

## The Kantian categorical imperative and Marawi refugees: Affirming the importance of the Anti-Terrorism Law

### *Imperatif kategoris Kantian dan pengungsi Marawi: Menegaskan pentingnya UU Antiterorisme*

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#### Abstract

Immanuel Kant's Categorical Imperative teaches a single moral obligation for every human person. Regarded by many as the most influential philosopher during the modern era, his ethical emphasis was on the deontological moral system as the basis of man's actions rather than ethics based on subjective considerations. This paper uses an interpretive analysis of the Kantian doctrine intertwined with the treatment of refugees in the war-torn Marawi in 2017. Refugees and other victims of this human strife fled Marawi City and settled in other towns with the help of the government and other people and organizations. Terrorism did not stop in that year as this activity can still be felt all over the world. Even today, the Philippine government still deals with terroristic acts despite the promulgation of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 and hopes to finally minimize if not end the brutal attacks brought about by terrorism. The actions of certain people helping refugees conform with this Kantian doctrine, specifically on Duty, Good Will, and Hospitality. The necessity of an Anti-Terrorism Law is also explained to put an end to or minimize terror attacks in the country despite objections from certain groups.

**Keywords:** *Anti-Terrorism Law; categorical imperative; Immanuel Kant; terrorism; war refugees*

#### Abstrak

*Imperatif Kategoris Immanuel Kant mengajarkan satu kewajiban moral bagi setiap pribadi manusia. Banyak orang menganggap Immanuel Kant sebagai filsuf paling berpengaruh di era modern, penekanan etisnya adalah pada sistem moral deontologis yang menjadi dasar tindakan manusia daripada etika yang didasarkan pada pertimbangan subjektif. Tulisan ini menggunakan analisis interpretatif yang didasarkan pada doktrin Kantian terkait dengan perlakuan terhadap pengungsi di Marawi yang dilanda perang pada tahun 2017. Pengungsi dan korban lain dari perselisihan manusia ini melarikan diri dari Kota Marawi dan menetap di kota-kota lain melalui bantuan pemerintah, orang lain dan organisasi. Terorisme tidak berhenti pada tahun itu karena aktivitas ini masih dapat dirasakan di seluruh dunia. Bahkan hingga saat ini, pemerintah Filipina masih menangani tindakan terorisme meskipun Undang-Undang Anti-Terrorisme telah diundangkan tahun 2020 dan berharap dapat meminimalkan jika serangan brutal yang ditimbulkan oleh Terorisme tidak kunjung berakhir. Tindakan yang dilakukan dalam membantu pelarian pengungsi apabila didasarkan pada doktrin Kantian meliputi kewajiban, kehendak baik, dan hospitality. Kebutuhan akan Undang-Undang Antiterorisme juga dijelaskan untuk menamatkan atau meminimumkan serangan teror yang terjadi di negara ini walaupun mendapat bantahan dari kelompok tertentu.*

**Kata kunci:** *UU Anti-Terrorisme; imperatif kategoris; Immanuel Kant; terorisme; pengungsi perang*

## Introduction

The Philippines has experienced a number of terror attacks perpetrated by violent extremists. On April 4, 1995, the town of Ipil in Zamboanga Sibugay became a location of violent extremism when Abu Sayyaf militants strafed innocent civilians claiming numerous lives (Frake 1998). They not only claimed lives but also took some hostages and burnt the town to ashes. In December of 2000, members of the Jemaah Islamiyah group orchestrated the Rizal Day bombing (Magouirk et al. 2008) that claimed nearly two

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dozen people and injured more than a hundred. These are just a few of the many violent acts that the country received at the hands of these terrorists. Other succeeding incidents happened in the succeeding years that, the country has been dubbed as a haven for terrorists (Fabe 2013).

