Ang humahawak talaga dyan yung military tribunal court. Para siyang court of marshal."</i>	The MILF maintained formal structures like a military disciplinary board and a military tribunal court (similar to a court martial) to address internal violations.	Internal Islamic and Disciplinary Mechanisms	Internalization of Legal and Ethical Principles through Islamic Doctrine and Organizational Discipline	301
012	AALA- <i>"Meron din kami kasing organized na task force conflict prevention na nasa central committee po siya."</i>	The MILF Central Committee has an organized task force specifically for conflict prevention.	Internal Islamic and Disciplinary Mechanisms	Internalization of Legal and Ethical Principles through Islamic Doctrine and Organizational Discipline	301
059	RSEM- <i>"malakas yung orientation namin... Ang military naman mayroon yan silang training and during the training ino-orient yan sila for"</i>	The MNLF emphasizes strong orientation and discipline through its military training department, which imparts doctrine and	Internal Islamic and Disciplinary Mechanisms	Internalization of Legal and Ethical Principles through Islamic	301

	<i>discipline... Mayroon training department na nagbibigyan ng doktrina... Mayroon silang general command... at mayroon religious department na nagbibigay ng Islamic doctrine doon."</i>	Islamic teachings via a religious department.		Doctrine and Organizational Discipline	
036	<i>RBAY- "There is a transitional justice system... includes the Shariah or different court under the Islamic Law... we were required to undergo training, executive seminar for seven days, executive seminar for senior officers on IHL and IHRL."</i>	The transitional justice system in the Bangsamoro includes Shari'ah courts and is a focus of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro; state actors like the PNP are required to undergo training on IHL and IHRL.	Institutional Training and Transitional Justice Mechanisms	Institutional Application of International Legal Frameworks through State Mechanisms and Capacity Building	302
080	<i>HMUM- "BHRC has the power to advise the government... to ensure that all the government actions, particularly their legislations and policies, were in accordance with the international human rights standards."</i>	The BHRC exercises its power to advise the government, ensuring that policies and legislation comply with international human rights standards.	Human Rights Oversight and Policy Advisory	Institutional Application of International Legal Frameworks through State Mechanisms and Capacity Building	302
081	<i>HMUM- "Executive Order No. of City Local Government Unit of Cotabato, yung automatic checkpoint... kasi yung intention is hindi siya less intrusive and kailangan ma-preserve yung right to privacy nila... position paper particularly on executive order ng Cotabato City, providing power to the barangay officials to detain the minor which is very contradictory to the Juvenile Justice Act."</i>	The BHRC actively scrutinizes local government policies, such as a Cotabato City Executive Order, issuing position papers to address potential non-compliance with human rights standards like the right to privacy and the Juvenile Justice Act.	Human Rights Oversight and Policy Advisory	Institutional Application of International Legal Frameworks through State Mechanisms and Capacity Building	302
082	<i>HMUM- "state actors naman natin kasi we are binded by this international framework... through the doctrine of incorporation as well as the doctrine of transformation in international arena,</i>	State actors are legally bound to adhere to duly ratified international laws (like IHL/IHRL) through the doctrines of incorporation and transformation.	Constitutional and Legal Obligation to International Law	Institutional Application of International Legal Frameworks through State Mechanisms and Capacity Building	302

