10 March 2018

URGENT APPEAL For Support Against The Terrorist Proscription Of Indigenous Peoples Rights Defenders In The Cordillera, Philippines

Dear Friends,

We urgently appeal for your support against the Philippine government’s terrorist proscription of indigenous rights defenders from the Cordillera, Philippines. Reliable sources have informed us that the government recently issued a legal petition to declare around 600 persons terrorists alleging that they are members of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New Peoples Army (NPA). The proscription list is in pursuant to the Human Security Act of 2007 implementation in the context of the worsening state of human rights recognition in the country. This endangers the lives of indigenous human rights defenders and that of their families and colleagues. This is an attack to the legitimacy of people’s organizations like the Cordillera Peoples Alliance and signals the intensifying curtailment of our fundamental and democratic rights and freedoms. This is a blatant attack by the despotic Duterte regime against human rights defenders and the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) and our communities. The CPA has been fighting for the defense of our ancestral domains and self determination for more than three decades – as an exercise of our fundamental rights.

The government’s terrorist proscription list includes the following staunch indigenous peoples rights defenders:

1. **Victoria Tauli Corpuz**, a Kankanaey, current United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, former Chairperson of CPA
2. **Joan Carling**, a Kankanaey, former Secretary General of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), current Co-Convenor of the Indigenous Peoples Major Group on Sustainable Development, former CPA Chair and current member of the CPA Advisory Council
3. **Jose Molintas**, an Ibaloi human rights lawyer, former Asia representative to the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), former CPA Chair and current member of the Advisory Council member
4. **Beverly Longid**, a Kankanaey-Bontok, current global coordinator of the International Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self-Determination and Liberation (IPMSDL), current Co-Chair of the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE), former CPA Chair and current member of the Advisory Council member
5. **Joanna Cariño**, an Ibaloi, member of the CPA Advisory Council and Co-Chair of the SANDUGO Movement of Moro and Indigenous Peoples for Self Determination
6. **Windel Bolinget**, a Kankanaey-Bontok, current Chairperson of the CPA and National Co-convenor of KATRIBU national alliance of indigenous peoples in the Philippines
7. **Jeanette Ribaya-Cawiding**, Kankanaey, former chairperson of CPA-Tongtongan ti Umili and current Regional Coordinator of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers – Cordillera
8. **Sherwin de Vera**, Regional Coordinator of DEFEND Ilocos and member of the Save The Abra River Movement (STARM)
The charges are baseless and malicious, with intent to sow fear and delegitimize dissent limiting the already narrow democratic space in Philippine society. The proscription list is part of a systematic attack against legitimate political dissent is an implementation of the program of the Philippine government’s Inter-Agency Committee on Legal Action (IACLA).

Since February 2017 with the stalling of the Peace Talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), human rights violations in the Cordillera have intensified to a Martial Law-like state. CPA members and indigenous rights advocates, activists, communities and people’s organizations asserting indigenous peoples rights became targets of illegal arrests and detention, political vilification and persecution, threats, harassment and intimidation, the filing of trumped-up charges and even extrajudicial killing. On March 2, 2018, indigenous activist Ricardo Mayumi was extrajudicially killed in his own home in Kiangan, Ifugao province. Mayumi was a leader of the Ifugao Peasant Movement (IPM), the CPA chapter in Ifugao province. The IPM is at the forefront of the opposition against the Quadriver dam projects in Tinoc that endanger the livelihood and undermine the control of the Ifugao people over their ancestral land and resources. Mayumi and 9 other IPM leaders have previously received death threats from State security forces and their agents. In 2015, they were sent a picture of a gamong or the Ifugao death blanket.

In the face of the worsening tyranny of the Duterte government and aggressive actions towards an installation of a dictatorship, we are appealing for support to compel the Philippine government to comply with its obligations to all human rights and international humanitarian law, treaties and conventions that it is a signatory to including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

These are very difficult and challenging times not just for the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera but for the entire Philippine nation.

We appeal for your support and solidarity. The following are some of the ways by which you can help us in this campaign:

1. Issue strong statements of solidarity for circulation to the public and media circles and posting in websites and social media platforms. Please send a copy to cpa@cpa.phils.org.

2. For individuals and organizations outside the Philippines, write letters of concern to your embassies in the Philippines, and to the addressees provided in Annex 1.

