



The Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self-Determination and Liberation (IPMSDL) condemns the escalating attacks on *Lumads* – the Indigenous Peoples of Mindanao, Philippines, their schools and communities. We join the growing clamor to demand the pullout of military and State-backed paramilitary forces in indigenous communities and territories; disband and disarm State-backed paramilitary forces; and for an immediate, fair, and impartial investigation on the cases of extra-judicial killings of *Lumad* leaders and activists.

On August 30, combined forces of the 36<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> IBPA, Special Forces and their paramilitary Magahat/Bagani intruded in the territory of the *Manobo* (a *Lumad* tribe) and occupied the grounds of the Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development (ALCADEV) in Lianga, Surigaodel Sur. They threatened to massacre the community if they do not leave in two days.

The following day, August 31, elements of the paramilitary Magahat/Bagani opened fire and burned down the community cooperative store of the MAPASU (Malahutayong Pakigbisog Alangsa Sumusunod) forcing majority of the community to evacuate in the same day to the nearby village in Km. 16. As they were leaving, they saw Emerito Samarca, ALCDEV Executive Directors with his hands, feet and neck tied – forcibly accosted by the military to one of the ALCDEV classrooms.

At around 4:00 in the morning of September 1, the soldiers went from house to house and forced the remaining residents to assemble at the center of the community. Here, in the presence of the community, the soldiers blew the head of Dionel Campos killing him instantly, and shot dead Bello Sinzo, a leader and member of MAPASU, respectively.

A few hours later, members of the community found the body of Emerito Samarca still with his hands, feet and neck tied in one of the ALCDEV classrooms, his throat slit open almost from ear to ear, his face bruised almost unrecognizable.

The above incidents are not isolated in Surigao. It happens almost every day in Mindanao.

Earlier, on August 18, elements of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Special Forces Battalion mercilessly killed 5 *Manobo* peasants in Pangantucan, Bukidnon on the accusation that they are members of the New People's Army (NPA); two were minors, one youth and two elderly with one being blind. The lone survivor and witness is also a minor.

This is the reality of Oplan Bayanihan – the Philippine government's counterinsurgency policy. This is the reality of the *Lumads* and other Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines as we assert our rights to land, resources, development and self-determination. The militarization of Mindanao especially *Lumad* communities has resulted to massive violations of people's human rights. Communities and activists have reported cases of extrajudicial killings, threats, harassment, intimidation, trump-up criminal charges, torture, arrests and detention, encampment of communities and schools, destruction and divestment of properties, vilification of organizations, schools and individuals, all these forcing *Lumad* communities to evacuate their homes for safety and security.

From March – September 2015, KATRIBU (a national alliance of Indigenous Peoples organizations in the Philippines) has recorded 13 extrajudicial killings of *Lumad* activists, six incidents of forced evacuations involving more than 500 families, and 25 closing or suspension of classes of *Lumad* or community schools.

The attacks on the *Lumads*, their schools and communities have worsened their situation of poverty, neglect and discrimination. In this case, the *Lumads* organized themselves in a community organization and cooperative MAPASU to alleviate themselves from poverty and neglect, and build their unity and collective capacity. The MAPASU and advocates built the ALCADDEV to respond to the education needs especially of the youth and children. It demonstrates not only community unity, but also viable economic alternatives from indigenous economic and sustainable practices, and enhancing indigenous language and culture. Instead of supporting and developing these initiatives, the Philippine government has declared war against the *Lumads* and tagged their initiatives and empowerment as acts of terrorism.

Indigenous Peoples in other parts of the country and the globe also experience the same militarization and violation of their human rights in their assertion of their rights to land, development and self-determination. In India, the Indigenous Peoples suffer the same vilification under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. Almost daily, we receive reports of the killing and sexual assault against women and children in Bangladesh. In the Arctic to the Pacific, from Africa to Latin America, Indigenous Peoples face similar threats of prosecution, arrest and detention, killings as they confront destructive projects of mines, energy and plantations in their territories.

This worsening exploitation and repression challenges us Indigenous Peoples to persevere in our struggles and to build further our organizations in the grassroots, strengthen solidarity among us and with other sectors and groups.

Stop the Killings of Indigenous Peoples!

Long Live International Solidarity!

Long Live the Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self-Determination and Liberation!