	<i>kailangan natin mag-adhere dun sa duly ratified natin na mga international laws."</i>				
103	NADI- <i>"unang-una titingnan yung mga provisions ng IHL, ng IHRL, at saka ng Islamic law, and then, titingnan kung some of those provisions or the entire provisions can address issues na kinakaharap ng Bangsamoro."</i>	Legal consideration involves prioritizing the provisions of IHL, IHRL, and Islamic law to determine their applicability in addressing issues within the Bangsamoro.	Integrated Legal Assessment and Policy Deliberation	Hybrid and Contextual Application of International Legal Frameworks through Legal Integration and Localization	303
105	NADI- <i>"Ang nakikita ko talaga na mabilis na ma-apply nito ay yung Islamic law, pero depende kung anong juristic direction ang sinusunod ng mga ng Darul Ifta"</i>	Islamic law is seen as the most quickly applicable framework, though its implementation is contingent upon the specific juristic direction adopted by the Darul Ifta (House of Islamic Jurisprudence).	Islamic Juristic Interpretation and Application	Internalization of Legal and Ethical Principles through Islamic Doctrine and Organizational Discipline	301
106	NADI- <i>"One principle that the Bangsamoro adopted is yung tinatawag nilang moral governance... it's really inclined and aligned from Islamic principles. There is a demarcation of goodness and evilness."</i> (PRLS)	The guiding principle of the BARMM, moral governance, is fundamentally aligned with Islamic principles, focusing on distinguishing between right and wrong.	Islamic-Based Governance Principles	Internalization of Legal and Ethical Principles through Islamic Doctrine and Organizational Discipline	301
127	PAMA- <i>"for the state, it is more of a state responsibility to observe... it is being observed to enhance or strengthen legitimacy and global support... Second is the localization, because the local implementation, in practice, in whatever is applicable and effective."</i>	The State observes IHL/IHRL as a core responsibility, which also serves to enhance legitimacy and global support; adherence is also driven by localization—applying principles that are effective and practical in the local context.	State Responsibility and Localization of Legal Norms	Hybrid and Contextual Application of International Legal Frameworks through Legal Integration and Localization	303
128	PAMA- <i>"We apply the laws. We have no question on the military because we have court martial. If a member or soldier violates the IHL or human rights law, we check that during the assessment."</i>	State military forces (AFP) ensure compliance with IHL/IHRL through established internal mechanisms, such as the court martial system, to prosecute violations by its members.	Military Accountability and Judicial Enforcement	Institutional Application of International Legal Frameworks through State Mechanisms and Capacity Building	302

153	JGAM- <i>"even among the sympathizers of the non-state armed group in Marawi. Questions arose when someone spoke about the destruction... the destruction and damage their actions cause are fundamentally not aligned with any religious basis or ethical conduct... those legal frameworks are crucial... because they provide the foundation for the justice necessary to rebuild that trust."</i>	The destruction caused by non-state armed groups, even to their sympathizers, is seen as unethical and non-religious; legal frameworks (IHL/IHRL) are deemed crucial for establishing accountability and justice, which in turn rebuilds public trust.	Accountability and Trust Restoration	Hybrid and Contextual Application of International Legal Frameworks through Legal Integration and Localization	303
176	LGUS- <i>"BARMM was born because of the peace talks. The peace talks should follow the international standards... they follow what they talked about, what we have in BOL... So, with the international standards, they should follow it."</i>	The creation of BARMM and the resulting BOL stemmed from peace talks that adhered to international standards, thus creating an obligation to comply with these standards.	Peace Agreement Compliance and Legal Obligation	Hybrid and Contextual Application of International Legal Frameworks through Legal Integration and Localization	303
177	LGUS- <i>"The case that was used for those two cases that were prosecuted; the Republic Act 9851 was used... in the context of BARMM... Also in the region of Western Mindanao, when the MNLF had a war there... the case that was filed against them was actually is IHL. Although, domestically, the Republic Act 9851 was adopted on the international humanitarian law grounds."</i>	Domestic law, specifically Republic Act 9851 (incorporating IHL), has been used to prosecute cases against armed groups in the BARMM and surrounding regions, demonstrating the practical application of international principles via domestic adoption.	Domestic Incorporation of International Law	Hybrid and Contextual Application of International Legal Frameworks through Legal Integration and Localization	303

Legends

AALA	- Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)
RSEM	- Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)
PAMA	- Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)
RBAY	- Philippine National Police (PNP)
MHUM	- Bangsamoro Human Rights Commission (BHRC)
JGAM	- Ministry of Public Order and Safety (MPOS)
NADI	- Policy Research and Legal and Services (PRLS)
LGUS	- Bangsamoro Darul Ifta' (BDI)/ Ulama (Islamic Scholar)

Analysis

The analysis of the significant statements in table 3 revealed three emergent themes concerning the application of the International legal frameworks in the Bangsamoro region. These themes were identified as: Internalization of Legal and Ethical Principles through Islamic Doctrine and Organizational Discipline, Institutional Application of International Legal Frameworks through State Mechanisms and Capacity Building and Hybrid and Contextual Application of International Legal Frameworks through Legal Integration and Localization. This analysis supported by whether the application of the international legal frameworks is successful in the Bangsamoro region.

