



**MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE**  
FOR COMPARATIVE PUBLIC LAW  
AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

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**The Moro of the Philippines – a minority in their land of origin seeking self-determination**

**MPIL Agora**  
**in cooperation with Discussion Group on Law & Development**

Wednesday, 30 September 2015, 17:00 – 18:00, Room 014

The Muslim minority (also called the Moro) of the Philippines have been involved in one of the longest running struggles for autonomy and self-determination in the world. The Moro is a minority in the Philippines but used to be a majority on one of the largest islands, Mindanao. Through many years of domestic migration from the rest of the Philippines to Mindanao, the Moro have become a minority in their land (island) of origin.

Closely linked to their change in status, was socio-economic deprivation, loss of traditional lands, and high levels of unemployment. The desire of the Moro for self-government has gravitated between peaceful demands for a form of autonomy to violent protests and civil war.

This presentation will reflect on the way in which social intervention by successive governments in Manila has reduced the Moro to a minority and the most recent efforts to grant some form of asymmetrical, regional autonomy to them within the Bangsamoro area of Mindanao. The regional autonomy negotiated by the Moro may offer lessons to other minorities who seek some form of self-government within existing state boundaries. The presentation will consider challenges brought about by asymmetrical arrangements and pose the question whether such arrangements are worth pursuing in other regions of the world where existing sovereign borders are being challenged by minorities.



*Bertus de Villiers (BA Law, LL.B, LL.D) is a Member of the State Administrative Tribunal of Western Australia and a Honorary Fellow of the Law Faculty of the University of Western Australia. He is admitted as a legal practitioner in South Africa and Australia. He is a Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung (Germany). From 1999 to 2005 he was principal legal advisor to the Goldfields Land and Sea Council. During this period he also lectured on an ad hoc basis at the University of Western Australia.*

*Before migrating to Australia he was principal legal advisor to South African National Parks (1996-1999). He was also co-drafter of the treaty that established the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park between South Africa and Botswana.*

*From 1990-1996 he was head of the Centre for Constitutional Analysis (HSRC) in Pretoria where he had close involvement in the debates leading to the South African Constitution.*

*Dr De Villiers has travelled widely and has undertaken research and lectured on constitutional and political developments in various countries. He has published extensively on a wide range of constitutional topics, in particular topics dealing with federalism, human rights and administrative law. He was awarded the Alexander von Humboldt scholarship for post-doctoral research in Germany in 1994/5. He was again the recipient of an Alexander von Humboldt scholarship for advanced research in constitutional law 2011 and 2015.*

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Please register for participation by sending an e-mail to Ms. Margit Dagli (dagli@mpil.de)