

CORDILLERA PEOPLES DENOUNCE MILITARY OPERATION

IN DEFENSE OF OUR LAND

(Statement from the Kalinga-Bontoc Peacepact Holders' Association)

Recent events in the Cordilleras are both disturbing and condemnable.

Since June 11, 1984, the Armed Forces of the Philippines has been sending more and more troops to Kalinga areas namely Basao and Batalao for no apparent reasons. These military personnel have been on a bloody rampage since then, causing the residents to live in terror and uncertainty.

On June 11, a PC Company arrested a busload of Kalinga residents coming from Baguio for allegedly carrying underground letters. They were subsequently detained and one of them was buried up to the neck while being pressed for information.

On June 12, negotiations for the release of the detained proved unfruitful as the military commander responsible for the arrest subjected all 74 negotiators to the usual run-around.

On June 15, Gen. Azada of the Regional Unified Command announced in Bontoc that he will push through with the military plan to send an AFP battalion to the province to combat NPAs. This, despite protestations from a 2,000-strong indignation march demanding the release of those detained.

On June 16, a PC trooper from the provincial command seriously shot a native from Talubin, Bontoc for no obvious reason.

On June 21, a composite battalion of PC/Army/Marine soldiers launched a search and destroy operation in Agawa, Basao and Aguid, Sagada burning four huts and raping two women.

On June 23, AFP troops continued to burn farmers' huts around Aguid area while some troopers looted, taking with them several pigs and chickens.

On June 24, another AFP battalion arrived together with an American military adviser apparently to reinforce military units in the area.

From June 27 to 29, the areas of Basao, Boscalan and Bugnay were transformed into a fiery battleground with the AFP troops using mortars and helicopters allegedly against the NPAs. The military also dropped bombs from two warplanes in an obvious effort to decimate the latter and their alleged sympathizers in the area, in the process destroying several rice terraces (payaos) all ready for harvesting.

Fearing for their lives, people ceased to go out into the fields to harvest and look for food. If operations continue, people will go hungry since food supplies will not last long.

The on-going military operations in the area have severely destroyed our main sources of livelihood.

In this regard, we, of the Kalinga-Bontoc Peacepact Holders' Association, denounce, in strongest terms, the AFP's virtual invasion of our life, liberty and property through massive and large-scale military operations in our area. We condemn this manifestation of the state's blatant disregard for our well-being.

We, Kalingas and Bontocs, are known for being a warrior people.

If the AFP pursues its kind of war against the Kalinga-Bontoc people, we shall have no other recourse but to fight back in defense of our land, our life and our well-being.

We call on our brother Filipinos to help us fight this armed invasion on our sacred land.

We demand an end to all military operations and atrocities in our area.

JUSTICE FOR ALL VICTIMS OF MILITARY ATROCITIES!

Mario Yag-ao
Chairman, KBPHA
July 5, 1984

July 9, 1984

"Defy the Armed Invasion On Our Land, Resist this New Colonization"

We speak to our Brother Filipinos in the midst of an ongoing war being waged by the Armed Forces of the Philippines on the tribal Kalinga and Bontoc people. For the past month up to present, we have witnessed an atrocious military campaign designed to coerce our tribes into acceding to a new colonization of our ancestral lands.

Starting from the last week of June, our people have suffered from the escalating military abuses being dealt by the AFP.

Using helicopters and warplanes, our villages and our lands have been strafed and bombed. A number of Kalingas have already been killed during the military campaign. Our Kalinga women, whom the criminal AFP troops treat so lowly, have been subjected to worse indignities such as body searches and gang-rapes. And in the midst of their genocidal campaign, we have been ordered to stop harvesting the palay from our payaos, our mere presence outside our homes being used as pretexts for wholesale manslaughter.

We raise a call to all our brother Filipinos to help us put an end to this bloody carnage being perpetrated on our people. No amount of government and military effort to win back our "hearts and minds" will convince us to accept this unlawful intrusion into our domain.

The government and its military criminals have acquired a notorious reputation to the mountain tribes of Bontoc and Kalinga-Apayao. In the mid-70's, they tried, unsuccessfully, to construct four huge dams over the Chico River that will destroy our payaqs, desecrate the burial grounds of our ancestors, and leave us homeless, all for the benefit of transnational corporations in need of hydroelectric power.

Our brother Tingguians in Abra, together with the Kalinga and Bontoc people also resisted the planned deforestation of over 400,000 hectares of pine land for the Cellophil Resources Corporation, a local partner of transnational paper companies.

Our leader, Maciling Dulag, who valiantly resisted all bribes and threats made by the PANAMIN, the local government, and the military was felled by assassins bullets in April 1980 and up to now, his assassins have not been punished.

The consistency with which the government and the military have persecuted our people have taught us to be more vigilant and courageous despite exploitation and oppression. We shall face this new attempt at colonization in the same manner that we did for the Spanish, Japanese and American colonizers.

In the face of all these atrocities, we demand the immediate and total withdrawal of all military detachments and troops in the areas of Bugnay, Basao, Ngibat, Buscalan, Jinglayan, Kalinga-Apayao and in the villages of Annabel, Aguid and Agawa, Sagada and Bontoc.

We demand justice for all victims of military atrocities. Punish the military men, their officers and field commands, and the AFP chiefs of staff who planned, participated in and led the attacks on our sacred land. General Ver has reported that heavy casualties have been inflicted on NPA rebels operating in the area. The fact is that the Kalinga and Bontoc people are those that suffer most from such an operation.

We reiterate a call to all Filipinos, individuals, groups and organizations to help the Kalinga and Bontoc people in their struggle against this insanity of the AFP.

We, the Kalinga and Bontoc people have been known for our peace. Yet, we are also recognized as warrior people. This early, we warn the armed transgressors on our land. We shall shed blood if only to defend our sacred land and our ancestors domain from their desecration by the military. Our murdered pangat, Macling-Dulag has said it clearly before, "The land is sacred, it will become more sacred when it is nourished by our blood".

Kalinga-Bontoc Peace Pact Holders Association

July 9, 1984



Ama Carlos Patungao
(Council of Leaders)