



มูลนิธิผสานวัฒนธรรม Cross Cultural Foundation

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Letter of Solidarity, with respect to disappearance of Mr. James Balao, human rights activist in Philippines

The Cross Cultural Foundation extends support to the family and friends of Mr. James Balao, who has been missing since 17th September 2008 and is believed to have been abducted by state security forces. On 17th September, while Mr. James Balao was standing on the roadside, a van pulled up in front of him and several men jumped out, handcuffed him and pushed him inside the van. One of the men turned to the crowd of onlookers and shouted out; 'Don't interfere, this is a drug pusher, we're taking him to Camp Dangwa'.

Mr. James Balao has not been seen since then. Before his disappearance, Mr. Balao had reported about the increasing surveillance on himself and his family.

Mr. James Balao is one of the Founding Members of the Cordillera People's Alliance, Philippines. The Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA) was established in 1984 as an independent federation of grassroots based organizations amongst indigenous communities in the Cordillera Region, Philippines and is committed to the promotion and defense of indigenous people's rights, human rights, social justice, national freedom and democracy. The Cordillera Human Rights Alliance, a branch of the CPA, believes that the surveillance and enforced disappearance of Balao was perpetrated by state security forces as a part of their policy of categorizing legal people's organizations and their staff and volunteers as "front organizations" and "supporters" of armed insurgent groups. This has led to surveillance, harassment, abduction, and killing of members and leaders of progressive people's organizations all over the country.

The Cross Cultural Foundation joins human rights organizations in Philippines in urging the Philippine government to disclose the whereabouts of Mr. James Balao immediately.

Somchai Homlaor

President
Cross Cultural Foundation

For more details regarding the disappearance; Contact Ms. Cheryl L. Daytec-Yangot, Board Member of the Cordillera Indigenous Peoples Legal Center and a Member of the Cordillera Human Rights Alliance- CHRA, email: chytdaytec@gmail.com

Cross Cultural Foundation (CrCF) aims at promoting understanding across different cultures. It also works for the promotion and protection of human rights and democracy and rule of law. CrCF is registered under Ministry of Culture in Thailand in 2002. Since then it has been working closely with its partners such as National Human Rights Commission of Thailand, Lawyer Council of Thailand, Thai Volunteer Services towards promoting rule of law, facilitating vulnerable groups to access justice through legal aid and litigation and promoting understanding amongst diverse groups through studies, research and information dissemination