As is well known, the Islamic State of Lanao, famously known as the "Maute Group," a radical Islamist group based in Mindanao, attacked Marawi City on May 23, 2017. The attack was believed to be an attempt of the Maute Group to support Isnilon Hapilon, the leader and emir of the Abu Sayyaf, an ISIS-affiliated group based also in Mindanao. As clashes with government forces erupted, members of the Maute Group took strategic locations of the city, resulting in the dragging on of the war for months.

The war between government forces and the Maute group has profoundly affected Marawi City socially and economically. Its economy suddenly dipped to its lowest level as most businesses shut down and residents fled to neighboring towns and provinces. Based on official reports received by the Department of Social Welfare and Development Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center, within just a month of conflict, a total of 360,000 persons were displaced by the war (Amnesty International 2017). The magnitude of this problem was compounded by the fact that some victims of the war did not survive the ordeal. Some were trapped in the middle of the firefight, others feared escaping to a safer place because of the danger of being hit by a bullet or other deadly weapon. The more horrifying aspect was being taken hostage by the terror group as it would render the victim's survival dubious. Indeed, the atmosphere of the place was gruesome as tears were shed by the inhabitants of the locality watching their zone slowly being torn into pieces by bullets, grenades, and other armaments from opposing forces.

Indeed, I can only imagine the ordeal that the Marawi refugees have had to experience. A number of these refugees perished while they were settled in evacuation centers. Health officials said 39 evacuees from Marawi City died from different illnesses while living in evacuation centers weeks after the siege. Some of the fatalities were children who died of dehydration caused by diarrhea (Unson 2017). However, the terror that these refugees experienced has abated as they were transported by government agencies out of the area, and were met with love and compassion from many people who were strangers to them.

The framework of this study is anchored on the concept of the categorical imperative formulated by German philosopher Immanuel Kant. Kant is considered one of the more influential thinkers in the history of philosophy. He was at the centerpiece of the modern era, garnering praise from both contemporary and subsequent intellectuals in philosophy. The cornerstone of his deontological moral philosophy stood on his doctrine of categorical imperative whereby it can be used to evaluate the motivations for actions. It is the single moral obligation that is founded on duty. However, Kant argues that, when a human person acts, it does not necessarily emanate from duty, but could also be on immediate inclination, or ulterior motive (Kant 2002). This ethical doctrine also considers other aspects like hospitality and goodwill which can be a source of action (Kant 2012). These concepts embodying this ethical principle will be utilized to explain the different actions of various people shown toward the refugees.

This paper argues that Kant's categorical imperative is the most appropriate moral theory to use in assessing the different acts of kindness and helpfulness that people have extended. In fact, in his conception of cosmopolitan law, he also talks about hospitality which is best displayed among nations in their relations with each other including the treatment of refugees. His essay "Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch" 200 years since its publication still holds valuable data for present-day situations concerning international relations. Kant's essay still enjoys value and relevance even in the twenty-first century (Sonmezocak 2018). Again, this is one of the reasons why I utilized Kant's categorical imperative in assessing the different acts of kindness and helpfulness that people have extended to war refugees.

Also, it must be noted that the Philippine government enacted the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 to address issues about terrorism and other related crimes. And it was believed that the crafting of its implementing rules and regulations will address any terroristic acts, and at the same time protect the rights of the country's citizens (Department of Justice 2020). Now, this study also argues that the practice of helping

a person who is in need, which is normally viewed as a good gesture, can be underpinned by this law. Hence, the Anti-Terrorism Act can be of great help to many people, especially the war refugees.

Therefore, this study aims primarily to examine the different acts of kindness and helpfulness that people have extended to Marawi refugees through the lens of Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative. Kantian ethics, famously known as the categorical imperative, will be utilized in evaluating certain acts of assistance from various groups like the national government offices, nearby local government units, and private groups or individuals. This Kantian ethical principle, although formulated many years back, is still relevant today in evaluating some of these actions of individuals or groups who helped refugees. The secondary aim of this paper will focus on the need for the Philippines to have a law countering violent extremism and its violent acts in the country. The study argues that the Anti-Terrorism Law might be the best alternative in combatting terrorists in the country and putting an end to people becoming war refugees.

