

Boto Mo Bangsamoro Bulletin No. 8

Areas Covered: Bangsamoro Region

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SUMMARY

Polling centres have officially closed at 7PM across the Bangsamoro, with some areas reported to have closed earlier due to the fewer voters coming into the precincts. Some areas such as Al-Barka and Maluso in Basilan have extended their voting to 9PM to make way for the delayed start of the polls due to tensions and reprinting of shaded ballots.

Security forces remain in heightened alert as election equipment, documents, and returns are about to be transported to the municipal halls.

Violence continued to erupt in Shariff Saydona, the same incident that began at 11AM and was only settled around 6PM. Shooting incidents erupted yet again in Cotabato City, including another explosion in Central Pilot Elementary School. Tensions and altercations continued to occur as polls close such as in Guindulungan and Butig.

Meanwhile, a feature of today's election in Lanao del Sur is that there are currently no reported incidents of gun violence as of coverage period. Incidents of collective violence were mostly brawls and fistfights that were eventually settled by either the military or elders.

Aside from incidents of violence, another common feature that surrounded today's election were reports of electoral fraud. Reports indicate pre-shaded ballots, and in some areas, multiple ballots were being filled out by either the same voter or the electoral board. These could falsely indicate a higher voter turnout or secure votes of one political party over the other. Furthermore, there were also reports that votes had been pre-arranged and distributed between political parties. In the past, this was often done to serve as a bargaining chip of local leaders to ensure they get support and endorsement from the political parties in succeeding elections. An unintended consequence is the deterrence of violence as votes have already been negotiated, but it risks the foundations of fair and democratic elections. ●

