

# Turning Point: Exploring The Reasons and Experiences of Rebel Returnees On Abandoning Their Rebel Life

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## **ABSTRACT**

The descriptive qualitative method was used in this study to explore and understand the reasons and experiences of rebel returnees in abandoning their rebel life. The pieces of evidence gathered were collected this April 2024, from South Cotabato Halfway House, the results of the study revealed the experiences of the friends rescued which brought a huge impact and success of the study. The result of the study revealed that there are lots of difficulties that the rebel returnees are facing such as exhaustion and starvation, extreme weather conditions, safety concerns, enduring fear and trauma. That is why participants found their ways to overcome such challenges with the help of engagement of the government and support, educational and social integration, clearing a reputation, financial and livelihood opportunities, having a fear-free environment, personal growth and reintegration, and surrender and reconciliation. As evidenced by the participants' comments, they all face challenges, but they also have coping mechanisms in place to overcome them. Struggles may appear to be a roadblock to achieving the reintegration that they aim for, but they are not a reason to give up rather, they are an invitation to fight even in the most difficult circumstances. This study will help the recipient to understand more and to have a clearer vision of this kind of situation as explored and studied by the researcher. Thus, the experiences of the friends rescued have an impact on how they live their new life and be reintegrated, it will mold them to be the best version of themselves.

**Keywords:** Friends Rescued, Social Integration, Reintegration, Reconciliation, South Cotabato Halfway House

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **Rationale**

The Province of South Cotabato, noted for its breathtaking scenery and lively culture, has struggled with an extensive and complicated history of insurgency and rebellion. One of the most prominent groups is the New People's Army (NPA), a communist rebel organization with a presence in Mindanao. The NPA has sought to advance its political agenda through armed struggle, often recruiting disillusioned members of the local population. The reintegration of former rebels, often known as "friends rescued," into mainstream society and governance has been an important feature of this history. This procedure is a complex effort to bring about peace, harmony, and socioeconomic advancement in a country that has endured a protracted armed war. This study uncovered the particular experiences of the rebel returnees in the Philippines, giving light to the numerous elements that have influenced this process over time. In

addition, the importance of this study was to unfold the experiences and difficulties of the returnees as they reunite with society.

In the government, everybody is given the chance to improve their lives, earn a decent income, and live peacefully. The surrenderers will be enrolled in the government's Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program Integrating former rebels into government can incentivize them to pursue their objectives through peaceful political means rather than armed struggle. This transition can contribute to a more stable and democratic political landscape. It helps the rebel returnees to reintegrate into the community by providing them with a complete package (Tamayo, 2022).

In addition, a study was conducted to examine the experiences of former rebels who went on for service as humanitarians in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The study explains how rebel-turned-humanitarians deal with a volatile political climate while incorporating their military training into a career in aid work. The distinction between soldiers and humanitarians continues to be at the core of the humanitarian fantasy. However, those who not only mediate links between the two but also migrate between them link the insurgent and humanitarian realms. The returnees balance on a razor's edge since their rebel past is seen as a threat to maintaining a neutral humanitarian identity and a resource for negotiating access with armed organizations (James, 2021).

Furthermore, this study aimed to focus on the qualitative experience of the rebel returnees. Understanding the experiences, motives, and difficulties faced by rebel returnees can help in the development of successful peacebuilding and conflict resolution techniques. Many research has explored the challenges encountered by the rebel returnees, but have often focused on examining how traumatic experiences, both during recruitment and within rebel life, influence the decision to abandon the group. Understanding how trauma, mental health, and stress play into returnees' motivations could help in creating more supportive reintegration programs. Policymakers and organizations can use the knowledge gained from their experiences to create programs that help former combatants reintegrate into society. This research contributes to academic understanding, policy development, and the healing and reconstruction of the lives of persons impacted by the armed conflict. It is essential for bringing about long-lasting peace in conflict-affected areas. This study was conducted in a specific time frame of the academic year 2023-2024 to provide facts and unbiased results of the study.

### **Research Questions**

This study aimed to explore the experiences of the rebel returnees and life after surrendering and rejoining society.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the main reasons friends rescued in South Cotabato decided to abandon their rebel life?
2. What are the challenges faced by friends rescued in South Cotabato that leads them to transition back to civilian life?
3. What are the coping mechanisms and support systems that friends rescued rely on in South Cotabato?
4. What are the opportunities that friends rescued obtained in South Cotabato as they reintegrate into society?
5. What recommendations do friends rescued have for other rebels who haven't surrendered yet in South Cotabato?

### **Theoretical Lens**

In this part, it presents the explanation of variables, concepts, and theories that were related to the study. This study is grounded in the descriptive qualitative narrative research design as its primary theoretical framework. It focuses on subjective experiences, feelings, and thoughts. The goal is to understand the meaning people make of their lived experiences (Gitonga, 2023).

The theoretical underpinning of this study is the Social Control Theory of Travis Hirschi (1969). This states that humans have established complex social relationships throughout history, which influence their behavior, choices, and beliefs. These societal ties, also known as norms, values, and cultural expectations, are crucial in determining both individual and group behavior. However, there are times when people break the law, that is, they deviate from these societal standards and norms.

Supported by the Strain Theory of Merton (1938), social systems can influence people to commit crimes. According to the classic strain theory, deviation is more likely to occur when "cultural goals" (such as financial prosperity) and opportunities for achieving them are not aligned in a society. Therefore, individuals are socialized to pursue culturally defined goals, such as financial success and social status. However, not everyone has equal access to the means to achieve these goals, leading to a state of strain or anomie.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study aimed to determine what are the main reasons friends rescued in South Cotabato decided to abandon their rebel life, what are the challenges faced by friends rescued in South Cotabato that leads them to transition back to civilian life, what are the coping mechanisms and support systems that friends rescued rely on in South Cotabato, what are the opportunities that friends rescued obtained in South Cotabato as they reintegrate into society and what recommendations do friends rescued have for other rebels who haven't surrendered yet in South Cotabato.

The result of the study would help and benefit the Policymakers, Security and Law Enforcers, Community Members Affected by Conflict, International Community Members, Friends Rescued Themselves, Researcher, and Future Researchers.

**Policymakers.** Policymakers at both national and international levels will benefit from the study's findings. They can use this research to inform the development of more effective policies and strategies for handling rebel returnees, including reintegration programs and efforts to prevent radicalization and recidivism. By addressing the needs and challenges of rebel returnees, policymakers can foster community healing and reconciliation, which is essential for long-term stability.

**Security and Law Enforcers.** Security and law enforcement agencies will benefit from a better understanding of the motivations and experiences of former rebels. This knowledge can aid in developing more targeted approaches to counterterrorism and counterinsurgency efforts. Security agencies can use this information to identify potential defectors and gain a strategic advantage. This study is crucial for developing strategies to prevent former rebels from rejoining rebel groups.

**Community Members Affected by Conflict.** The study will have a direct impact on communities affected by conflict. By understanding the reasons behind rebel return and the experiences of returnees, communities can be better equipped to facilitate the reintegration of former rebels and promote healing and reconciliation. Understanding the complexities of rebel return and actively participating in the reintegration process can foster social cohesion within the community along with the community members. This, in turn, can contribute to stability and unity, allowing community members to work together toward a more peaceful and harmonious coexistence.

**International Community Members.** The findings of the study will have broader implications for international efforts to combat terrorism and extremism. Insights into the factors influencing rebel return can inform global counterterrorism strategies and contribute to international peace and security. They can benefit from this study also by using its insights to improve global counterterrorism strategies, support conflict resolution efforts, and enhance diplomatic and humanitarian aid practices, ultimately contributing to a more peaceful and secure world.

**Friends Rescued Themselves.** Perhaps most importantly, the study will directly benefit friends rescued by giving them a voice and helping to address their unique needs and challenges. It will provide validation for their experiences and contribute to their successful reintegration into society. The study can also contribute to reducing stigmatization and discrimination against the former rebels. This, in turn, can improve their social acceptance and integration within their communities.

**Researcher.** This study would assist the researcher in broadening her horizons by providing information and skills in dealing with a variety of difficulties. This study would act as a learning experience for the researcher as he seeks solutions to the problem. Additionally, it has the potential to develop and expand his powers, capacities, and thinking abilities.

**Future Researchers.** This study would aid them in their future research on the experiences of student leaders. This study would also serve as a foundation for their research projects, providing them with data to use in developing questions for their studies.

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

This study was conducted to understand the main reasons former rebels in South Cotabato decided to abandon their rebel life, what are the challenges faced by former rebels in South Cotabato that leads them to transition back to civilian life, what are the coping mechanisms and support systems that former rebels rely on in South Cotabato, what are the opportunities that former rebels obtained in South Cotabato as they reintegrate into society and what recommendations do former rebels have for other rebels who haven't surrendered yet in South Cotabato.

The participants of this study were chosen from the Halfway House in Barangay Tinongcop, Municipality of Tantaran, Province of South Cotabato. The participants were chosen through the pre-determined criteria which the researcher used to identify and select the participants.

### **Definition of Terms**

This section presents a clear definition of the key and important terms in the study. The following terms were defined conceptually and operationally for a better understanding of this paper. Conceptual is defined as the universal meaning of words or a group of words that many people understand. On the other hand, operational definition is the meaning of the terms used in this study.

**Abandoning.** Conceptually, the Oxford Dictionary (2023), defined this term as the act of leaving a person, thing, or place with no intention of returning. It also refers to the act of leaving behind or giving up on one's previous actions, behaviors, or activities. It implies a deliberate decision to discontinue or move away from things that were done or pursued in the past. Operationally, abandoning is to leave permanently from the rebel life and to be a normal citizen.

**Complexities.** Conceptually, Cambridge Dictionary (2022), defined this term as the state of having many parts and being difficult to understand or find an answer to. It also refers to the intricate, intricate, and often challenging aspects of a situation, problem, system, or concept. They involve various interconnected elements, variables, or factors that make understanding, managing, or solving them difficult. Complexities can manifest in different forms and domains. Operationally, it refers to the state of

being intricate, involved, or composed of multiple interconnected elements, making a system, problem, or situation difficult to understand, analyze, or manage.

**Friends Rescued.** Conceptually, Implementing Rules and Regulations of Administrative Order No. 10s. (2018), defines this term as members of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), New People's Army (NPA), and National Democratic Front (NDF) who voluntarily abandoned the armed struggle and opted to become productive members of the society. Operationally, refers to individuals who were once members of a rebel or insurgent group but have since chosen to leave the group and reintegrate into mainstream society.

**Prosperity.** Conceptually, Legatum Institute (2023), define this term as underpinned by an inclusive society, with a strong social contract that protects the fundamental liberties and security of every individual. It is driven by an open economy that harnesses ideas and talent to create sustainable pathways out of poverty. And it is built by empowered people, who contribute and play their part in creating a society that promotes wellbeing. Operationally, it is the state or condition of having improved economic success, well-being, and living standards as the aim of the rebel returnees' experience.

**Radicalization.** Conceptually, Dr. Borum (2011), defines this term as focusing narrowly on ideological radicalization risks implying that radical beliefs are a proxy or at least a necessary precursor for terrorism. It also refers to the process by which an individual or group adopts extreme beliefs, ideologies, or behaviors that are significantly different from mainstream or conventional views. This often involves a shift towards more extreme and often violent positions, typically in the context of political, religious, or social beliefs. Operationally, in the context of rebel returnees, it refers to the process by which individuals who have been involved in armed conflicts or extremist groups become increasingly committed to radical ideologies and violent actions.

**Reintegration.** Conceptually, Mckee (2023), defines this term as the process of successfully reintegrating offenders into society through collaborative efforts to reduce recidivism, enhance public safety, and provide economic benefits.

In the corrections context, it also seeks to enhance public safety by reducing the risk of reoffending. Operationally, it refers to the process of bringing back those who have previously participated in armed rebellion, insurrection, or conflict into society in the context of rebel returnees.

### **Organization of the Study**

The first chapter of this study describes the problem and why it is important to perform the thesis research. This enables the researcher to address the issues that have arisen. The justification that exposes the true problem, the thesis objectives, and the literature that concludes why the study is needed are all included in this chapter. When writing Chapter 1, it was anticipated that the research questions would answer the problems stated in the rationale. This chapter also serves as a resource for policymakers, security and law enforcers, community members affected by conflict, international community members, rebel returnees themselves, researcher, and future researchers.

Chapter 2 is the thesis study's backbone; it is where we can see the benefits, the problems, and the linked literature that explains why we were undertaking the study. This chapter was crucial in determining the true problem of the research study, as well as compensating for the respondent's responses to the literature and related studies. Furthermore, it specifies the problem that must be addressed during the course of the thesis research. This will also support the respondents' claims and make reading the entire chapter of the study more valid.



The synergy of the thesis study in Chapter 3 provides energy on where to begin and what tools must be used to complete the investigation. This is where researchers can look at the study's methods, such as how the researcher completed it, and the techniques used to make the thesis more realistic. The research design is one of the most important tools that can be seen in this chapter, as it will show the reader what design is being used to make the study look less futile. The study's sequence is more obvious in this chapter; it provides promises of ethical consideration and trustworthiness, implying that the respondents will not be given the benefit of the doubt.

The outcomes of the study's problems are presented in Chapter 4, which refers to what would be the expectations and reality after reviewing the results derived from each respondent's responses. The study's findings were the most important portion of the chapter since they show whether the thesis is successful or not. The results, on the other hand, would reveal how the researcher supported the issues raised in the study, they would also reveal the absence of proof in some of the research studies indicated in Chapter 2. The tools mentioned in each chapter will compensate for the tools utilized throughout the chapter. When the data is validated, it is clear that the respondents answered the study questions. This chapter will determine the study's effectiveness.

In Chapter 5, is where the results are interpreted, and it is an important component of the chapter because it broadens the reader's and future researcher's viewpoints. This also covers the implications for practice, which emphasizes the need to understand the experiences of the rebel returnees. Implications for future research are a one-way street to enlighten the study's flaws and broaden the scope of an issue. This chapter will provide an exquisite discussion and conclusion.

## **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES**

This chapter explores the literature and studies which encompass relevant information to this study. This review of literature and studies provides an understanding of the large discussion on what are the main reasons friends rescued in South Cotabato decided to abandon their rebel life, what are the challenges faced by friends rescued in South Cotabato that leads them to transition back to civilian life, what are the coping mechanisms and support systems that friends rescued rely on in South Cotabato, what are the opportunities that friends rescued obtained in South Cotabato as they reintegrate into society and what recommendations do friends rescued have for other rebels who haven't surrendered yet in South Cotabato.

### **Abandoning their Rebel Life**

The rebel is a warrior and an artist. Artists have the potential to be catalysts for societal change. As a warrior, he struggles for the sake of man's freedom in preserving the dignity of human life and the law of moderation within the limits of his capacity as a man. As an artist, his desire for unity and meaning seeks to bring the beauty of human dignity to life by creating a canvas of action that paints the reality of the rebel's acceptance of and desire for his struggle (Von Hassel, 2017).

The person returning then may be substantially different from the person who left. As Hammond writes, 'whether a returnee comes back to his or her birthplace or settles in an entirely new environment, he/she considers returning to be more of a new beginning than a return to the past'. This is especially so given the protracted nature of so many contemporary displacement situations. Younger generations who came of age while displaced might have weakened connections to ancestral lands and may even be 'returning' to a place they have never lived (Macdonald & Kerali, 2020).

According to Maniano (2021), a senior military official in the area stated on Tuesday that the New People's Army (NPA) recent crimes in the Samar provinces demonstrate that the armed conflict has already progressed to the point of "fighting for survival." Commander of the 8th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army, Maj. Gen. Pio Diñoso III stated that the NPA's terrorist actions are to be expected given the near conclusion of the fight against communist rebels in the area. Our campaign will soon come to an end. Given that NPA members are currently battling for their lives, we should anticipate this to be more brutal. They wish to convey that they are still powerful," Diñoso stated over the phone to the Philippine News Agency (PNA). Following recent attacks on Samar Island by the communist terrorist group that left soldiers, militiamen, village leaders, and civilians dead or injured, the military official released the statement.

Paunan (2023), stated in his study that, former communist rebels and supporters spoke out about how the CPP-NPA-NDF misled them and how the group has repeatedly violated human rights over the years. They also condemned the leaders of the group for enjoying luxury while its followers' endured hardship. Another participant, who has been a CPP member for more than ten years, explained how she was persuaded to join the group by claims of a better life and a brighter future for the nation. The organization's leaders, she soon discovered, were mainly concerned with their own financial benefit. Another rebel who had defected from the organization revealed how its leaders had become corrupt and had abandoned the principles of its founders.

### **Challenges Faced by Friends Rescued that Leads them to Return to Civilian Life**

Convincing a rebel to surrender is a delicate and challenging task that requires careful communication and a deep understanding. The Philippine Government has been in constant battle against the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) particularly its armed force which is the New People's Army (NPA). For decades now, the government has led efforts in order to have peaceful agreements with this group so as to end the armed conflict and eventually convince the members of NPA to surrender. A few have surrendered, while many are still fighting for their ideologies (Martinez, 2018).

Moreover, in the study of Paunan (2023), a former rebel who spoke at the rally was Ka Romeo, who was a member of the NPA for more than 20 years. He explained how the organization's officials had become corrupt and had abandoned the principles set forth by the group's founders. The CPP-NPA-NDF turned off the revolution's course. The organization's founders' ideals have been violated by the leaders, who have turned corrupt, he claimed little is known regarding the possibility of discrimination against ex-soldiers in welcoming communities.

According to the study by Lopez (2022), in Butuan City, exhausted from being always on the run, a New People's Army (NPA) insurgent has voluntarily surrendered to the Army's 30th Infantry Battalion (IB) in Gigaquit, Surigao Del Norte. In a statement Thursday, the 30IB identified the NPA rebel as Alias Rustom who belonged to Sandatahang Yunit Pampropaganda of Guerrilla Front 16C of the North Eastern Mindanao Regional Committee. Rustom yielded to the 30IB on Tuesday afternoon. "He voluntarily surrendered due to fatigue, thirst, and hunger while inside the rebel movement especially nowadays that military operations of the 30IB have intensified," the military unit said. It added that Rustom managed to escape from his companions which led him to connect with 30IB troopers for his immediate surrender.