## Research Method

This study utilizes the interpretive analysis method, which is founded on philosophical assumptions about particular beliefs or principles. Several books, journal articles, and other texts have been used to acquire insights that discuss the Kantian categorical imperative, the Marawi siege, and certain activities that catapulted the full realization of the Anti-Terrorism Law promulgated in the Philippines. It employs textual analysis and hermeneutics. The former pertains to the method of data analysis that examines either the content or meaning of the text (Given 2008). The text used is the literature or sources of select ethical theories. The latter means interpretation both in philosophy and in the field of qualitative research (Renning n.d.).

In this study, the principles of the Kantian Categorical Imperative are analyzed based on the book *Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Morals* by Immanuel Kant. It is further analyzed side by side with several academic articles from journals that also discuss Kantian principles relating to situations of refugees of war and terroristic actions. Then, newspaper clips showing various consoling acts from many people living near Marawi city were interpreted using the principles of the Kantian Categorical Imperative. This process interrelated and elaborated the significance of the Categorical Imperative and the actions of men and women who helped refugees escape and recover from the dreadful effects of terrorism. To further enhance this work, it proceeded by suggesting the necessity of the Anti-Terrorism Law to avoid terrorism and other similar acts. The Philippines, especially the southern part, has always been a scene of terror attacks, frequently displacing many inhabitants of that place, hence the need for this kind of legislation.

During the data analysis, I started with data preparation drawn from several books, journals, and other articles written in notes (Elliot & Timulak 2005). These notes are segregated depending on the topic that they have relevance to. This will give clarity to the information as to where they should be placed in the paper (Elliot & Timulak 2005). Then, using textual analysis (Given 2008) and hermeneutics (Renning n.d.), I interpreted the categorical imperative of Kant and explained how it can categorize the different acts of compassion that were shown to the refugees by people or agencies who helped. Then I proceeded by indicating that war refugees can be reduced if not eliminated with the recent promulgation of the Anti-Terror Law.

## Results and Discussion

### Kantian categorical imperative

**Good will.** The categorical imperative is an absolute, unconditional requirement that must be obeyed in all circumstances and must be treated as an end in itself. For Kant, some concepts must be elucidated to have a better understanding of the idea. Goodwill is an element that a person must possess. He stresses

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that intelligence, talents, skills, money, fortune, prestige, and honor may be beneficial to a human person, yet these qualities are prone to bad results and can corrupt man's moral character. Goodwill serves as the equalizer of all these conditions so that a human person can regulate the use of these valuable qualities. Thus goodwill appears to constitute the indispensable condition even of being worthy of happiness (Kant 2002).

**Duty.** For a better understanding of goodwill, Kant proceeds in discussing the concept of duty as a component in every action. He used the motives of an actor to further explain the real reason why a person acted in such a manner. It is important to determine the motivation of the doer as it will indicate the authenticity or the deceitfulness of his action. A person may perform an act in three different ways. First, he does it on the contention of duty, and that it is the right thing to do. Second, he does so based on immediate inclination, that is, he wants to do it for the love of doing it. And third, he does it based on an ulterior or deceitful inclination just so as to further another end. When a businessman sells goods to customers at a reasonable price without taking advantage of certain gullible customers, he does this to maintain a good reputation and to further his interest as a merchant. This, for Kant, is an example shown in the third type which he disregarded because of the ulterior motive found in it. The first and second instances would indicate a clear concern and love for others on the part of the doer. However, a distinction has to be made so that the better option will be highlighted as the principle worth emulating.

**Hospitality.** As mentioned earlier, this virtue promotes an imperfect duty since humans act according to their desire, not on duty. Just the same, this virtue is heartened because it caters to the needs of humanity, especially those who need it or least expect it. Some people who responded to the terror attack may have acted based on duty, but some helped based on love and hospitality. Either way, the act is laudable. The joy experienced by someone in anguish after being abetted is priceless.

