

SPEECH FOR PEACE MEDIA DAY FESTIVAL

(PPP-101) – 28 Feb 2014

By

ABU HAFEZ AL HAKIM



เอกสารประกอบ

PEACE MEDIA DAY

PPP101: Pa(t)tani Peace Process

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In the name of ALLAH, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

Mr. Chairman

Distinguished guests and speakers

Ladies and gentlemen

Assalamualaikum, peace be upon you

We wish to thank the organizer in providing space and opportunity for Patani fighters to voice their opinion on the Peace and Media Day Festival today at this prestigious venue.

It is incomplete for this important gathering if the voice of the Patani fighters is not heard .

We have been striving for years ,with sweat and blood , to defend the dignity of our race ,faith and land of Patani Malay people.

We would like to remind the audience that the Patani conflict is not just 10 years old. Rather, it is an ongoing political, historical and social conflict of more than 200 years. This means that the hardships and sufferings endured by the Patani Malays under Thai colonialism is much longer and more painful than the sufferings of other ethnics of Patani, especially the Thai Buddhists since 2004. **We fight against the Thai colonialism, while the Thai people are NOT our enemies.**

It also need to be reminded that we chose armed struggle because in the past the Thai state never listened to the peoples' plight. Our past leaders who fought through the Parliament or Human Rights petitions were often subjected to arrest or imprisonment. Some were even murdered or went into exile. Sadly, the similar situation still exists today.

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Ladies and gentlemen

The involvement of Patani fighters in peace process is not new. Prior to the current Kuala Lumpur Peace Process we have entered into other processes, unofficially, brokered by certain governments and the NGOs. However those mentioned processes ended as soon as they started. Just to mention a few names like : Geneva , Bogor , Langkawi etc. , as a reminder of any process that has not been well-planned nor organized will eventually fail. The Kuala Lumpur Peace Process will meet the same fate if the problems and the weaknesses of the previous processes are not addressed.

Previous peace processes were done in secrecy with questionable authority and representation. Both sides came to the table with different agendas. While the fighters' aim was to gauge the sincerity and commitment of the Thai State to solve the conflict, the Thais came , apart from intelligence gathering, to seek ways to end violence and at the same time to find out how much control the fighters' representatives have over the militants on the ground. There was no recognition of the fighters , thus they were still considered as terrorists.

The KL Peace Process is a little different. Whatever controversies that aroused at the beginning , it was open ,with prior official acknowledgement by the then Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra , a high level representation from the Thais (The Secretary General of National Security Council) and Malaysia as the Facilitator. The fighters are referred to as "people who have different ideologies and opinions from the state" with Ustaz Hassan Taib of the BRN (Barisan Revolusi Nasional) as their representative. **This is the first time a peace process for Patani is considered official and well-accepted by the regional and international communities.**

Although the fighters were "tied-up " with the framework of Thai Constitution in the "General Consensus on Dialogue Process " signed on 28 February 2013 , we still come to the table to seek alternative means ,other than armed struggle, **for a JUST, COMPREHENSIVE and SUSTAINABLE** solution of the Patani conflict. We believe that through dialogues and negotiations, violence can be reduced or even stopped entirely, which will eventually lead to determination of the future status of Patani.



There are amongst us those who are skeptical of the KL Process , especially when it was rumored that the person who has severed the hearts and minds of Patani people in the Kresik and Tak Bai tragedies, the former Thai Prime Minister, was involved. Nevertheless, we accepted the initiative because Islam has taught us to accept an offer for peace even from an enemy. As quoted in the Holy Quraan : **When they(the enemy) inclines towards peace , thou shall accept it and rely upon Allah. He is the most Hearing and Knowing** - from Chapter Al Anfal verse No. 61. We stepped in while some others were still in doubt and chose to wait and see.

In the initial meetings of the process (first on 28/3/13 and second on 29/4/13) the discussions were on basic matters pertaining to the peace dialogue. **There was no negotiation nor any offer whatsoever as rumored.** The early stage should be concentrated on confidence building for both sides, in secrecy. But what happened was that the Thai media started to "sound the horn" of criticism, assumptions , accusations and biased reporting. The Thai delegation also frequently issued "over- stated" comments before and after a meeting .The Thai leaders indiscriminately expressed their views exposing disunity amongst them . This situation not only failed to push the process forward but also putting it at stake.

In view of unclear road map for the process , on 27/4/13 the BRN posted a video clip over You-Tube the 5 Preliminary Demands in order **to put the process on the right tract.** The said demands were later proposed on the dialogue table at the official meeting of 29/4/13. The Thais were also perceived as only wanted the militants to end or reduce violence. This became clear in the subsequent meeting on 13/6/13 when they proposed a limited ceased-fire in the coming month of Ramadhan. The BRN spontaneously responded with a greater offer adding a few more demands.