The success of a government-led program for reintegrating former non-state armed organizations. This might be significant in preventing violence and preventing acts of violence from recurring. Former soldiers deal with a number of numerous challenges and issues, including criminal violence, financial hardship, and political violence. These problems, if not appropriately addressed, could increase the

likelihood that some of them might engage in illegal behavior or violence on the political front. Returnees are instructed on how to manage financial matters and daily living routines before aid is released (Henao et al., 2021).

### **Coping Mechanisms and Support Systems Friends Rescued Rely On**

Governments can make a deliberate effort to engage rebel groups, show that they are committed to peace, and open the way for rebels to select peaceful resolutions to conflicts by putting these extra measures into practice. In addition, since the institutionalization of President Rodrigo Duterte's Executive Order No. 70 or 'Whole-of-Nation' Approach in Ending Local Communist Armed Conflict in 2018, many of the rebels have already made peace with the government. The government agencies have complemented all their efforts in attaining sustainable peace to finally end insurgency in the country (Fabria, 2020).

Moreover, as part of the reintegration process, the government provides several jobs, a means of subsistence, and educational opportunities for rebel returns. The government spearheaded attempts to reach this group to halt armed conflict or convince them to surrender (Martinez, 2018). The former rebels signed up as recipients of the Comprehensive Local Integration Program (CLIP) and Local Social Integration Program (LSIP) of the province meant for rebel returnees. Under the program, surrenderers receive livelihood and cash assistance (Amazona, 2018).

In addition, as a part of the reintegration process, the government provides several jobs, a means of subsistence, and educational opportunities for rebel returns. The government spearheaded attempts to reach this group to halt armed conflict or convince them to surrender (Martinez, 2018). Governments can make a deliberate effort to engage rebel groups and show that they are committed to peace. Open the way for rebels to select peaceful resolutions to conflicts by putting these extra measures into practice.

President Duterte increased the Comprehensive Local Integration Program (CLIP) for former CPP-NPA-NDF members, renaming it Enhanced CLIP or E-CLIP to offer beneficiaries more all-encompassing, comprehensive, and long-lasting advantages, such as housing subsidies. The primary goal of the Duterte government, E-CLIP, is to reintegrate former Militia ng Bayan and CPP-NPA-NDF members into society at large. Through a national approach to the ultimate goal of establishing just and sustainable peace, the program seeks to accomplish social healing and national unity. By creating a range of rewards and services for those who choose to give up their weapons and reintegrate into society, it offers social fairness to former rebels (FRs) (Del Rosario, 2021).

### **Opportunities Faced by Friends Rescued**

In the study of Sen (2022), throughout several interviews with present-day and former Maoist rebels in India's north and south, both admitted they could not give up. Even if they wanted to, the insurgent group. Such was because they feared that after retirement, unarmed and helpless. They could be killed by either their adversaries or previous allies, while the Indian state would not lose anything by not protecting them.

The government's ongoing responsibility is to support former rebels in resolving the issues. Due to their surrender, they have now faced challenges, particularly in securing employment and assuring they are secure (Lodangco, 2022). Despite their challenging circumstances, the couple's rebellious returnees are more driven to put their kids' education first so they can go to college and get a good job in better positions. The couple believes that the only wealth they can provide their children is education to guarantee an improved future. The family is appreciative to have participated in the program as they have developed into empowered people, prepared to confront an open-to-change, empowered society. Pantawid



Pamilya and the many government initiatives, services, and aid they provide they got helped them improve their state of well-being (Castillo, 2018).

Philippines-based insurgency movements have existed for a very long period. Organized groups of people, like the Communist Party of the Philippines Nationalist Party (NPA), New People's Army (CPP), and Democratic Front have engaged in combat in their endeavor to overthrow, the Philippine Government. Attempting to overthrow the elected government and maintain the returnees' movements and force, who were once political offenders received treatment under the government's E-CLIP program to aid in their integration and re-entry into society. The peace and development agenda of the administration. One way to determine how effective the government's policy is at fully reintegrating the returnees into society returning citizens, as well as those who were directly involved in the program (Edrolin, 2021).

Abenido et al., (2023), asserted that in the past administration in the Philippine government, programs were implemented to rebel returnees to live a normal life. During Duterte administration, he adopted and enhanced the program to convince most members of the CPP- NPA to surrender, and this led to signing Administrative Order No. 10, 2018, establishing the Enhanced Community Livelihood Integration Program (E-CLIP) for NPA rebels and Militia ng Bayan (MB) members who quit and surrender to the Philippine government. E-CLIP is a program for reintegration.

### **Recommendations of Friends Rescued for other Rebels who haven't Surrendered**

When the militants realized that this was not the life, they desired for themselves, they surrendered. Many others also expressed a desire to travel in time. According to a former sub-leader of the DI-Maguid Group, "I have been awake for days thinking about my family and the normal life I used to lead. I worried that I would end up being a victim of a failed effort. Surrendering is just the beginning of their journey back to normalcy, though. "All of a sudden, I just wanted to become a farmer and be with my family again." They must adjust to civilian life after their defection, which includes finding and keeping a job. This is challenging, especially after decades or even years of militant behavior. Therefore, in order to reintegrate into society, ex-fighters need the assistance of government officials and community partners (Uñga, 2023).

Additionally, Severino Samgan, president of the South Cotabato organization of former rebels, expressed gratitude to the government for implementing a reintegration program in an interview with the Philippine Information Agency. He claimed that programs like E-CLIP can assist former rebels like him to "encourage those who have remained in the revolutionary work to also avail of the services that the government has offered." Before his surrender in 1990, Samgan said he had spent more than 20 years as an active member of the New People's Army fighting in the Caraga Region, Sultan Kudarat, and South Cotabato. According to Agustin, South Cotabato helped roughly 70 rebels who had returned in 2018 (Doguiles, 2019).

Pursuant to the order of the President, the Department of Agrarian Reform distributed the Certificate of Land Allocation (CLA) on September 24, 2018, to ten converted former rebels, including Ka Jerome. Preparations for the grant of farm land to the converts were made by Regional Agrarian Directors from Region II, the Cordillera Administrative Region, and Kalinga. The benefit they received was part of the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) for former rebels. This program is implemented by the Task Force Balik-Loob composed of various national and local government agencies, including the DAR (Task Force Balik-Loob, 2019).

Furthermore, at its onset in 2019, the interim government followed two strategies for tackling militancy. First, it acknowledged the grievances of MILF splinter groups particularly the BIFF with the

peace process and encouraged them to take up their complaints with the central government. Hundreds of fighters from the Karialan and Bungos factions showed interest in doing so, but they grew wary of arrest when Manila was unable to dispense with criminal cases that were pending against many combatants. Secondly, the interim government aimed to improve local authorities' capacity throughout the BARMM so that municipal and village officials could provide better services and reduce the appeal of militant groups criticizing their performance. More broadly, it identified priority development projects under its "moral governance" agenda, to deliver the promised peace dividends (Crisis Group, 2022).

### **Synthesis**

Friends rescued were a particular aspect of the complex web of conflict and its aftereffects. Their experiences span a wide range of reasons, difficulties, and outcomes, and they provide insightful perspectives on the resiliency of the human spirit. It is crucial to understand the capacity for change and the significance of comprehensive support networks as we navigate a world characterized by ongoing war. These factors will help former combatants more easily reintegrate into society. The experiences of exiled rebels are a testament to how persistently humans may change for the better and work toward peace.

Understanding what drives individuals to leave rebel groups and seek reintegration is a complex puzzle. Some rebel returnees are motivated by disillusionment with the cause or the brutality they witnessed within the group. Communities may be distrustful or fearful of their return, and they may struggle to find employment or access essential services. Others may be driven by a desire to reunite with their families, escape the constant threat of violence, or the prospect of amnesty and a chance for a fresh start.

Therefore, it is important to remember that every rebel returnee's situation is different, and their reasons for leaving may have been impacted by a number of these factors together. The process of reintegration into society can also be challenging for these people because they frequently experience stigma, mistrust, and psychological trauma. For them to properly reintegrate into society, supportive initiatives and programs are essential. Their journeys from conflict to reintegration underscore the capacity for change and redemption.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

This chapter discusses the methods of research used during the course of the study. It includes the research design employed in the exploration of the experiences of the student leaders in facing the new normal. Furthermore, it discusses the overall design of the study: the participants, the sources of data, data gathering procedure, analysis, and ethical considerations in the conduct of this study.

### **Research Design**

This study used a descriptive narrative qualitative design. Descriptive narrative qualitative design is the chosen approach for this study to focus on the individual's or group of people's experiences within the scope of the study. The focus is on writing narratives about the experiences of individuals. It involves presenting a narrative that captures the essence of a particular situation. According to Nielsen Norman Group (2023), doing descriptive analysis allows for a compilation of data on how the person expressed themselves, what language they used when describing a particular event or feeling, and the thoughts and motivations they experienced. A narrative analysis will also consider how the research participants constructed their narratives.

**Locale of the Study**

This study was conducted within the selected Municipality of South Cotabato namely the Municipality of Tantangan. The participants of the study were intentionally chosen considering their experiences as friends rescued.

Tantangan is a landlocked municipality in the coastal province of South Cotabato. The Municipality of Tantangan was created by virtue of Executive Order No. 415 series of 1961 signed by Philippine President Carlos P. Garcia on January 27, 1965. It is located in the Northeastern part of South Cotabato. The total land area of the municipality is 14,970 hectares as certified by the Land Management Department of Environment and Natural Resources. At present, the municipality is classified as 3rd class municipality with thirteen (13) barangays within its locality.

The study was conducted at the South Cotabato Halfway House, it is situated in Barangay Tinongcop, Tantangan, South Cotabato, and serves as a dedicated facility designed to aid the former rebels who have reformed and are in the process of reintegrating into society after returning to the fold of the law. The halfway home for FRs, worth P5 million, was built on one of the province's assets in Barangay Tinongcop of the Municipality of Tantangan and was handed over to the South Cotabato Provincial Government by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) 12.

**Role of the Researcher**

This study allowed the researcher who was a criminology student to enhance her skills and suffice her knowledge. The role of the researcher was to document the study for the readers (documenter) and also to enable them to understand (enabler) what are the main reasons former rebels decided to abandon their rebel life, the challenges they faced as they transition back to civilian life, the coping mechanisms and support systems that former rebels rely on, the opportunities that they obtained, and the recommendations former rebels have for other rebels who haven't surrendered yet in South Cotabato and to transcribe interviews, coding, and categorizing the data (transcriber) to convert the verbal data collected through interviews or discussions into written text to transcription ensures the accuracy and reliability of the data. Furthermore, the researcher's participation in seeking to reach the study participant's ideas, feelings, and experiences is required, as this is a difficult undertaking that entails asking individuals to talk about topics that are potentially extremely personal to them. Another primary role of the researcher was to safeguard participants' data such as information and answers, mechanisms for safeguarding participants must be properly communicated to them and authorized by a competent research ethical review board before the study may begin. Lastly, it is a must-have of the researcher to seek advice from an experienced and reliable qualitative researcher before embarking on and publishing the study.

**Research Participants**

As a descriptive narrative qualitative method used to explore individuals' lived experiences, Budiu (2021) purports that the researcher identified participants from 5-7 participants who can talk about the personal experience they have the time in real-life experiences under review and it includes criteria to be needed in the study. Participants must also have voluntarily left or defected from the rebel group or insurgency and now are actively participating in a halfway house for the reintegration process. Participants must not be under current legal threats or prosecution related to their previous involvement in the rebel group, ensuring their freedom to share their experiences without fear of legal repercussions. For this reason, experiences of friends rescued who had experienced leaving their rebel life for 1 year or more and stated their reasons on why they did so and were willing and able to talk about it were sought for the purpose of this study, and that is included in the said criteria that deals based on the definition presented.

The researcher coordinated with the local Barangay Tinongcop, Tantangan, and PSWDO or the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office at South Cotabato Provincial Capitol unit to access the participants.

### **Research Instrument**

The study used a semi-structured interview guide in the exploration of the experiences of the rebel returnees and life after surrendering and rejoining the society. Guide questions are all drafted to extract the experiences of the participants. The interview guide questionnaire is the tool used by the interviewer as a guide during the key informant interview. According to Roulston (2010) interview guide, provides evidence for claims about what happens in our world. Thus, interviewing was chosen as the instrument for this study in an effort to elicit evidence to answer the research questions, and through careful analysis of the words shared by participants in their descriptions of their experiences, garner the bigger themes that the evidence supports.

The following interview guide has been reviewed and approved by the defense panel to ensure the validity and congruency with the research questions. The contents of the interview guide are all pertaining to answering the research questions that are relevant and align with the experiences of the rebel returnees in abandoning their rebel life

### **Data Collection**

A systematic procedure was employed to determine the reliability and trustworthiness of the gathered data. It is a technique for the researcher to obtain false and unverified information (Warner, 2010). The researcher prepared a Letter of Permission to Conduct Research that the thesis adviser has signed. Once approved, the letter was forwarded to the Provincial Governor at the Provincial Capitol Compound of South Cotabato. The researcher provided a copy of the said letter to the identified participants. The letter contained the agreement between the researcher and the participant to participate in the study. The following was presented to the identified participants: Informed Consent Form, Participant's Agreement Form, Rebel Returnees Consent Form, and the Interview Protocol for the Participants.

Furthermore, the goal of the researcher's interview was to produce and squeeze individuals' perspectives, experiences, beliefs, and motivations on a specific topic. Before the interview, the researcher informed the participants that the interview would be audio-recorded, and its confidentiality would rest assured. The availability of the participants determined the time and day of the interview. The participants may choose between English, Filipino, or Taglish to answer their life experiences and the reasons for abandoning their rebel life.

### **Analysis of the Data**

Descriptive Qualitative Narrative Research Design was used in this study to relate the Complementary methods for Research in Education by Clandinin and Connelly (1990). This method is used to understand the personal experiences of individual participants.

After the interview, the data gathered were transcribed. All the transcribed interviews were presented to the participants for them to validate. Clandinin and Connelly, concentrate on specific aspects of qualitative research. Prioritize the individual's experience and the private area. Personal experience, according to Clandinin and Connelly, is best understood through storytelling since "experience is the stories people live" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Methods by Clandinin and Connelly were utilized in exploring the perceptions and personal stories of the way participants experience the world. Narrative researchers collect stories from individuals

retelling of their life experiences on a certain topic. Participants must meet a form of requirement that fits the purpose, problem, and objective of the study. Participants and researcher collaborate through the research process to ensure the story were told and the story aligns. After collecting the narrative data, the researcher organized it systematically. This involved transcribing interviews, coding, and categorizing the data. There will be a field study; to have a panel of experts in the profession of the study review the research protocol and interview questions to ensure they align to the purpose statement and research questions. This revealed the experiences of the rebel returnees in abandoning their rebel life. The emergent themes were the basis for discussion and recommendation of the study. Referrals of emergent themes to participants were also done to validate the data. This validation step helped to enhance the credibility and reliability of the data.

### **Trustworthiness**

Interviews were scheduled at mutually convenient times especially for, the participants. This scheduling ensured that participants were comfortable and able to provide insightful responses. Each interview took place in a face-to-face setting. This method was chosen to facilitate open communication, rapport-building, and a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives.

The interview was done in accordance with the procedure. The interview started with an explanation of how it would be conducted, with a focus on the ethical concerns raised in this study as well as the structure and duration of the interview. The following was presented to the identified participants: Informed Consent Form, Participant's Agreement Form, Rebel Returnees Consent Form, and the Interview Protocol for the Participants.

The components and content of the interview questions were discussed before the interview. The researcher questioned the rebel returnees in detail about their experiences and the reasons for abandoning their rebel life as they reintegrated into society.

Their lived experiences are divided into information about the main reasons former rebels in South Cotabato decided to abandon their rebel life, the challenges faced by former rebels as they transition back to civilian life, the coping mechanisms and support systems that they relied on, the opportunities that former rebels obtained as they reintegrate into society, and the recommendations former rebels have for other rebels who haven't surrendered yet in South Cotabato. For emphasis and clarification, follow-up questions were asked.

Data from the exit interviews, including the exact date, the start and end times, and the names of the respondents, were recorded by the researcher. To keep track of how long the respondents' interview lasted, this was done.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Every stage of the study's research procedure could pose ethical problems. The study involves gathering and sharing information about the experiences of the former rebels as they abandon their rebel life and reintegrate into society. It is crucial to first obtain consent for participation from both the students and the adviser. The researcher described the study's goal to the participants before beginning the actual data collection. A detailed explanation of the study's objectives, potential hazards, and commitment to anonymity are all included in the authorization. The fact that participants are free to stop at any point without incurring any penalties is also made known to them. The researcher proceeds to clarify that in order for the former rebel to take part in the interviews, the signed form had to be returned. The researcher meets with each participant one-on-one after they have been chosen as research subjects. The participants were also made aware that this study did not set out to evaluate anything they had done. The interview



questions' structure only serves as a focal point for participants to discuss their experiences as former rebels in abandoning their rebel lives and living as normal citizens.

#### 4. RESULTS

This chapter presents the themes drawn from the analysis of the responses during the Semi-structured interviews (SI). In identifying the articles, the researcher transcribed the audio version of the interview. From the transcript of the discussions, significant statements were extracted. These were utilized in response to the research title "Turning Point: Exploring the Reasons and Experiences of Rebel Returnees on Abandoning their Rebel Life."