Goodwill, duty, and hospitality are important elements in Kant's categorical imperative. Although he asserts that a human act must be founded on the nature of duty, he does not disregard goodwill and hospitality as motives. A human act born out of goodwill can neutralize human wants or needs. Hospitality is also a commendable gesture towards another, especially those who need it. Besides, one cannot judge the sincerity of an action from a person based on the act alone. These three elements taken as a whole project the better, if not the best, part of a person in his day-to-day dealings with fellow humans and agents of society. Sans the concepts of ulterior motive as the basis of human dealings, all the rest are commendable factors of the categorical imperative.

### **Assessing Kantian categorical imperative on the Marawi refugees**

When terror attacks broke out in Marawi City on May 23, 2017, the entire Philippines was stunned by the unfortunate incident. The worst feeling was probably felt by the residents of that place themselves. Some of the hostages were killed outright while others were used as human shields. Others luckily escaped the firefight while some were trapped in the middle of it. For those who were able to escape from the war, the problem did not stop as it was also inevitable to leave their houses, livelihood, and love ones. The terrorists displaced many people waiting for help from the government and other entities. Around 400,000 residents of Marawi City in the southern part of the Philippines were displaced due to Islamic militants' action to invade the city (Morella 2017). Fortunately, the terror refugees got help from various organizations and personalities aside from the Philippine government.

**On good will.** The Kantian philosophy speaks of being good without limitation. A person who does the right thing for the right reason produces goodwill. Several Muslims were interviewed and made pronouncements of executions and beheadings in the area (Shahpur 2021). These unfortunate incidents were terrifying not just for Christians but even for Muslims. One Muslim survivor narrated how he and his family were able to witness a public execution in the plaza (Shahpur 2021). These incidents prompted the Muslims to assist Christians to slip through checkpoints set up by this ISIS group and find their way out of Marawi (Unson 2017). In one incident, a display of goodwill was shown between Muslims and Christians as they helped each other pull out of the city. In the news and actual pronouncements from survivors themselves, some Muslims facilitated the escape of Christians from the battlefield. For



instance, Muslims would teach Christians some Islamic words such as passwords to get a safe pass out of the battlefield. Some would lend a hijab to a female non-Muslim just so the latter could be identified as a practicing Muslim and eventually move away from the fighting area (Shahpur 2021). It is part of Philippine history that these two religions have experienced love-hate incidents. But, during the time of terror, a gesture of goodwill was shown while setting aside age-old differences (Unson 2017). The example may be bizarre for some considering that the terrorists in this Maute group are Muslims, but one is left to think that a Muslim helping a non-Muslim, a Christian at that, is commendable.

The noble act of helping sans religious affiliation is unconditional worth as conceived by Kant. Christians and Muslims may have a long history of strife but the depiction of goodwill during the war was a limitless concern for fellow human beings. Muslims had a higher chance of being spared since the perpetrators were themselves Muslims. Christians were the immediate target, but many of them were spared because of these Islamic friends.

**On duty.** Kant discussed three actions emanating from duty. The individuals who gave their assistance to the terror refugees may fall under the three types conceived by Kant. They may have given their support to the refugees, but to assume that they all acted out of duty as it was the right thing to do will be *assumptio non probata*. Some people may perform an act out of duty as it is the right thing to do, but experience and history dictate that some help because of an ulterior motive.

