

World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) 2014
Roundtable 2: Implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples at the national and local level

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In order for the rights of indigenous peoples to be truly realized, the respect, genuine recognition and implementation of these rights must be seriously ensured at the national and local level. It is a fact that our collective rights as indigenous peoples especially at the national and local level have been historically violated up to the present in spite of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Rights (UNDRIP) and other international standards.

Indigenous peoples rights cannot be respected and implemented under conditions of militarization and political repression and State fascism. Our collective rights to our ancestral lands, territories and resources continue to be violated as State military forces are deployed in our communities to protect destructive projects and corporate plunder. How can there be free, prior and informed consent when our communities are under a reign of state military terror? Community resistance to extractive industries and other so-called development projects are criminalized and addressed with the brute force of the State and powerful corporations. How can there be peace, democracy and progress in indigenous territories if our rights are systematically violated because of State policy of militarization and political repression? Self determination cannot be possible if indigenous peoples' territories are subjected to militarization and indigenous peoples organizations and movements are suppressed and terrorized by the State through extrajudicial killings, illegal arrests, bombardments and indiscriminate firing, intimidation and political vilification, massacres and other human rights violations. If States are really in good faith in adopting the UNDRIP and adhering to international human rights standards, why is it that they did not accept and consider our proposal and call for an end of militarization of indigenous peoples and their territories? Our rights as indigenous peoples can never be implemented for as long as these situations are not changed.

Indigenous leaders are being killed for fighting for our human rights and for defending our ancestral domains and communities from plunder and development aggression. In the Philippines, since Benigno Aquino III assumed presidency in June 2010, at least 47 indigenous peoples have been killed under the continuing State policy of terror known as Operation Plan Bayanihan which targets civilians and activists. On September 5, 2014, Engineer Fidela Salvador was killed by the 41st Infantry Battalion of the Northern Luzon Command of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) when she was on a monitoring visit for various socio-economic projects in Abra which is a militarized province in the Cordillera, Philippines. Also killed in the military operation is an indigenous civilian Noel Viste.

We express our great disappointment and condemnation that nothing in the Outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples mentions about commitment from States to stop State violence, militarization, and political repression against indigenous peoples. This affirms that States will continue to violate our human rights and militarize indigenous communities which hampers the implementation of the UN Declaration. Militarization and political repression has been a historic injustice which must be rectified; a central issue and life and death concern of indigenous peoples not only in the Philippines but worldwide.

Based on the foregoing, we call on the Philippine government, States, and the United Nations to ensure and guarantee the implementation of the UNDRIP and the WCIP Outcome Document; and

push for the stop of militarization of indigenous communities and political repression of indigenous peoples. Specifically, we urgently recommend and call the Philippine government with the intervention of the UN for the:

1. Urgent cessation of military operations in Lacub, Abra, Philippines to ensure the protection of civilians from the AFP. Immediate pull out of the 41st IBPA and other AFP units from Lacub, Abra to ensure the impartial and thorough investigation of the human rights and international humanitarian law violations. Justice for Engr. Fidela Salvador and Noel Viste and justice for the victims of human rights violations of the 41st Infantry Battalion. Prosecution of the perpetrators of this incident and ensure that accountability is demanded in full from the 41st IB, the 5th Infantry Division and the Northern Luzon Command of the AFP ensuring command responsibility.
2. Withdraw or scrap Oplan Bayanihan, the Philippine government's counterinsurgency program, that victimizes civilians. Put an end to the extrajudicial killings, harassment and political vilification of indigenous peoples; stop the militarization of indigenous communities; and ensure that justice is truly served for all victims of human rights violations.
3. Implement the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all the major Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law instruments that it is a party and signatory to, including the Comprehensive Agreement to the Respect of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL).
4. Resume the Peace Talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GPH) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) to address the root causes of the armed conflict towards a just and lasting peace.

Thank you for your attention.