Since there were several significant statements in the study because of the reliability and participants, to ensure that the messages were relevant to the studied phenomenon. The topics that provided a substantial response to the research questions served as the foundation for the discussion structure in this Chapter. Below were the participants and their short backgrounds and why they are trustworthy, credible, and suitable for this research;

##### **A. What are the main reasons friends rescued in South Cotabato decided to abandon their rebel life?**

Table 1. Main reasons friends rescued in South Cotabato decided to abandon their rebel life

Emergent Themes	Formulated Meanings
<b>The Limits of Human Endurance in the Face of Relentless Hardship.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Under sieged by relentless attacks and debilitated by starvation, can no longer continue as the body succumbs to exhaustion and is unable to continue.</li><li>• Exhausted and unable to continue and weary from relentless walking.</li><li>• Old age presents the individual with relentless marching and sees no hope in continuing to fight.</li><li>• Under sieged by relentless attacks and debilitated by starvation, can no longer continue as the body succumbs to exhaustion and is unable to continue.</li><li>• Worn out from constant marching and unable to endure further.</li><li>• Food is scarce, resorting to available options such as root crops becomes necessary to sustain oneself and to survive.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhausted to the point where the body cannot endure it any longer.</li> <li>• The severe scarcity of food makes survival impossible.</li> </ul>
<b>Pursuit of Peace and Family Unity Beyond Conflict</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritizes the safety and well-being of the family and children.</li> <li>• Prioritizing the stability and future of the family.</li> <li>• Give priority to the family, adhering to the son's desire to disengage from the rebel group is the reason the former rebel abandoned the rebel life.</li> <li>• Wanted to ensure that family and civilians stay out of the conflict, believing that no one should live in fear of the NPA.</li> <li>• Having seized the opportunity for reconciliation, the former rebel can now reunite with their family and pursue the possibility of creating a family of their own.</li> </ul>
<b>Disillusionment and Search for Purpose Beyond Conflict</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Losing both the will and interest in armed combat, there is no longer a sense of purpose or drive to continue fighting.</li> <li>• Driven by the realization that staying offered no future.</li> </ul>

## The Limits of Human Endurance in the Face of Relentless Hardship.

According to Sinnreich (2023), a lack of food affects individuals both physically and mentally. The physical effects of starvation on the body are wasting, swelling (edema), susceptibility to disease, and eventually death. Mentally, individuals undergo the psychological difficulties of the transformation of the body during starvation, behavioral changes, and food obsession, all of which drastically affect social and family life. The military cited “gutom, pagod, hirap at ang pangungulila sa kanilang mga mahal sa buhay [hunger, fatigue, and hardship, including missing their loved ones]” as the primary reasons for their surrender (Agad, 2023).

Now, the once-passionate rebel must face the harsh reality of exhaustion and starvation. The daily fight to survive is intense as former rebels search the barren terrain for even the smallest pieces of food.

The exhausted bodies are burdened with fatigue, making each step a tough task. As such, participants expressed their perception of why former rebels in South Cotabato decided to abandon their rebel lives. Along with having the exact reasons why they suffered from exhaustion; they said;

“Inde ko ka agwanta didto abi kay kapoy na man, inde ko maka kaon, budget ang kaon. Dina maka tulog maayo, kag ang mga army ga kwan man ga lusob na ang operation. Mao tong ginbiyaan nakon to kay di naman kaya sakong, kaya sa akong panlawas pero sa akon na pang huna-huna hinde na gyud nako Makaya.” (Mario: A 12-26)

(I cannot endure it anymore because I’m exhausted, I cannot eat because food is limited. I cannot sleep well, and the army forces are besieging. That is why I quit because my body can still endure it but mentally, I cannot take it anymore.)

Nag halin ko maam kay gusto ko mag bag-o ko kay kapoy man abi sigi ka lakat sa lasang.” (Marko: A 2-8)

(I withdraw ma’am because I want to change because it’s very exhausting marching constantly in the forest.)

Both Mario and Marko were forced to grudgingly leave the rebel group due to extreme fatigue and starvation, as their bodies and emotions were completely depleted. Mario and Marko both admitted that they were too exhausted from marching nonstop to go on. Their strength and spirits had suffered due to the unrelenting pace. They were forced to turn to readily available options, such as root crops, in order to survive as food had become limited. Their voyage became increasingly difficult due to the hard conditions and inadequate provisions, pushing the boundaries of their resilience. Exhaustion can also trigger your sympathetic nervous system, leading to feelings of panic, anxiety, and worry. These mental and physical exhaustion symptoms can make daily life incredibly difficult (Campbell, 2022).

### **Pursuit of Peace and Family Unity Beyond Conflict**

Although some people may act irrationally and lash out at their family without considering the pain and suffering, they cause such selfish behavior can severely damage their family relationships. What they often don't realize is that they are ultimately hurting themselves and will likely have many regrets in the long run (Cherubin, 2024). Seizing the opportunity for reconciliation, Jim decided to leave the group to reunite with their family and pursue the possibility of creating a family of their own. Prioritizing the safety and well-being of their loved ones, they recognized that stability and a secure future for their family and children were paramount. This decision was driven by a deep commitment to ensuring a better life and a brighter future for those they hold dear. One of them specified;

“Tungod sa akong kuan akong pamilya kay nihangyo na akong anak na ipahawa na ko didto sa kwan sa pikas bahin.” (Jim: A 2-6)

(Because of my family, my son pleaded for me to leave the rebel group.)

Marko has the same reason for leaving the rebel group about prioritizing safety not only for the family but also for the civilians. In reality, far too often civilians and civilian objects, such as houses, places of worship, and schools, are targeted on purpose. Attacks are sometimes launched against cities or

villages because, it is argued, they contain military objectives. The attacks result in numerous casualties among the civilian population and damage to civilian objects, which, if excessive to the direct military advantage anticipated, are unacceptable (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1999).

“Gusto ko maam na ang sibilyan didto na inde na sila mahadlok na naay mga NPA. Sa mga pamilya ko, inde ko abi gusto na naay madamay na mga sibilyan.” (Marko: B 10-15)

(What I want ma’am is that the civilians in the conflict area will not be afraid of NPA anymore. When it comes to my family, I don’t want the innocent will be involved.)

### **Disillusionment and Search for Purpose Beyond Conflict**

The former rebels lost both the will and interest in armed combat, they found themselves devoid of any sense of purpose or drive to continue fighting. This loss of motivation was compounded by the stark realization that staying with the rebel group offered no future. The absence of a meaningful goal and the bleak prospects ahead ultimately led to their decision to leave the group.

According to Crisis Group (2024), any members of such groups become disillusioned with the constant state of armed conflict and begin to lose both the will and interest in continuing their involvement. This disenchantment is exacerbated by the realization that staying within the group offers no viable future, leading them to seek alternatives that promise better stability and personal fulfillment. These sentiments are not uncommon in long-standing conflicts, where the initial motivations for joining a rebel cause may erode over time, leaving individuals questioning their commitment and the overall direction of the group.

“Wala na, di nagid ko sa armado nga pakig-bisog mga gina tawag nila nga armado sa pakig bisog, di nagid ko, kay gin pamangkot man konila amo na ang rason, di na ko na lose moral na ko ginatawag nga armado sa pakig-bisog.” (Mario: A 14-26)

(I no longer desire any involvement in armed conflict. When asked for my reasons, I simply respond that I have lost all interest in what is referred to as the armed struggle.)

“Oo gina isip ko man ang kaugmaon kay kung magpadayon ko didto, wala man ko sang pabuton.” (Nardo: A 4-8)

(Yes, I was thinking about the future because if I stay, there is nothing for me to gain.)

Mario's decision to no longer be involved in armed conflict marks a significant shift in his outlook and priorities. When asked for his reasons, he simply responds that he has lost all interest in what is referred to as the armed struggle. Nardo, the rebel returnee, finds himself at a critical juncture, contemplating his future with a newfound clarity. His realization that staying with the rebel group offers no tangible benefits marks a significant shift in his mindset

**B. What are the challenges faced by friends rescued in South Cotabato that leads them to transition back to civilian life?**

Table 2. Challenges that were faced by friends rescued that leads them to transition back to civilian life.

Clustered Themes	Formulated Meanings
<b>Extreme Weather Conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fueled by starvation and constant exposure to the rain and must flee as army forces approach.</li> <li>The lack of sleep, inability to eat during missions, and constant walking through harsh weather became unbearable, prompting the former rebel to abandon rebel life</li> </ul>
<b>Safety Concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staying with the armed group would only lead to demise.</li> <li>The former rebel is compelled to leave the rebel group due to the unpleasant living conditions.</li> <li>The unsettling notion that this desolate path may mark the end for the former rebel.</li> </ul>
<b>Enduring Fear and Trauma</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facing the dual threats of being stranded in the mountains and the fear of soldiers struggling desperately to survive in the harsh terrain.</li> <li>Having endured a week without food amidst an ongoing conflict that shows no signs of ceasing, the struggle for survival grows increasingly desperate.</li> </ul>

## Extreme Weather Conditions

According to the study of Martinez (2018) the participant of his study Ka JM, his life as a rebel was difficult, most especially during calamities. He experienced not sleeping in the forest and risking his life just so to find a place to hide in case of battles. He also experienced extreme hunger when their troop did not eat for one week. He said that it was so difficult to be in this kind of situation especially when they needed to continue walking and hiking, especially if it was raining.

“Na experice gi namon didto ma’am na way kaon aah magutman ka didto tapos mabasa ka pa sa ulan, kag madalagan ka pa kung mag hambal sila nga may ara mga army, madalagan ka na naman sa pikas na buntod. Ako na gid ang nag desisyon na mag baba nag id ko dire.” (Marko: A 2-8)



(We had starved in the mountains, and the rain had soaked us. If the armies came, we would have to flee to the other hill. We are forced to march nonstop due to the inclement weather and our inability to eat properly.)

“Ang mga pagsubok didto, perti ka damo mga di ka katulog, tapos kung panahon sang operasyon dika maka kuan, gutom na maagyan mo, di ka maka kaon sang mayo, tapos damo pa nag mga kuan pagsubok nga naagihan ulan, init sige lang lakat, wala sang direksyon. Sigi lang nilakat.” (Nardo: B 9-18)

(The hardships that we experienced there are, there are a lot of, and when in the times of operation, you cannot function well because you are starving and there are more, the harsh weather conditions and walking non-stop without direction.)

The participants relayed how terrible the weather they faced made their hard lives even worse. They were starving and constantly soaked by heavy rain, with no good shelter to keep them dry. They could not sleep or eat properly during their missions, which left them weak and tired. Walking through the harsh weather every day became too much to bear. The nonstop rain, hunger, and fear were overwhelming, leading many to leave the rebel life to find safety and stability.

### **Safety Concerns**

Rebels' perspective, however, physical safety is more important than these livelihoods Sen, R. (2022) Rebels quit extremist groups only when they know that they can disarm without getting killed in the process. In the study of Sen, R. (2022) in the course of several rounds of interviews, current and former Maoist rebels in North and South India shared that they were not able to quit the insurgent organization even if they wanted to. This was because they feared that they could be killed postretirement, unarmed and defenseless, by either their former enemies or their former comrades, while the Indian state would lose nothing for failing to protect them.

The participant Diego thought that staying with the armed group posed a serious threat to their lives, as remaining with them would only lead to their demise. The unbearable living conditions, including constant hunger, exposure to harsh weather, and relentless danger, compelled many to leave the rebel group. The unsettling thought that this desolate and dangerous path might be their end weighed heavily on their minds. Seeking safety and a chance at survival, they chose to abandon the rebel life, hoping to find a better future away from the constant threat of death.

“Sa physical nako, kapoy lang gid ang mga kuan nako. Sa mental ko, nang nasulod sa akong mental, nagwa ko kay subra naman gud ang kwan, kanang mag lakaw ta sa lasang tapos walay kaon, mao nay kuan, maluya ko ba kay di man makakaon kay steady man ang libot-libot, muna naka sabi ako sa sarili ko, baka dito na ako mamatay.” (Diego: B 16-24)

(Physically, I'm utterly exhausted. Mentally, I keep thinking about how relentless walking in the mountains and constant starvation weakened me. We were unable to eat and kept walking, leading me to believe that this might be where I meet my end.)

## Enduring Fear and Trauma

Former rebels often endure significant fear and trauma due to their past experiences and the challenging conditions they face. Many have suffered from constant fear of military encounters, harsh living conditions, and the psychological impact of their actions and surroundings. For example, former rebels from the Anglophone conflict in Cameroon have faced extreme violence and displacement, leaving many women and children traumatized and struggling to rebuild their lives amid ongoing insecurity and economic hardship (Crisis Group, 2022).

“Nang na kwan na, di na ko kuan.. komportable nako sa akong kinabuhi ba nga makita ko sang mga, army, di na ko siling nga makulba-kulbaan kung maka kita ang paryas sina bisan sang una kay makakita ka lang ka Christmas light, hadlok na abi ko pulis, pero subong waay na, normal nalang ba, ang pangabuhi.” (Mario: B 18-22)

(It goes, I'm not..I'm comfortable with my current life. I no longer feel nervous when I see the Army. In the past, even Christmas lights would make me anxious, thinking they were the police, but that's not the case anymore. Now, I have a normal life.)

“Dati kay dili ko maka baba gikan sa bukid karon maka baba na ko. Dati kay lisod ang kabuhi didto og kanabang mahalok sa mga sundalo.” (Jim: B 7-8)

(Previously, I was unable to descend from the mountain, but now I can. Life was very difficult then, and I was constantly afraid of armies.)

Both Jim and Mario shared that one of the significant challenges they faced in transitioning back to civilian life as former rebels were enduring the lingering fear and trauma from their past experiences. They recounted enduring a week without food amidst ongoing conflict, a desperate struggle for survival that left deep psychological scars. This prolonged exposure to danger and deprivation continues to haunt them, making it difficult to adjust to a peaceful civilian life. The relentless fear and trauma from their time as rebels remain formidable obstacles in their efforts to reintegrate and find stability.

## C. What are the coping mechanisms and support systems that friends rescued rely on in South Cotabato?

Table 3. Coping mechanisms and support systems in South Cotabato that friends rescued rely on.

Clustered Themes	Formulated Meanings
<b>Freedom and Renewal Through Restored Reputation.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear reputation acts as the primary pillar of support for the former rebel, while additional assistance received serves as supplementary benefits.</li> <li>• The former rebels have been granted the opportunity to attain a clean name, with all past cases expunged, enabling them to have a fresh start.</li> <li>• Having acquired the opportunity, the former rebel now revels in the freedom</li> </ul>

	<p>to roam unrestricted with a clear name, unburdened by past constraints.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attaining a clear name, reputation, and newfound freedom, the former rebel seized an invaluable opportunity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Empowerment Through Education: Reintegration and a Path to a Peaceful Future.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government-provided educational support for the children of rebel returnees improves their access to education, reducing the risk that they may be influenced to get involved in rebel organizations like their parents.</li> <li>• There are educational opportunities, as they seek to reintegrate into society and pursue academic advancement as a means of personal improvement.</li> <li>• The former rebel seized the opportunity presented by government-initiated programs such as the Alternative Learning System (ALS), enabling their reintegration into society through educational activities.</li> </ul>

## Freedom and Renewal Through Restored Reputation.

Former rebels often seek to clear their reputation and reintegrate into society, driven by a desire for stability and a better future. Many of these individuals participate in government programs designed to support their transition to peaceful and productive lives. For instance, in Tubungan, Iloilo, the Local Government Unit, in partnership with the Department of Labor and Employment and the Philippine Army, provides skills training, livelihood projects, and other forms of assistance to help former rebels reintegrate and thrive in mainstream society (Tacuban, 2019).

“Ang pinaka importante gid ang mahimo nga legal na ako, nang wala ako sang gina ka hadlokan, ma clear na nag pangalan ko, tapos wala natong mga kaso.” (Nardo: D 28-35)

(The most important thing is that I have become legal. I no longer live in fear, my name will be cleared, and my previous cases are now resolved.)

“Ang maihambal ko sa mga wala pa nag naog kung mahimo ko lang tani, naog man sila e para maging legal man ang ila nga mga pangalan. Para maging legal man sila paryas sa amon.” (Karding: E 35-38)

(To those who have yet to descend from the mountains, I can only offer this advice, if it's within their capability, they should come down to clear their names. This way, they can also attain legal status, just like us.)

Former rebels like Nardo and Karding now prioritize having a clear reputation above all else. Nardo emphasizes the importance of being recognized as a legal citizen with a clean record, free from the stigma of his past. For him, rebuilding his life means being accepted by society without the shadow of his former rebel identity. Karding, on the other hand, wants to share his journey with others, encouraging them to also seek a fresh start. He believes that by sharing his experiences, he can inspire other former rebels to reclaim their identities and clear their names, showing them that it is possible to be accepted and respected in their communities once more.

### **Empowerment Through Education: Reintegration and a Path to a Peaceful Future.**

The Philippine government has developed comprehensive programs to support the educational and social integration of former rebels. One of the key initiatives is the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP), which provides a range of assistance to help former rebels reintegrate into society. This program includes financial aid, livelihood support, and educational opportunities. For instance, former rebels receive financial assistance to start small businesses, which helps them achieve economic stability and a sense of normalcy (Partlow, 2021).

According to the Department of National Defense (2021), programs like E-CLIP are part of a broader strategy that involves multiple government agencies working together to ensure the successful reintegration of former rebels. This whole-of-government approach aims to address not just the economic, but also the social and psychological needs of the returnees, promoting long-term peace and stability in the region.

“Akon lang nga nakuha dire maam sa buhay na pagbalik sa gobyerno damo man sang mga activities nakuha namon halin sa ila. Paryas sinang gina himo namon nang naga iskwela. May ara sang mga ALS.” (Karding: D 221-39)

(Ma'am, upon returning to the government, I've found numerous beneficial activities. Similarly, our ongoing efforts involve continual learning, including participation in ALS programs.)

Karding experienced the educational support provided by the government as a former rebel, benefiting from programs designed to facilitate his reintegration into society. His journey from insurgency to integration is emblematic of the opportunities offered to former rebels seeking to rebuild their lives. Through tailored programs aimed at fostering reintegration, Karding accessed educational resources that not only equipped him with essential skills but also instilled a renewed sense of purpose and belonging in mainstream society.