First, a person may do it on the contention of duty, and that is the right thing to do. The primary consideration for this category shall be the soldiers of the Philippine government whose primary objective was liberating Marawi despite the danger to their lives. Among Southeast Asian countries, members of the armed forces are the designated first responders in tragedies whether natural or man-made (Trias & Gong 2020). This reality about the armed forces is reinforced by a study conducted at Mindanao State University that news items concerning the Marawi siege contained numerous headlines pointing to government troops or soldiers being given the higher authority to give command and orders in the area (Villa et al. 2018-2019). Besides, when terrorists initially took hold of Marawi City, President Duterte declared the entire Mindanao under martial law. This authority catapulted their sworn duty to defend and rescue civilians from incurring injury due to crossfire, and eventually retake the city from the hands of the terrorists (Villa et al. 2018-2019). Soldiers have sworn to protect the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of the Philippines, and such has become their duty even up to the point of giving up their lives. On October 13, 2017, a video emerged about the rescue of refugees by the soldiers while a firefight was going on. The soldiers were all aware of the danger that they might incur, but, because of the sworn duty to protect innocent civilians, they persisted. One story struck the hearts of many when a soldier communicated to the command center to bomb his location because the enemies were very near him (Rappler 2017, Alilin 2019). Government troops bombarded his location killing the enemies as well as the soldier who transmitted the information.

Second, a person may perform an action based on immediate inclination, that is, he wants to do it for the love of doing it. Kant says that the actions of people belonging to this category have no true moral worth compared to those acts stemming from duty (Kant 2010-2015). It is because the result of their acts may just be for honor, prestige, or infamously unlike the one performed out of duty. After all, it is the right thing to do. This second type may be lower in degree in comparison to the first type, but acts drawn from it are still encouraged since they help humanity. The recipient of the assistance is independent of the true intention of the giver, and the receiver relieves himself from suffering. Private sectors jumped to the aid of the refugees bringing with them various items like food, medicine, shelter, and many other things greatly needed during that time (Macas 2017). Lived experiences of the refugees were highlighted when several individuals, groups, or organizations jumped to the opportunity of assisting. The refugees felt relief due to these donations extended, which they found to be beneficial (Laput et al. 2019). Additionally, the help that these refugees received from donors reinvigorated their already resilient nature. Filipinos are labeled to be inherently resilient, which was truly tested when super typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) struck the central part of the Philippines in 2013 bringing countless destruction to lives and property, but people re-emerged from the rubble to continue existing and living (Laput et al. 2019). It is unfair to judge the intentions of those who helped the refugees if they fall under this category because the

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intention of the giver is internal and independent from the perspective of the recipient. Every human act has varied intentions and this depends on the motive of the doer. Kant said that, although the doer loves helping another person, a person also can help for fame and honor, and these reasons make this second illustration lesser in value compared to the first one.

Third, a person does an act based on an ulterior or worse a deceitful inclination just to further another end. Kant believes that this category is not worth emulating. It would be hypercritical and prejudicial to pinpoint some people or organizations who belong to this category. It may be overzealous to mention that everybody who helped the terror refugees in Marawi City did so with an honest heart, but at the same time injurious if some of them are blatantly identified as an exploiter of the situation. History is full of tales about corrupt leaders, turncoats, exploiters, and the abusive. Human nature is susceptible to this behavior. As society is composed of humans, so is the reality of abuse among men existent.

**On hospitality.** This virtue promotes an imperfect duty since humans act according to their desire, not on duty. Just the same, this virtue is heartened because it caters to the needs of humanity, especially those who need it or least expect it. Some people who responded to the terror acts may have acted based on duty, but some helped based on love and hospitality. Either way, the act is laudable. The joy experienced by someone in anguish after being abetted is priceless. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees profiled in 2018 a total of 97,126 internally-displaced persons due to the war (UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency 2018). This number may not be similar to the initial count made in 2017 during the crisis itself, but the number shows an astounding number of displaced persons (Amnesty International 2017). The refugees, although distraught by their situation, were received by neighboring towns that served as their temporary shelters like Iligan City (UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency 2018). The situation was helpful given that their homes and livelihood were being bombarded with bullets and bombs (Laput et al. 2019). Some refugees went to relatives to take shelter where they were also welcomed. In 2021, as the Duterte administration pushed harder in its effort to rehabilitate the city, displaced persons were still evident in neighboring towns, but a considerable number of persons have already returned to their homes especially the ones which were not damaged (Fernandez 2021). Kant conceives this act as an imperfect gesture since its basis is on desire rather than duty. However, as an imperfect act, it still has a tremendous degree of humanity and love in it. Acts of hospitality that were shown by either persons or local government units were needed in those times. The refugees could have experienced more terror if not for the hospitality from non-victims of that strife.

