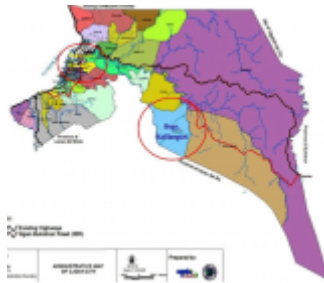


# Solidarity mission in Mindanao (Philippines) - Brgy. Kalilangan: We're Always with You

Tuesday 16 March 2021, by [BERLAN Boboy](#) (Date first published: 10 February 2021).

The Brgy. Kalilangan was one of the hinterland barangays of Iligan City inhabited with mixed people of Higaonon (Lumad/indigenous peoples) and Maranaw tribes of the region, living dependently in farming as the main source of income. As of 2015 census, Kalalingan population reached 1,442 individuals with 5 - 9 family members. The barangay has about 9 kilometers distance (under-developed roads) from the very center of Iligan and with 461.9 meters or 1,515.4 feet above sea level reasons that the community is potential of any types of farm products.



As remember, on June 25, 2020, residents of Brgy. Kalilangan, affected by armed confrontation between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and alleged members of the New People's Army (NPA) which accordingly newly present in the forested portion of the area. The situation of pandemic that resulted to total lock down for several months put the affected residents into multiple difficulties due to situation such as 1) before the pandemic they've already suffering food scarcity due to poor agricultural harvest as effect of no support from the responsible agencies, 2) if having farm production, the proceeds will nearly enough for hauling cost due to expensive transportation cost because of the very poor access road to the market, and 3) absence of basic social services which translated by local leaders that they were left and forgotten by the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Iligan.



According to reliable source from the community, that's not the first time of encounter between NPA and AFP, it happen before, when the alleged NPA elements started to occupy the forested areas when a coal mining operator attempt to operate and such situation resulted to several encounters and residents started to felt insecurities of their peaceful living and livelihoods, but worst was the incident of June 25. Although, only some villages forced to flee from their houses, the entire community of Kalilangan were affected emotionally, in fact, when they heard fire fights thru exchanging firing of fire arms all of them especially the women and children were emotionally panic while the men or the breed winners afraid to go in their respective farms and preferred to stay home for security reason.



As accounted figure, a total two hundred three (203) families affected by the armed conflict specifically from the village of Dowa-dowa, Sapot B, Upper Kalilangan, Lemon, Galang-galang, Samid-samid 1 ug Samid-samid 2 and fifty four (54) families displaced from their place and homes. The first solidarity mission for Kalilangan has conducted last year in collaboration with the Multi-stakeholders Initiatives for Humanitarian Action against Disasters (MIHANDS), Kilosang Maralita sa Kanayonan (KILOS KA), Sumpay Mindanao, Lanao Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (LAHRA), Alyansa ng Kabataan para sa Kapayapaan (AKMK) and Ranaw Disaster Response and Rehabilitation Assistance Center (RDRRAC).

Last February 10, 2021 a second solidarity mission conducted by the same collaborating institution of Kilusang Maralita sa Kanayonan (Kilos Ka), Lanao Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (LAHRA), Multi-stakeholders Initiatives for Humanitarian Action against Disasters (MIHANDS) Central, Alyansa ng Kabataang Mindanao para sa Kapayapaan (AKMK), Sumpay Mindanao and Ranaw Disaster Response & Rehabilitation Assistance Center (RDRRAC). The mission not mainly to provide food assistance but also to formally establish relationship with local or traditional leaders in order to discuss deeper the situation of the community in the comprehensive and integrated lens in the context of mutual responsibility and action considering the human rights, environmental rights and peace building.



The community leaders fervently accepted the team with warmest welcome of the Punong Barangay of Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) of Kalilangan. Youth, as significant sector also have consulted by representative youth from AKMK. The traditional leaders and the team formally shared some ideas and perspective about the recent condition of the community and where to meet and establish partnership.

The simple activity conducted at the Day Care Center of the barangay thru ceremony initiated by a Religious Leader it was followed by the short message of Punong Barangay Armando Mansumayan. Only thirty-eight (38) families received a food packs since others were already transfer to other areas as considered safety for their permanent relocation. The remaining 38 families were those who unable to return their original place of origin due to security advised by LGU and AFP.

It was observed during this visit the latest condition of the IDPs, that every family live in a very small shanties of about 6 feet by 8 feet floor area and 7 feet maximum height of the roof. Family utilized it as their sleeping room and dining room. Materials' used were few pieces of galvanized iron sheets and round timber, but they have no choice because of the incapacitated BLGU due to politically discriminated of the city government of Iligan. In fact, during this mission, a few kilos of different sizes of nails were also provided as requested by the Punong Barangay for them to use to tighten the

roof of the shanties. Aside of the condition of the IDPs, scarcity of food to meet the three basic daily requirements for breakfast, lunch and dinner were noticed. The situation of the access road from adjacent barangay, Dulag is concrete evidence of a discriminated community in which the team this experience felt unusual body pains after the mission due to very difficult condition of road to Kalilangan. A certain leader added that even they could do farming any farm products, they can do it easily but the hardship to deliver in the market is the main factor and felt them discourage because of very expensive cost of transport parallel with strict mobility due to Covid-19 situation.

Among of the salient part of the visit were the symbolic welcome initiated by a certain elders as usual opening events of an activity with a newly participants of the area. Distribution of the food packs followed in which the faces of the recipient wore of happiness and children also were distrusted some candies which done thru their day care teacher. Boodle fights lunch participated with all the present individuals happily and meaningfully done as one. In the middle of simple menu of viands (native chicken and a dried fish) everyone ate satisfactorily. With all initial words with the leaders, the team happily left the community in the late part of the day, again, having the challenging travel due to heavily damaged access roads.

### **Boboy Berlan, RDRRAC**



*One of the oldest age traditional leader (red shirt) preparing the ritual to be conducted as formal opening of the activity that visit. He will be the officiating leader of the ritual as agreed by the present council of elders. Accordingly, the ritual will serve as offering prayers of the Indigenous Peoples to ask the safety of the newly faces persons and to guide the activity safety and successful.*



*AKMK member assisted the old community leader during receipt of food pack assistance*



*For those recipients which unable to go to the venue, some of their leader personally guide the team to deliver the food pack in their homes especially those adult were not around.*

