

Mindanao (Philippines): Stop Lumad Killings! Respect human rights and our right to self-determination within our ancestral domains!

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We, the twenty-six (26) members of the Council and peace panel of the Independent Indigenous Peoples' Voice (IIP Voice) coming from different tribes of the Indigenous Peoples of Mindanao strongly condemned the spate of killings directed towards our ranks. In the Municipality of Arakan, North Cotabato alone, there are already six (6) persons killed from October 2017 until January of the present year. Most of those killed are Indigenous Peoples.

From our documentation, in the period of October-December 2017, the following persons were killed: Dondon Bartolaba, Edgar Arania, Toto Lamana.

At the start of the year, three people were again murdered. These are:

Tommy Agyaman- January 11, 2018

Michael Locario January 13, 2018

Ricky Olado- January 28, 2018

These killings have caused anxiety and fear in our communities. This intensified when the Martial Law declaration was extended until end of 2018. The AFP and the President even made a pronouncement that 75-80% of the members of the New Peoples Army (NPA) are Indigenous Peoples of Mindanao. We are greatly concerned with this pronouncement, more so, when the President declared the NPA terrorists. This declaration further endangers our lives.

The cases of killings are not confined to the municipality of Arakan in North Cotabato alone. It is also taking place in other parts in Mindanao such as what happened to T'boli leader, Datu Victor Danyan, and seven other of his fellow tribe leaders last December 3, 2017 at Ned, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato.

We are caught in the armed fightings between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the New Peoples Army and armed and paramilitary groups that forcibly take the resources from our ancestral domain. These wars are not ours but we are the ones suffering. All we want is to live in peace in our ancestral domains without interventions from any groups.

Many of us are anxious and confused, with nowhere to go. A number of us were tagged as members of NPA. While those who joined the auxiliary forces of the military were regarded as counter-revolutionaries by the NPA. These accusations and counter-accusations have caused deep division and mistrust among us and in our communities.

One of our Council members of the IIPV, has security issues. Early morning of January 30, 2018,

three men wearing masks entered Datu Danilo Apang's place. The leader happened not to be home during that certain day. It so happened that two of the listed persons (Agyaman and Olado) killed were Datu Apang's relatives.

We collectively call for an end to the killings and justice for all the victims. We also call upon to all those concerned, whether from the side of the government, rebels and other armed groups to respect the Lumad communities as well as the tribal self-governance systems or Indigenous Political Structures .

We strongly encourage the Government of the Philippines and the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front-New Peoples Army to resume with their peace negotiations. Without the talks, the affected communities has no mechanism to resort to, instead, are caught in the armed fighting and victimized by it.

We reiterate that our ancestral domains are our sacred grounds, thus, do not bring your wars in our territories.

References:

Timuay Leticio Datuwata

Chairperson, IIPV Peace Panel

Datu Ayag Quiambao

Spokesperson, IIPV

P.S.

* <http://www.solidarity-us.org/site/node/5236>