Filipinos are generally known to be hospitable. It is shown in how they treat visitors, both local and foreigners. This is not, however, absolute as some would take advantage of situations by committing fraud or swindling visitors. For Kant, hospitality is a right. A stranger, visitor, or foreigner has the right to be treated well. He is not deserving of hostility, hence, not to be treated as an enemy (Sonmezocak 2018). In fact, in Peter Niesen's article, philosopher Han argued that a refugee has the right to dwell in a foreign land provided he lives peacefully. Human beings are common owners of the earth and to be hospitable even to a stranger is rightful in the mind of Kant (Niesen 2017). Many Filipinos are unaware of this philosophical standpoint, but many of them are also aware that they are hospitable. In that incident in Marawi, both the victims and the Good Samaritan folks were unaware of the Categorical Imperative while they treated each other well, but the essence of this Kantian thought was truly present. There were a great number of acts of giving food, water, and shelter to the refugees. Many people from neighboring towns of Marawi did this for the victims despite the danger to their households, whether from the attacking terrorists or from the refugees themselves since they were strangers.

However, the person who extends assistance does not need to worry that a refugee might take over his property (Niesen 2017). This is not what Kant wanted in his doctrine. Doing so will violate Kant's doctrine, and the refugee will eventually face legal repercussions. And this is what happened to refugees who were temporarily sheltered by private individuals. After several weeks passed, the same refugees left and built a place of their own outside Marawi while others waited for the war to end and then decided to return to their native town. Filipinos are normally warm and, during special occasions, Filipinos treat their visitors or guests with cordiality. In some areas, the host would sometimes pack food for his guests as the latter made their way home. It is not surprising why Filipinos in trying times would extend the

same love and care to those victims of tragic events, without the worry that their guest might take over his property. Otherwise, it will result in bitter litigation.

Even from a global perspective, many states treat each nation with diplomacy and its respective citizens with dignity (Kleingeld 1998). Several countries continuously open their territories to these terror refugees. Kant, who was regularly criticized for the failure of his cosmopolitan philosophy to penetrate the global realm of politics up until the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has now paved his way into the notion of international law in the later part of that century (Kleingeld 1998). The global perspective on accepting refugees has been steadily increasing with the establishment of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Sonmezocak 2018). Countries do not only accept terror refugees, but they also despise terrorism, and view that terror attacks are detrimental to human life. The Philippines is not spared from these terrorists. There have been numerous instances from the past until today perpetrated by various groups inclined to terrorism. They attack without warning and, when they do, they destroy life, limb, and property. Interestingly, every time unfortunate incidents like these happen, hospitable and caring Filipinos never fail to comfort the victims and the displaced. In the mind of Kant, these displaced families and individuals have the right to hospitality as they are also dwellers of this earth. This right should not only be enjoyed by the wealthy and powerful but also among the displaced, the poor, the hungry, and the war-torn individuals and families (Niesen 2017).

The elements of the Categorical Imperative, which are goodwill, duty (duty, immediate inclination, ulterior motive), and hospitality, were shown by many people and agencies who helped refugees from the war-torn Marawi city. The illustrations above categorized each element side by side with certain actual events or actions committed by concerned individuals toward the refugees. The genuineness of these actions must be presumed, and the benefit of the doubt must be observed because the intention of the doer is innate and independent from observers. It is a fact that some help because of concealed motivation, nevertheless, the satisfaction of the victims due to various assistance is gratifying.

