



# CORDILLERA PEOPLES ALLIANCE

*For the Defense of the Ancestral Domain and for Self Determination*

23 July 2012

## **Unmask and Resist the Deception of the Aquino II regime**

July 23 today is PNOy's third SONA, and for two years of the Aquino presidency, nothing substantial was achieved inspite of PNOy's pronouncements of "matuwid na daan" and "kayo ang boss ko". The Filipino people have been unwillingly plunged into deeper crisis, with the worsening poverty, hunger and human rights violations We expect myths and false claims in PNOy's SONA today—and as such the people must make their own SONA for the continuing assertion of people's rights and resistance to the deception of this regime.

As Filipinos and indigenous peoples of the Cordillera, what would we have wanted to hear in this year's SONA?

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*...That poverty and hunger have been substantially addressed.*

Delia is a sidewalk vendor in Baguio City. She barely earns enough to provide for the daily needs of her 6 children. Yesterday, she earned P260, when she should at least earn P941 so they can at least eat decently in a day. It remains a problem how to source out for their other needs: children's education, health and transportation needs. At a national scale, only from December 2011 to March 2012, poverty rate rose from 9.1 million to 11.1 million families. In the first quarter of this year alone, 23.8% or 4.8 million families experienced hunger. In NCR, minimum daily wage should be P1017, but it is still pegged at P446. Still, daily wage goes as low as P113, which is the same as in 2003. And only between 2011 to 2012, the net wealth of the country's 40 richest families even increased by 40%, with now 15 Filipino billionaires from 11 in the same period. The net wealth of these richest families of \$37B is already 25% of the country's gross national income.

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*...That secure employment has been created, just wages granted*

Lorna hails from Benguet and has opted to work abroad as an OFW, with high hopes of greener pastures. With continuing lack of secure jobs in the country, she will be joining the 1.4 million Filipinos who go abroad as OFWs, yearly. An average of 3,000 Filipinos leave the country everyday to work as OFWs.

Unemployment worsened, with 24% more unemployed since December 2011.

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*...That basic social services are receiving greater State subsidy and support.*

Julian's wife is about to give birth, and needs medical attention. But from their remote barrio in Talifugo, Lacub, Abra, help is a long way off, as it takes a 1 day hike to the clinic in Poblacion. It takes another 4-5 hours to reach the hospital in the provincial capital of Bangued. A vehicle must first be secured for their travel. In Balbalan, Kalinga, Pedro is carried on a stretcher by his kinsmen, racing down mountain trails for hours just to get him to the nearest hospital, for his treatment from malaria. Medicines are scarce and expensive, and they will have to pay hundreds of pesos for his medical treatment. In another remote barrio, in Buneg, Conner, Apayao, children trek at least three to four hours a day to reach the nearest school. Grades One to Four share a single classroom as only one teacher is assigned to the primary school. But for those able to attend highschool, the hike could take 1 whole day to reach the school.

Government allotted P114.4B for defense which is 6.3 percent of the total national budget, while state colleges and universities were only given a total of P30.3 billion for 2012. In the Cordillera, tuition fee increase in SUCs now reached a staggering 300%. The rest of the social services sector of education, health, social services, employment, among others, will have to divide the total allotted budget of P567.9 B, such that every Filipino is only allotted P1.33/day health budget—not even enough to buy paracetamol. Meanwhile, P356B was allotted for debt servicing (foreign debt is now at \$62.9).

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*... That we enjoy a better state of human rights... and indigenous peoples' ancestral land rights and self determination is respected and recognized.*

Until now, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has not been charged for the countless human rights violations under her regime. There is still no justice for CPA's Markus Bangit, Alyce Claver, and thousands more all over the country who were victims of Oplan Bantay Laya. PNoy continues this State terrorism with Oplan Bayanihan, where 95 cases of extrajudicial killings and 10 cases of enforced disappearance have been documented in the two years of the Aquino II regime.

The Cordillera remains heavily militarized, disrupting community life, sowing fear and terror, and resulting in violations to indigenous peoples' collective, civil and political rights. Under Oplan Bayanihan, communities and progressive people's organisations continue to be vilified and attacked as military targets. Military operations are held in the guise of "peace and development operations", which are ultimately aimed at deceiving the people and hiding the military's true intent of counter insurgency and political repression. Until now, Captain Danilo Lalin, formerly with the 50<sup>TH</sup> IB and now of the 86<sup>TH</sup> IB, is not made accountable for the rape and sexual abuse of two minors from Mankayan. In fact, under PNoy, no military official responsible of human rights violations was made accountable.

The violation of indigenous peoples ancestral land rights persists and even worsened, as the Cordillera remains a resource base of the State for plunder and profit. From the time we submitted the Indigenous Peoples Agenda in Malacañang in 2010, PNoy has not made any commitment, not even a response. Lately, he enacted EO 79 which will only worsen mining plunder and human rights violations. Pnoy also approved 24% of permits being processed for mining activities.

Communities in Mankayan, Benguet are on their 7<sup>th</sup> month barricading Lepanto partner and South African mining company Goldfields from pursuing its drilling and eventual mining activities. Apart from overlapping large mining applications covering at least 1.2 million hectares of the Cordillera land area of 1.8 million hectares, large hydro and geothermal projects are also in the offing, such as that in Kalinga by the global giant Chevron.

All of the above show nothing was done for Cordillera indigenous peoples under PNoy. It has done the complete opposite, by actively selling out our national patrimony and sustaining State terrorism. Deceptive programs like the conditional cash transfer and *pantawid pasada* have not improved the ordinary Filipino's standard of living. In two years, PNoy showed he is no different from GMA, or other regimes before him. Thus, true hopes for change remain in people's collective struggle for social justice and human rights. \*\*\*

Reference:

Abie Anongos, Secretary General