



# CORDILLERA PEOPLES ALLIANCE

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

*Joint Statement of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance and Cordillera Elders Alliance*

## **Cordillera Heroes: Remembering Ama Daniel Ngayaan (1922-1987)**

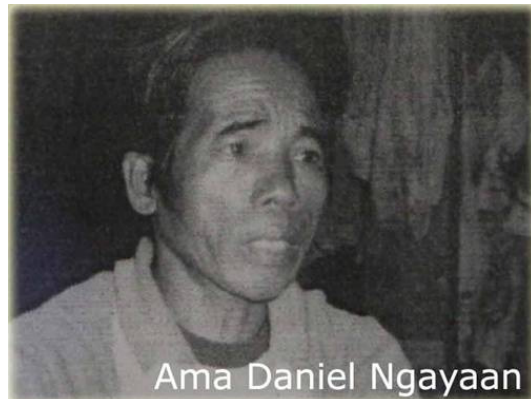
27 years ago, tribal elder and leader Daniel Ngayaan was abducted and killed in Cagaluan gate, Pasil, Kalinga province, by the Cordillera Peoples Liberation Army (CPLA). Ama Daniel had just come from the Regional Council meeting of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) in Baguio City on October 5, 1987, where he was the vice chairperson until his death. At that time, he was also the chairperson of the Cordillera Bodong Association. His remains were never found. 27 years after his abduction, his family, clan, friends, *kailian* and organisation have yet to say that justice has been served. On October 5, 2014 we remember and honor Ama Daniel, hero and martyr of the Cordillera peoples' struggle.

### **Who is Ama Daniel Ngayaan?**

Ama Daniel was born in 1922 in Sitio Liglig, Tanglag Lubuagan, Kalinga and belongs to the Tanglag tribe. Ama Daniel was able to finish elementary education with the inaccessibility of education in far-flung areas, and later raised his family of eight as a farmer and a skilled carpenter. From 1955-1960, his leadership earned his appointment as Barangay Captain of Tanglag.

In 1974, he was one of the elders who stood up and actively participated and led the opposition against the World Bank-funded Chico River Dams project during the Marcos dictatorship. Ama Daniel significantly contributed in uniting the elders of his community, being an influential peace pact holder himself for the Tanglag tribe. Through his participation in *bodong* conferences in Buscalan, Tanglag, and as far as Metro Manila, community opposition was strengthened and consolidated. From these *bodong* conferences, elders forged a *pagta* expressing opposition to the dam project in 1975, in the spirit of the defense of ancestral heritage. His leadership figured as well in spontaneous actions against the dam such as the dismantling of the National Power Corporation camp in Mosimos, Tomiangan. Affected communities including a huge number of women marched down from Tomiangan to Camp Duyan in Bulanao, Tabuk to return parcels of the dismantled camp. This happened in 1976.

Threatened by the growing opposition, the Marcos government later sent PANAMIN (Presidential Assistant on National Minorities) representative Manda Elizalde to the province. PANAMIN was used as a divide and rule mechanism against the tribal peoples just so the dam project would push through. Scholarships were offered to families, including cash and canned goods. Ama Daniel was among the first to expose the real motives of this agency. Like thousands of mass leaders and members of the progressive organizations illegally detained during the Martial Law, Ama Daniel, together with other 150 leaders,



Ama Daniel Ngayaan



Lower photo: KBPPHA Assembly in Buscalan, Tinglayan, Kalinga (1983). Ama Daniel at far right.

elders, oppositionists of the Chico dam was arrested in 1976. They were detained in Camp Olivas in Pampanga, charged of hampering a government project. They were released the following year with the help of different support groups from the church, the Free Legal Assistance (FLAG) and Amnesty International.

His arrest and detention did not discourage his determination against the dam construction and his people's fight, as he continued to figure in the struggle against the dam. As a peace pact holder, he was among those who actively participated in the formation of the Kalinga Bontoc Peace Pact Holders Association (KBPPHA) in 1982, where he became an officer. In 1983, the growing and widening Cordillera people's movement gave rise to the birth of the Cordillera Bodong Association, which he later chaired. During the second congress of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance, Ama Daniel was elected vice chairperson, In October 5, 1987, Ama Daniel was homeward bound to Tanglag after the CPA Regional Council Meeting when he was abducted by elements of the CPLA in Cagaluang gate.

### **Elusive Justice**

Justice for Ama Daniel remains elusive. It remains so even with the knowledge that the CPLA is accountable for his death, and later on Romy Gardo of CPA-Abra. Even with CPLA's criminal activities and the complaints lodged against it, the CPLA remains scot-free and is fact coddled by government, the latest act of which is the CPLA's integration into the Armed Forces despite its criminal records under the Arroyo government, virtually forgetting the CPLA's crimes. For this, the state remains culpable of denying justice to Ngayaan, his clan, tribe and the Cordillera people's movement. In the wake of the national issue of corruption through the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF), the CPLA is in fact among those that acquired huge budget from government and remain to enjoy privileges resulting from its MOA with government through the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP). This is a sham peace process, and call on the Philippine government to instead resume its formal peace talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) to address the roots of the armed conflict towards just and lasting peace.

Thus, as we remember Ama Daniel, we shall not let our guard down and continue to expose the CPLA for its criminal acts and human rights violations. We shall continue our calls for the immediate abolition of this paramilitary group and make it answer for its crimes against the Cordillera people.

Nearly three decades after his abduction, we come to remember the life of our martyr Ama Daniel Ngayaan-his great contributions in the defense of our ancestral lands, his thoughts and deed as a progressive tribal leader. We also remember the brave people of Kalinga and Bontoc who stood up against the dam. Today, the Chico river runs free and flowing.

### **Justice for Ama Daniel Ngayaan! Justice to All victims of Extrajudicial Killings!**

Reference:

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