### **The Philippines' Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020**

Refugees flee their homes to escape the damaging effects of terrorism. Wars and terroristic attacks are the common causes of people fleeing their homes and finding refuge in another place. These displaced persons need consolation from other countries or persons who are willing to open their boundaries to help. For the Philippine government, these pictures of sorrow can be avoided with the passage of a law protecting the lives of innocent civilians from terrorists. There have been numerous attacks perpetrated by violent extremists in the country, like the Rizal Day Bombing in 2000, the presence and the continuous terroristic acts of the Abu Sayyaf Group, and the Davao City Market bombing in 2016. Even the New People's Army has been carrying out destruction and killing members of the armed forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police, and even civilians for more than five decades. This group is the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Allegedly, this group has also been causing terror throughout the country (Broome 2021). These unfortunate episodes make the element of peace elusive in the country, especially on the island of Mindanao. This country has been struggling to find peace within its territory following a handful of subversive groups. In Mindanao, several Islamic groups have expressed their desire to meet the government peace panel so an enabling law will finally rule the Islamic people in Mindanao. The passage of the Bangsamoro Organic Law during the Duterte administration has put legitimacy on the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and other Muslim groups to govern the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (Marcelo 2018). There have been numerous presidents that preceded him, but it was only during his administration that the full realization of this enabling law happened.

During the presidency of Rodrigo Roa Duterte, he expressly labeled the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party in the Philippines, as a terror group (Presidential Communications Operations Office 2017). This army has been waging its communist ideology in the country for more than fifty years (Broome 2021), but their struggle has been futile ever since. This is not an Islamic group, unlike the Abu Sayyaf, but its members are Filipino citizens who adhere to the Maoist ideology. During Duterte's presidency, several destructive efforts are still attributed to or claimed by this group,

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but many of its members continue to surrender to the government's care (Broome 2021). Thousands have been recorded to have surrendered and returned to a civilian and peaceful life. Besides, despite such declaration as a terrorist group, the government continues to offer surrenderees houses, livelihood, and a better state of life. If this insurgency comes to a close, then this will not only be a conflict won by the government but the entire Filipino nation. The fight between the government and the New People's Army where both are Filipinos might finally come to an end. The Abu Sayyaf Group has always been labeled as a terroristic cluster expressly stating their allegiance to international terrorists like Al-Qaeda (Sullivan 2010). For many years, this group has waged destructive actions on both life and property among civilians and military alike in the Philippines, especially in the southernmost part of Mindanao. These realities prompted the Duterte administration to finally promulgate a law to stop if not control terrorism in the country.

On the one hand, when the Philippines promulgated this law in 2020, not all people were pleased with its enactment. There were concerns of further human rights violations which have continually hampered the Duterte administration due to its war on drugs. Various sectors posited that this law could jail a suspect for a week without any charge, and the same can be used against the administration's political opponents (McCarthy 2020). Even the Catholic Church of the country opposed the timing and humanity of this law. The vast island of Mindanao located in the southern part of the Philippines is normally the victim of violent extremism, although similar attacks have been recorded in other parts of the country. This law might be a stumbling block to negotiation and the eventual realization of peace on that island (Subedi & Kovács 2020). These were the utmost concerns of those individuals who opposed this law, and they converted these concerns into petitions before the Supreme Court. The country's Supreme Court thereafter received an outright 25 petitions from various groups and constituents questioning the constitutionality of the law (Khaliq 2020). The high court has the power of judicial review over all enacted laws, hearing the sides of both petitioners and respondents and thereafter rendering its judgment whether the law in question conforms with the country's constitution or not.

On the other hand, the Philippine government defended the entirety of this legislation. It was a landmark law providing security for both the political and economic rights of its constituents (Department of Justice 2020). The best way to suppress terror attacks and other similar untoward incidents is the presence of a working law for the enforcement agencies of the government to depend on in its pursuit against terrorists. The Anti-Terrorism Council in the Philippines coupled the Anti-Terror Law with implementing rules and regulations for a clearer and better understanding of the latter (Department of Justice 2020). The president of the Philippines lauded this piece of legislation and labeled it a legal framework to stop terrorism (Parrocha 2020). During his tenure as president, he experienced several bombings in Mindanao, all connected to terrorists, and these occurrences claimed the lives of innocent people. This prompted him to pursue the enactment of this law saying at the United Nations Assembly that this particular law conforms with UN standards and was crafted with the primary purpose of protecting the innocent (Parrocha 2020).

