Marawi Seige

Why in news?

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The city of Marawi has been engulfed by a deadly, ongoing siege since late May.

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What is the reason for conflict?

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- Marawi City, is the capital and the largest city of the province of Lanao del Sur on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines.
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- Marawi siege started in May 2017 when Philippine government security forces began to take on heavily armed militants linked to the Islamic State.
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- Militants also include the Maute and Abu Sayyaf Salafi jihadist groups.
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- The siege is also aimed to capture or kill Isnilon Hapilon.
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- Hapilon is the leader of the Abu Sayyaf Islamist group who was named emir of the “Caliphate” in Southeast Asia by IS head Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in 2016.
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- Philippine President declared martial law across the island for 60 days.
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- Some blame the political leadership for ignoring the rise of the IS. e.g Philippine President rejected a ceasefire offer from the Maute group.
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- This group is on the front lines in the fight against the Philippine military in Marawi.
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What is the present situation?

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- The death toll is estimated to be above 300.
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- Over 200,000 residents have fled what has effectively become an urban battlefield.
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- U.S' military advisers and intelligence analysts have been deployed to aid Philippines.
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- Rebels still control key areas.
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- Many civilians remain in the area, complicating any planned government assault.
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What is the significance?

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- IS jihadist have set Singapore as a target in their publications and videos.
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- Malaysia faced its first IS attack when a grenade injured eight people at a nightclub near Kuala Lumpur.
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- As the world's largest Muslim-majority country, Indonesia is concerned that IS members could easily infiltrate.
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- So the present war has political significance throughout the region and beyond.
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- It is also seen as a move by Mr. Duterte's to divert attention beyond the infamous brutal drug war that his government has waged.
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- Nevertheless, now Mr. Duterte is aiming to bring the battle to a quick, decisive end, and if necessary, to resume negotiations with some groups.
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- Tackling the humanitarian crisis created by this conflict depends on these negotiations and on relief efforts.
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- Mindanao has been rocked by armed insurgency for years. So to prevent

future crisis the long neglect of Mindanao should be ended.
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Source: The Hindu

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