

Statement

# Philippines: Justice for Inday Natingga, Justice for the small tenant-farmers...

Friday 22 June 2012, by [Kilos Ka](#) (Date first published: 21 June 2012).

It was five (5) in the afternoon of June 19, 2012 when Venecia “Inday” Natingga was murdered along the highway of Kapatagan, Lanao del Norte while she was going home and riding in a single motor cycle from the Poblacion. She sustained seven (7) gun shots. Identified suspects are said to be hired by the opponents of small tenant-farmers in one of the land disputes that she was assisting.

Inday Natingga is a known farmer-leader of DKMP-Lanao (Demokratikong Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas - Lanao) and a strong advocate for the protection of the rights of small farmers especially the tenants. She was a former Barangay Captain of Pulang Yuta, Kapatagan, Lanao del Norte; a former chairman of Barangay Agrarian Reform Council; current Chairwoman of cluster ARC community in the areas; and a consistent advocate of Agrarian Reform. Her actions until the last moments of her life proved her strong conviction that rural peace and development will only come to reality if small farmers will have security of the lands they are tilling. She has been very vocal against land grabbing and a pressure to government agencies involved in the processing of land claims.

A week before she was murdered, she together with other para-legals and officers of DKMP – Lanao, a federation of small farmers in Lanao del Norte, received death threats in relation to their strong advocacies of protecting the peasants in their barangay.

Her death adds to the long lists of unsolved killings of farmer leaders all over-the country. In Lanao areas, cases of harassment and human rights violation against tenants have intensified in recent days. In San Luis Estate in Pinuyak, Lala, Lalano del Norte, a total of 7 tenants were ejected from their tenanted lands without order from a court but by the lawyer of the landlord (San Luis). Of the same estate, a tenant’s husband was murdered on March of this year and another farmer harvesting the rice field was shot at his leg by one of the security guards hired by the landowner in last January. All of these cases are languishing in local courts without resolution.

In 2009, a legal counsel, Atty. Dimavivas, was shot dead after assisting the farmers who are illegally ejected from Aradasa Estate in Brgy. Tiacongan, Kapatagan, Lanao del Norte and until today his case went unheard.

As the government is not doing its responsibility of implementing the agrarian reform program mandated by the Constitution and existing laws in a swift and timely manner, community leaders and the small farmers continue to face threats and intimidations.

The death of Inday Natingga should serve as a wake-up call for the government, the national agencies involved in the implementation of agrarian reform program that their slow action has been resulting to violence to rural communities.

In most cases, the small farmers do not receive protection from the government agencies against the

violence perpetuated by the landlords. Instead, the police or military are usually supporting the harassments/ intimidation of the farmers by the landowners.

It has been 24 years since the implementation of CARP which started as centerpiece policy to address social justice in the rural areas under the Administration of the mother of the current president, the late Corazon Aquino in 1988. The President, Mr. Aquino has promised recently, to fully implement the agrarian reform targets before his term ends in 2016. However, if the farmers and community leaders who are protecting the rights of the peasant and small farmers are being murdered, intimidated and denied of any protection from government forces, the promise of the president will surely fail. Unless the government will use its forces to implement the laws and strongly implement the agrarian reform program with will and conviction, rural peace and development will remain a battle cry.

In the light of Inday Natingga's murder, the latest barbaric act against a farmer human rights defender, Kilusang Maralita sa Kanayunan (KILOS-KA), a movement of rural organizations from Mindanao strongly calls the rural communities throughout the country and peasant organizations and supporters from other countries to condemn the Administration of President Aquino for his unsupportive action and slow paced implementation of agrarian reform program. KILOS-KA also calls CARPER implementation oversight committee of the Philippine Congress to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation in resolving the increasing violence and harassment against farmer leaders and to speed up the implementation of agrarian reform program.

KILOS - KA is also calling the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) to order the Philippine National Police, and Local Chief Executives to protect the small farmers against any form of harassment from the landlords and should not use the alibi that the land is a private property so they could not help the farmers.

For the international communities, KILOS KA urges all partners supporting agrarian reform to voice out their sentiments against harassment among farmer leaders and inform the government of Mr. Aquino to take concrete actions. These actions can be in the form of serious implementation of agrarian reforms as mandated by laws and resolve the cases perpetuated against farmers leaders.

June 22, 2012

**Kilusang Maralita sa Kanayunan (KILOS KA)**

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Venecia "Inday" Ybañez Natinga is a member of a peasant farmer family tilling one (1) hectare of foreclosed land in Brgy. Lalibertad, Kapatagan, Lanao del Norte, an adjacent barangay of Pulang Yuta-a barangay where her family is staying. She has been active in land tenure improvement issues since 1994 with her involvement in Demokratikong Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (DKMP)-Lanao.

The picture above [which could not be reproduced here] was taken on August 2010 during the Farmers Consultation in Sitio Camalig, Magpatao, Lala, Lanao del Norte where she was one of the participants.

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