Just recently, in December of 2021, the Philippine Supreme Court concluded the oral arguments of either side and finally rendered its judgment on the matter. The highest court of the country upheld the majority of the provisions of this controversial law, save two sections. The justices struck down Section 4 of the law which states that public protests, dissent, and other exercises of political rights shall be allowed as long as it is not intended to cause harm or death. The court considered it a violation of freedom of expression (Strangio 2021). It also scrapped Section 25 which allows an anti-terrorism council created by the president to adopt a request from a foreign organization that tags a person or group as a terrorist (Strangio 2021). All the other provisions of the Anti-Terrorism Law were interpreted by the court as not unconstitutional.

Time and again, the world has witnessed refugees seeking refuge in another place due to turmoil that has destroyed their homes and places. Coincidentally, the same world has also observed men helping other men recover from the conflict. Refugees are products of human strife that have rendered their homes inhabitable due to the absence of peace. Terrorism and its similar forms can be stalled when there is an enabling law that prohibits or punishes the commission of these actions. When terror attacks are



suppressed, it could mean security in the community. When peace and security are attained in a society, there will be a lesser chance of people becoming refugees.

The Anti-Terror Law is now in full swing with the favorable decision of the Philippine Supreme Court as to its constitutionality. The doubts and fear of some people will continue, but those who favor this legislation will consider it a victorious moment. Some will continue to question the law, but the fact remains that laws must favor the common good. The majority hopes that this piece of legislation will minimize, if not eradicate, terror attacks in the country, and finally establish lasting peace.

## Conclusion

The Categorical Imperative is an avenue or procedure to evaluate a man's action and determine whether his action can be applied to everybody or that all people may do the same act without any contradiction whatsoever. The existence of a contradiction in a maxim proposed by an individual will not achieve its universalizability envisioned by Kant. The Categorical Imperative is universal and impartial -- universal because all people, by being rational, would act in precisely the same way, and impartial because their actions are not guided by their own biases, but because they respect the dignity and autonomy of every human being, and do not put their ambitions above the respect that others deserve.

The actions of various individuals helping the terror attack victims in Marawi City were not altogether in conformity with the Kantian doctrine. As mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, some acted out of duty, while some others did so on certain inclinations or imperfect duties. Truthfully, those who acted from duty conform with the doctrine. Those who focused on their inclinations deviated partially from the teaching. Nevertheless, the results of their actions benefitted the terror refugees of the war between government troops and the ISIS-inspired group Maute. The right to hospitality postulated by Kant may not be in its entirety the kind of practice that Filipinos have in mind, but the act of embracing a refugee conforms to the notion of Kant.

To suppress further similar incidents, the Philippine government passed the Anti-Terror Law. This law is primarily intended to safeguard innocent civilians against unwanted terror attacks. Up to this point in time, some members of the left-leaning politicians and their armed groups continue to denounce it despite the declaration of the Philippine Supreme Court that it is constitutional. On the one hand, lawmakers and the executive branch of government believe it will finally end terror attacks in the country and ultimately achieve lasting peace, especially in Mindanao. However, it is still too early to judge that this law will be effective in suppressing violent extremism in the Philippines since it is still new. However, most people welcome this development and are positive that peace and progress may finally reign, especially in Mindanao and in some other poorer provinces where the presence of the New People's Army can still be felt. On the other hand, those opposing it contend that this will be the start of government abuses just like during the martial law years of the Marcos administration. As long as safeguards are properly stipulated and the enforcers of the law observe strictly the provisions contained in it, then this law will benefit the common good.

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