Attached is a list of the human rights violations in the Cordillera region since February 2017 for your information and reference (Annex 2).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

BESTANG DEKDEKEN
Secretary General, Cordillera Peoples Alliance

AUDREY BELTRAN
Vice Chair, Cordillera Human Rights Alliance
Annex 1. Please send letters of concern to the following addresses:

You may send your communications to:

1. H.E. Rodrigo Duterte
   President of the Republic
   Malacañang Palace,
   JP Laurel St., San Miguel
   Manila Philippines
   Voice: (+632) 564 1451 to 80
   Fax: (+632) 742-1641 / 929-3968
   E-mail: op@president.gov.ph or send message through http://president.gov.ph/contact-us/

2. Hon. Jesus Dureza
   Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
   Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP)
   7th Floor Agustin Building I
   Emerald Avenue
   Pasig City 1605
   Voice:+63 (2) 636 0701 to 066
   Fax:+63 (2) 638 2216
   Email: stqd.papp@opapp.gov.ph, feedback@opapp.net

   Secretary, Department of National Defense
   Room 301 DND Building, Camp Emilio Aguinaldo,
   E. de los Santos Avenue, Quezon City
   Voice:+63(2) 911-6193 / 911-0488 / 982-5600
   Fax:+63(2) 982-5600
   Email: info@dnd.gov.ph, webmaster@dnd.gov.ph

4. Hon. Vitaliano Aguirre
   Secretary, Department of Justice
   Padre Faura St., Manila
   Direct Line 521-8344; 5213721
   Trunkline: 523-84-81 loc.214
   Fax: (+632) 521-1614
   Email: communications@doj.gov.ph

5. Hon. Jose Luis Martin Gascon
   Chairperson, Commission on Human Rights
   SAAC Bldg., UP Complex, Commonwealth Avenue
   Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines
   Voice: (+632) 928-5655, 926-6188
   Fax: (+632) 929 0102
   Email: chairgascon.chr@gmail.com
Annex 2. Human rights violations against the CPA and Cordillera indigenous peoples from February 2017 to March 2018

The list below is partial. Incidents without written documentation are not yet included.

1. **February 9, 2017**: Sarah Abellan-Alikes, a Kankanaey-Igorot, was illegally arrested by the Armed Forces of the Philippines. She was turned over to the Philippine National Police and was illegally detained for two days without charges. On February 11, she was charged with arson and robbery with intimidation. She was released after posting bail. Sarah Abellan-Alikes is a pioneer of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance and a member of the Board of Directors of the Regional Development Center – Katinnulong dagiti Umili ti Amianan (RDC-Kaduami). To read more, click here.

2. **February 2017 to present**: The 24th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army (IBPA) under LTC Thomas Dominic Baluga intensified their combat military operations which included the maligning and political vilification, harassing and threatening leaders and staff of the Kakaillian Salakniban Tay Amin a Nagtaudan (KASTAN), the Cordillera Peoples Alliance chapter in Abra province. These were done through public fora in communities and schools, social media, and threats of court charges.

3. **March 13, 2017 up to April first week**: Military troops belonging to the 24th IBPA conducted military combat operations in Malibcong, Abra indiscriminately bombing villages, affecting at least 56 families, including 200 children. The indiscriminate aerial strikes using white phosphorous bombs caused forest fires, damaged agricultural fields, endangered civilians and forced schools to suspend classes. On March 18 and 19, 2017, soldiers of the 24th IBPA occupied schools and encamped in the nearby residential area endangering the civilians. Malibcong residents also reported a blockade of basic food and other necessities, and threat, harassment and intimidation of civilians by military and police troops. On March 18, four civilians were illegally arrested and detained for several hours including a minor and two women in two separate incidents. To read more, click here.

4. **May 2017 to present**: Rima Mangili Libongan, an Ibaloi, reported that she was stalked and harassed by two suspected military or police agents. On May 30, one of these men monitored the proceedings of a youth assembly that Rima facilitated in her hometown Itogon in Benguet province. Early in the morning of June 3, the two men accosted her and clasped her forearm. They only let her go when shopkeepers started opening the doors to their stores. Later that day, the two men tailed Rima again. She received an SMS message on her cellphone saying “Oh, so you go to many places.” To avoid getting harassed, she changed her number. But on June 8, she received a new message saying, “You’ve been pinpointed.” To read more, click here.

5. **July-October 2017**: Five women activists – Sarah Abellan-Alikes, Sherry Mae Soledad, Joanne Villanueva, Rachel Mariano and Asia Isabelle Gepte – were charged with trumped-up cases of frustrated murder and multiple attempted murder related to alleged armed encounters between the New People’s Army and troops under the 7th Infantry Division – the 71st Division Reconnaissance Company and the 81st Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army. Sarah and Sherry Mae are both with RDC-KADUAMI. Sarah is a pioneer of the CPA. Rachel is with the Cordillera Health, Education, Services and Training in the Cordillera (CHESTCORE). Villanueva works with the Cordillera Women’s Education, Action, Research Center (CWEARC) and Asia is a convenor of Binnadang, a network of advocates in Metro Manila supporting Cordillera indigenous peoples’ issues and campaigns, and a staff of the joint secretariat of the NDFP nominated section to the Joint Monitoring Committee on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. To read more, click here. On February 9, 2018, these women human rights defenders posted bail for their temporary liberty while facing these trumped up charges.