Theme 1: Internalization of Legal and Ethical Principles through Islamic Doctrine and Organizational Discipline

This theme highlighted how the NSAGs such as MILF and MNLF complied with internal regulation that blend Islamic law with formal disciplinary system creating a *de facto* hybrid legal and ethical application even before the establishment of BARMM.

The internal structures supported the compliance with ethical standards as observed by the MILF and MNLF. AALA said;

“Dito sa Central Committee, meron din kaming tinatawag na Jihad Executive Councilor. Tumitingin sa pagitan ng halal at sa haram. Pwedeng gawin at saka hindi.” (Here in the Central Committee, we also have what we call the *Jihad Executive Councilor*. They also look at what is permissible and what is forbidden. What can be done and what cannot.) [line 008].

The MILF established a specific body which serves as an internal control aligned with the *jus in bello* (laws of armed conflict) principles of IHL. AALA added;

“At dito naman sa military, meron din kaming Mursidin- taga-turo at gabay.” (And here in the military, we also have *Mursidin*-religious teaching and guidance) [line 009].

The presence of the *Mursidin* (religious teaching and guidance) in the military camp of MILF institutionalizes the religious conduct of war and promoting discipline among armed fighters.

AALA emphasized;

“During the height of our struggle, meron kaming tinatawag na military disciplinary board.” (During the height of our struggle, we have what we call the military disciplinary board.) [line 010], he added *“Ang humahawak talaga dyan yung military tribunal court. Para siyang court of marshal.”* (The one that will truly handle that is the military tribunal court. It's like a court martial.) [line 011].

The armed forces of the MILF maintained their internal military justice system like the state. AALA added;

“Merong din kami kasing organized na task force conflict prevention na nasa central committee po siya.” (There is also an organized task force conflict prevention which is in the central committee.) [line 012].

This conflict prevention task force demonstrates a commitment to mitigate the negative impact of conflict to the civilians and disciplinary measures aligned with peacebuilding initiatives in the region.

The MNLF stressed out the strong orientation and discipline of their military in accordance with Islamic teaching and practices during the military trainings. RSEM said;

“malakas yung orientation namin for example sa MNLF well oriented din sila. Ang military naman mayroon yan silang training and during the training ino-orient yan sila for discipline. Mayroon training department na nagbibigyan ng doktrina doon sa orientation sa lahat ng mga forces. Mayroon silang general command doon sa general staff nila at mayroon religious department na nagbibigay ng Islamic doctrine doon” (our orientation is strong, for example, in

the MNLF, they are also oriented. The military they have their training and during the training, they are oriented on discipline. There is a training department, and they are the ones who provide the doctrine and orientation to all the forces. They have a general command in their general staff, they have a religious department, they are the ones who give the Islamic doctrine there.) [line 059].

On the other hand, NADI said;

“Ang nakikita ko talaga na mabilis na ma-apply nito ay yung Islamic law, pero depende kung anong juristic direction ang sinusunod ng mga ng Darul Ifta`.” **(What I truly see that can be quickly applied is Islamic law, but it depends on which juristic direction the Darul Ifta` is following.)** [line 105].

The effectiveness and application of the law particularly Islamic law was observed, but it is contingent on the specific juristic direction of the BDI. The potential delay in the consistency legal system and application is necessary for a unified legal framework

NADI added;

“One principle that the Bangsamoro adopted is yung tinatawag nilang moral governance. If you're going to take a look at how they define moral governance for the BARMM, especially under the MILF leadership, it's really inclined and aligned from Islamic principles. There is a demarcation of goodness and evilness.” **(One principle that the Bangsamoro adopted is what they call moral governance. If you're going to take a look at how they define moral governance for the BARMM, especially under the MILF leadership, it's really inclined and aligned with Islamic principles. There is a demarcation of goodness and evilness.)** [line 106].

Moral governance in Bangsamoro region provides religious foundation that supports and reinforces the rule of law. This is supported by the Islamic tradition of *Sulh* (reconciliation) as a model for peacebuilding from the news release of Rasool, Abadi & Stuart (2025).

Theme 2: Institutional Application of International Legal Frameworks through State Mechanisms and Capacity Building

This theme focused on the deliberate process and transition within BARMM to blend and apply IHL, IHRL, and Islamic law, together with Philippine domestic law. RBAY said;

“There is a transitional justice system. That is also one of the aspects under the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) and Ceasefire Agreement with Moro armed groups. Meaning, it is being highlighted. The restoration of the transitional justice includes the Shariah or different court under the Islamic law. It brought about probably by the education and the information campaign that is being initiated by the government or security forces. That is why me, as senior officer, we were required to undergo training, executive seminar for seven days, executive seminar for senior officers on IHL and IHRL.” [line 036].