## D. What are the opportunities that friends rescued obtained in South Cotabato as they reintegrate into society?

Table 4. Opportunities that friends rescued obtained in South Cotabato as they reintegrated into society.

Clustered Themes	Formulated Meanings
<b>A New Chapter: Choosing Community, Stability, and Self-Betterment Over Conflict</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The individual abandoned the armed group to focus on land management, leaving the rebel faction to look after the property left unattended during the former rebel's involvement with the rebel group.</li> <li>• Elevated by the opportunity to serve as a Barangay Kagawad, former rebels have earned the trust of their community through dedication, garnering support from both locals and relatives, marking a definitive departure from their past lives as insurgents.</li> <li>• The former rebel recommends that those still fighting should leave the armed group to focus on self-improvement and securing a better future, as remaining a rebel offers no benefits for them or their families, unlike aligning with the government, which provides some support even in case of death.</li> </ul>
<b>Embracing Peaceful Reintegration and Harmony in Civilian Life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The opportunity seized by former rebels lies in fostering a harmonious coexistence with military personnel, free from the specter of fear or conflict.</li> <li>• Having gained their freedom, the former rebels now can move about without fear, unrestricted by previous constraints.</li> <li>• Former rebels have been granted the opportunity to reunite with their families and reintegrate into society</li> </ul>



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	<p>with the support of government assistance, facilitating a smooth transition to civilian life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid disrupting the peace to prevent angering others, emphasizing the importance of acting kindly to avoid making enemies.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Government Support: A Pathway to Stability and Self-Sufficiency for Rebel Returnees</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rebel returnee is anticipated to be supported mostly by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), as well as various forms of government financial aid.</li> <li>• The financial assistance provided by the Government serves as a vital pillar of support for rebel returnees, offering a dependable resource to rely on during their transition.</li> <li>• The opportunity afforded to the former rebels entails receiving financial aid from the Government.</li> <li>• The former rebels have gained a new lease on life through the Government's livelihood program, offering them a chance for sustainable employment and stability.</li> <li>• The former rebel's most cherished opportunity was the government's livelihood program, which provided them with an income to sustain their daily needs, marking a pivotal step towards stability and integration into society.</li> <li>• The former rebels seized the opportunity to acquire livestock, some through government assistance, thereby securing a means of livelihood.</li> </ul>

## New Chapter: Choosing Community, Stability, and Self-Betterment Over Conflict

One of the former rebels named Juan (not his real name), during his tenure in the program, he also served as the chairperson of the Barangay Sub-Project Management Committee of Kalahi-CIDSS and the group was able to accomplish a farm-to-market road project worth almost Php1 million. Because of his efforts and contributions to the community, his neighbors actually encouraged him to run as a barangay councilor in the 2014 election. He was convinced then and has served two terms as a public official. Juan is hopeful to see more returnees like him. He is glad to have taken the new path which is safer, worry-free, and more settled with his family. Indeed, the government has helped him see the light and be freed to improve his life (DSWD, 2022).

Former rebels like Nardo have chosen the path of reintegration and have embraced a new journey centered on land management, relinquishing the tumultuous life of armed conflict. With determination and resilience, they have transitioned from fighters to caretakers, redirecting their energy towards nurturing the land they once fought upon. In this transformation, they have entrusted their former rebel faction with the responsibility of safeguarding the properties left unattended during their involvement with the armed group.

“Bali ang kuan ang dugang ko sina, una, sa kadugayon ko nga ara sa rebelde, kung ako pa nang idevelop para sa akong kaugalingon, nag kuan na, nag show up na akong kinabuhi tapos kung mapatay ko didto sa sulod wala naman pud koy paabuton, maayu pa nang araka sa gobyerno, kung halimbawa, military, police, mapatay ka didto may dawaton pamilya mo.” (Nardo: E 36-40)

One aspect I'd like to emphasize is my personal development during my tenure with the rebel group. I've come to realize that enhancing my life should be my priority. In the unfortunate event of my demise, while associated with the rebel group, there would be no benefits accruing to me. In contrast, being affiliated with the government, such as the military or police, offers a different scenario, if one perishes in the conflict, their family receives support from the government.

Former rebels like Nardo have decided to reintegrate into society by taking up land management, leaving behind their previous lives of fighting. With determination, they've shifted from being fighters to caretakers, focusing on improving themselves. He left the responsibility of looking after the properties they used to occupy during their time with the rebel group to their former faction.

“Ang pinaka importante gid ang mahimo nga legal na ako, nang wala ako sang gina ka hadlokan, ma clear na nag pangalan ko, tapos wala natong mga kaso.” (Nardo: D 28-35)

(The most important thing is that I have become legal. I no longer live in fear, my name will be cleared, and my previous cases are now resolved.)

In addition, Nardo's journey towards legality marked a significant turning point in his life. No longer shackled by the chains of fear and uncertainty, he found solace in the assurance that his status was now lawful. The weight of past transgressions lifted from his shoulders as his name was cleared of any wrongdoing. With the resolution of previous legal cases, Nardo could finally breathe easy, knowing that the shadows of his past no longer loomed over him. As he embraced this newfound freedom, a sense of

optimism and renewal swept through his being, paving the way for a brighter future filled with promise and opportunity.

### **Embracing Peaceful Reintegration and Harmony in Civilian Life**

In Basilan, the AS2G CARE program has been instrumental in reintegrating former members of extremist groups by offering psychosocial support and vocational training, allowing them to rebuild their lives and contribute positively to society. These programs demonstrate the significant impact of targeted support in fostering a sense of security and belonging among former rebels, enabling them to live freely and fearlessly (Galing Pook, 2022). Mario and Marko expressed how happy they are that they can now live without fear and now have the freedom to be wherever they want.

“Inde na bug at, kay nakasakay naman ko sa sakyanan sa army, pabuligon na mi jamming jamming na kami sang mga army mga SF, mga police.” (Mario: D 22-44)

(It's no longer a burden for me because I can now ride in the military vehicle. They are seeking our assistance, and we can comfortably chat with the Special Forces and police officers.)

“Nalipay na ko kay maka laag na ko sa bisag diin ako makadto, amo na wala na ko na hadlok.” (Marko: D 21-30)

(I am delighted that I can move freely and explore places I desire, which has completely eliminated my fear.)

In addition, they now can co-exist with what they feared before which are the Police personnel and Military personnel. This newfound legality not only brought them relief from the burdens of their past but also opened doors to a new sense of harmony in their life. No longer haunted by the specter of persecution, they could now coexist peacefully with those they once feared the most: the police and military personnel. Where once there was apprehension and distrust, there now existed the possibility of mutual understanding and respect.

### **Government Support: A Pathway to Stability and Self-Sufficiency for Rebel Returnees**

Rebel returnees have been receiving significant financial aid and livelihood opportunities to support their reintegration into society. Programs such as the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) in the Philippines have been instrumental in this effort. For example, ten rebel returnees recently received ₱65,000 each in livelihood assistance. This financial support helps them establish sustainable sources of income, such as small businesses or agricultural projects, thereby fostering economic independence and stability. Such initiatives are crucial for helping returnees rebuild their lives and reintegrate successfully into their communities (PICAO, 2023). Both Jim and Nardo received financial assistance and gained a livelihood opportunity.

“Daghan, kuan, ang mga gin hatag kay financial gikan sa gobyerno. May ara na kami sang supply sang pagkaon. Inde na kami ma budlayan mangita kaunon, kay ano didto sa babaw budlay sang pagkaon.” (Jim: C 10-14)

(The government has provided substantial financial assistance, allowing us to secure a stable food supply. We no longer have to endure the hardship of finding food, unlike our struggles in the mountains where it was incredibly difficult to obtain sustenance.)

Thanks to the government's substantial financial assistance, former rebel Jim has been able to secure a stable food supply, alleviating the once-daunting burden of daily sustenance. No longer does he have to endure the relentless hardship of scavenging for food, a stark contrast to the grueling struggles he faced in the unforgiving mountains where obtaining even the most basic provisions was a constant challenge. With this newfound stability, Jim can focus his energy on rebuilding his life and integrating into civilian society, free from the constant worry of where his next meal will come from.

“Ang na baton ko lang sapag balik ko ang kuan, ang livelihood program tapos gin elect pud ko sa pagka kagawad sa barangay namon.” (Nardo: D 28-35)

(When I returned, I benefited from a livelihood program and was also elected as a Barangay Kagawad in our community.)

The opportunity that Nardo also gained is he was elected as a Barangay Kagawad allowed him to have profit and at the same time gain the trust of the people in his community.

“Paryas sina sa pag kwan ko dire, naka baton nako sa mga ginpanghatag sa gobyerno, naka bakal na ko sang mga kabayo paryas sina, naka bakal ko sang mga kanding. Gina padamo pa, bag o palang man abi ka umpisa, mga September man to gin hatag September ba o October.” (Mario: D 22-44)

(Upon my arrival here, I availed of the government's assistance, which proved immensely beneficial. With their support, I invested in acquiring a horse and several goats. Since I began this endeavor around September or October, thanks to the assistance provided, I am currently in the process of breeding them.)

Upon Mario's arrival at the halfway house, he avails himself of the government's assistance, which proved to be immensely beneficial for his transition to civilian life. Recognizing the opportunity for a fresh start, Mario wisely invested in acquiring a horse and several goats, resources provided by the government to aid in his rehabilitation. With determination and foresight, Mario embarked on the journey of breeding these animals, recognizing their potential as a sustainable source of income and livelihood. This newfound occupation not only provides Mario with a means of financial stability but also instills in him a sense of purpose and responsibility.

## E. What recommendations do friends rescued have for other rebels who haven't surrendered yet in South Cotabato?

Table 5. Recommendations that friends rescued have for other rebels who haven't surrendered yet in South Cotabato.

Clustered Themes	Formulated Meanings
<b>Government Empowerment: Comprehensive Support and Opportunities for Friends Rescued</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The government provides comprehensive support for rebel returnees.</li> <li>• The government extends comprehensive aid to rebel returnees, encompassing livelihood support, cash assistance, and educational seminars, aiming to offer them the utmost assistance available.</li> <li>• The former rebels sought the opportunity to secure a government project and obtain what they rightfully deserved.</li> <li>• The aspiration of the former rebel lies in securing employment within the government or becoming a government employee.</li> <li>• Seek aid from the government, as assistance will be provided if they make the request.</li> </ul>
<b>Guidance Towards Peaceful and Reintegration: Embracing Government Support for a Better Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach the nearby army camps for assistance, as former rebels can testify to the government's generosity and willingness to receive individuals who lay down their arms.</li> <li>• The former rebel recommends those still fighting to support the government and seek its protection rather than remaining with the rebel organization, as staying could be dangerous.</li> <li>• The former rebels' recommendation for those still in insurgency is to encourage them to descend from the mountains</li> </ul>



	<p>and embrace the transformative experiences that led to their own reintegration and personal growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The former rebel tells those still fighting to recognize the government's generosity, asking them to surrender and assist the government, which is second only to God in its devotion to the welfare of the people, to create long-term peace.</li><li>• Submit to the government and descend from the mountains, as they possess the resources and support necessary for our assistance.</li><li>• The former rebel's advice to those who haven't surrendered yet is to embrace surrender, facilitating the transition towards a peaceful existence and benefiting from available governmental assistance.</li></ul>
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### **Government Empowerment: Comprehensive Support and Opportunities for a Rebel Returnees**

According to the Senate of the Philippines press release (2023), the Balik-Loob Program, officially known as the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP), is a key initiative of the Philippine government. Managed by Task Force Balik-Loob (TFBL), the program commends the Armed Forces of the Philippines for its role in positively transforming the lives of former rebels. Created by Administrative Order No. 10 in 2018 during the time of Duterte, the TFBL serves as the central coordinating body for the government's reintegration efforts for members of the CPP-NPA-NDF, including their immediate families. A standout feature of the Balik-Loob Program is the Balik-Loob Lending Program, a loan facility provided by LandBank. This lending program is one of the benefits of E-CLIP, aimed at helping former rebels establish or expand businesses, thereby facilitating their successful reintegration into civilian life.

“Ang suporta na inaasahan ko ay gusto ko lang na ang tulong ng gobyerno na makita ko at makarating sa akin. Sa na kuan ko maám, na experience ko na mabuti ang gobyerno na matutulungan tayo. Yun lang ma’am.” (Diego: C. 26-42)

(I anticipated receiving support, and I'm grateful to say that I've witnessed and personally experienced the assistance provided by the government. It's been a testament to the effectiveness of government programs in aiding us. That sums it up, ma'am.)

Diego had long anticipated receiving support, hoping that the promises made would materialize into tangible assistance. As he navigated the challenging transition from life as a rebel to that of a civilian,

his hope was mingled with uncertainty. However, his anticipation turned into reality when he began to witness and personally experience the aid provided by the government. Diego found himself enrolled in rehabilitation programs that offered not only the basic necessities like food and shelter but also vocational training and mental health services. The consistent support he received was a testament to the effectiveness of the government's initiatives. It provided him with a renewed sense of hope and a clear path toward rebuilding his life. Through the comprehensive assistance, Diego was able to regain his footing and start envisioning a future beyond his past struggles.

### **Guidance Towards Peaceful and Reintegration: Embracing Government Support for a Better Future**

The House of Representatives supports Proclamation No. 1093 granting amnesty for former rebels who belong to the Communist Terrorist Groups (CTG) who have committed crimes punishable under the Revised Penal Code and Special Penal Laws in furtherance of their political beliefs. Our desire for peace is the reason why the amnesty program is necessary and desirable it does not mean rewarding the perpetrators for their crimes, but a step toward the rebuilding of peace and reconciliation and helping former rebels return to civilian life to have a chance at a different and better future. This is good news and further progress by the government and a timely measure needed to end this "protracted" armed conflict in the country. It will also complement the services provided to rebel returnees through the Balik-Loob Program, the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) (The Freeman, 2021).

The Amnesty program of the government will serve as an encouragement for CTG to lay down their arms without fear of prosecution for crimes they committed in the fight against the government.

"Pero kung sila na mismo mag kadto hinuon sa akon didto nga 'mangayo kami bulig sa imo kay ikaw na agyan nan nimo ang halin sa gobyerno." Ma kwan, mangayuan ko, mapangayu-an ko bulig sa mga kilala ko paryas sa reserve unit pwede nakon maka kwan sa ila, mapa tigayon ba." (Mario: E 46-50)

(However, if they seek assistance from me, given my firsthand experience with government aid, I would suggest they reach out to reliable channels, such as the reserve unit, for support. I can guide them through the process and recommend avenues where they can receive the necessary assistance.)

Mario is ready to support rebels who wish to surrender and be reintegrated since he can help them with the process and suggest outlets for them to get the support they need.

"Ang akon nga recommendation sa kuan, sa akon mga kauban dito sa babaw, ng dapat kuan lang gyod sila mag isip naman sila nga kinahanglanon naton ang support sa gobyerno nga dili na mag sukol sa gobyerno kay pila naman ka tuig ang ilang pakiglapan, wala lang giyapon nahitabo mas maayo, para matabangan, tabangan sang gobyerno, mapalapit nalang sa gobyerno, kay basi ma disgrasya pa sila." (Nardo: E 36-40)

(I strongly advise my former colleagues who were rebels to carefully consider our genuine needs. Instead of opposing the government, we should seek their support. Years of conflict have only brought us suffering and yielded no positive outcomes. To access government assistance, we must approach them directly. This proactive approach not only ensures our safety but also opens doors to the help we urgently require.)

The government's amnesty program will encourage rebels to lay down their arms without fear of prosecution for their past crimes. Nardo and Mario similarly recommend this to rebels who haven't yet surrendered, highlighting that it offers significant help in transforming their lives and living normally and harmoniously.

## 5. DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the summary of the experiences of the participants, important insights, and implications based on the insights drawn in the study "Turning Point: Exploring the Reasons and Experiences of Rebel Returnees on Abandoning their Rebel Life."

### **Reasons for Friends Rescued on Abandoning their Rebel Life**

This study collected different insights, especially the reasons for former rebels abandoning their rebel life. The decision to give up their lives as insurgents was made by former rebels in South Cotabato, mostly because of the terrifying combination of exhaustion and starvation. After being under constant attack and fighting a never-ending battle, their bodies have given in to the immense pressure and they are no longer able to fight. They are so emotionally and physically exhausted from the violence that it is beyond the capacity of their bodies to bear the ongoing upheaval. Furthermore, the crippling effects of famine have made their situation worse, with a significant lack of food making survival all but impossible.

Furthermore, former rebels in South Cotabato have made the decision to give up their insurgent way of life mainly because they deeply value their families and safety. Seeing how important it is to protect those they care about, these people have bravely chosen to put their families' safety and well-being, especially the health of their kids first. In the unstable environment of conflict, protecting their families from harm became a compelling motivation. They realized that removing themselves from the dangers of insurgency was necessary in order to provide a better future for their children. Furthermore, the need to put stability first and make sure their families had a bright future guided them toward making amends and getting back together with their loved ones.

Moreover, because they no longer felt motivated or had a purpose, former rebels in South Cotabato made the difficult decision to give up their life of fervor. Many people who were once inspired to employ military force by ideas have discovered that their cause no longer inspires them with the same fervor and conviction. A feeling of aimlessness and disillusionment has replaced the once strong resolve. That once-unwavering dedication to the rebel cause has wavered in the absence of a clear goal or motivation to battle on. Not to mention that it is becoming more and more obvious that there is no true future to be found in remaining in the boundaries of revolt. Many have realized that their dreams of a better life had to be abandoned when the hard reality of living as a rebel takes hold.

