

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2314



Introduced by Representative BELLA VANESSA B. SUANSING

AN ACT
DECLARING THE MONTH OF MARCH OF EVERY YEAR AS
“BANGSAMORO HISTORY MONTH”

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) marks a historic and transformative milestone in the long and arduous struggle of the Bangsamoro for justice, peace, and self-determination. The Bangsamoro peace process has been a testament to the enduring aspirations of the Bangsamoro people to assert their identity, reclaim their agency, and build institutions that reflect their culture, history, values, and visions of justice and peace. Key historical milestones in the creation of the BARMM include the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) in 2014, the passage of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) in 2018, and the subsequent plebiscite in early 2019.

In view of this, former BARMM Chief Minister Ahod B. Ebrahim, Al Haj, signed on March 8, 2021, Proclamation No. 001, declaring every March of every year as the "Bangsamoro History Month," as it holds several significant events that contributed to achieving peace and the right to self-determination of the Bangsamoro. As part of national efforts to promote historical consciousness and promote rooted awareness on diversity, the Bangsamoro History Month aims to acknowledge the historical injustices endured by the Bangsamoro and honor their sacrifices that paved the way for autonomy and peace; to promote historical awareness and education among present and future generations, and to advance the principles of transitional justice, peacebuilding, and genuine reconciliation.

Efforts must be made to create an all-encompassing representation of the Bangsamoro in the national consciousness, with its representation not limited to historical tragedies and points of conflict. Though these tragedies and points of conflict are important as deterrents for future conflict, dialogues must focus on culture and the multiplicity of identities within the Bangsamoro to establish a humanized portrayal of the region's people, not merely as victims of conflict.

This endeavor, upon approval, would then be of great significance to preserve and promote the beliefs, customs, traditions, and aspirations of our Moro communities and raise consciousness about the struggle for the right to self-determination, appreciate the gains of the peace process, and strategize ways forward for the Bangsamoro.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



BELLA VANESSA B. SUANSING
Second District of Sultan Kudarat

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Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State recognizes the fundamental role of the Bangsamoro people in nation-building, and shall ensure the fundamental equality between all ethnic groups within the Philippines before the law.

SECTION 2. *Bangsamoro History Month.* – Every month of March of every year is hereby declared as the “*Bangsamoro History Month*” to commemorate the significant cultural, historical, and social features of the Bangsamoro region.

SECTION 3. *Objectives.* – The objectives of the annual celebration of the Bangsamoro History Month are as follows:

- a) To promote and deepen understanding amongst non-Moros about the Bangsamoro culture and history;
- b) To remove prejudices towards Moro people created by centuries of pernicious misinformation campaigns;
- c) To promote appreciation for diversity in expression of oneself and one’s faith and religion; and
- d) To promote tolerance and acceptance of other lifestyles amongst the citizenry.

SECTION 4. *Awareness Program.* – Bangsamoro History Month shall be observed every month of March to celebrate the culture and history of the Bangsamoro people.

Government institutions, schools, and the private sector shall be encouraged to observe this event in a manner that promotes understanding and awareness among their employees and students of the objective of the campaign.

SECTION 5. *Implementing Agencies.* – The National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) are hereby mandated as the lead agencies in promoting and raising consciousness about Bangsamoro History Month.

The NCMF and NCIP must collaborate with the Department of Education, the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Commission on Higher Education, and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts to conduct activities that shall aim to deepen understanding of Bangsamoro history and culture within this month. Towards this end, they may conduct fora, information dissemination campaigns, and other educational initiatives to effectively meet the objectives of this Act.

SECTION 6. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days after its complete publication either in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of national circulation.

Approved,