The transitional justice system includes *Sharia*, and PNP and AFP received trainings on IHL and IHRL. This argument supporting the OHCHR (2023, 2022) call for the application of IHRL principles and accountability mechanism.

The gaps on the implementation and challenges on the enforcement of laws remained unresolve. This argument supported by the statement from HMUM;

“To provide you a particular example, Executive Order No. 1 of City Local Government Unit of Cotabato, yung automatic checkpoint which is, for us, somehow, kasi yung intention is hindi siya less intrusive and kailangan ma-preserve yung right to privacy nila and, yun ang isa sa ginawa namin na position paper particularly on executive order ng Cotabato City, providing power to the barangay officials to detain the minor which is very contradictory to the Juvenile Justice Act. So, yun ang isa sa parang concern namin na mandato na ginagawa ng aming division.” (To provide you a particular example, City Local Government Unit of Cotabato's Executive Order No. 1, the automatic checkpoint which is for us is the intention is not less

intrusive and the right to privacy needs to be preserved and that's one of what we made a position paper for a particularly executive order of Cotabato City, providing power to the barangay officials to detain the minor which is very contradictory to the Juvenile Justice Act. That is one of the sorts of concerns and mandate our division is doing.) [line 081].

Active monitoring and close supervision are required because local policy can still contradict national laws such as Juvenile Justice Act and IHRL.

PAMA said;

"We apply the laws. We have no question on the military because we have court martial. If a member or soldier violates the IHL or human rights law, we check that during the assessment." [line 128]

State military forces such as AFP ensure compliance with IHL and IHRL through established internal mechanisms, such as trainings and court martial system, to institutionalize the legal frameworks and prosecute violations by its members.

The BHRC is actively worked to ensure IHRL compliance in the Bangsamoro region. According to HMUM;

"BHRC has the power to advise the government. This power is exercised to ensure that all the government actions, particularly their legislations and policies, were in accordance with the international human rights standards." [line 080]. He added, *"Doon sa state actors naman natin kasi we are bound by this international framework. Because we already ratified this to international laws. So, whether they like it or not, through the doctrine of incorporation as well as the doctrine of transformation in international arena, kailangan natin mag-adhere dun sa duly ratified natin na mga international laws."* **(On the other hand, our state actors are bound by this international framework. Because we already ratified this to international laws. So, whether they like it or not, through the doctrine of incorporation as well as the doctrine of transformation in the international arena, we need to adhere to the international laws that we have duly ratified.)** [line 082].

State actors recognized the international legal frameworks through domestic doctrines indicating responsibility to comply with IHL and IHRL. As per news release of Rulac Geneva Academy (2022), confirmed the application of the Geneva Convention particularly the Article 3 in non-international armed conflicts (NIAC) in Mindanao which binds the state actors.

Theme 3: Hybrid and Contextual Application of International Legal Frameworks through Legal Integration and Localization

The application of the international standard outlines the priority and synergy of the legal approach where IHL, IHRL and Islamic law are considered together to resolve local issues.

NADI said; *"Of course, unang-una titingnan yung mga provisions ng IHL, ng IHRL, at saka ng Islamic law, and then, titingnan kung some of those provisions or the entire provisions can address issues na kinakaharap ng Bangsamoro."* **(Of course, first and foremost is to look at the provisions of IHL, IHRL, and Islamic law, and then, see if some of those provisions or the entire provisions can address issues that the Bangsamoro is facing.)** [line 103].

This statement supported by the hybrid model as described from the book of Deinla (2008) regarding the security of the community and conflict resolution.

The application is driven by both state obligation and legitimacy of action as PAMA said; *"As I said, for the state, it is more of a state responsibility to observe. While for the other side, if it benefits them. So that is what happens. That is why its observance is a combination of internationality. Sometimes they say it is to promote legitimacy. So, a combination of internationality and localization it is being observed to enhance or strengthen legitimacy and global support. Second is the localization, because the local implementation, in practice, in*

whatever is applicable and effective. That is the basis for the observance. But, definitely from the state actors, we religiously observe in following these legal frameworks.” [line 127].

