



APPEAL FOR SUPPORT

Defend Talaingod, Save Pantaron Range!

The Manobo People's Exodus is part of their continuing struggle for justice and peace, to fulfill their quest for land rights and self - determination

April 10, 2014

Dear fellow advocates:

On 2 April 2014, in Talaingod, Davao Del Norte, after a series of aerial bombings and intense military operations in civilian communities, and while a thousand Manobo lumads (indigenous peoples) were fleeing the wrath of the military's guns and bombs, 12 - day - old Biboy Manabay passed away.

Biboy died of pulmonary aspiration, secondary to dehydration, as his family and the other villagers of Sitio Laslasakan, together with evacuees from other interior villages, started their exodus for sanctuary.

After a seven (7) hour trek from his home in Laslasakan, without any food and water, under the glaring heat of the sun, Biboy's fragile health did not make it. He passed away and was buried in Sitio Igang, halfway through the evacuation.

Biboy is just one of the countless, and often faceless, Manobo lumads

who have died during the decades - long conflict over the ancestral home of the valiant Manobo tribe.



Though Biboy's death is indeed one too many, such is the sad reality of the resource-rich, yet dimly poor town of Talaingod. Here, every Manobo family has experienced the deaths of one or more of their members, especially infants and



women. This is due to intermittent forcible evacuation and militarization over the last two decades, and severe poverty due to the government's neglect in providing them with basic services.

Since March 3, the start of the military operations of the combined military strength of the 68th IB and 60th IB of the 1003rd Brigade, and the 4th Special Forces under the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in Talaingod the military has perpetrated atrocities that are appalling:



- The count of displaced individuals has reached 1,353 (as of April 4): 927 are in Davao City while 426 are staying in Sitio Nasilaban. Of the 927 evacuees in Davao, 515 are children, from new-born infants to 12 years old. The number of evacuees who are currently trapped in the interior areas are still unknown. Traditionally, to evade military atrocities, the Manobos withdraw into the forests where they likewise experience hardships.
- An old woman, Ubunay, was arbitrarily detained, subjected to sexual abuse and was forced to be used as a guide for military operations.
- The military conducted aerial bombardments of civilian populated communities on March 20. The military also admitted to razing some homes.
- Harassment, threat and intimidation of residents, and students and school personnel belonging to Salugpungan Ta Tanu Igkanugon Learning Center.

(Check attached Chronology of Events for more details on the Human Rights Violations.)



The residents also testify that that the military stated: “for every 1 soldier killed by the NPA, we will kill 5 Manobo lumads.” Perhaps the aforementioned violations are manifestations of that statement; the military has been known to turn their ire upon civilians when they suffer casualties.

Sadly, this vicious cycle has become a way of life for the lumads, especially for a people as defiant as the Manobos of Talaingod, who have consistently been bravely defending their ancestral lands from the threats ethnocide, in the form of resource plunder and militarization, since the early 90's.

(Check attached Defend Talaingod Save Pantaron Primer for more details on the historical and cultural context of the Talaingod Manobo people.)

Defying all basic tenets in the Philippine Constitution protecting human rights and civil liberties, mocking international instruments and protocols on war, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Aquino Government are bent on crushing the vibrant history, and culture of the Manobo people.

To all advocates of peace and social justice, let us not allow this to happen.



Let us support the demands of the Manobo people of Talaingod led by the Salugpungan Ta Tanu Igkanugon people's organization:

1. Pull out all military troops from Talaingod. Investigate and prosecute those who have perpetrated the documented war crimes;
2. Just reparations must be made by the perpetrators for any damaged homes, sources and means of livelihood of the people;
3. Stop the attacks on indigenous schools, students and personnel.

Our assistance in the following forms are urgently needed:

1. Supporting LEGAL ACTIONS instigated by the SALUGPUNGAN TA TANU IGKANUGON and DEFEND TALAINGOD Movement by sponsoring either the legal and technical fees; sponsoring the necessary trips to make the lobbying events possible.
 - A. Case Filing at the Commission on Human Rights Region XI
 - B. Lobbying at the House of Representatives
 - C. Lobbying at the United Nations, either in Geneva or New York

Institutions, and NGO's based in various countries may host lobbying engagements / audiences in the UN and other international platforms in order to bring to international attention the plight and struggle of the Manobo people.

2. Help provide the evacuees with food, medicines, blankets and other materials.

The following are the camp-based services and activities which need your support:

SERVICES		NEEDS
Daily Provisions & Camp Management	FOOD	15 sacks of rice per day
		PhP 45,000 per day for the viand and water alone (1000 evacuees x Php 15 per meal)
Psychosocial Intervention Services	Therapy through games, and art activities such as bead making, art projects and theatre workshops.	School and art materials
		Toys
		Healthy snacks for children
Medical	Sustained medical services for the evacuees	Medicines and Vitamins

- Write of letters of appeal addressed to the President of the Philippines, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Department of Justice, the House of Representatives, in support of the struggle of the Manobo people. You may also write letters to the media and hold educational discussions on the general issues of human rights and peace in the country and the need to resume the peace talks.

Please contact **May Vargas and/or Maypril Rusiana, Secretariat of the Committee for International Relations of the Defend Talaingod Campaign, for queries and other information you may need.**

In Solidarity,

(sgd.)

**Sr. Marisol Huertas Garduno, CSC
Rural Missionaries of the Philippines -SMR
Co-Convener, Defend Talaingod Save Pantaron Range**

(sgd.)

**Datu Duloman Dawsay
Salugpungan Ta Tanu Igkanugon
Talaingod, Davao Del Norte**

(sgd.)

**Sidro Indao
PASAKA Federation of Lumad Organizations in Southern Mindanao
Davao City**

The Defend Talaingod, Save Pantaron Range Movement may be contacted through the following contact information:

**Email Address: defendtalaingod2014@gmail.com
Mobile #: 639391669065**

**Food stuff and other donations may be brought to:
UCCP Haran House, Fr. Selga St., Davao City
Please look for Marge.**

Donations may be sent via the following conveners of the Defend Talaingod Movement:

For PESO DONATIONS:

**Rural Missionaries of the Philippines
Bank Name: Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI)
Branch: 0203- Davao Main
Account Number: 2083-9067-93**

For US DOLLAR DONATIONS:

**MINDANAO INTERFAITH SERVICES FOUNDATION INC. (MISFI)
Bank Name: Unionbank Davao
Account Number: 130170000025**