

# Philippines: Support the Full Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples Rights in the Bangsamoro Basic Law!

Monday 19 May 2014, by [BANDARA Alim M.](#) (Date first published: 19 May 2014).

**Conversations with CSOs:** Support the Full Inclusion of IP rights in the Bangsamoro Basic Law!

Date & Time: 20 May 2014, Tuesday; 6PM

Venue: Adarna Food & Culture, Kalayaan Ave., Quezon City

IP LOBBY MISSION IN MANILA May 19-21, 2014

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## Support the Full Inclusion of IP Rights in the Bangsamoro Basic Law!

We are the Teduray, Lambangian and Dulangan Manobo indigenous communities thriving at the very heart of the proposed core territory of the incipient Bangsamoro. Our great elders have told our "*baglalans*" to name things above and below to mark the boundaries of our lives and spaces we occupy. Our 200,000 hectares of ancestral domains stand witness to the Birth and Suffering of our people. We have lived side by side with our Moro neighbors and shared the abundance around us through the passage of time. Like them, we are also 'children of the struggle' who have lost limbs and all – and we share, too, the many faces of poverty, injustice and conflict that led to our own 'woundedness'.

We may not have a formal peace negotiations with the National Government, but we struck a peace agreement 17 years ago – the Indigenous Peoples Right Act (IPRA). But the GPH-MILF signed agreements are silent on this, and the draft Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) will echo the same - where are we in the "busy-ness" of all peace actors and stakeholders? In the dawning of the Bangsamoro, what is at stake for the Tedurays, Lambangian, Dulangan Manobos, Erumenen ne Menuvus and the rest of the island IPs such as the Badjao, Jama Mapun, Sama, Balanguingui?

## INTRODUCTION

Intrinsic to a political settlement is the legalization process that guarantees the outcomes of a peace process, the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) has been mandated to draft the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) in order to "entrench the consensus agreements". The BTC went on a caravan in city centers in Mindanao to consult different stakeholders and even collaborated with civil society to conduct community consultations to generate perspectives and proposals from various publics and socialize the FAB and Annexes as well. Last April 2014, the Commission submitted the draft BBL to President Aquino for review before it goes to Congress.

The draft BBL is expected to be the embodiment of the needs and aspirations especially of all inhabitants of the proposed territory of the Bangsamoro. This is the barometer of a more inclusive

peace process wherein the Bangsamoro dream is shared across by diverse peoples in the core areas.

## **IP AGENDA IN THE BANGSAMORO**

And for the Teduray, Lambangian, Dulangan Manobo and other the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in the core and adjacent Bangsamoro territory, engaging the policy formulation processes (crafting of the basic law) was the way to go. Hence, the IPs had been bullish that the BBL will serve as a bastion for respecting and recognizing the fundamental IP rights in the Bangsamoro. For several months, they have been engaging every community consultation, forum, workshop, and conference in order to articulate their agenda in the BBL. They were also serious in attending hearings and submitting formal proposals to various committees designated by the BTC to consolidate proposals in the BBL language.

A challenging paradox for IPs is that they are currently negotiating for their own inherent and existent rights in the new political entity. Moreover, they have to contend with further dilemmas - Annexes and the final compact signed don't recognize IPRA and the MILF publicly declared that there is only one Ancestral Domain and no delineation process will be allowed. What happens when the draft BBL submitted to the President and later enacted by Congress further diminishes their rights and won't guarantee their self governance in the Bangsamoro?

## **IP AT THE CROSSROADS**

The Erumanen ne Menuvu and other tribes adjacent to the core territory have been in solidarity with the IPs in the core areas. They have been consulting among their own constituents, studying the implications of this new political landscape, releasing statements and submitting proposals to the BTC, the GPH and the MILF panels.

For the IPs, their BBL engagement already ended. Hence, they have to move on. They are not convinced with the assurance that an "IPRA"-like law will be legislated in the future. They have already experienced this with ARMM for many years. IPs thought of seeking support from their own 'champions' to carry over relevant IP provisions in the Congress level.

This is the reality ahead of them amidst heavy challenges in the ongoing ancestral domain delineation processes that started this year and vulnerability of communities towards land conflicts and, worse, hostilities due to misinformation and self-serving interest. Such tension from the ground are not covered by mainstream media and subsequently causes grave insecurity of their families and communities over their safety and the future of their ancestral domains.

## **IP LOBBY CONCEPT**

The the 3-day IP LOBBY MISSION on May 19-21, 2014 is conceived as the launch pad to extensively work for the inclusion in the BBL language the fundamental rights perceived to be missing in the draft basic law. The mission expresses the national character of the advocacy appeal of IP for the recognition of their full rights in the BBL through meetings with various publics as well as policymakers in both Houses of Congress to discuss the issue of entrenchment of IP rights.

The mission has the following lobby agenda points : IP's right to self determination and identity, self-governance, delineation of Ancestral Domains, and preservation of existent rights - issues that have been raised by the IP leaders and communities in the formal talks as early as 2004 but their engagement were relegated as "informal talks" hence not covered in official documents nor integrated in the substantive agenda of the talks.

Convened by the Timuay Justice Governance (TJG) and the Gempa te Kelindaan ne Kamal, the

indigenous political structures (IPS) of the Teduray, Lambangian and Erumanen ne Menuvu tribes, respectively - the IP Lobby Mission is accompanied by the IP SYNERGY IN THE BANGSAMORO, a coming together of various Civil Society Organizations (CSO) advancing the IP agenda and meaningful participation in the peace process.

## **LOBBY OBJECTIVES**

1. To create a platform for key IP leaders to advance the IP agenda in the BBL in Congress and various publics;
2. To influence policymakers to champion the recognition of fundamental rights of IPs in an enhanced basic law and work for the passage of a more inclusive BBL;
3. To mobilize popular support in promoting the IP agenda in the ARMM and the Bangsamoro;
4. To continue to engage as active stakeholders in the GPH-MILF peace process;
5. To popularize dialogue and conversations as empowering elements of a public peace process.

The 6-person IP lobby delegation calls on the Philippine government to include in the due diligence and eventual passage - a BBL that fully recognizes their distinct identity as non-Moro Indigenous Peoples and their fundamental rights to govern their fusaka inged (ancestral territory).

## **PROGRAM ITINERARY & CONTACT DETAILS**

May 19 - Kapihan sa Aristocrat (9:30am), Visit to Congress

May 20 - Media Briefing (10am, Kenny Rogers, Matalino St, QC), Visit to Congress, RTD on IP in the BBL (5pm, Adarna, QC)

May 21 - Visit to Congress

*For further details, please contact :* Legal Rights and Natural Resources, Inc (LRC-KsK), mobile 09189436119, Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID) mobile 09177247579, Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement (MPPM) mobile 09998721405, LILAK Purple Action for Indigenous Women's Rights mobile 09175268341.

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*"We are one with the country, as we always have been, in the peace agreement between the Philippine government and our Moro brothers and sisters from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). We have supported the peace process and constructively engaged them from the very beginning and we will continue to do the same as we build our future within the Bangsamoro."*

**Timuay Alim**, a Teduray leader

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