



Cordillera Peoples Alliance

For the Defense of Ancestral Domain and for Self Determination

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tragic bus crash should serve as eye opener

On August 18, 2010, one of the deadliest bus crashes which claimed 42 lives shook the Cordilleras and the country. At 9:20 AM that day, an ESO NICE bus with 50 passengers bound to San Fernando, La Union from Baguio City fell into a 150-foot ravine in Barangay Banangan, Sablan, Benguet due to failing breaks. The bus fell from a sharp curve with nothing to block it from going down the ravine.

“The Cordillera Peoples Alliance extends its deepest condolences to the families, relatives and friends of the victims. We expect the local government to provide financial support to the victims and the management of ESO NICE to face its accountabilities in the tragedy. At the same time, we hope that this would serve as an eye opener to everyone. This sort of tragedy is not the first of its kind in the Cordillera and it must never happen again. We therefore ask the local and national government to immediately enforce safety measures against such vehicular tragedies,” said CPA Chairperson Windel Bolinget.

Bolinget added that transport infrastructure, as a basic government service, has to be further developed and should be made a priority in the Cordillera. This is especially so because of the region’s geographical terrain and topography where roads are inevitably built in steep mountainsides thereby making roads prone to vehicular accidents in addition to landslides and roadcuts primarily caused by heavy rains.

Bolinget stressed that much needs to be done with the present road system in order to ensure public transport safety. For instance, safety mechanisms could be put up on roadsides especially in sharp curves.

In addition, vehicular conditions must also be accounted for in ensuring public transport safety. “The bus crash indicates a need to implement regular inspection of public transport vehicles and strict enforcement of transportation safety-related policies especially on buses to ensure the security of passengers. Moreover, operators and drivers must seriously consider vehicular conditions before any travel,” said Bolinget.

The CPA calls on the new administration to prioritize adequate budget allocation for the rehabilitation and development of road systems and other basic social services in the region more than allocations for projects and programs that are detrimental to the lives of indigenous peoples such as military budget and even foreign debt service. For effective delivery of public transportation services, the government must also seriously look into the issue of corruption. “President Noynoy Aquino must curb corruption as he promised and ensure that government funds allocated for the restoration, rehabilitation and development of road systems in the region are used accordingly,” added Bolinget. # **CPA Public Information Commission**

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