He emphasized a localization of the international laws for effective implementation, and a process of building peace and trust.

LGUS added;

“BARMM was born because of the peace talks. The peace talks should follow the international standards... they follow what they talked about, what we have in BOL... So, with the international standards, they should follow it.” [line 176]

The creation of BARMM and the resulting BOL stemmed from peace talks that adhered to international standards, thus creating an obligation to comply with these standards.

LGUS said; *“The case that was used for those two cases that were prosecuted; the Republic Act 9851 was used. So, it means that it was really used in the context of BARMM. In the context of BARMM, because Marawi is part of BARMM. So, they used it. Also, in the region of Western Mindanao, when the MNLF had a war there, when the Zamboanga siege happened, the case that was filed against them was actually IHL. Although, domestically, the Republic Act 9851 was adopted on the international humanitarian law grounds.” [line 177].*

This statement provides clear evidence of the practical application of local IHL (RA 9851) to those non-state armed group members violated the laws indicated the adaptation of the IHL into domestic law enforcement.

The internal mechanisms may not fully align with international legal frameworks. JGAM said; *“This situation explains why, even among the sympathizers of the non-state armed group in Marawi. Questions arose when someone spoke about the destruction. Why did this happen, and why was this chosen as the battlefield where there are many inhabitants, causing mass destruction of properties. Even though those in the community might consider the armed group their brethren while we are, for example, Muslims, they are our brethren, the destruction and damage their actions cause are fundamentally not align with any religious basis or ethical conduct. As someone working in peacebuilding, when one sees that there is no justice because one party is acting without accountability and others are failing to hold them to account the public's trust will lessen. Therefore, those legal frameworks are crucial, even if they were not intended to be pillars of peace, because they provide the foundation for the justice necessary to rebuild that trust.” [line 153].*

This statement reflects a gap where the actions of other NSAGs are seen as a violation of both religious and humanitarian principles.

CONCLUSION

This study explored and understood the influence of the legal frameworks from different field of expertise. The qualitative approach used in this study allowed an in-depth examination of the acceptance, perception, and application of these legal frameworks based on the personal knowledge, experiences and insights of various key actors on peacebuilding efforts.

Security-sector practitioners should strengthen internal accountability mechanisms—such as courts martial, monitoring systems, and human rights oversight—to ensure that violations of IHL and IHRL are addressed promptly. Practical enforcement of these mechanisms can help institutionalize discipline, prevent abuses, and reinforce public confidence in peace and security institutions.

Religious leaders, ulama, and Islamic institutions play a critical role in translating international legal norms into locally meaningful guidance. Practice-oriented interventions should prioritize collaboration with the BDI and faith-based organizations to frame humanitarian and human rights principles within Islamic teachings, making them more accessible and acceptable at the community level.

Peacebuilding in the Bangsamoro region is defined by a nuanced hybrid legal order where the acceptance and perception of international legal frameworks are inextricably linked to their alignment with Islamic law, which serves as the primary source of foundational legitimacy. While IHL and IHRL provide essential operational structures, their practical application is effective only when they undergo institutional localization and are harmonized with Islamic normative values. Findings suggest that when these frameworks are integrated through hybrid mechanisms—uniting religious authority, state governance, and international standards—they significantly enhance civilian protection and social stability. However, the successful transition from formal adoption to meaningful compliance remains contingent upon bridging the gaps between international norms and local cultural realities, necessitating a context-sensitive approach that balances global obligations with the lived religious and legal identity of the Bangsamoro people.

Recommendations

1. State security forces, particularly the AFP and PNP, should rigorously enforce internal accountability mechanisms, including court martial and disciplinary processes, to address violations of IHL and IHRL and reinforce public trust.
2. NSAG such as the MILF, MNLF, and other armed formations should institutionalize regular capacity-building programs on IHL and IHRL framed through Islamic law, and strictly enforce their internal codes of conduct.
3. The BHRC, together with CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) and religious groups, should conduct sustained community-based education campaigns on human rights and humanitarian principles from an Islamic perspective.
4. Future studies may include a wider range of participants such as women peacebuilders, youth leaders, IP (Indigenous People), IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons), local government officials, and community elders to capture more inclusive and grassroots perspectives on the implementation of international legal frameworks in the Bangsamoro region.

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