Ladies and gentlemen



We are all aware of the outcome of the "Ramadhan Peace Initiative". We have learnt a great lesson that **any initiative has to be meticulously planned, discussed , scrutinized and mutually agreed by both sides before implementation.**

We have observed many weaknesses in this initiative. It was prematurely planned in a hurry prior to the confidence building measures. There was no mutual planning nor discussion . The announcement made by the Facilitator lacked the full support of the conflicting parties regarding the terms and regulations mentioned in the 7-page **"Terms of Ramadhan Peace Initiative 2013"**. There was neither official agreement nor signing pact, thus any party could violate the terms any time. There was neither referee nor neutral monitoring team in the field to determine the violators. Most of all there was no adequate information made to the public regarding the terms and regulations, protective measures and complaints in case of violation by any party.

The most distressful incidences were the extrajudicial killings of activists or those accused in the security- related cases in the first week of Ramadhan. This prompted the BRN to suspend its involvement in the talks. The message from The Shura Council was declared by the members of the BRN armed force via the You-Tube on 6 August 2013. **Failure of the Thai side to conform to the terms and regulations contained in the mentioned document for the cease-fire that they initially proposed has led to total suspension of the official talks by the BRN until the 5 Preliminary Demands are principally accepted and endorsed by the Thai Parliament.**

Towards the end of August 2013 the Thais requested detailed interpretation of the five demands, and BRN responded with a 38-page document through the Facilitator. Again, unfortunately ,the Thais took an extended time to reply whereas the political situation in the South was unstable and the turmoil in Bangkok began to take shape. The reply letter from the Head of Thai delegation dated 25 October 2013 stressed that " The five Preliminary Demands are acceptable for further discussion ".

That reply however did not meet the expectation of the BRN because it did not specifically noted that the 5 Preliminary demands are **principally** accepted for further discussion , and neither was it endorsed by the Thai Parliament as proposed. We opined that if the five



demands are not accepted principally, they could be rejected one by one by the Thais . The change of government could also affect the process if the demands are not endorsed as a National Agenda.

Ladies and gentlemen

The KL Peace Process is considered a failure and dead by many. It was based on the uncertainty of the Thai political crisis and the withdrawal of Ustaz Hassan Taib as the head BRN Delegation , as announced via the You-Tube on 1 December 2013.

But we have to remember that the process was launched officially . Thus far there has been no official statement passed through the official channel of the withdrawal of any party from the process, be it from the BRN , the Thais or the Malaysian Facilitator. Therefore the process is thus considered as being "suspended " due to unfavorable circumstances on the respective sides and will recommence when all obstacles are cleared.

We, the Patani fighters, are indeed consistently committed in this process with the existing representatives. The participation of more members for inclusiveness will be upgraded from time to time and all those representing the Patani stakeholders will be known as **The Patani Malay Community**.

We would like to see the dissemination of information , discussions and active participation of the people of all walks of life ,occupations, backgrounds, races and religions in Patani to understand and be convinced that peace is good for all. Activities of NGOs and CSOs towards supporting of peace should neither be hindered nor subjected to harassment .

We call upon the government of Thailand to adopt true democracy in providing space and opportunity for all people of Patani to freely voice their opinions in term of their genuine need for their own benefits in everyday life , without resorting to violence, for their Right to Self-Determination in future or even talking about "MERDEKA" (independence). **It is sensible for any government to face its own people with words and ideas , rather than bullets and bombs.** It is also prudent for us to discuss peace today for another 10-15 years rather than to continue fighting for 20-30 more years before starting a peace talk.



We request " people who have different ideologies and opinions from the State ", especially the Patani fighters, be safely welcomed into Patani to meet and talk to our people and to the general Thai public. We would wait for the day when a representative of Patani fighters be given the honour to speak in the Thai Parliament to all the people of Thailand that we genuinely seek JUSTICE, FREEDOM and PEACE.

Finally, we wish to quote the words of the former Leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation(PLO), Mr.Yasser Arafat at the United Nations on 13 November 1974 :

"Today I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand "

and he concluded :

"War erupted in Palestine, and in Palestine peace will be born ".

In a similar manner today, we wrap up by saying :

" Today we come unarmed, bearing a BUNGA RAYA as a symbol of PEACE . War has also erupted in Patani , and in Patani peace will be born , the land renown as PATANI DARUSSALAM, the Land of Peace.

Wassalamualaikum , peace be upon you

Thank you.

ABU HAFEZ AL HAKIM

(From outside the fence of Patani - representing the Patani Fighters on the dialogue table)

28 February 2014.

