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VOLUME 6 • ISSUE 9

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Mindanao, the Philippines' restive southern province, remains mired in conflict and misery, due to regular military invasions and resulting displacements of the Indigenous Lumad people. Many of these operations are generated by large-scale mining operations and agri-business plantation owners, exacting a terrible toll on the human rights of the local population and the pristine, natural environment.

The Philippines' Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, claims to support the human rights, cultural integrity and right to self determination of the Indigenous people including the Lumads, but has failed to protect these fundamental liberties. Government support of mining expansion and the demands of multinational companies has led to brutal suppression of peaceful resistance.

Act for Peace, through our partner the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, continues to work with Lumad communities and local Christian and Moro (Muslim) groups, to restore their rights and freedoms. Activities include:

- capacity building of local Indigenous leadership
- conducting human rights education at the community level
- fact finding missions and providing material support of alleged human rights abuses
- lobbying Philippine and international human rights bodies to address these violations

\$20 will support a human rights defender to attend an interfaith gathering on Indigenous rights

\$220 will support a campaign for Indigenous people's rights in Mindanao

Act for Peace is the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA).

actalliance



Act for Peace
National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA)
Locked Bag 199, Queen Victoria Building, NSW 1230
Free Call: 1800 025 101 E: actforpeace@ncca.org.au
Fax: (02) 9262 4514 W: www.actforpeace.org.au
ABN 64 493 941 795

THANK YOU Partners for your commitment to Act for Peace through your prayers and regular gifts. Through your generosity, we are making a real and lasting difference to the lives of many people, such as the Lumads in the Philippines. Please tell a friend about this work and encourage them to become an Act for Peace Partner. If you would like help with this or if you wish to upgrade your own regular gift, simply free call Howard or Sarah on **1800 025 101** or email hgraham@ncca.org.au.

Your feedback and suggestions are welcome, as we love to hear from you and to pass on comments to project partners. This gives them great encouragement.

On the other hand, if you are not yet an Act for Peace Partner and would like to be or would just like to help this project, your call or e-mail will be most welcome!

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The Quest for Indigenous Peace and Justice in the Philippines

Dear Act for Peace Partner,

I am Lorna Mora, General Secretary of the Kalumaran¹. We do a lot of work in educating Indigenous people in basic literacy. Militarisation is always accompanied by human rights violations. Paramilitary groups recruit Lumads into their forces to divide and rule. There have been circumstances of gang rape by the military. There have also been cases of physical torture of leaders who are opposing development projects. For the Lumad, there is no real development as it benefits only a few – the multinationals and the local associates. Non-Lumads, including settlers and farmers, are sympathetic to the Lumads and we need to unite on issues that affect us all. There's an effort for solidarity; but there is also no illusion that Lumads can succeed all by themselves.

The Lumad are not anti-development. We favour projects that benefit all people in society. We want to thank concerned Australians, particularly Act for Peace Partners in supporting our struggle for a better life.

¹ The Kalumaran is a representative alliance of Lumad tribes in Mindanao, which has been established to counter aggression of developers.



Peaceful Lumad Protest March

Lorna



I am Monico Ito Cayog of the Bogobo Tagabawa tribe. I live in the foothills of Mount Apo in Mindanao and I am a leader of the tribe and Chairman of the Kalumaran¹.



Lumad Chief

The main problems we face are large-scale mining and plantation expansion and the building of large dams, which flood many barangays (villages or districts). We were tricked into signing a paper that allowed the building of a hydropowerplant. The National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP) went house to house and talked to people about building a road, asking them to sign the paper, but this was not what they were planning to build at all.

The farms of the people were bulldozed and the people forced to evacuate. People were left on their own with compensation that was just enough to move somewhere else. It was not equitable.

We Lumad are literally the original inhabitants, and as Indigenous inhabitants, our lives are connected with the land. It is our inherent duty to protect it from those who want to take it. The threat is if the land is taken our identity will vanish. The land is like a mother – the source of life.

Thank you for standing with us!

Monico

Partner's Prayer Points:

Pray for Indigenous people forced from their lands and for their courage in speaking out for their traditional culture and way of life.

Bless those who guide them in the way of peaceful and objective protest.

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