Lastly, by abandoning their life of rebellion, they are both embracing the hope of a better future and letting go of their dark pasts. By making this courageous decision, they are regaining control over their life and exploring paths that may bring them prosperity and happiness outside of the lines of conflict. Freed from the bonds of insurgency, people can now follow their interests in work, education, and community service without fear of reprisals or limitations. They are changing not just their own fates but also the peace and stability of their region by accepting this new chapter in their life. They are leading by example by making this brave choice, showing that there is hope even in the midst of rebellion.

**Challenges Faced by Friends Rescued that Leads them to Return to Civilian Life**

Transitioning back to civilian life presents many obstacles for former rebels in South Cotabato, with severe weather being the main one. Their years of defiance were characterized by constant exposure to harsh weather. They regularly had to leave their hideouts quickly, often without enough time to relax or find suitable cover, due to the constant rain and the necessity to avoid armed forces. Due to their demanding lifestyle, they were unable to obtain basic needs like food and sleep because they were always on the go. For many, the psychological and physical toll of making lengthy marches through harsh weather became unbearable. Their misery was made worse by the unpredictable rainfall and the soggy terrain, which left them exhausted and drenched. Their commitment was weakened by the combined effects of hunger, lack of sleep, and exposure to the weather making the rigors of rebel life unsustainable. Overcoming these challenges requires substantial support from both the community and government programs to ensure these individuals can rebuild their lives and attain a semblance of normalcy after years of hardship.

Moreover, former rebels in South Cotabato face a myriad of challenges as they transition back to civilian life, grappling with safety concerns and adjusting to a vastly different environment from the one they have known. One of the primary drivers for leaving armed groups is the realization that remaining with them often leads to a perilous and potentially fatal future. The constant threat of military operations, inter-group conflicts, and the harsh realities of guerrilla warfare create an environment where survival is uncertain, compelling many to seek a safer, more stable existence.

Additionally, the living conditions within these groups are frequently dire, marked by inadequate shelter, food scarcity, and limited access to medical care. These hardships foster a sense of disillusionment, pushing rebels to abandon the cause they once believed in. However, reintegrating into civilian life is fraught with its own set of difficulties. The psychological toll of their experiences, including trauma and guilt, can hinder their ability to adapt and thrive in a peaceful setting. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive reintegration strategies that encompass security, mental health support, vocational training, and community engagement to ensure former rebels can successfully transition to civilian life that is both safe and fulfilling.

Furthermore, as they return to civilian life, former rebels in South Cotabato encounter numerous difficulties, many of which are caused by deep-seated trauma and anxiety. After years in the mountains, they struggle with the constant worry of military encounters as well as the prospect of becoming trapped in the difficult terrain. Every day is a battle for survival because of the hostile surroundings and the constant fear of future conflicts. The severe agony of a week-long food shortage amid persistent conflict exacerbates the psychological wounds from their previous existence. Their emotions of vulnerability and despair are increased by this dreadful scenario.

Lastly, the combination of these factors creates a precarious situation where former rebels must navigate the transition to civilian life amidst unresolved trauma and a persistent struggle for basic survival, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive support and rehabilitation programs to aid their reintegration. These difficulties underscore the urgent need for comprehensive support and rehabilitation programs tailored to their unique circumstances. Effective reintegration requires not only addressing the physical needs of former rebels but also providing robust mental health services, vocational training, and community-based support systems. By doing so, the government and aid organizations can help these individuals rebuild their lives, fostering a sense of stability and belonging. Fortunately, the government is

committed to assisting these individuals by providing for their needs and serving as a crucial support system throughout their reintegration process.

### **Coping Mechanisms and Support Systems Friends Rescued Rely On**

Reintegrating into society can be a difficult process, and former rebels frequently rely on coping strategies and networks of support. Their reputation being cleared is one such way. They can start over by being given the chance to have their record cleared of all previous offenses. This crucial action provides individuals with both legal and psychological comfort, enabling them to let go of the guilt they once felt for their previous transgressions. Former rebels can start rebuilding their life with this newfound independence, free from the persistent shadow of their past deeds hanging over them.

Additionally, support systems play a crucial role in this process. Whether it be through counseling services, mentorship programs, or community outreach initiatives, these support networks provide invaluable guidance and encouragement. They offer a safe space for former rebels to express their concerns, address their traumas, and seek assistance in overcoming the challenges they may encounter. Furthermore, these support systems foster a sense of belonging and acceptance, helping former rebels reintegrate into society with dignity and purpose. As they navigate their way through the complexities of reintegration, the clearing of their reputation and the support of their networks serve as beacons of hope, guiding them toward a brighter future filled with opportunities for growth and redemption.

Former rebels often rely on coping mechanisms and support systems to facilitate their transition back into society. Among these, educational and social integration play pivotal roles. Government-provided educational support for the children of rebel returnees is crucial in improving their access to education. By ensuring that these children receive proper schooling, the risk of them being influenced to join rebel organizations, similar to their parents, is significantly reduced. Government-initiated programs, such as the Alternative Learning System (ALS), offer former rebels the opportunity to reintegrate into society through educational activities. This initiative allows them to acquire skills and knowledge necessary for employment and social participation, thus fostering their successful reintegration into mainstream society. Through educational programs like ALS, former rebels can develop a sense of purpose and belonging, as well as gain the necessary tools to build a stable and productive future.

In addition to this, social integration initiatives provide former rebels with the support and networks needed to rebuild their lives outside of armed conflict. By connecting them with communities, mentors, and resources, these programs help former rebels navigate the challenges of reintegration and establish meaningful connections within society. Overall, educational and social integration serve as crucial coping mechanisms and support systems for former rebels seeking to leave behind their past involvement in armed conflict and embrace a peaceful and productive life.

Lastly, the opportunity provided by government-initiated programs enables former rebels to reintegrate into society through educational activities. A clear reputation serves as a primary pillar of support for these individuals, while supplementary benefits, such as expunging past cases, provide further assistance. This clean slate allows former rebels to have a fresh start and pursue opportunities without the burden of their previous involvement. Through a combination of educational support, social integration, and the chance to rebuild their reputation, former rebels are equipped with the necessary tools to successfully reintegrate into society and move forward with their lives.

### **Opportunities Obtained by Friends Rescued in Reintegrating into Society**

Former rebels transitioning back into society often find themselves faced with plenty of opportunities for personal growth and reintegration. Many opt to abandon the insurgent life to focus on



land properties, seizing the chance to rebuild their lives and contribute positively to their communities. This shift often leads to remarkable transformations, as individuals prioritize self-improvement and securing a better future for themselves and their families. Some former rebels even venture into politics, with some successfully being elected as Barangay Kagawads, illustrating their commitment to lawfully serving their communities. This transition away from rebellion is driven by a recognition that remaining in armed conflict offers no tangible benefits, neither for themselves nor their loved ones. Instead, aligning with the government provides access to support systems, even in the unfortunate event of death, thereby incentivizing a peaceful return to civilian life.

Moreover, former rebels who have successfully reintegrated into society now enjoy newfound opportunities in a fear-free environment. Liberated from the constraints that once restricted their movements, these individuals can now navigate their surroundings without the looming specter of fear. A significant opportunity lies in the establishment of harmonious relationships with military personnel, as the absence of fear or conflict enables open dialogue and collaboration. Through mutual understanding and respect, former rebels and military members can work together towards common goals, such as community development and peace-building initiatives. The fear-free environment facilitates the reintegration process by providing a supportive atmosphere for individuals to address their past experiences and traumas.

Former rebels transitioning back into society have been afforded opportunities for reintegration through various means, primarily supported by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and government financial aid initiatives. With the aim of fostering sustainable livelihoods, financial assistance is provided to aid in their transition. This support encompasses a range of aid programs aimed at facilitating the economic stability of returnees. Notably, former rebels have capitalized on these opportunities by engaging in activities such as acquiring livestock, often facilitated by government assistance. This move not only provides them with a source of income but also establishes a foundation for long-term financial security. By embracing such initiatives, former rebels are not only reintegrating into mainstream society but also contributing positively to their communities by becoming self-sufficient and economically empowered individuals.

Finally, this shift from conflict to livelihood underscores the transformative potential of comprehensive support systems in enabling the successful reintegration of former combatants. Through these endeavors, individuals once involved in insurgency find avenues for sustainable livelihoods, fostering their journey toward reconciliation and contributing to the broader goal of peacebuilding and social cohesion. As they navigate the complexities of their transition, the support they receive serves as a crucial stepping stone toward their successful reintegration into society, empowering them to chart a new course and leave behind the strife of the past. Overall, the opportunities obtained by former rebels in reintegrating into society within a fear-free environment empower them to lead fulfilling lives and contribute to the collective well-being of their societies.

### **Recommendations of Friends Rescued for other Rebels who haven't Surrendered**

The recommendations from former rebels to those who haven't surrendered yet emphasize the importance of government engagement and support. They advocate for rebels to avail themselves of the comprehensive aid extended by the government to returnees, which includes livelihood support, cash assistance, and educational seminars. The aim is to provide maximum assistance to facilitate their reintegration into society. Former rebels advise their counterparts to actively seek aid from the government, assuring them that assistance will be provided upon request. They also highlight the



possibility of aspiring to become government employees as a pathway to reintegration. This suggestion underscores the potential for former rebels to transition into productive members of society through employment opportunities within the government.

Former rebels who have surrendered offer recommendations to their compatriots still engaged in conflict. They advocate for approaching nearby army camps for assistance, emphasizing the government's generosity and openness to receiving those who lay down their arms. These former insurgents attest to the government's commitment to the welfare of its people, positioning it as an entity second only to God in its dedication to fostering peace. Urging their fellow rebels to recognize this benevolence, they implore them to surrender and collaborate with the government to establish lasting peace. Their counsel to those who remain hesitant to surrender is rooted in the belief that embracing reconciliation is paramount. By doing so, they can seamlessly transition towards a peaceful existence and avail themselves of the support and resources provided by the government.

Lastly, through their firsthand experiences, these former rebels convey a message of hope and pragmatism, emphasizing the tangible benefits of surrender and reconciliation in achieving long-term stability and prosperity for themselves and their communities. The recommendations reflect a pragmatic approach towards reconciliation and reintegration, emphasizing collaboration between former rebels and government entities to foster lasting peace and stability in affected regions. By embracing these recommendations, rebels who have yet to surrender can access vital support networks and resources that can facilitate their journey toward a peaceful and sustainable future outside of armed conflict.

### **Implication for Practice**

The main aim of this study was to explore and understand the reasons and experiences of rebel returnees on abandoning their rebel life. As the participants underwent the interview process, they responded to the questions being given to them and it reflects their experiences in abandoning their rebel life. Another thing is that they also provided the ways on how they come up with those reasons and the personal experiences and developments they gained in overcoming the process of transitioning from rebel life to reintegration into the community.

Consequently, the researcher believed that this study is a timely and essential study on the reasons behind and experiences of rebel returns giving up their insurgent lives. This research provides valuable insights into the complexities of conflict dynamics by determining the reasons underlying people's choices to refrain from participating in a rebellion. Communities can use this research to develop strategies that effectively address the core causes of insurgency by learning more about the underlying elements that motivate rebel returnees to embrace peace and reconciliation. The study also provides an overview for enabling effective reintegration procedures, which in turn promotes social cohesiveness and stability, by recording the experiences of these returnees.

The implication of this study is to help the former rebels to reintegrate into society. As the study presents different experiences being encountered by the former rebels it will serve as a guide in order for the rebel returnees to serve as a voice and help to address their unique needs and challenges. It can provide validation for their experiences and contribute to their successful reintegration into networks and resources that can facilitate their journey toward a peaceful and sustainable future outside of armed conflict. They must learn the importance of government engagement and support instead of engaging in armed conflict.

In addition, this study implies that rebels who are still in the insurgency must be given opportunities like the ones that the rebel returnees acquired provided by government-initiated programs that enable to reintegrate also into society. Since the government can provide for their needs, they don't have to engage in armed conflict where they can't gain anything, and will only cost their precious lives. The opportunities obtained by former rebels in reintegrating into society within a fear-free environment empower them to lead fulfilling lives and contribute to the collective well-being of their societies. This study will serve as an overview for the citizens in South Cotabato on what are the experiences of rebel returnees and how difficult their experiences are the most important is that people refrain from joining rebel groups since, in the end, being involved in rebellion does not benefit those who are involved.

Lastly, this study implies that when rebels make the courageous decision to abandon their insurgent lifestyles, they are offered a second chance. The government consistently extends an open hand, ready to accept them and aid in their reintegration into society. Through various support mechanisms, these individuals are provided with a vital head start toward building a better life for themselves, setting them on a path toward long-term stability and prosperity.

### **Implications for Future Researchers**

This Qualitative Study on the former rebel's reasons and experiences in abandoning their rebel life considering the results and the processes that this study had gone through, implied that:

Based on the findings of this study, future researchers who are interested in investigating the study's findings must look into a more specific selection of participants, it is recommended to conduct research with more participants in order to get more thorough responses to the research's inquiries. It ought to address more general goals that compare the previous to and after rebel returnees' lives.

Additionally, it is advised to research to get more in-depth responses and insights regarding the experiences of rebel returnees. It is also advised that they bring their thorough learning insights from those experiences as this may lead to interesting comparisons from the current study.

The study suggest that the government requires ongoing initiatives for youth, especially those not in schools, such as sports and work opportunities. In the same way, it also suggests helping locals in isolated locations where rebels operate, making sure communities have access to the resources they need, and deterring people from joining rebel movements because they are frustrated by unmet demands. The rebel returnees can start afresh with their new, regular life after being resettled back into the community, where they can be with their families.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The researcher worked sincerely diligently and persistently to complete this study. The researcher dedicated a great deal of effort to completing this important study. The researcher's life was profoundly affected and revealed by the entire process of writing every section of the study. One of the biggest obstacles to conducting this study was dealing with money issues, mental breakdowns, and restless nights this study has been a great challenge to the researchers, but because of her willingness to accomplish this endeavor, and indeed, with the help of prayer, those they thought impossible things became possible. This research study was effectively produced and created by the researcher since she is committed to working through any obstacles and completing the study. Although there will always be challenges, the researcher uses this research as a means to achieve her ambitions in life.

Additionally, managing these trials would have been incredibly difficult without the support of those around the researcher. The researcher wishes to convey that undertaking research is one of the most challenging aspects of a college student's life. It demands prior knowledge, mental discipline, financial

support, and effective time management. Crafting this research paper serves as a test of the researcher's resilience and ability to navigate complex tasks. Moreover, this endeavor is profoundly meaningful, as it provides students with a broader understanding of current issues. The process of conducting this study not only hones essential skills but also enriches the academic journey by fostering a deeper comprehension of the subject matter.

Since the aim of this study is to identify the reason of the rebel returnees abandoning their rebel life and their experiences behind it, it is evident that South Cotabato has long grappled with a complex and protracted history of insurgency and rebellion. This research sheds light on the personal journeys of former rebels who chose to abandon their insurgent lifestyles. Through their candid testimonies, the participants revealed the multifaceted reasons and profound experiences that led to their decisions to return to a peaceful life. Their stories underscore the challenges and transformative moments that influenced their turning points. This study not only contributes to our understanding of the factors driving these decisions but also highlights the potential for reconciliation and peacebuilding within our community. It is a poignant reminder of the resilience of the human spirit and the possibility of change, even in the face of long-standing conflict.

Lastly, the rebel returnees might carry a negative stigma, but opportunities for change and redemption always exist. With the support of their families and communities, these individuals can undergo a transformative journey away from insurgency towards a more conventional life. Additionally, the steadfast support of the government plays a crucial role in facilitating their reintegration into society. Through collective efforts and unwavering assistance, former rebels can find a path to redemption and contribute positively to their communities. This study will enlighten the readers, future researchers, and the people in the community about the importance of reintegration for rebel returnees on how it helps deal with the difficulties that they are facing in their lives.

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APPENDIX A  
COVER LETTER



RAMON MAGSAYSAY MEMORIAL COLLEGES-MARBEL, INC.  
Purok Waling-Waling, Arellano Street, Koronadal City, South Cotabato  
Tel. No.: (083) 220-2880



COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

March 22, 2024

HON. REYNALO S. TAMAYO, Jr.  
Provincial Governor,  
Provincial Capitol Compound  
Koronadal City, South Cotabato

Thru: SONIA L. BAUTISTA, RSW, MPA, MTRM  
PSWDO Head

Dear Hon. Tamayo Jr.,


Greetings!

The undersigned would like to request on evaluator from of your staff in my research study entitled "TURNING POINT: EXPLORING THE REASONS AND EXPERIENCES OF REBEL RETURNEES ON ABANDONING THE REBEL LIFE" as a requirement for the degree of Bachelor Science in Criminology. Undoubtedly, your expertise would make the instrument rich and substantive in content.


Attached to this request is the actual printout of the interview guide and research questions. If there are any questions or queries on this matter, you may contact my personal number 09663940568.

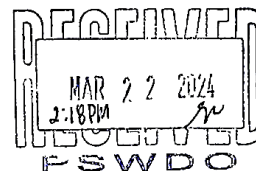
Thank you!

Sincerely:

  
**SHYNA JOYCE B. PABALINAS**  
Researcher

Noted by:

  
**ALBERT P. BALONGOY, PhD**  
Research Adviser



## APPENDIX B QUESTIONNAIRE



RAMON MAGSAYSAY MEMORIAL COLLEGES-MARBEL, INC.  
Purok Waling-Waling, Arellano Street, Koronadal City, South Cotabato  
Tel. No.: (083) 228-2880



COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

---

### Semi-Structured Interview Questionnaire

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Time Start:

Time End:

The purpose of this interview and study is to understand and explore the lived experiences of rebel returnees and the reasons on abandoning their rebel life. Participants are rebel returnees in South Cotabato. Introduction of myself to the participant. Review the consent form and participants will sign it. Review of the questionnaire.

