

The Silsilah Dialogue Movement wins top peace award



Mindanao group wins top peace award

The Silsilah Dialogue Movement works with Christian and Muslim communities. An interreligious peace movement in troubled Mindanao has won the prestigious Goi Peace Award, a Japanese prize previously given to Microsoft founder Bill Gates and the former president of Costa Rica.

The Silsilah Dialogue Movement, founded by Italian missionary Priest Sebastiano D’Ambra in Zamboanga City, has set up training and other projects to promote peace between Christians and Muslims in insurgency-hit Mindanao since 1984.

“The dedicated efforts of the members of the movement have not only advanced the process towards lasting peace in their communities, but have inspired many people around the world with an example of true dialogue based on spirituality,” the award-giving body said in a statement.

D’Ambra said the award is “recognition” for the organization’s concerted efforts to help end the patchwork of conflicts in the southern Philippines island of Mindanao involving Islamic and Communist rebels over the past 30 years.

Started with a group of Muslim and Christian friends, D’Ambra has seen the movement steadily grow its peace-building and dialogue activities. It is also involved in sustainable agriculture, environmental advocacy and holistic healthcare.

Silsilah, an Arabic word which means 'chain' or 'link,' implies "spiritual linkage of humanity as created by the same God," said D'Ambra.

The organization will receive the award at a ceremony to be held during this year's Goi Peace Foundation Forum in Tokyo in November.

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