



Residents of Tugat, Sultan Sa Barongis flee their homes due to a fireflood caused by a *rido* between two warring groups on 5 August 2026. Photo by CCAA-ERN.

Resurgence of clan feuds risks further violence ahead of the elections

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The first two weeks of campaign period for the first Bangsamoro Parliamentary Election (BPE) saw two major recurring clan feuds in the Special Geographic Areas (SGA) and Maguindanao del Sur. The involvement of politico-military actors in these strings of violence reflects the complex dynamics that have allowed these conflicts to persist over time, as well as heighten the risks that these feuds could intersect with the electoral process and pose significant challenges to the polls.

Campaign activities kick off

The campaign period kicked off with political parties, their candidates, and supporters launching their own respective caravans across the region. These assemblies aim to rally support, mobilise constituencies, and demonstrate each party's political strength. The opening salvo of the campaign period was generally calm, but this may represent a temporary lull before political activity intensifies. As in previous electoral seasons, the initial stages of campaign periods tend to unfold

gradually, as voters coalesce around their preferred candidates and alliances take shape. Early signs of tension, however, are already emerging as competing parties and their supporters began to assert their presence on the ground.

Just a few days after the campaign season took off, several supporters of political parties reportedly removed each other's tarpaulins and campaign paraphernalia such as in Saguilaran, Lanao del Sur and in Cotabato City. In Taraka, Lanao del Sur, these led to tensions after tarpaulins were reportedly torn down and damaged by opposing supporters shortly after being installed.

Rido, floods, and displacement

Longstanding clan feuds also pose a threat to the forthcoming elections. A fireflood erupted yet again on 4 August in Kadayangan municipality, SGA, stemming from the same ongoing *rido* between the municipal mayor of Nabalawag and a Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) Commander.¹ To be sure,

¹ A related incident has occurred in July 2026 and in March 2026. See *Safeguard the Bangsamoro Vote*: <https://conflictaalert.info/our-work/bulletins/56/safeguard-the-bangsamoro-vote-a-critical-period-to-transcend-violence-in-the-region>

several peace settlement efforts had been reached to resolve the conflict, but the recurring violence indicates that these have proven to be ineffective.² Around 1,850 individuals were displaced as a result of the violence, most of whom had already been displaced during previous encounters and have yet to return home.

While the current violence is not directly election-related, the two groups involved have aligned themselves to contesting parties in the upcoming elections. The continued displacement of residents poses concerns in their ability to vote freely and safely on election day. It has likewise been observed that campaign activities in the area have been sparse due to fears that openly supporting one party could be perceived as aligning with the group. This potentially exposes residents to further tensions or retaliations.

In Sultan sa Barongis, another firefight erupted on 5 August between two families, one of whom is related to the barangay chairman of Tugal and the other a former commander of the MILF. The conflict has been going on for years, which began as a land dispute but has since escalated into a rido. While the immediate cause of the incident is rido, its potential political dimension is also a concern, particularly in the upcoming BSK elections, given that the barangay chairman was among those targeted and the family has been long-established in local politics.³

Of additional concern is the compounded burden faced by the residents who were forced to flee their homes, while also dealing with flooding in the area. One thing is certain: conflict does not

discriminate in times of natural disasters. Those caught in the crossfire are left to bear the brunt of the compounded impacts brought about by identity violence and natural calamities within the backdrop of the elections.

Meanwhile, a barangay councilor was shot dead while on his way home from a campaign rally in Datu Anggal Midtimbang on 8 August. Campaign rallies and assemblies are becoming avenues for rival groups to retaliate and conduct revenge attacks against their opponents.

Gun-related violence continues to pose a threat to the peace and security situation in the Bangsamoro with at least ten incidents recorded during the coverage period. This remains a concern despite the Philippine National Police's announcement on 3 August that they have already arrested 12 individuals for violating the election gun ban.⁴

The deployment of security forces in the first week of August could have contributed to the relative peace observed so far. But it is also undeniably a reflection of the level of security intervention required to secure peace in the region, particularly with at least 100 areas identified by the Commission on Election as election hotspots.⁵ The augmentation of security personnel, including the deployment of elite troops in the region, is a welcome sign that measures are being undertaken to secure the polls. However, these are also the sort of measures that only provide a temporary reprieve from violence. The challenge is to sustain this relative calm beyond the elections, particularly in areas where long-standing conflicts remain. ●

² The military and the police intervened in July 2026 to mediate the warring groups. *DXMS Radyo Bida Cotabato City*, 28 July 2026. <https://www.facebook.com/reel/1723428442232318>

³ The barangay chairman was targeted in an ambush attack in June 2026, which led to the killing of his brother. Incident mentioned in the previous Boto Mo Bangsamoro brief, link above.

⁴ PNP: 12 arrested for violating BARMM election gun ban. *GMA News*, 3 August 2026. <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/997137/pnp-12-arrested-for-violating-barmm-election-gun-ban/story>

⁵ BARMM security maps show areas under watch ahead of historic polls. *Rappler*, 10 August 2026. <https://www.rappler.com/philippines/mindanao/barmm-areas-security-watch-ahead-polls-august-2026/>



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The Critical Events Monitoring System (CEMS), is an SMS-based reporting system that captures conflict incidents and tensions in Muslim Mindanao that may lead to the eruption of violence. The Early Response Network (ERN) is an organisation of individuals in various localities in Muslim Mindanao who share real-time information on tensions and violence and work with key stakeholders in coordinating quick context-specific responses.