### Confidential Questionnaire

Part 1: Warm-up

Name:

Age:

Year:

Gender:

Address:

Part 2: Questions

SOP	Main Question	Probing Question
1. What are the main reasons former rebels in South Cotabato decided to abandon their rebel life?	1.1. What are the main reasons that you as a former rebel in South Cotabato decided to abandon your rebel life?	1.1.1. Do you have any personal experiences you can share from your time as a rebel that caused you to abandon rebel life? Explain why. 1.1.2. Do you recall the main thoughts that led you to make the decision to leave the rebel group? Explain what are those. 1.1.3. How did you come at the decision to abandon your rebel life?
2. What are the challenges faced by former rebels in South Cotabato	2.1. What are the challenges you faced as a former rebel in South Cotabato as	2.1.1. What are the challenges you faced as a former rebel in South Cotabato as you

		important to your reintegration process? 4.1.3. Do you have any particular opportunities that you are excited about as you embark on
5. What recommendations do former rebels have for other rebels who haven't surrendered yet in South Cotabato?	5.1. What recommendations do you have for other rebels who haven't surrendered yet in South Cotabato?	5.1.1. Do you have any recommendations for other rebels who haven't surrendered yet in South Cotabato? Explain what are those. 5.1.2. What are the recommendations that you can provide to assist those rebels who have not yet surrendered in South Cotabato?

as they transition back to civilian life?	you transition back to civilian life?	transition back to civilian life the moment you left your rebel life? 2.1.2. How did you faced the challenges that you encountered when you are transitioning back to civilian life? 2.1.3. How does going through these challenges affect your experiences as you reintegrate to the society? 2.1.4. How does those challenges you have encountered affect your daily life and the way you adjust in civilian life?
3. What are the coping	3.1. What are the coping mechanisms and support	3.1.1. Do you have specific coping

mechanisms and support systems that former rebels rely on in South Cotabato?	systems that you rely on in South Cotabato?	mechanisms that have been the most helpful in dealing with the challenges of transitioning to civilian life? 3.1.2. What helps or supports you with the challenges that you experience while you are in transition to civil life?
4. What are the opportunities that former rebels obtained in South Cotabato as they reintegrate into society?	4.1. What are the opportunities that former rebels obtained in South Cotabato as they reintegrate into society?	4.1.1. What are the opportunities that you are expecting when you will reintegrate into society? 4.1.2. Can you share a particular opportunity that you consider

## APPENDIX C VALIDATION SHEET



RAMON MAGSAYSAY MEMORIAL COLLEGES-MARBEL, INC.  
Purok Waling-Waling, Ardlano Street, Koronadal City, South Cotabato  
Tel. No.: (083) 228-2880



COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

### VALIDATION RATING SHEET OF EXPERT VALIDATORS

For the Evaluator. Please check the appropriate box for your rating.

Rating: Number of "Yes" marks

( ) 12-13 Very Good

( ) 6-8 Fair

( ) 9-11 Good

( ) 0-5 For Revalidation

Kindly check the Column which fits your evaluation for the item.

ITEMS	YES	NO
<b>ETHICS</b>		
1. Introduce (Purpose, confidentiality, duration and a way to conduct) and closing components.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. Informed consent is provided.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3. Interview protocol for participant is available.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4. Interview Consent form is available.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5. Participants Verification Form is included.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>ARTISTRY</b>		
1. Questions are heading towards description of the research topic.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. script is included, so interview can introduce, guide and conclude the interview in a consistent manner.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>RIGOR</b>		
1. Questions are open-ended to encourage in-depth responses avoiding close-ended questions which answered by "yes" or "no".	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. Coherence of the research with the research paradigm is evident.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3. Questions are stated in the affirmative.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4. Research question is semi structured.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5. Questions are sequenced in logical order.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6. Questions are focused and expressed in a concise manner as to be worked and researchable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

*Yan-Yan J. Balongoy, PhD*  
Name and Signature of Evaluator



RAMON MAGSAYSAY MEMORIAL COLLEGES-MARBEL, INC.  
Purok Waling-Waling, Ardlano Street, Koronadal City, South Cotabato  
Tel. No.: (083) 228-2880



COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

### VALIDATION RATING SHEET OF EXPERT VALIDATORS

For the Evaluator. Please check the appropriate box for your rating.

Rating: Number of "Yes" marks

( ) 12-13 Very Good

( ) 6-8 Fair

( ) 9-11 Good

( ) 0-5 For Revalidation

Kindly check the Column which fits your evaluation for the item.

ITEMS	YES	NO
<b>ETHICS</b>		
1. Introduce (Purpose, confidentiality, duration and a way to conduct) and closing components.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. Informed consent is provided.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3. Interview protocol for participant is available.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4. Interview Consent form is available.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5. Participants Verification Form is included.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>ARTISTRY</b>		
1. Questions are heading towards description of the research topic.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. script is included, so interview can introduce, guide and conclude the interview in a consistent manner.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>RIGOR</b>		
1. Questions are open-ended to encourage in-depth responses avoiding close-ended questions which answered by "yes" or "no".	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. Coherence of the research with the research paradigm is evident.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3. Questions are stated in the affirmative.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4. Research question is semi structured.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5. Questions are sequenced in logical order.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6. Questions are focused and expressed in a concise manner as to be worked and researchable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

*Albert P. Balongoy, PhD*  
Name and Signature of Evaluator



RAMON MAGSAYSAY MEMORIAL COLLEGES-MARBEL, INC.  
Purok Waling-Waling, Ardlano Street, Koronadal City, South Cotabato  
Tel. No.: (083) 228-2880



COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

March 3, 2024

Dear Validator,

I am presently conducting a study entitled "TURNING POINT: EXPLORING THE REASONS AND EXPERIENCES OF REBEL RETURNEES ON ABANDONING THE REBEL LIFE" I need your expertise in validating the instrument to be used.

Attached is the questionnaire to be used in the study. Please help me evaluate the questions and the option whether they are relevant or irrelevant basing on the following criteria: Suitability and relevance of the study evaluated, appropriateness of the language used and correctness of grammar. You could use the following symbols for the comments.

**S** means not suitable. This shows that the questions and the option in that item are relevant. (Yes)

**NS** means not suitable. This shows that the questions and the option are not suited or irrelevant in the study. (No)

Any other comments you want to say about the question please feel free to write it under the specified columns.

Thank you.

*Shyna Joyce B. Pabalinas*  
**SHYNA JOYCE B. PABALINAS**  
Researcher

Noted by:

*Albert P. Balongoy, PhD*  
**ALBERT P. BALONGOY, PhD**  
Research Adviser



RAMON MAGSAYSAY MEMORIAL COLLEGES-MARBEL, INC.  
Purok Waling-Waling, Ardlano Street, Koronadal City, South Cotabato  
Tel. No.: (083) 228-2880



COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

### VALIDATION RATING SHEET OF EXPERT VALIDATORS

For the Evaluator. Please check the appropriate box for your rating.

Rating: Number of "Yes" marks

( ) 12-13 Very Good

( ) 6-8 Fair


( ) 9-11 Good

( ) 0-5 For Revalidation


Kindly check the Column which fits your evaluation for the item.

ITEMS	YES	NO
<b>ETHICS</b>		
1. Introduce (Purpose, confidentiality, duration and a way to conduct) and closing components.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. Informed consent is provided.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3. Interview protocol for participant is available.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4. Interview Consent form is available.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5. Participants Verification Form is included.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>ARTISTRY</b>		
1. Questions are heading towards description of the research topic.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. script is included, so interview can introduce, guide and conclude the interview in a consistent manner.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>RIGOR</b>		
1. Questions are open-ended to encourage in-depth responses avoiding close-ended questions which answered by "yes" or "no".	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. Coherence of the research with the research paradigm is evident.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3. Questions are stated in the affirmative.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4. Research question is semi structured.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5. Questions are sequenced in logical order.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6. Questions are focused and expressed in a concise manner as to be worked and researchable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

*Albert P. Balongoy, PhD*  
Name and Signature of Evaluator



**RAMON MAGSAYSAY MEMORIAL COLLEGES-MARBEL, INC.**  
Purok Waling-Waling, Arellano Street, Koronadal City, South Cotabato  
Tel. No.: (083) 228-2880



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**COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION**

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**VALIDATION RATING SHEET OF EXPERT VALIDATORS**

For the Evaluator. Please check the appropriate box for your rating.

Rating: Number of "Yes" marks

( ) 12-13 Very Good


( ) 6-8 Fair


( ) 9-11 Good

( ) 0-5 For Revalidation

Kindly check the Column which fits your evaluation for the item.

ITEMS	YES	NO
<b>ETHICS</b>		
1. Introduce (Purpose, confidentiality, duration and a way to conduct) and closing components.	✓	
2. Informed consent is provided.	✓	
3. Interview protocol for participant is available.	✓	
4. Interview Consent form is available.	✓	
5. Participants Verification Form is included.	✓	
<b>ARTISTRY</b>		
1. Questions are heading towards description of the research topic.	✓	
2. script is included, so interview can introduce, guide and conclude the interview in a consistent manner.	✓	
<b>RIGOR</b>	✓	
1. Questions are open-ended to encourage in-depth responses avoiding close-ended questions which answered by "yes" or "no".	✓	
2. Coherence of the research with the research paradigm is evident.	✓	
3. Questions are stated in the affirmative.	✓	
4. Research question is semi structured.	✓	
5. Questions are sequenced in logical order.	✓	
6. Questions are focused and expressed in a concise manner as to be worked and researchable	✓	

  
NAME

  
Name and Signature of Evaluator

**APPENDIX D****SAMPLE OF INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

**RAMON MAGSAYSAY MEMORIAL COLLEGES-MARBEL INC.**  
Purok Waling-Waling, Arellano Street, Koronadal City  
Tol. No.: (083) 228-2880



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION**

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**Participants Consent****Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study**

Title: "Turning Point: Exploring the Reasons and Experiences of Rebel Returnees on Abandoning their Rebel Life."

Researcher: Shyna Joyce B. Pabalinas

09663940568

**A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND**

Shyna Joyce B. Pabalinas is conducting research "Turning Point: Exploring the Reasons and Experiences of Rebel Returnees on Abandoning their Rebel Life." This study aims to systematically investigate the This study uncovered the particular experiences of the rebel returnees in the Philippines, giving light on the numerous elements that have influenced this process over time. In addition, the importance of this study was to unfold the experiences and difficulties of the returnees as they reunite to the society. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are one of the best and fit to the study.

**B. PROCEDURES**

If you agree to participate in this research study, the following will occur: Focus on the experiences of rebel returnees in abandoning the rebel life and reintegrating into the society. The process are as follows; first, will have interview Semi-Structured and Confidential Interview which will entake about 10-20 minutes interview. The interview will have audio recording for quality purposes.

**C. CONFIDENTIALITY**

The records from this study will be kept as confidential as possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. All descriptive qualitative interview answers will be given codes and stored separately from any names or other direct identification of participants. Research information will be kept in locked files at all times. Only research personnel will have access to



the files and only those with an essential need to see names or other identifying information will have access to that particular file. After the study is completed will state who will be able to see the result, and the instrument in data gathering.

#### D. BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

There will be direct benefit to you from participating in this research study as it is for the better experience on your reintegration process and for the future rebel returnees. The anticipated benefit of your participation will have its significance to the policy makers, security and law enforcers, community members affected by conflict, researcher and future researchers. The benefit might be general but the participation is much appreciated.

#### E. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your decision whether or not to participate in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate in this study, you can withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

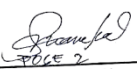
#### F. QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Shyna Joyce B. Pabalinas by calling 09663940568 with any questions about the rights of research participants or research related concerns.

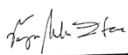
## APPENDIX E CONSENT FORM

### CONSENT

You are making a decision whether or not to participate in a research study. Your Signature below indicates that you have decided to participate in the study after reading all of the information above and you understand the information in this form, have had any questions answered and have received a copy of this form for you to keep.

  
Participant's Name (Print & Signature)

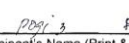
4-17-24  
DATE

  
Researcher Signature

4-17-24  
DATE

### CONSENT

You are making a decision whether or not to participate in a research study. Your Signature below indicates that you have decided to participate in the study after reading all of the information above and you understand the information in this form, have had any questions answered and have received a copy of this form for you to keep.

 Pabalinas  
Participant's Name (Print & Signature)

4-17-24  
DATE

  
Researcher Signature


4-17-24  
DATE

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Participant's Name (Print & Signature)

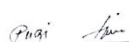
4-17-24  
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Researcher Signature

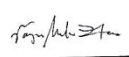
4-17-24  
DATE

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 Pabalinas  
Participant's Name (Print & Signature)

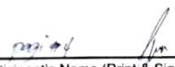
4-17-24  
DATE

  
Researcher Signature

4-17-24  
DATE

## CONSENT

You are making a decision whether or not to participate in a research study. Your Signature below indicates that you have decided to participate in the study after reading all of the information above and you understand the information in this form, have had any questions answered and have received a copy of this form for you to keep.

  
Participant's Name (Print & Signature)

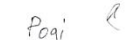
4-17-24  
DATE

  
Researcher Signature

4-17-24  
DATE

## CONSENT

You are making a decision whether or not to participate in a research study. Your Signature below indicates that you have decided to participate in the study after reading all of the information above and you understand the information in this form, have had any questions answered and have received a copy of this form for you to keep.

 Pogi  
Participant's Name (Print & Signature)

April 17, 2024  
DATE

  
Researcher Signature

April 17, 2024  
DATE

## APPENDIX F INTERVIEW MATRIX

SOP NO. 1 WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS FRIENDS RESCUED IN SOUTH COTABATO DECIDED TO ABANDON THEIR REBEL LIFE?			
SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS	CODE	FORMULATED MEANINGS	CLUSTER THEMES
14. Inde ko ka agwanta didto abi kay kapoy na man, inde ko maka kaon, budget ang kaon. Dina maka tulog maayo, kag ang mga army ga kwan man ga lusob na ang operation. Mao tong ginbiyaan nakon to kay di naman kaya sakong, kaya sa akong panlawas, pero sa akon na pang huna-huna hinde na gyud nako makaya.	<b>A. 14-26 Mario</b>	Under sieged by relentless attacks and debilitated by starvation, can no longer continue as the body succumb to exhaustion and unable to continue.	THE LIMITS OF HUMAN ENDURANCE IN THE FACE OF RELENTLESS HARDSHIP
16. Kuan mga... nga na desisyon ko nagid nga inde nagid nakon kaya kay kapoy nagid.		Losing both the will and interest in armed combat,	

26. Wala na, di nagid ko sa armado nga pakig-bisog mga gina tawag nila nga armado sa pakig bisog, di nagid ko, kay gin pamangkot man konila amo na ang rason, di na ko na lose moral na ko ginatawag nga armado sa pakig-bisog.		there is no longer a sense of purpose or drive to continue fighting.	DISILLUTIONMENT AND SEARCH FOR PURPOSE BEYOND CONFLICT
<p>4. Ang rason nga nag halin ko sa kuan.sa akon na grupo, ang una may pamilya na ako, may mga bata, amo na ang rason.</p> <p>6. Oo gina isip ko man ang kaugmaon nila kay kung magpadayonn ko didto, wala man ko sang pabuton.</p> <p>8. mao na nga naka isip ko nga mag baba nalang.</p>	<b>A. 4-8 Nardo</b>	<p>Prioritizes the safety and well-being of the family and children.</p> <p>Driven by the realization that staying offered no future.</p> <p>Prioritizing the stability and future of the family.</p>	<p>PURSUIT OF PEACE AND FAMILY UNITY BEYOND CONFLICT</p> <p>DISILLUTIONMENT AND SEARCH FOR PURPOSE BEYOND CONFLICT</p> <p>PURSUIT OF PEACE AND FAMILY UNITY BEYOND CONFLICT</p>
<p>2. Nag halin ko maam kay gusto ko mag bag-o ko kay kapoy man abi sigi ka lakat sa lasang.</p> <p>4. Na experice gi namon didto ma'am na way kaon aah magutman ka didto</p>	<b>A. 2-8 Marko</b>	<p>Exhausted and unable to continue and weary from relentless walking.</p> <p>Fueled by starvation and constant exposure to the rain and must</p>	<p>THE LIMITS OF HUMAN ENDURANCE IN THE FACE OF RELENTLESS HARDSHIP</p>

<p>tapos mabasa ka pa sa ulan, kag madalagan ka pa kung mag hambal sila nga may ara mga army, madalagan ka na naman sa pikas na buntod. Ako na gid ang nag desisyon na mag baba nag id ko dire.</p>		<p>flee as army forces approach.</p>	<p>EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS</p>
<p>2. Kapoy man gud sigeg lakaw, labi na kay nagkatigulang na ta, walay taklaron ang kinabuhi kung sigelang tag pakigbato.</p> <p>4. Tungod sa akong kuan akong pamilya kay nihangyo na akong anak na ipahawa na ko didto sa kwan sa pikas bahin.</p>	<p><b>A. 2-6 Jim</b></p>	<p>Old age prevents the individual from relentless marching and sees no hope in continuing to fight.</p> <p>Giving priority to the family, and adhering to the son's desire to disengage from the rebel group is the reason for the former rebel abandoning the rebel life.</p>	<p>THE LIMITS OF HUMAN ENDURANCE IN THE FACE OF RELENTLESS HARDSHIP</p> <p>PURSUIT OF PEACE AND FAMILY UNITY BEYOND CONFLICT</p>
<p>2. Ang rason nakon is nakapoy na ko. naapoy na ko sa kwan sa pag lakaw amo na nga inde nako kaya.</p> <p>6. Umm kasi, ang akon nga naalala ko na rason, hinde ko maasikaso yong mga area ko. Mga parte sa mga kalupaan ko, kasi yong mga area ko na</p>	<p><b>A. Diego 2-14</b></p>	<p>Worn out from constant marching and unable to endure further.</p> <p>The individual abandoned the armed group to focus on land management, leaving the rebel faction to look</p>	<p>THE LIMITS OF HUMAN ENDURANCE IN THE FACE OF RELENTLESS HARDSHIP</p> <p>A NEW CHAPTER: CHOOSING COMMUNITY, STABILITY, AND SELF-</p>

<p>abandoned kasi yon tapos yon ang naalala ko kaya na rason kaya ako dun nag alis ako para maintain ko area ko.</p> <p>12. Oo uncle ko nag ano sa akin, convince. Sabi nya “mag surrender ka na”, sabi nya sa akin eh “kasi kung hindi ka magsusurender mamatay ka.” Ganon talaga yung sabi nya. Syempre sinunod ko rin kasi kapatid ng nanay ko.</p>		<p>after the property left unattended during the former rebel's involvement with the rebel group.</p> <p>Staying with the armed group would only lead to demise.</p>	<p>BETTERMENT OVER CONFLICT</p> <p>SAFETY CONCERNS</p>
<p>2. Tungod sa pagka pigaduhon gid didto sa bukid.</p> <p>4. Naagyan namon didto perti abi ka lisod samong mga agihanan didto kay nang sa pag, sa among mga kunsomo wala mi mga pagkaon didto, mga ano,ano lang amon gina kaon. Kung short na gid kami sang amon mga pagkaon, ginakaon namon didto kay ng kuan, mga Palawan, Palawan bala haw, mga gabi kamoteng kahoy damo.</p>	<p><b>A. Karding</b> <b>2-6</b></p>	<p>The former rebel is compelled to leave the rebel group due to the unpleasant living conditions.</p> <p>Food is scarce, and resorting to available options such as root crops becomes necessary to sustain oneself and to survive.</p>	<p>SAFETY CONCERNS</p> <p>THE LIMITS OF HUMAN ENDURANCE IN THE FACE OF RELENTLESS HARDSHIP</p>

## SOP NO. 2 WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FACED BY FRIENDS RESCUED IN SOUTH COTABATO THAT LEADS THEM TO TRANSITION BACK TO CIVILIAN LIFE?

