

## **URGENT ALERT: Mining bares more teeth by hiring renegade paramilitaries to force resisting communities to issue their consent in Bukidnon, Philippines**

On October 28, 2011, members of the paramilitary group Triom Force intercepted Jimmy Liguyon, the barangay (village) captain of Dau, San Fernando, Bukidnon, and his wife as they were heading home from a human rights rally in Cagayan de Oro City. According to Liguyon, the motorcycle they were riding was stopped and he and his wife were made to walk to a (vacant) house, accompanied by 13 armed men. Their leader, whom he identified as Ange Dal-anay also known as 'Taruc', then threatened them. Dal-anay told him to stop joining rallies and stop reporting the Triom Force's activities on the radio.

Dal-anay then told him he should sign an endorsement letter accepting mining in Barangay Dau otherwise he will be killed. Liguyon argued that it was not for him to decide whether or not to accept mining because he had to consult the residents of Dau. Their barangay, however, had been staunchly against the entry of large mining companies because their primary livelihood was small scale mining. They were released after more than an hour of threats. However, he is warned that should he further refuse to sign, they already have the orders to kill him. They did not, however, say who gave them the orders.

Prior to that incident, Jimmy Liguyon had already been constantly harassed by groups pushing for mining. On October 13, Nonong Salusad, one of Triom's leaders, called him and told him not to show his face again in Barangay Dau otherwise they will kill him. The leaders of Triom are also heading the San Fernando Matigsalug Tigwahanon Tribal Association (SANMATRIDA) which is claiming the ancestral domain title in San Fernando. The group threatens to kill anyone who will not join their association.

On October 16, at around 12 midnight, Ange Dal-anay and at least four other armed men encircled the house of the Liguyon family. Dal-anay demanded for Jimmy to come out. However, only his two sisters, his brother, two nieces and his mother-in-law were there. After the incident, Jimmy's relatives left Dau for fear that Dal-anay and his group would come back.

Liguyon's case is just one among the many human rights violations committed by Triom Force. Just recently, the Philippine Army has increased its forces in the municipality of San Fernando, claiming the deployment of more troops is to keep the peace and order situation in the communities. Despite this, Triom members are able to go around freely. The residents are suspecting that the military is supporting the group to help them with their counter-insurgency operations. In fact, one of its leaders, Nonong Salusad, had been seen together with military personnel after he supposedly became instrumental in the surrender of 80 alleged New Peoples' Army rebels.

The indigenous communities of San Fernando are fed up with the staged actions of the military and its backed armed civilian groups. The increased military presence did not help their situation and in fact only added to their fears. The

military bombed the mountain of Butay near the Pantaron Range where the people of of Barangays Bunacao, Namnam and Magkalungay gather abaca. They justified it by saying that it was an operation against rebels even if there was no crossfire. Residents who had been there at that time took days before they were able to go home after they fled from the bombs. Recently the area was restricted to the communities, robbing many families of their livelihoods. The location of the military camp in Barangay Namnam is also just in front of the elementary school and every time they fire a bomb, the entire barangay is shaken. This, in addition to the possible danger the camp is exposing the barangay should rebel groups attack the military.

We, the indigenous peoples of San Fernando ask for help in pressuring the Philippine government – with its numerous agencies that are supposed to be concerned of our welfare – to look into our situation and act on it. We call upon the military to stop terrorizing and threatening our communities and to stop the militarization of our villages. We do not want military detachments to be constructed in or near our communities as it causes fear among the inhabitants. We want the Triom Force to be disbanded and disarmed to end their violence, killings and extortion. We would also want an investigation regarding the organization of this paramilitary group and the military's involvement.

Below are the contact details of the government agencies where letters of concern can be addressed:

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*\*This Urgent Alert is released by Katribu, a community-based organization of indigenous people in San Fernando, Bukidnon. Katribu is a member of the Kalumbay Regional Lumad Organization. Please contact Kalumbay for other details or questions concerning this Urgent Alert.*

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*Working for the defense of our land, rights & culture, KALUMBAY is a regional alliance of nine Lumad (indigenous peoples) organizations in Northern Mindanao, Philippines*