



FOR URGENT RELEASE

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Rights violations intensify in Mindanao, after martial law declaration

A few days after the declaration of martial law in Mindanao, a Moro resident of Brgy. Salat, President Roxas, North Cotabato was killed due to military aerial bombings, and at least two farmers were illegally arrested in Maragusan, Compostela Valley, in the course of the Armed Forces of the Philippines' continuing implementation of counter-insurgency operations and in line with Pres. Duterte's Proclamation 216.

"The immediate palpable impact of Duterte's martial law declaration is the more brazen violation of human rights and international humanitarian law on the ground, including the right to life and the right against warrantless arrests. These initial incidents prove that assurances of AFP, PNP and government officials that rights will be respected under Duterte's martial law are, in reality, sugar-coated bullets," Karapatan Secretary General Cristina Palabay said, upon receiving initial reports from Karapatan Southern Mindanao chapter, Suara Bangsa Moro and Exodus for Justice and Peace last night, May 27.

On May 25, 2017, from 5:30am to 10pm, around 240 elements of the 39th Infantry Battalion-Philippine Army conducted aerial bombings and fired at the Moro communities in sitios Pedtobawan, Campo, Apulan, and Centro Salat of Brgy. Salat, and in sitio Libpas, Brgy. Tuel in President Roxas, North Cotabato and in barangays Tangkulan and Anggaan, Damulog, Bukidnon. These areas are at least 100 kilometers away from Marawi City. 105 Howitzer cannons were mounted at Brgy. Kisupaan, Pres. Roxas, North Cotabato. More than 1,000 residents (252 families) have fled their homes.

This afternoon, elements of the 72nd IBPA prevented Karapatan Quick Reaction team members from providing assistance to the residents. Abdillah Makalang, barangay captain of Brgy. Salata, told QRT members that he cannot assure the team's security due to heavy military presence.

Makalang confirmed that Brgy. Salat resident Abdullah Mamansag was killed, when shrapnels from the artillery bombs of the military hit his spine and severed his right leg, while Norhamin Dataya, 25, and Dodong (not his real name), 14, were wounded and currently in critical condition. Norhamin was reportedly hit by shrapnels from artillery bombs while Dodong was hit in his chest and stomach. Dataya's house was destroyed during the said bombing. Residents reported that there were more residents injured.

In Brgy. Tual, Pres. Roxas, N. Cotabato and Brgys. Tangkulan and Anggaan, Damulog, Bukidnon, 39th IBPA elements went on a firing spree attacking homes of residents with 50 caliber machine guns.

Yesterday morning, two farmer members of the Unyon sa Mag-uuma nga Nakigbisog (UMANA), Nestor Quintaro and Gilbert Rodella, were illegally arrested by elements of the 66th IBPA for still unknown charges, while another farmer, Eranio Lapus, remains missing.

“The Government of the Republic of the Philippines negotiating panel with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) has yet to answer numerous submitted complaints on human rights violations under Duterte. At the same time, the GRP attempts to downplay these violations in the ongoing peace talks in The Netherlands by putting across issues outside the substantive agenda in the negotiations, while the situation of the people in Mindanao is worsening by the minute, with the onslaught of military operations further legitimized by the martial law declaration,” Palabay said.

“Is the GRP really sincere in addressing the root causes of the armed conflict through the crafting of the agreement on socio-economic reforms? Or is it just after a paltry bilateral ceasefire agreement that literally means nothing to the Filipino people, when martial law and counter-insurgency programs are in place?,” she asked.

“It would do well for the GRP to remember that in The Hague Joint Declaration, the agreement on human rights and international humanitarian law is the first substantive agenda in the peace talks. They have yet to fulfill their obligations under the CARHRIHL, so they should show some modicum of sincerity first in abiding by previous agreements,” Palabay concluded.

Reference:

Cristina Palabay, Secretary General, 0917-3162831
Karapatan Public Information Desk, 0918-9790580

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PUBLIC INFORMATION DESK

publicinfo@karapatan.org



KARAPATAN

Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights
2nd Flr. Erythrina Bldg., #1 Maaralin corner Matatag Sts., Central District
Diliman, Quezon City, PHILIPPINES 1101
Telefax: (+63 2) 4354146
Web: <http://www.karapatan.org>

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