



Mindanao (Philippines) - Sounding the Gong: The IPVoice in the Peace Processes

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The Independent Indigenous Peoples' Voice (IPVoice) is an autonomous body of 21 Mindanao Lumad tribes that pursues the indigenous peoples' peace agenda to the peace processes between the government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) as well as the Communist Party of the Philippines-New Peoples' Army -National Democratic Front (CNN).



The top-down, vertical approach and exclusive talks that included the indigenous peoples' non-negotiable rights as a concession of negotiated peace settlements and agreements without free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) have hampered their direct participation in making decisions that affect their survival.

They became unwilling hosts to extractive projects such as mining and logging in times of peace and became battlefields of the government and rebel forces in times of war. Their men, women and youth were recruited to both armed forces and their communities were divided into different ideologies. As an indigenous leader, Timuay Alim Bandara said, they became victims of war and of peace.

This plight pushed key indigenous leaders in Mindanao to convene at the Indigenous Peoples' Conference on the Peace Processes in Mindanao in Midsayap, Cotabato on October 2012 and

positioned to assert their inherent, inalienable and non-negotiable right to self-determination and commit themselves in engaging the Mindanao peace processes.

This was followed by a series of indigenous peoples' consultations on the peace processes in 2013 where political demands of full inclusion of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) in the BBL and the indigenous peoples' genuine participation to the GPH-CNN peace process were formed.

With indigenous peoples' determination to fight for their rights, their leaders became targets of harassment and killings. The rise of IP killings rose to an overwhelming number in 2015 which prompted indigenous peoples to organize, consolidate, and mobilize.

On October 27-29, 2016, at least 50 indigenous leaders from 21 tribes gathered at the Mindanao Indigenous Peoples Leaders Conference on the Peace Process in Cotabato City. The discussion and decision revolved around the creation of an independent peace panel that would negotiate the political demands of indigenous peoples in the peace processes. And from there, the IPVoice was first sounded and echoed.

* Posted 29th October 2017 by IPVoice:

<https://ipvoicemindanao.blogspot.fr/2017/11/sounding-gong-ipvoice-in-peace-processes.html>

IPVoice crafts peace advocacy blueprint



A member of the IPVoice governing council presents the result of a SWOT analysis workshop.

Cotabato City- The members of the governing council of the independent Indigenous Peoples' Voice (IPVoice) underwent a series of workshops in strategic advocacy and communication planning on September 29-October 3 in Cotabato City.

The IPVoice is a campaign body composed of leaders from 21 ethnic groups in Mindanao that was formed out of series of consultations on the peace processes since 2016. It particularly pursues the genuine engagement of indigenous peoples in the peace processes between the government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) as well as the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Peoples' Army-National Democratic Front (CNN).

Datu Brunz Babelon, an Erumanen ne Menuvu member of the IPVoice governing council said that the strategic advocacy planning was necessary for the 1-year old organization to evaluate its gains and lay down its plans for further engagement.

"Nahimo syang lugar sa pagsusi namo sa katikaran mahitungod sa peace processes na nakapahan-ay

sa amuang mga gimbuhaton sa pag-lobby (It became a space for us I assessing the recent developments in the peace processes that strategized our lobby work)", he added.

The indigenous leaders also realized the importance of communication knowledge, skills and methods in effectively and efficiently popularizing their agenda to the peace processes.

Bae Esterlita Tumindog, a Kulamanen leader from the Arakan Valley shared that making their demands understood had always been difficult because they are not an official party in the peace processes. She appreciated the process of assessing their target audiences and the specific communication strategies to raise their awareness and mobilize them for support.

"Karon mas mahimong sakto gyud ang amuang paglihuk kay naa na miy giya sa pagpalapnag sa amuang mga katungod ilabi na diha sa peace process (We will now engage more effectively because we will be guided by our plans in demanding for our rights especially in the peace process)", she said.

The IPVoice formed its independent peace panels that would negotiate for their rights in the peace processes: the Lumad Husay Mindanao for the GPH-CNN peace process and the Independent Indigenous People's Peace Panel for the GPH-MILF peace process. These panels particularly push for the full inclusion of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act in the Bangsamoro Basic Law and the genuine IP participation the peace process.

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<https://ipvoicemindanao.blogspot.fr/2017/11/ipvoice-crafts-peace-advocacy-blueprint.html>