20. Nang na kwan na, di na ko kuan komportable nako sa akong kinabuhi ba nga Makita ko sang mga, army, di na ko siling nga makulba-kulbaan kung maka kita ang paryas sina bisan sang una kay makakita ka lang ka Christmas light, hadlok na pero subong waay na, normal nalang ba, ang pangabuh.	<b>B. 18-22 Mario</b>	The trauma borne by former rebels affects them, leading them to mistakenly perceive ordinary objects as threats.	ENDURING FEAR AND TRAUMA
12. Ang mga pagsubok ditto, perti ka damo mga di ka katulog,tapos kung panahon sang operasyon dika maka kuan,gutom na maagyan mo, di ka maka kaon sang mayo, tapos damo pa nag mga kuan pagsubok nga naagihan ulan,init sige lang lakat,wala sang direksyon. Sigi lang nilakat.  18. Naapektohan kay, murag di na kayo ka kaya ang akon panglawas.	<b>B. 9-18 Nardo</b>	The lack of sleep, inability to eat during missions, and constant walking through harsh weather became unbearable, prompting the former rebel to abandon rebel life.  Exhausted to the point where the body can't endure it any longer.	EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS  THE LIMITS OF HUMAN ENDURANCE IN THE FACE OF RELENTLESS HARDSHIP
<b>10.</b> Gusto ko maam na ang sibilyan didto na inde na sila mahadlok na naay mga NPA. Sa mga pamilya ko, inde ko abi gusto na naay madamay na mga sibilyan.	<b>B. 10-15 Marko</b>	Wanted to ensure to keep family and civilians stayed out of the conflict, believing that no	PURSUIT OF PEACE AND FAMILY UNITY BEYOND CONFLICT





7. Pag pauli ko kay 1 year and 6 months inde ko mamalayan ba kung ato pa ko sa bukid mabuhì pa ko kag, antis nga nabal-an ko, mas maayo pa ning mapahuway ko. Kaluy-an sang ginoo nakabalik na ko sa pamilya ko.	<b>B. Karding 7-14</b>	Choosing to remain with the rebel group, faces the uncertainty of survival.	SAFETY CONCERNS
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<b>SOP NO. 3 WHAT ARE THE COPING MECHANISMS AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS THAT FRIENDS RESCUED RELY ON IN SOUTH COTABATO?</b>			
24. Ang pinaka-una una nga mabulig gid sa akon ang pagpa clear ko sa akon mga pangalan. Amo gid na nag pika ka una nga gin huna-huna ko gi man sila, bilang bunos nalang na sa amon nga pag surrender sa pagpa clear sang amon nga mga pangalan.	<b>C. 24-28 Mario</b>	A clear reputation acts as the primary pillar of support for the former rebel, while additional assistance received serves as supplementary benefits.	FREEDOM AND RENEWAL THROUGH RESTORED REPUTATION
28. Ang gobyerno, ang kwan sang gobyerno. Sila ang nag bulig kag suporta sa akon.		The government's assistance proved instrumental in aiding the former rebels, facilitating their integration and rehabilitation into society.	GOVERNMENT EMPOWERMENT: COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT AND OPPURTUNITIES FOR FRIENDS RESCUED
20. Ang mga kuan, kinahanglan ko nga kuan, support para sa akon, amo nana ang education para sa mga bata ko. Kag	<b>C. 20-26 Nardo</b>	Government-provided educational support for the children of rebel returnees improves	EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION: REINTEGRATION AND A PATH TO A PATH TO A

kung wala abi ka skwela ang mga bata,basi ma paryas lang gihapon sa akon ba ma convince sang iban nga tawo. Basi kung madala lang gyapon sila, tungod sa kakulangan sang edukasyon.		their access to education, reducing the risk that they may be influenced to get involved in rebel organizations like their parents.	PEACEFUL FUTURE
17. Ang inasahan ko na suporta ang sa DSWD, sa iban pa na financial assistance halin sa government.	<b>C. 17-19 Marko</b>	The FR is anticipated to be supported mostly by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), as well as various forms of government financial aid.	GOVERNMENT SUPPORT: A PATHWAY TO STABILITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOR FRIENDS RESCUED
10. Daghan, kuan, ang mga gin hatag kay financial gikan sa gobyerno. May ara na kami sang supply sang pagkaon. Inde na kami ma budlayan mangita kaunon, kay ano didto sa babaw budlay sang pagkaon.	<b>C. Jim 10-14</b>	The financial assistance provided by the Government serves as a vital pillar of support for rebel returnees, offering a dependable resource to rely on during their transition.	GOVERNMENT SUPPORT: A PATHWAY TO STABILITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOR FRIENDS RESCUED
26. Ang suporta na inaasahan ko ay gusto ko lang na tulongan ng gobyerno na makita ko at makarating sa akin. Sa na kuan ko maám,	<b>C. Diego 26-42</b>	The government provides comprehensive support for rebel returnees.	GOVERNMENT EMPOWERMENT: COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT AND OPPURTUNITIES FOR FRIENDS RESCUED

<p>na experience ko na mabuti ang gobyerno na matutulungan tayong. Yun lang ma'am.</p> <p>38. Gusto ko dito ay makatapos ng pag-aaral dapat maimprove sa akin ay makapag-aral ako.</p>		<p>There are educational opportunities, as they seek to reintegrate into society and pursue academic advancement as a means of personal improvement.</p>	<p>EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION: REINTEGRATION AND A PATH TO A PEACEFUL FUTURE</p>
<p>18. Naibulig sa amon sang mga gobyerno ma'am kay mga livelihood, cash assistance, kag sa, paghatag sang mga seminar, dako kaayong naibulig sang gobyerno, daw halos tanan gani gin hatag sa amon.</p>	<p><b>C. Karding 18-21</b></p>	<p>The government extends comprehensive aid to rebel returnees, encompassing livelihood support, cash assistance, and educational seminars, aiming to offer them the utmost assistance available.</p>	<p>GOVERNMENT EMPOWERMENT: COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT AND OPPURTUNITIES FOR FRIENDS RESCUED</p>

## **SOP NO. 4 WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT FRIENDS RESCUED OBTAINED IN SOUTH COTABATO AS THEY REINTEGRATE INTO SOCIETY?**

<p>22. Inde na bug at, kay nakasakay naman ko sa sakyanan sa army, pabuligon na mi jamming jamming na kami sang mga army mga SF, mga police.</p> <p>30. Mga opurtunity nga nadawat tung kuan, mga pangkabuhayan, mga cash assistance.</p> <p>38. Paryas sina sa pag kwan ko dire, naka</p>	<p><b>D. 22-44 Mario</b></p>	<p>The opportunity seized by former rebels lies in fostering a harmonious coexistence with military personnel, free from the specter of fear or conflict.</p> <p>The opportunity afforded to the former rebels entails receiving</p>	<p>EMBRACING PEACEFUL REINTEGRATION AND HARMONY IN CIVILIAN LIFE</p> <p>GOVERNMENT SUPPORT: A PATHWAY TO STABILITY AND SELF-</p>
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<p>baton nako sa mga ginpanghatag sa gobyerno, naka bakal na ko sang mga kabayo paryas sina, naka bakal ko sang mga kanding. Gina padamo pa, bag o palang man abi ka umpisa, mga September man to gin hatag September ba o October.</p>		<p>financial aid from the Government.</p> <p>The former rebels seized the opportunity to acquire livestock, some through government assistance, thereby securing a means of livelihood.</p>	<p>SUFFICIENCY FOR FRIENDS RESCUED</p>
<p>28. Ang na baton ko lang sap ag balik ko ang kuan, ang livelihood program tapos gin elect pud ko sa pagka kagawad sa barangay namon.</p> <p>32. Kay inde naman gusto sang mga parente ko kung magbalik ''Dalagan nalng pagka Kagawad kay supportahan taka'' para dira maka huna-huna didto sa bukid.</p> <p>34. Ang pinaka importante gid ang mahimo nga legal na ako, nang wala ako sang gina ka hadlokan, ma clear na nag pangalan ko, tapos wala natong mga kaso.</p>	<p><b>D. 28-35 Nardo</b></p>	<p>The former rebels have gained a new lease on life through the Government's livelihood program, offering them a chance for sustainable employment and stability.</p> <p>Elevated by the opportunity to serve as a Barangay Kagawad, former rebels have earned the trust of their community through dedication, garnering support from both locals and relatives, marking a definitive departure from their past lives as insurgents.</p>	<p>GOVERNMENT SUPPORT: A PATHWAY TO STABILITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOR FRIENDS RESCUED</p> <p>A NEW CHAPTER: CHOOSING COMMUNITY, STABILITY, AND SELF-BETTERMENT OVER CONFLICT</p>

		The former rebels have been granted the opportunity to attain a clean name, with all past cases expunged, enabling them to have a fresh start.	FREEDOM AND RENEWAL THROUGH RESTORED REPUTATION
<p>21. Nalipay na ko kay maka laag na ko sa bisag diin ako makadto, amo na wala na ko na hadlok.</p> <p>25. Gusto gid nakon tanan nga bulig nila, maka bulig gid sila sa amon nga mga pamilya nga inde gid mangabudlay kay makauban ko na ang akong pamilya.</p> <p>29. Gusto ko mabaton, ang tagaan ko project halin sa gobyerno, amo na kong ano ang project sang gobyerno, dapat may ara gid kami sang mabaton sina.</p>	<b>D. 21-30 Marko</b>	<p>Having gained their freedom, the former rebels now can move about without fear, unrestricted by previous constraints.</p> <p>Former rebels have been granted the opportunity to reunite with their families and reintegrate into society with the support of government assistance, facilitating a smooth transition to civilian life.</p> <p>The former rebels sought the opportunity to secure a government project and obtain what they rightfully deserved.</p>	<p>EMBRACING PEACEFUL REINTEGRATION AND HARMONY IN CIVILIAN LIFE</p> <p>EMBRACING PEACEFUL REINTEGRATION AND HARMONY IN CIVILIAN LIFE</p> <p>GOVERNMENT EMPOWERMENT: COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT AND OPPURTUNITIES FOR FRIENDS RESCUED</p>



18. Tanan, tanan-tanan kay akong nagustohan halin sa mga cash assistance, clear na akong pangalan og maka laag-laag na ko, mao ran a ang akong gusto	<b>D. 17-18 Jim</b>	Having acquired the opportunity, the former rebel now revels in the freedom to roam unrestricted with a clear name, unburdened by past constraints.	FREEDOM AND RENEWAL THROUGH RESTORED REPUTATION
28. Malaya ako, clear na ang aking pangalan. Malaya na akong pumunta kahit san kasi clear na pangalan ko.  30. Ang pinaka importante, Makita nako ang akong mga pamilya, kaduha, single paman ko maam, basig mamatay ta wa pa ta anak.  34. Ang handom ko gid maam ang maka trabaho sa gobyerno.	<b>D. 28-34 Diego</b>	Attaining a clear name, reputation, and newfound freedom, the former rebel seized an invaluable opportunity.  Having seized the opportunity for reconciliation, the former rebel can now reunite with their family and pursue the possibility of creating a family of their own.  The aspiration of the former rebel lies in securing employment within the government or becoming a government employee.	FREEDOM AND RENEWAL THROUGH RESTORED REPUTATION  PURSUIT OF PEACE AND FAMILY UNITY BEYOND CONFLICT  GOVERNMENT EMPOWERMENT: COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT AND OPPURTUNITIES FOR FRIENDS RESCUED
21. Akon lang nga nakuha ire maam sa buhay na pagbalik sa	<b>D. 21-39 Karding</b>	The former rebels seized the opportunity	EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION:

<p>gobyerno damo man sang mga activities nakuha namon halin sa ila. Paryas sinang gina himo namaon nang naga iskwela. May ara sang mga ALS</p> <p>27. Ang pinaka paborito nga gina hatag sang gobyerno, kung pwede lang gani halos tanan eh. Puro man abi na para sa kaayuhan. Ang gusto ko gid mabaton livelihood gid maam kay para maka income man ta bisan gamay-gamay bisan pang adlaw-adlaw ta lang.</p>		<p>presented by government-initiated programs such as the Alternative Learning System (ALS), enabling their reintegration into society through educational activities.</p> <p>The former rebel's most cherished opportunity was the government's livelihood program, which provided them with an income to sustain their daily needs, marking a pivotal step towards stability and integration into society.</p>	<p>REINTEGRATION AND A PATH TO A PATH TO A PEACEFUL FUTURE</p> <p>FINANCIAL AID AND LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES</p>
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## SOP NO. 5 WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS DO FRIENDS RESCUED HAVE FOR OTHER REBELS WHO HAVEN'T SURRENDERED YET IN SOUTH COTABATO?

<p>36. Kung gusto nila magpa bulig, halimbawa sa akon, nang sila mismo ang magkadto sa akon nga mapa bulig sila, mabuligan ko sila nga ma kwan nagid nga magbalik sa gobyerno, pero siling nga paryas ako, makadto ko didto</p>	<p><b>E. 46-50</b> <b>Mario</b></p>	<p>Seek aid from the government, as assistance will be provided if they make the request.</p>	<p>GOVERNMENT EMPOWERMENT: COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT AND OPPURTUNITIES FOR FRIENDS RESCUED</p>
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<p>sa bukid kag mag hambal-hambal nga “pagsurender na mo” ay di man na pwede kay pusilon palang ka didto.</p> <p>48. Pero kung sila na mismo mag kadto hinuon sa akon didto nga “mangayo kami bulig sa imo kay ikaw na agyan nan nimo ang halin sa gobyerno.” Ma kwan, mangayuan ko, mapangayu-an ko bulig sa mga kilala ko paryas sa reserve unit pwede nakon maka kwan sa ila, mapa tigayon ba.</p>		<p>Approach the nearby army camps for assistance, as former rebels can testify to the government's generosity and willingness to receive individuals who lay down their arms.</p>	<p>GUIDANCE TOWARDS PEACEFUL AND REINTEGRATION: EMBRACING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR A BETTER FUTURE</p>
<p>36. Ang akon nga recommendation sa kuan, sa akon mga kauban dito sa babaw, ng dapat kuan lang gyod sila mag isip naman sila nga kinahanglanon naton ang support sa gobyerno nga dili na mag sukol sa gobyerno kay pila naman ka tuig ang ilang pakiglapan, wala lang giyapon nahitabo mas maayo, para matabangan, tabangan sang gobyerno, mapalapit nalang sa gobyerno, kay basi ma disgrasya pa sila.</p>	<p><b>E.Nardo</b> <b>36-40</b></p>	<p>The former rebel recommends those still fighting to support the government and seek its protection rather than remaining with the rebel organization, as staying could be dangerous.</p> <p>The former rebel recommends that those still fighting should leave the armed group to focus on self-improvement and securing a better future, as</p>	<p>GUIDANCE TOWARDS PEACEFUL AND REINTEGRATION: EMBRACING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR A BETTER FUTURE</p> <p>A NEW CHAPTER: CHOOSING COMMUNITY, STABILITY, AND SELF-BETTERMENT OVER CONFLICT</p>

38. Bali ang kuan ang dugang ko sina, una, sa kadugayon ko nga ara sa rebelede, kung ako pa nang idevelop para sa akong kaugalingon, nag kuan na, nag show up na akong kinabuhi tapos kung mapatay ko didto sa sulod wala naman pud koy paabuton, maayu pa nang araka sa gobyerno, kung halimbawa, military, police, mapatay ka didto may dawaton pamilya mo.		remaining a rebel offers no benefits for them or their families, unlike aligning with the government, which provides some support even in case of death.	
32. Imbitaron nako sila aron maka baba sila dire, ma agyan nato sila nga paryas sa amon nga nag baba mi nag bagong buhay na mi. Ang advice ko lang sa mga upod namon didto halin sa bukid, kung ara pa man sila sa bukid, dapat mag baba na sila dire maging surenderee sila paryas sa amon para ma experience man nila ang na experience namon.	<b>E. 32-35 Marko</b>	The former rebels' recommendation for those still in insurgency is to encourage them to descend from the mountains and embrace the transformative experiences that led to their own reintegration and personal growth.	GUIDANCE TOWARDS PEACEFUL AND REINTEGRATION: EMBRACING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR A BETTER FUTURE
20. Ma advice nako sa ilaha ka maayo ng gobyerno ma advice nako kay	<b>E. 20-27 Jim</b>	The former rebel tells those still fighting to recognize the	GUIDANCE TOWARDS PEACEFUL AND REINTEGRATION:

<p>makipagbalik na sila sa gobyerno kay para kuan na ang tanan, wala nay samok. Maayo ang gobyerno segunda sang ginoo ang gobyerno .ang gobyerno ginoo ang nag kilala kay wala may laing makatabang sa mga tao kuni ang gobyerno.</p> <p>25. Ang ma advice nako sa uban ayaw ta sigeg samok-samok sa mga laing tawo kay basig masuko sila, maayo ang atong pagka puyo kung wala tay kalaban.</p>		<p>government's generosity, asking them to surrender and assist the government, which is second only to God in its devotion to the welfare of the people, in order to create long-term peace.</p> <p>Avoid disrupting the peace to prevent angering others, emphasizing the importance of acting kindly to avoid making enemies.</p>	<p>EMBRACING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR A BETTER FUTURE</p> <p>EMBRACING PEACEFUL REINTEGRATION AND HARMONY IN CIVILIAN LIFE</p>
<p>36. Sa mahatag ko sa ila didto masabi ko lang maam is mag tapat na sila dahil kung natutulungan naman tayo ng gobyerno. Mag baba na tayo kay tutulongan naman tayo ng gobyerno yun lang ang sa akin.</p>	<p><b>E. 35-37</b> <b>Diego</b></p>	<p>Submit to the government and descend from the mountains, as they possess the resources and support necessary for our assistance.</p>	<p>GUIDANCE TOWARDS PEACEFUL AND REINTEGRATION: EMBRACING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR A BETTER FUTURE</p>
<p>35. Ang maihambal ko sa mga wala pa nag naog kung mahimo ko lang tani, naog man sila e para maging legal man ang ila nga mga pangalan. Para maging legal man sila paryas sa amon.</p>	<p><b>E. 35-38</b> <b>Karding</b></p>	<p>The counsel from the ex-rebel to those who haven't surrendered yet is to descend from the mountains, clear their names, and transition into lawful citizenship</p>	<p>CLEARING A REPUTATION</p>

37. Oo para ma experience man nila ang mga na experience namon dire, bal-an mo perti tana ka tawhay ang bulig nga ginahatag sang gobyerno. Didto nge perti tana ka budlay.		akin to their fellow rebel returnees.  The FR's advice to those who haven't surrendered yet is to embrace surrender, facilitating the transition towards a peaceful existence and benefiting from available governmental assistance.	GUIDANCE TOWARDS PEACEFUL AND REINTEGRATION: EMBRACING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR A BETTER FUTURE
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## APPENDIX G

### TRANSCRIPTIONS OF DATA

Date: April 17, 2024

Place: South Cotabato Halfway House, Brgy. Tinongcop, Tantaran, South Cotabato

Interviewer: Shyna Joyce B. Pabalinas

Interviewee: Mario (not his real name)

1. Interviewer: Ano name mo sir?
2. Interviewee: Alyas Pogi Mario
3. Interviewer: Pila nae dad mo sir?
4. Interviewee: 28
5. Interviewer: pila ka n aka years sir sa grupo mo dati before nag lakat dire?
6. Interviewee: mga 2015 man ko nag baba
7. Interviewer: So ano ka year nag start idto sir?
8. Interviewee: 2013
9. Interviewer: Umm... butang ko sir 2013 to 2015
10. Interviewee: Sang nag baba ko sa armado, wala nako nag kapot pusil sang 2015 na
11. Interviewer: tagaa diin ka sir?
12. Interviewee: Taga ...taga lake Sebu maam
13. Interviewer: Ang una ko na pamangkot sir ano ang rason ngaa gin biyaan mo pagka rebel emo sir?
14. Interviewee: Inde ko ka agwanta didto abi kay kapoy na man,Inde ko maka kaon,budget ang kaon,Dina maka tulog Maayo ,kag ang mga army ga kwan man ga lusob na ang operation. Mao tong Ginbiyaan nakon to kay di naman kaya sakong.
15. Kaya sa akong panlawas pero sa akon na pang huna-huna hinde na gyud nako Makaya.
16. Interviewer: So amo to sya ang imo nga mga rason sir no.
17. So paano nimo napag desisyonan na sir nga mag halin nalang gid?
18. Interviewee: kuan mga... nga na desisyon ko nagid nga inde nagid nakon kaya kay kapoy nagid



19. Interviewer: sige sir, second Question is ano ang mga pagsubok na naranasan mo sap ag ajust sa buhay ribilyan tung pag halin ml sir, pag hlin mo sa grughghghgpo nga to tapos pag balik mo dire sa society, Ano nga mga pagsubok ang naagyan mo sir, ano nga mga pag bago, sa dire na?
20. Interviewer: Oo sir
21. Interviewee: Nang na kwan na di na ko kuan komportable nako sa akong kinabuhi ba nga Makita ko sang mga, army, di na ko siing nga ma kulba-kulbaan kung maka kita ang paryas sina bisan sang una kay makakita ka lang ka Christmas light, hadlok na pero subong waay na, normal nalang ba ang pangabuhi
22. Interviewer: Ahh nang daw inde na sya bug at sir
23. Interviewee: Oo inde na bug at, kay nakasakay naman ko sa sakyanan sa army, pabuligon na mi jamming jamming na kami sang mga army mga SF, mga police
24. Interviewer: So sa pag balhin mo dire sir, syempre pa reintegrate sir no, amo gina expect mo mga mabulig sa imo
25. Interviewee: Ang pinaka-una una nga mabulig gid sa akon ang pagpa clear ko sa akon mga pangalan.amo gid na nagf pika ka una nga gin huna-huna ko gi man sila, bilang bunos nalang na sa amon nga pag surrender sa pagpa clear sang amon nga mga pangalan.
26. Interviewer: Ano ang nagging motivation mo gid sir para mag halin ka nagi didto?
27. Interviewee: Wala na, di nagid ko sa armado nga pakig-bisog mga gina tawag nila nga armado sa pakig bisog, di nagid ko, kay gin pamangkot man konila amo na ang rason, di na ko na lose moral na ko ginatawag nga armado sa pakig-bisog.
28. Interviewer: tapos ano ang mabulig sa imo subong sir sa pag suporta sapag reintegrate nyu, ano ga bulig sa imo?
29. Interviewee: Ang gobyerno, ang kwan sang gobyerno. Sila ang nag bulig kag suporta sa akon.
30. Interviewer: So sa ika no.4, ano ang mga opurtunidad na nakuha mo sapag, balik mo sa buhay sibilyan? Ano nga opurtunidad mga opportunity nga madawat mo dire sir?
31. Interviewee: Tung kuan, mga pangkabuhayan, mga cash assistance.
32. Interviewer: Pwede moba ibahagi kung ano ang importante na oppurtunidad para sa iyo sa pag balik mo sa sibilyan na buhay? Sa imo sir, sa tanan na opportunity nga ginhatag nila sa imo, ano gid didto ang pinaka importante sa imo?
33. Interviewee Pinaka importante nga ginhatag nga opportunity sa akon ang ....libre?
34. Interviewer: Bisano lang na basta benepisyo nga nga nakuha mo sa ila, diin didto ang pinaka importante paraa imo?
35. Interviewee: Ang kwan, parehas sang mga material?
36. Interviewer: Pwede pud sir kung ano ang importante
37. Interviewee: Ang una-una angsa kuan ...sa ...liwata daw maam bi.
38. Interviewer: Ay sige sir, pwede mo bang ibahagi kung ano ang pinaka importante na opurtunidad ang ibinigay sa iyo sap ag balik mo ire sa lipunan?
39. Interviewee: Paryas sina sa pag kwan ko dire, naka baton nako sa mga ginpanghatag sa gobyerno, naka bakal na ko sang mga kabayo paryas sina, naka bakal ko sang mga kanding.
40. Interviewer: May ara kamana galisang sarili nga livelihood dire sir nga gina pagkakitaan
41. Interviewee: Oo
42. Interviewer: Like ano sir?
43. Interviewee: kanding

44. Interviewer: Ano na sir gina paamo mo?
45. Interviewee: Gina padamo pa, bag o palang man abi ka umpisa, mga September man to gin hatag. Septembe ba o October
46. Interviewer: Tapos ano ang mga rekomendasyon mo na maiibigay para sa masmapabuti ang proseso pag balik ng iba pang mga ating rebelde sa lipunan dire sa south Cotabato sir? Pwede sir example, diba na experience mo na ni noh, diba nami sa pamatyagan ano na ang mahambal nio, sa ano pa ang mahambal mo sa mga wala pa nag surrender bala sir haw, rekomendasyon mo sa ila.
47. Interviewee: Kung gusto nila magpa bulig, halimbawa sa akon, nang sila mismo ang magkadto sa akon nga mapa bulig sila, mabuligan ko sila nga ma kwan nagid nga magbalik sa gobyerno, pero siling nga paryas ako, makadto ko didto sa bukid kag mag hambal-hambal nga “pagsurender na mo” ay di man na pwede kay pusilon palang ka didto.
48. Interviewer: Bitaw sir
49. Interviewee: Pero kung sila na mismo mag kadto hinuon sa akon didto nga “mangayo kami bulig sa imo kay ikaw na agyan nan nimo ang halin sa gobyerno.”
50. Interviewer: Ano imo na ma advice sir?
51. Interviewee: Ma kwan, mangayuan ko, mapangayu-an ko bulig sa mga kilala ko paryas sa reserve unit pwede nakon maka kwan sa ila, mapa tigayon ba
52. Interviewer: Amo na to any last na question sir, thank you sir.

## TRANSCRIPTION OF DATA

Date: April 17, 2024

Place: South Cotabato Halfway House, Brgy. Tinongcop, Tantaran, South Cotabato

Interviewer: Shyna Joyce B. Pabalinas



Interviewee: Nardo (not his real name)

1. I: Hambal ka lang sir ha kung reay ka na sir
2. P: Ready na ko
3. I: Ang una ko na pamangkot is. Ano ang rason ngaa nag halin kka ditto sa grupo?
4. P: ang rason nga nag halin ko sa kuan.sa akon na grupo, ang una may pamilya na ako, may mga bata amo na ang rason.
5. I: kay gina isip mo man ang ila nga ano sir
6. P: Oo gina isip ko man ang kaugmaon nila kay kung magpadayonn ko didto, wala man ko sang pabuton, mao na nga naka isip ko nga mag baba nalang.
7. I: Wala ka na sang kuan dire sir, nga nang pag duwa-duwa? Nga ng pag ano mo didto sir, desidido ka na gid mag halin?
8. P: Oo
9. I: Sa ika uwa nga pamangkot sir, ano nga pagsubok ang naranasan mo, sap ag-adjust sa buhay sibilyan? tung ag halin mo sa pagka rebelde sir, ano ang mga pagsubok?
10. P: Pagsubok ang mga kuan .. mga pagsubok.. karanasan no?
11. I: Oo sir

12. P: Ang mga pagsubok dito.. perti ka damo, mga di ka katulog, tapos kung panahon sang operasyon dika maka kuan, gutom na maagyan mo, di ka maka kaon sang mayo, tapos damo pa nag mga kuanpagsubok nga naagihan, ulan, init sige lang lakat, wala sang direksyon.
13. I: Ga lakat lang nga ga lakat sir?
14. P: Oo sige lang nilakat
15. I: Paano ka sina naapektohan sang mga tong gina hambal mosir, paano ka naapektohan?
16. P: Sa
17. I: Satong naagyan mo nga gutom, paano ka na apektohan, ikaw sa physical kag sa imo nga mental?
18. P: Naapektohan kay, murag di na kayo ka kaya ang akon panglawas
19. I: Sa ika tatlo sir, ano ang mga tulong at suporta na inaasahan mo?
20. P: Para sa akon ang kinahanglan na kuan, diin ni nga question?
21. I: Number 3 sir
22. P: Ang mga kuan, kianahanglan ko nga kuan, support para sa akon, amo nana ang education para sa mga bata ko.
23. I: May makuha man na sila nga scholarship sir?
24. P: Oo.. kag kung wala abi ka skwela ang mga bata, basi ma paryas lang gihapon sa akon ba ma convince sang iban nga tawo.
25. I: Nga mahikayat sila sir?
26. P: Basi kung madala lang gyapon sila, tungod sa kakulangan sang edukasyon
27. I: Ari sir sa No.4 sir, ano ang mga oportunidad na nakuha m sap ag balik mo sa buhay sibilyan? Ano ang mga Opportunities sir ang nabaton mo dire?
28. P: Ang na baton ko lang, sap ag balik ko, ang kuan, ang livelihood program tapos gin elect pu ko sa pagka kagawad.
29. I: Sa diin na sya nga kagawad sir, sa dire sir?
30. P: Sa Baranggay Hidait
31. I: Ay name ba
32. P: Kay inde naman gusto sang mga parente ko kung magbalik. Dalagan nalng pagka kagawa kay supportahan taka''para dira maka huna-huna didto sa bukid
33. I: Pwede mo ba ibahagi kung ano ang importante na opurtonidad na para sa iyo? Nang sa pagbalik mo dire sir, diin didto ang pinaka importante gid na oportunidad nga nabaton mo?
34. P: Ang pinaka importante gid ang mahimo nga legal na ako, nang wala ako sang gina ka hadlokan, ma clear na nag pangalan ko, tapos wala natongg mga kaso.
35. I: Ikaw sir no kay na experience mo naman na dire ano ang mahatag mo nga ano sir, recommendation para sa sunod naman mag enroll diri kay diba ang iban wala paman naka enroll ara pa sa bukid, ano ang mahatag mon a recomendasyon sir?
36. P: Ang akon nga recommendation sa kuan, sa akon mga kauban atio ddito sa babaw, ng dapat kuan lang gyod sila mag isip naman sila nga kinahanglanon naton ang support sa gobyerno nga dili na mag sukol sa gobyerno kay pila naman ka tuig ang ilang pakiglapan, wala lang giyapon nahitabo mas maayo, para matabangan, tabangan sang gobyerno, mapalapit nalang sa gobyerno, kay basi ma disgrasya pa sila.
37. I: May idugang ka pa, sa may maishare ka pa sa experience mo dati sir? Basi may gusto mo nga ihambal na lesson, may maishare ka pa?

38. P: Bali ang kuan ang dugang ko sina, una, sa kadugayon ko nga ara sa rebelede, kung ako pa nang idevelop para sa akong kaugalingon, nag kuan na, nag show up na akong kinabuhi tapos kung mapatay ko didto sa sulod wala naman pud koy paabuton, maayu pa nang araka sa gobyerno, kung halimbawa, military, police, mapatay ka didto may dawaton pamilya mo.
39. I: Oo may ara ka sang benepisyo
40. P: Oo
41. I: So amo lang to Sir. Thank you

**APPENDIX H****RESEARCH ETHICAL LEGIBILITY FORM**

 <b>RAMON MAGSAYSAY MEMORIAL COLLEGES – MARBEL, INC.</b> Research, Extension, External Affairs and Development Office Purok Waling-waling, Arellano St., Brgy. Zone II, City of Koronadal		
<b>Document Type:</b>	<b>Document No.: PM-RDO-05-001-G</b>	
Controlled	Issue No.: 01	Revision No: 00
<b>Document Title:</b>	Effective Date : September 22, 2023	
<b>RESEARCH ETHICAL LEGIBILITY FORM</b>	Page 1 of 1	

**RESEARCH ETHICAL LEGIBILITY FORM**

Date

CHAIRPERSON  
Ethics Review Committee  
RMMC-MI

Dear Ma'am/Sir,

Greetings!

The Ethics Review Committee (ERC) has carefully evaluated the final research proposal entitled Turning Point: Exploring the Reasons and Experiences of Rebel Returnees on Abandoning Their Rebel Life. Based on the thorough evaluation this said research proposal adhered to the Ethical Standard prescribed in the Article 7 in Research Manual and we are pleased to inform you that the said research proposal was **approved for implementation**.

Sincerely,

SHYNA JOYCE B. PABALINAS  
Researcher

Approved by:

CLARENCE C. FLORES, LPT, MALIT  
ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (ERC)

## APPENDIX I LETTER FOR GRAMMARIAN



RAMON MAGSAYSAY MEMORIAL COLLEGES – MARBEL, INC.  
Purok Waling – Waling, Arellano Street, Koronadal City, South Cotabato  
Tel. No.: (083) 22/ - 2880



COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

### GRAMMARIAN'S CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the undersigned research entitles **“TURNING POINT: EXPLORING THE REASONS AND EXPERIENCES OF REBEL RETURNNEES ON ABANDONING THEIR REBEL LIFE”** by **SHYNA JOYCE B. PABALINAS** aligned with the set of structural rules that govern the composition of sentences, phrases, and words in English Language.

Signed this 15<sup>th</sup> day of April of the year 2025 at Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges-Marbel Incorporated, Purok Waling-Waling, Arellano Street, Koronadal City, South Cotabato

Signed by:

  
**CLARENCE C. FLORES, LPT**

Grammarian



## CURRICULUM VITAE

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name : Shyna Joyce Berto Pabalinas  
Age : 22 yrs.old  
Birthdate : June 30, 2002  
Birthplace : Brgy. Mabuhay, General Santos City  
Address : Municipality of Banga, South Cotabato  
Sex : Female  
Civil Status : Single  
Citizenship : Filipino  
Religion : Aglipay  
Ethnicity : Ilonggo  
Father's Name : Cesar Rodriguez Pabalinas  
Mother's Name : Rhodora Berto Pabalinas



### EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Tertiary : Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges – Marbel, Inc.  
(Bachelor of Science in Criminology)  
Secondary : San Jose National High School  
Elementary : New Mabuhay Elementary School