6. **August 2017 to present**: The 24th Infantry Battalion of the 7th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army has been waging a political vilification campaign against Kakaillian Salakniban Ta’y Amin A Nagtaudan (KASTAN), the Cordillera Peoples Alliance chapter in Abra province. They have been issuing threats against leaders and staff. The 24th IB has alleged that KASTAN is nothing more than a terrorist front; that its staff and at least one of its community leaders are recruiters for the “terrorist” New People’s Army. To read more, click here.

7. **October 27, 2017**: Joint forces of the 24th IBPA, 7th Infantry Division (ID) and the PNP illegally raided the home of peasant leader Eugene Antonio in Mudiit, Dolores, Abra. They served a search warrant for weapons that Antonio allegedly possessed; the search yielded nothing. Instead, soldiers and police seized documents of the
8. **October 28, 2017**: Cordillera Peoples Alliance Chairperson Windel Bolinget and Vice Chairperson for Internal Affairs Xavier Akien, along with staff of the Center for Development Programs in the Cordillera were harassed and illegally detained for one hour by the Philippine National Police in Ilocos Sur. They were subjected to four more illegal checkpoints in the same province after the incident. The group was on their way home to Baguio City after attending a community meeting in Patungancau, Quirino, Ilocos Sur, with the Save Quirino Movement (SQM). SQM is a people’s organization and a local partner of the CPA and CDPC. To read more, click [here](#).

9. **October 2017**: A petition circulated to eject the people living in the Ifugao Peasant Movement (IPM) staff house owned by the Tanguid Family in Poblacion East Lagawe, Ifugao province. The IPM confronted the Barangay council for the malicious petition and it exposed that it was led by an unnamed agent of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and that the barangay council had no hand in that petition. To read more, click [here](#).

10. **October 2017 to present**: Joanne Villanueva, one of the five women currently facing trumped-up charges, experienced heightened surveillance. In October 2017 and on January 6, 2018, a man who introduced himself as “Eric” and a member of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA) accosted Joanne and offered her financial assistance, for the trumped-up charges against her to be dropped and protection if she agrees to “cooperate” with the agency.

11. **November 2017**: CPA and CHRA learned that a complaint was filed against Rachel Mariano and UCCP Pastor Francisco Bonuan. They are linked to an alleged armed encounter between the New Peoples Army and the Armed Forces of the Philippines in October 2017 in Patacan, where an AFP soldier was killed.

12. **December 12, 2017**: Sherwin de Vera, coordinator Defend Ilocos, a regional environmental network in Ilocos region, was arrested in Ilocos on rebellion charges he was supposed to have committed way back in 2014. He was detained at the Abra Provincial Jail and was released after posting bail in January 2018. Sherwin is a staunch defender of the environment and human rights, and advocate of indigenous peoples’ rights. Sherwin and Defend Ilocos played a key role in leading the Save the Abra River Movement (STARM), which campaigned against the mining operations of the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Company in Benguet province. To read more, click [here](#).

13. **December 2017**: Five youth activists from Baguio and a youth from Abra were harassed by members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine National Police while on their way to Malibcong, Abra to conduct an immersion activity and a check-up visit to the municipal chapter of Kabataan Partylist in Malibcong. Casselle Ton, spokesperson of the youth group Progressive Igorots for Social Action (PIGSA) was among the 5 youth activists. Following the incident in December, the victims experienced threats, harassments and intimidation from January-February 2018. Police and military elements in civilian clothes reportedly followed the 5 young people to their residences and even talked to their parents. The victims were also maligned by the military through social media, tagging them as members and recruiters of the New Peoples Army.

14. **2017**: There were observations of monitoring and surveillance of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance regional office by military agents. Incidents of malicious tagging against the CPA happened several times when unidentified men secretly hanged placards bearing the letters CPP NPA NDF outside the CPA office.

15. **January 19, 2018**: CPA Chair Windel Bolinget received a text message on his phone, which said “…a police asset is tracking you down they believe you are umbrella wings of CPP NDF NPA.”

16. **March 2, 2018**: Ricardo Mayumi, an indigenous and environmental activist from Ifugao province was shot dead inside his house by two unidentified men believed to be members of the military. Mayumi was one of the leaders of the Ifugao Peasant Movement (IPM), the provincial chapter of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance in Ifugao province. He led the opposition against the Quadraver mini-hydro projects in Tinoc, Ifugao. In 2013, Mayumi and 9 other IPM leaders received death threats after being sent a picture of a gamong or the Ifugao death blanket. In 2014, William Bugatti, who was named in the Target List of the 5th Infantry Division, was killed. To read more, click [here](#).
March 2018: The Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) learned that several key leaders of CPA, including current and previous Chairpersons of the alliance, were listed as terrorists in a petition filed by the Department of Justice – Joanna Cariño, Windel Bolinget, Jeannette Cawiding, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz (current UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights), Joan Carling (current co-coordinator of the United Nation’s Indigenous Peoples’ Major Group on Sustainable Development), and Beverly Longid (current co-chair of the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness). Also included in the list is Sherwin de Vera of DEFEND Ilocos, a staunch environmental defender and indigenous peoples advocate.

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