



Cordillera Peoples Alliance

For the Defense of Ancestral Domain and for Self Determination

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SUMIKAD Cordi People's Protest condemns IP Rights Violations, Militarization

Baguio City—On October 20, hundreds of indigenous peoples (IP), advocates and families of victims of human rights and international humanitarian law violations marched the streets of Baguio City and highlighted the pressing issues of state fascism and national oppression.

The march dubbed as Sumikad Kordilyera targeted specific government agencies such as the Mine and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), Camp Allen, and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) to voice out their rage on the inaction of these agencies to protect the IPs and their direct participation on implementing projects that are being rejected by the umili. With October celebrated as Peasant Month, the march also staged short programs at the Department of Agriculture and the National Economic Development Authority, where protesters submitted the Cordillera Peoples Declaration on Genuine Regional Autonomy.



Justice for Lacub

Imelda Tabiando, deputy secretary general of the Cordillera Human Rights Alliance condemned and emphasized the violations of the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) committed by the 41st IBPA against the people of Lacub and seven combatants of the New Peoples Army. Aside from the clear indications of torture, mutilation and desecration of remains of the combatants, two civilians, Noel Viste, a resident of Poblacion, Lacub and Engr. Fidela Salvador were also extrajudicially killed by the 41st IBPA during their operation. Civilians were also used as guides and human shields by the military. She added that military continue to



use their detachment near the elementary and high schools of Lacub causing insecurity and suspension of classes during the operation. Even now, students and their parents fear for their security. Ms. Tabiando also noted that the military in Lacub and in Abra is the continuing

harassment of the local chapter of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance by the military. In ending, she challenged the current government of Aquino to resume peace talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines to address the roots causes of the armed conflict.

In Camp Allen, Jang Hernandez, sister of Recca Noelle Monte who among the seven members of the NPA killed in Lacub, Abra last September called the members of the 41st IBPA as *berdugo ng Abra*. In the autopsy conducted by the National Bureau of Investigation it clearly stated that Recca died without gunshot wounds. Recca like the other seven NPA members bore signs of torture, mutilation and desecration of their remains. She called for an immediate investigation on the incident in Lacub and those perpetrators must face justice. She pressed for accountability of the 41st IBPA on this kind of war crimes committed against combatants and civilians.

Abolish the NCIP

“Awan serbi ti NCIP para kadagiti nailian nga umili ditoy Kordilyera. Nagbalin da nga kabusor ti umili gapu iti ado ken nakaro a basol da iti intero a Kordilyera. Ngarud, masapul a marunaw ti NCIP,” This was the statement of an elder during the picket at the Regional NCIP office in Baguio City.

This similar sentiment was echoed by every community during the protest at NCIP. From the Amburayan River of Kapangan, Tranquilino Baniwas described the NCIP as an office licensing F ree Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) violations in their communities. He related that the NCIP never listened to the voice of the people.

The experiences of Mt. Province on the FPIC processes tell violations rather than respect. Community representatives of Napua, Sabangan lamented on how NCIP did nothing to consult other affected areas of the Hedcor project. In a written message, Mr. Walter Binos criticized NCIP for allowing HEDCOR’s environmental destruction in Sabangan, to pave way for tunnels and roads intended for the hydroelectric project.

In her speech, Gwen Gaongen also related that in other municipalities, the NCIP is also accused of their manipulation and total disregard of the FPIC process favoring energy and mining corporations, citing their experience in Sagada with the PhilCarbon wind farm project.

The earlier testimonies are also strengthened by the same experiences of the people of Tinoc, Ifugao regarding the violations of the FPIC processes by the NCIP. Nestor Peralta of the Ifugao Peasant Movement exposed that the NCIP never sided with the people of Tinoc. Instead, the NCIP is the prime agent in allowing the Quadrivier to deceive communities in Tinoc leading to the signing of Memorandum of Agreement which later is being retracted by the communities of Eheb; Tukucan and Impugong.

CPA chairperson Windel Bolinget went on to criticize NCIP’s inaction and passiveness with the spate of killings of indigenous activists and community members resisting development aggression in the Cordillera, such as Markus Bangit, Alyce Claver, and this year, the Ligiw family in Abra and William Bugatti of Ifugao.

Their people’s messages are clear. NCIP never lift any finger to protect the IPs in the region. Instead, NCIP is using all its power to trample the rights of the indigenous peoples and causing anarchy in all communities affected. The umili of the Kordilyera has spoken, NCIP should be abolished. ***

Reference:

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