

Solidarity for all Filipino Farmers in their Fight for Food and Justice

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Suffering the brunt of the ongoing El Nino, more than 6 thousand farmers converged along a national highway in Kidapawan in the island of Mindanao in the Philippines on March 30 to demand 15,000 sacks of rice and financial subsidy promised to them six months earlier by the provincial government. They urgently need this assistance to tide them over until they are able to plant and harvest rice again.

In response, government officials offered a meager 3 kilos of rice for each farmer to last them for 3 months. The protestors held their ground despite the threat of forcible dispersal from security forces. The three-day stand-off was broken on April 1 when forces of the Philippine National Police fired at the farmers leaving 3 farmers dead, hundreds injured and afterwards nearly 100 in detention. To date, more than 1,000 of the farmers are being prevented by the police from leaving the grounds of a church compound where they took shelter after the dispersal. Worse, the local government has refused the farmers access to the food and rice donations pouring in from those in support of the farmer's plight.

A severe food and water crisis is fast spreading in Mindanao and the rest of the Philippines in the wake of what scientists say maybe the most severe El Nino episode on record. Global warming and climate change has been generating not only super typhoons but also super-El Ninos. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) issued a warning early last year that there would be 34 provinces affected by EL Nino by March 2016 and 68 provinces by April. It is expected to peak between May and June or until the onset of the rainy season this year.

The Mindanao farmers and indigenous peoples communities would have been in a stronger position to weather the effects of El Nino if their watersheds and water systems had not been damaged. The provinces badly hit by El Nino todate — Bukidnon, North Cotabato, South Cotabato and Davao del Sur — have one thing in common. Most of their watersheds are severely compromised due to unregulated expansion of agribusiness plantations, mining operations and coal fired power plants.

We, the undersigned individuals and organizations condemn in the strongest terms the brutal response to the just and legitimate demands of the Mindanao farmers.

We express our solidarity with all Filipino farmers and call for support in their struggle to survive the El Nino crisis.

We demand the Philippine government to:

1. Suspend, investigate and charge at the soonest possible time all police units and government officials involved in the violent dispersal operations.
2. Stop withholding food and aid from the farmers, and hold local government culpable for this crime against the farmers.
3. Declare all 68 provinces affected by El Nino under a state of calamity and release the much

needed calamity and the standby quick response funds of concerned agencies;

4. Implement comprehensive land reform, stop land grabs, and dismantle landlordism and usury that have burdened Filipino farmers for centuries.

5. Stop the continued plunder and wanton destruction of ecosystems in the Philippines.

Initial list of Signatories

1. Asian-Peoples Movement on Debt and Development
2. Freedom from Debt Coalition
3. Philippine Movement for Climate Justice
4. Ecological Justice Interfaith Movement
5. Alyansa Tigil Mina
6. SANLAKAS
7. Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates
8. Buhay na may Dignidad para sa Lahat (DIGNIDAD Alliance)
9. Aniban ng Manggagawa sa Agrikultura
10. Makabayan Pilipinas
11. Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino
12. Task Force Detainees of the Philippines
13. Network for Transformative Social Protection
14. Bulig Visayas
15. Koalisyon Pabahay ng Pilipinas
16. ASEAN Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression Caucus
17. Asia-Pacific Network for Food Sovereignty
18. WomanHealth Philippines
19. Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances
20. Coalition of Services of the Elderly
21. Initiatives for International Dialogue
22. Foundation for Media Alternatives
23. Pambansang Kongreso ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan
24. Association Nigérienne des Scouts de l'environnement
25. Biofuelwatch, UK/US
26. Worldview-The Gambia
27. TierrActiva Peru
28. Institute for Policy Studies, Climate Policy Program
29. 350.org
30. Bolivian Platform on Climate Change
31. Ecologistas en Acción
32. 11.11.11
33. Partido Lakas ng Masa
34. Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland
35. Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement
36. Plataforma de Jóvenes Climáticos - Ecuador
37. TWN, Consumers Association of Penang and Sahabat Alam Malaysia
38. Trimona Multi-Purpose Cooperative Inc.
39. Kampanya para sa Makataong Pamumuhay
40. Indian Social Action Forum - INSAF, India
41. FDC-Southern Mindanao
42. LILAK (Purple Action for Indigenous Women's Rights)
43. Aksi

44. Solidaritas Perempuan
45. Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau
46. March for Climate Justice Pilipinas
47. Jagaran Nepal
48. KRuHA Indonesia
49. World March of Women-Pilipinas
50. Philippine Women on Asean
51. River Basin Friends
52. debtWATCH Indonesia
53. Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee
54. Focus on the Global South
55. KpSHK - Konsorsium Pendukung Sistem Hutan Kerakyatan
56. Greenpeace Southeast Asia
57. WWF-Philippines
58. STOP the War Coalition Philippines
59. Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives
60. Migrant Forum in Asia
61. VOICE
62. Philwomen on ASEAN
63. Trade Union Policy Institute
64. Dakila
65. Ecological Society of the Philippines
66. ActionAid Philippines
67. Global Justice Now
68. The Climate Reality Project - Philippines
69. ActionAid International
70. ATTAC Japan
71. Re: Common
72. Engajamundo
73. Nabodhara Bangladesh
74. Monitoring Sustainability of Globalization - Malaysia
74. All Nepal Peasants Federation
75. Women Peasants Federation
77. National Youth Peasants Association, Nepal
78. Dalits and Landless Peasants Association, Nepal
79. Alliance for Right to Food National Network, Kathmandu
80. South Asia Peasants Coalition
81. South Asia Food Sovereignty Network
82. South Asia Farmers Forum
83. EquityBD
84. COAST
85. Friends of the Earth U.S
86. Aksyon Klima
87. Himalaya Niti Abhiyan
88. Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha - BJVJ
89. Beyond Copenhagen Collective
90. IndiaClimateJustice
91. Franciscan Solidarity Movement for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation
92. Fellowship for the Care of Creation Association Incorporated
93. South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication
94. LDC Watch

- 95. People's SAARC
- 96. Rural Reconstruction Nepal
- 97. All India Union of Forest Working People
- 98. Bayay Sibuyanon Incorporated

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P.S.

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<http://act.350.org/letter/food-not-bullets/>