

**14TH SESSION OF THE UN PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES
20 APRIL - 1 MAY 2015, UN HQ, NEW YORK
Agenda Item 8: Intervention on Future Work of the Permanent Forum**

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Thank you Madame Chair. This is a joint intervention of the Asia Pacific Indigenous Youth Network, Cordillera Peoples Alliance, Centre for Research and Advocacy – Manipur, Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights in Manipur and the UN, Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self Determination and Liberation, and Land is Life.

Indigenous people's right to self determination, a fundamental right that transcends all provisions of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other major International Human Rights agreements, is increasingly being arbitrated in an aggressive form. In the case of Manipur and the Cordillera, Philippines, self determination efforts of indigenous peoples are crushed with brute forms of extensive militarization, sanctioned by the promulgation of State laws and policies such as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958 in Manipur and the counter-insurgency policy Operation Plan Bayanihan in the Philippines, which derogate the fundamental non-derogable human rights of indigenous peoples.

Indigenous communities especially in Asia have long been suffering from the impact of militarization, which ranges from direct civilian killings to land grabbing, facilitating development onslaught, economic dislocation and other forms of human rights violations and violations to our collective rights, all converging in reinforcing the denial of our right to self determination as indigenous peoples.

States militarize our communities to subdue self-determination movements and to implement extractive industries and other unsustainable development projects that are all resulting in worsening land conflicts and numerous human rights violations. Indigenous territories are being used for military activities which constitutes direct violations of State laws and the UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Land grabbing is carried out also for militarization purposes. Women, youth and children are not spared, with the countless indigenous women and children who fell victim of rape and other sexual abuses by State military members.

Militarization also continues to threaten our economic survival. Last year (2014), militarization resulted in the forcible evacuation of 1,238 families of Lumad indigenous peoples in the Philippines. The continuing military operations in the Cordillera region disrupts indigenous people's economic activities.

Militarization also targets educational facilities, and desecrate cultural and historical sites. From 2011-2014, 146 schools were under attack by State military and paramilitary groups in the Lumad communities in the Philippines. In Manipur, there has been a longstanding demand from the students of Manipur University to shift the Assam Rifles currently

occupying the Langthabal Hills, an important historical and cultural heritage site, located within the university premises.

Militarization has disturbed the profound relationships of Indigenous peoples with their lands and territories, and military activities are taking place without the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of indigenous communities. This has enormous social and cultural impacts, and also posing threats to the physical integrity, identity and survival of indigenous peoples.

In the Philippines, further exacerbating the problems of militarization within indigenous areas are operations of the government's paramilitary group, and tribal paramilitary groups that are organized by the State military among indigenous peoples. Thirteen cases of extrajudicial killings from July 2010 up to December 2014 are attributed to the operations of paramilitary groups.

We have been raising our concerns on militarization of indigenous communities to our respective governments, intergovernmental agencies, and UN bodies and mechanisms including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. However, instead of being addressed, the militarization of indigenous communities is worsening. We feel that the issue of militarization of indigenous communities must be given further attention in the future work of the Permanent Forum.

Hence, we forward the following **recommendations** to the Permanent Forum:

- For the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to undertake a study on multifaceted and holistic impacts of militarization, such as physical and psychological impacts
- Consider Militarization in indigenous peoples land and territories as one of the Themes of the Fifteenth (15th) Session of PFII
- Commission a study on the impacts of the infusion of non indigenous peoples and the role of State paramilitary groups in indigenous people's territories

Thank you for your attention.