



Cordillera Peoples Alliance

For the Defense of Ancestral Domain and for Self Determination

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Press Release
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Stop the killings of indigenous peoples and advocates in Mindanao!

The Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) is outraged by the killing rampage of paramilitary groups and State security forces in Mindanao against Lumad activists, environmentalists, human rights defenders, educators and advocates for the indigenous peoples. CPA condemns these killings in the highest terms possible.

The long-time collusion of notorious paramilitary groups and State security forces in Mindanao resulted in the long list of killings, enforced disappearances, evacuations against the Lumads and advocates for peace, human rights and environment. The recent spate of killings in Mindanao mirrors the height of impunity under the BS Aquino regime. In his last year in power, BS Aquino is unleashing its deadly attack against human rights, environmental defenders and peace advocates.

Based on data provided by KARAPATAN, on September 1, 2015, two Lumad leaders and a champion for indigenous people's education in Mindanao were killed in Surigao del Sur. Emerito Samarca, the executive director of ALCADDEV (Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development) was gunned down by paramilitary forces Mahagat/Bagani within the ALCADDEV campus in Lianga, Surigao del Sur. Samarca was found dead in a classroom in Alcadev with a stab wound, and his neck, arms and legs tied up. On the other hand, Dionel Campos, chairperson of Malahutayong Pakigbisog Alang sa Sumusunod (MAPASU) and his cousin Aurelio Sinzo were killed by the same paramilitary forces while they were coming out of a house in Diatagon, Surigao del Sur.

KARAPATAN further stated that two days prior to the killing, the paramilitary group Magahat/Bagani Force and elements of the 36th IB encamped at the ALCADDEV school compound and occupied the function hall and parts of the school grounds. During the encampment, the Magahat group threatened the school's faculty members, staffs and community members that they will massacre the community if the people will not leave in two days.

On August 31, 2015, the MAGAHAT group burned down the community cooperative store of MAPASU while indiscriminately firing around the community. Samarca, according to initial report was held and detained by some armed members of Magahat before he was killed. On the evening of August 31, the Alcadev faculty and most of the residents in Han-ayan went to Km. 16 for safety. At around 4 a.m., Magahat Forces went from house to house in Km. 16 and ordered the residents to get out of their houses and go to the center of the community. That was when Campos and Sinzo were met by a volley of gunfire from brothers Loloy and Bobby Tejero of the Magahat/Bagani Force.

Magahat members also confiscated all cellphones and cameras from the residents and ALCADEV staff and remaining visitors in the community.

ALCADEV is an alternative learning system especially designed to provide secondary education to indigent indigenous youth – the Manobo, Banwaon, Higanon, Talaandig, and Mamanwa of Surigao del Norte and Sur and Agusan Norte and Sur. ALCADEV have been established by Lumads themselves with the help of cause-oriented groups. However, instead of recognizing their valuable contribution, the Lumad community school has been subjected to harassment and malicious accusations of the 36th IB and their rabid paramilitary groups that ALCADEV is a NPA school.

The killing rampage by the Magahat forces also resulted to the massive evacuation of more than 4, 000 Lumad families from their communities in Surigao del Sur.

We should hold BS Aquino accountable to these heinous crimes committed against people. We also call on peace loving people to support the indigenous peoples in Mindanao at these difficult times. We should support them in their calls to demand justice for the victims. We also urged the government to conduct an investigation and prosecute the Mahagat/Bagani forces. Lastly, we call for the immediate pull out of military in indigenous communities, disbanding and dismantling of paramilitary forces in Mindanao. ***

For reference:

Abigail Anongos
Secretary General