



## **Urgent Appeal for Action on the Forced Evacuation of Indigenous People in Misamis Oriental and Quezon Province, Philippines**

Dear friends and colleagues,

Greetings of solidarity!

Communities of indigenous people in Misamis Oriental and Quezon Province in the Philippines are now subjects of intensified militarization, with their homes occupied by soldiers. They have resorted to mass evacuations in fear for their lives at the hands of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

In Mindanao, which is under martial law for more than a year now, around 35 Higaonon families (or 158 individuals including children) from Sitio Camansi, Brgy. Banglay, Lagonglong in Misamis Oriental left their homes last May 26, 2018. They put up a makeshift evacuation center at the nearby Cagayan de Oro City provincial capitol grounds on May 29 after days of trekking. The Lumad, as the Indigenous peoples were known in Mindanao, were forced to evacuate when soldiers of the 58th Infantry Battalion-Philippine Army occupied their community and homes. It was the community's sixth forced evacuation since 2015.

As what happens to displaced peoples, they are not given any food by the local government. Worse, they continue to experience harassment. On June 6, 2018, two unnamed men who identified themselves as officers from Cagayan de Oro City information office set up a movie screen near the evacuation makeshift camp showing military propaganda. During the setup, the evacuees were intimidated by the loud music. The two men said they were acting based on orders of the provincial government. Military and police elements were also loitering around the said camp.

The Higaonon evacuees believe that they are being driven from their ancestral lands to facilitate the entry of large scale mining companies and agribusiness plantations.

In Luzon island, last May 14, 2018, two Dumagat indigenous people were tortured and illegally arrested by soldiers from the 80th and 202nd Infantry Brigades of the Philippine Army, 2nd Jungle Fighter Company, the 2nd Infantry Division-PA, Philippine National Police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) and the AFP South Luzon Command (SOLCOM).

Dumagat peasants Ricky Torres and Dandoy Abellaneda were on their way to a store when they were arrested by a team of soldiers who were in hot pursuit of rebels in the area. The two Dumagats were accused of being NPA rebels and were beaten up and tied to the corpse of a dead soldier. The two remain incarcerated for trumped up charges of murder.

From May 15-31, 2018, some 160 members of the Dumagat tribe, where Torres and Abellaneda belonged to, forcibly evacuated from their homes at Sitio Dadiangao, Brgy. Umiray, General Nakar, Quezon Province, due to military operations and encampment of the above-mentioned military and police units in their community. The military also imposed a food blockade, adding to the misery of the evacuees.

As the Duterte administration intensifies its military operations in pursuit of its counter-insurgency program Oplan Kapayasaan, more human rights violations and forced mass evacuations in the countryside are documented.

We enjoin in you to lend your voices to oppose these attacks against indigenous people's communities in the Philippines. In particular, we enjoin you to provide material and financial support for food and medicines of evacuees. Please send an email to [karapatan@karapatan.org](mailto:karapatan@karapatan.org) for details on how you can donate.

We also enjoin you to write and send letters calling for:

1. The immediate investigation of the incidents to be conducted by an independent body;
2. The immediate prosecution of soldiers in the torture and illegal arrest and detention of Dumagat peasants Ricky Torres and Dandoy Abellaneda;
3. The immediate pull-out of soldiers from communities;
4. An end to the Duterte regime's counter-insurgency program Oplan Kapayasaan;
5. The Philippine government, through the Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD) and the local governments of Misamis Oriental and Quezon Province to provide immediate relief to the affected evacuees, since the people's livelihood were affected by the military operations of the AFP;
6. The Philippine Government to abide by its commitments under the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL); and
7. The Philippine Government to adhere and respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all major Human Rights instruments that it is a party and signatory.

You may send your communications to:

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Please send us a copy of your email/mail/fax to the above-named government officials, to our address below:

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