

GESELLSCHAFT FÜR BEDROHTE VÖLKER

Menschenrechtsorganisation für ethnische, rassische und religiöse Minderheiten

society for threatened peoples · association pour les peuples menacés · asociación para la defensa de los pueblos amenazados



Gemeinnütziger Verein

Bundesbüro:

Groner Str. 40

Postfach 2024

D-3400 Göttingen

Telefon 0551/55822-23

Teletex 5518101

Telex 175518101-GfbVGoe

Postgiro Hamburg 297793-207

Städtische Sparkasse Göttingen

Nr. 1917 (BLZ 26050001)

WGIP 88/SEA. PHL/2

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

We hereby confirm, that Mr. Hartmut Heller is our representative for the problems of the indigenous peoples of the Philippines, the Aeta (Negritos).

Mr. Heller will talk on behalf of the Society for Threatened Peoples.

Tilman Zittel

Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker

Bundesbüro
Postfach 2024
D-3400 Göttingen

28/7/88

Bundesvorsitzender

Society for Threatened Peoples.

File 127-1159179-1000-1840000-20 193 7413700 127-1159

The Aetas are the indigenous peoples of the Philippines. An estimated ^{for} 20000 ^{Aeta} Aetas inhabited the Philippines until the 1900's. In the 1900's Spanish missionaries started to drive them out of their ancestral lands step by step. Even at the time of the Spanish conquest in the 16th century Aetas still formed the majority population on many Philippine islands, such as on Negros, a larger island, which the Spaniards named after them. In the early 20th century Aetas were still abundant in many seacoast and in mountainous areas of the Philippines and elsewhere.

Today the remaining perhaps 15000 Aeta in the Philippines are confined to some 20 tiny infertile mountainous spots scattered all over the islands. They steadily decrease in number among a rapidly growing modern population. The other few thousand Aeta/Negrilas outside the Philippines, mainly on the Molukkas and on the Malayan peninsula, share a similar fate.

86% of the primeval forests in the Philippines, the environment the Aetas were used to live with, are destroyed by logging companies and missionaries, burn-slashing settlers. Aetas have no more ^{to} their retreats are destroyed or occupied. Nowhere they can be given a piece of land for their own.

Many Aetas are pushed into the tabang system. No longer able to pay debts with money or goods, they are actually sold by the debtor. The Aeta becomes a worker for the buyer. In some cases even their children have already been leased for life. Indeed a true form of slavery.

Since the Aquino Government came to power in 1986 massive road construction activities are carried out right through remaining ancestral lands on which the Aetas live, always without land titles. In the Pinatubo area in western Luzon, where more than half of the total Aeta population lives this has brought the effect, that the Aetas, two years ago still majority population, are now unimportant minority among Filipino settlers along the roads.

In the same areas hundreds of Aeta families have recently been relocated by the US-military without any compensation given. Compensation for the US military bases on this ancestral Aeta land, amounting to at least 150 Mio. US\$, were given to the president, while the Aetas received some T-shirts during the presidential visit.

In the western Ilocos region of the sea, the total remaining population created five areas less than from one side to the other side, suffering from permanent hunger or deadly diseases.

In the Ilocos region in eastern Luzon, military operations were decimated the population of the area, and they sympathized with the NPA guerrillas. Remaining 45% are forced to live in fenced camps, where the luckier ones receive a handful of rice daily given by a church organization.

On Palawan island the ~~remaining~~ 200 remaining indigenous people, the Batak, will have no chance to survive, if ongoing logging and land grabbing continues and unless the recently given logging licenses, covering the whole ancestral land, are withdrawn.

The Aeta in the Philippines are without a lobby and they do not receive any effective help from any institution. But they ask for assistance in their attempt to survive.

30 July, 1988

n.Heller