

Press Release: ILC Asia Stands in Solidarity with the Buhid Mangyan community in the Philippines

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Manila, Philippines/Bogor, Indonesia

International Land Coalition Asia (ILC Asia) stands in solidarity with the Buhid Mangyan indigenous community in Oriental Mindoro, Philippines. The military recently killed a member of the community, and five others have been red-tagged as members of the New People's Army (NPA). Cases of red-tagging usually involve harassment and have become even [deadlier](#) since former President Rodrigo Duterte took office in 2016, ultimately shrinking the space for peaceful activism in the country. This recent incident begs the question: will the newly elected President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr. follow suit?

The incident occurred between the late hours of the 25-26th of June when a military officer was passing through a portion of the Buhid Mangyan ancestral domain and fell victim to a poisonous trap set up by a Buhid hunter. The military assumed malicious intent as the trap killed one of their officers and gunned down the residence of Inyap, an elderly Buhid man who admitted to having set up the trap, ultimately killing him. The military also held hostage a man and a woman and forced them to "confess" that Inyap is a member of the NPA along with five other Buhid community members. The man and woman were later released.

The NPA is the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, which has been waging a rebellion for the past five decades. The Philippines Government has classified the NPA as a communist-terrorist organisation.

Previous efforts have been undertaken to address the cases of militarisation through training of community members on the rights of the accused and the Anti-Terror Law. The re-elected Municipal Mayor, H.E. Elegio Malaluan, during his previous term has conducted a dialogue with the police and military and intends to conduct a dialogue between the Buhid Mangyan community and newly assigned military officials in his municipality. The Mayor has also assigned the public attorney's office to provide legal services for the Buhid Mangyan community members pro bono.

"We call on the government to recognise and support the initiatives of the Mangyan leadership for peace," said Lagtum Pasag, former Commissioner of the National Commission of Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and representative of the Provincial Indigenous Peoples Development and Advisory Council (PIPDAC).

As a coalition of 59 civil society organisations in 14 countries in Asia, including the Philippines, ILC Asia supports our members who have worked tirelessly to protect the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, especially in the face of criminalisation and violent threats.

“We work for our members to support them in emergencies like this by making their voices heard and bringing attention to the international development community. We are here to advocate for people’s organisations and indigenous peoples fighting for their land rights and making changes in their lives,” said Mirgul Amanalieva, ILC Asia Regional Coordinator.

Together with ILC member organisations in the Philippines, we call on the Philippines Government:

- To immediately end the practice of red-tagging and allow indigenous peoples and land rights defenders to protect their rights peacefully;
- To prosecute the military officers involved in the killing and red-tagging of local communities;
- To immediately stop the criminalisation, any act of violence and harassment against indigenous rights defenders, community leaders, and political activists;
- To redress the bereaved family of the killed Buhid community member and release all wrongfully charged.

About ILC Asia

International Land Coalition (ILC) Asia is a membership-driven network that consists of 59 national and regional civil society organisations across 14 countries in Asia, whose vision is to achieve a just, equitable and inclusive world in which land rights are secure and poverty is eradicated. Members of ILC in the Philippines have convened as a national platform named the National Land Coalition (NLC). The platform seeks to empower farmers and indigenous peoples in claiming their land rights and access to natural resources.

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