

Mindanao (Philippines): Statement on Indigenous People Killings in Maguindanao province

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ALLIANCE OF TRI-PEOPLE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS (ALTAHR)

and

ALYANSA NG MAMAMAYAN PARA SA KARAPATANG PANTAO (AMKP) STATEMENT of CONCERN

Stop the Killings of the Lumads Now, Uphold Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Justice!

The recent development of the Peace Talks between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (GPH-MILF) resulted to the increase of morale among the Bangsamoro constituents who had long aspired for developments that would signal the start of the realization of the Bangsamoro's Right to Self-Determination. All steps are geared towards the setting up of New Political Entity called Bangsamoro whose identified core area include the Indigenous Peoples' ancestral territories.

The important issue at hand is that, the Ancestral Domains of the Teduray-Lambangian and Dulangan Manobo have been subjects for logging and mining exploration/exploitation. It is important to note that exploiting the Ancestral Domain resources through extraction means is like extracting bloods from the very fabric of the Lumad's Life and Identity and Cultural survival. Fact-Finding Mission have been conducted in the IP ancestral domains, and the result of such fact-finding is gruesome as it validated through their investigation, the ongoing exploration and excavation in their ancestral domains for minerals and oil without going through the process of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and even while the final peace agreement between GPH and MILF have not yet reached a conclusive phase.

Despite the seemingly important breakthrough in the Bangsamoro Struggle, unknown to many, the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in the areas of ARMM had been targeted. What is equivalently gruesome is that, after the fact-finding mission, one by one, those Lumad key leaders who are the front-liners of the campaign against logging and mining were killed helplessly by armed men in front of their family members. To this day, we are counting nine (9) IP leaders and members to have been assassinated. Some of those Lumad key leaders who had been advancing the rights of the Lumads in relation with the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) were being harassed and constantly being monitored by unknown men. These murdered IP Leaders were well known anti-mining and anti-logging advocates. Worst still is that, the murder and assassinations were done with impunity. To date, the authorities have not conducted any investigation and steps to identify and punish the perpetrators.

It is in this premise that we call upon the Government of the Philippines to look into the matters seriously and deliver the perpetrators to justice. Correcting the historical injustice to the Bangsamoro will not definitely mean disregarding justice to the IPs.

To the Government of the Philippines and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (GPH-MILF) panels we hope that they would take cognizance to the injustices that the IPs have encountered and reconsider their legitimate call and demand for full IP recognition and Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) implementation in the core areas.

We urgently call on peace loving people in the country as well as in different parts of the world, to support the struggle for inclusive peace of the Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines as integral part of the peace process between the GPH and the MILF. This can be best done if we strongly campaign for the immediate stop of killings and assassinations of IP leaders and members and bring to justice those who perpetrated these dastardly acts.

These killings should stop immediately! We no longer want to count dead bodies. IP rights are Human Rights and it is Non-Negotiable. We strongly support the peace agreement between GPH and MILF. We strongly support the full inclusion of the rights of the Indigenous Peoples' in the Bangsamoro Basic Law. We support building inclusive peace in the Bangsamoro in particular and the Philippines in general.

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