



CORDILLERA PEOPLES ALLIANCE

For the Defense of the Ancestral Domain and for Self Determination

August 30, 2013

Stop the Bombings and Militarization in Mountain Province!

While the Filipino people are demanding for the abolition of the pork barrel system, we are confronted with yet another situation where national government, AFP and PNP spends the people's money over something senseless. Today, August 30th, aerial bombings and ground military operations of the police and military shook Mountain Province, immediately affecting at least the northern communities of Sagada and upland communities of Bontoc.

CPA strongly condemns this, and we call for an immediate stop to the military operations before community properties, livelihood, and resources are destroyed and before any civilian becomes a victim of the military bombings and operations. We demand for the accountability of State armed forces, and we call on the local officials of Mountain Province and the Cordillera, all peace-loving individuals and organisations, to condemn the militarisation and push for the resumption of the peace negotiations of the GPH and NDFP to address the roots of the longstanding armed conflict towards attaining genuine, just and lasting peace.

Initial reports from our chapter in Mountain Province reveal that directly targeted by the aerial strikes and bombings are hunting grounds, *uma*, and water sources, very close to the rice fields and communities. The destruction of these poses serious economic impact to our indigenous communities, with the contamination of water sources and threat to food security. We fear that the bombs will hit pipelines supplying water to the communities like Mainit and Guinaang. The area has been historically, massively, and repeatedly bombed, indiscriminately fired at and the communities historically militarized resulting in various forms of human rights violations. Local livelihood is badly affected as well. Tourist guides in the northern barrios of Sagada alone are losing as high as P4,000 daily due to the military operations. This does not include yet the drivers, vendors, restaurants and inns also badly affected. These are even on top of the psychological and social impact, trauma and terror effects of bombings and indiscriminate firing, and the destruction to properties.

The military operations taking place in Sagada and nearby communities is Oplan Bayanihan. Oplan Bayanihan is militarization, the destruction of indigenous peoples' territories and resources, and the violation of our ancestral land rights. The Malibcong bombings earlier this year is Oplan Bayanihan. The rape and sexual harassment of young women in Mankayan in 2012 is Oplan Bayanihan.

We, the people, do not gain a single thing from all of these. We ask, how much was spent for the military operations in Sagada? How much exactly is national government spending for Oplan Bayanihan? How much discretionary fund and PDAF was used? How much is a bullet? a bomb? an attack helicopter? aviation fuel? To think that indigenous peoples in the Cordillera and the rest of the country are historically marginalised and neglected, and to think that it is the people's money and resources systematically corrupted and spent on senseless doings. These are the very resources used to kill people, destroy ancestral lands, communities, *papayew*, forests and watersheds. Is this the 'tuwid na daan' so hyped up by PNoy? We are enraged at this and we condemn this.

As Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces, PNoy and his chain of command is accountable for human rights violations in indigenous peoples' territories, for the damage and destruction inflicted to the communities. Stop the bombings, militarization, human rights violations. Use the peoples' money for services and welfare of indigenous peoples, not for bombs and bullets!

Reference:

AB Anongos, Secretary General