



August 31, 2015

**Col. Alexander Macario**  
**Brigade Commander**  
**401<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade,**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Philippine Army**  
**Agusan del Sur**

Col. Macario:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated August 24, 2015 requesting for a “lecturer” from KARAPATAN for your Joint HR/IHL training with the Commission on Human Rights Region 13 office. We are declining your invitation for one main reason – we vehemently refuse to participate in your charades of “human rights training” or similar futile exercises meant to waste public funds, either from the Philippines or from other States, over activities that will redound to nothing but more human rights abuses on the marginalized sectors in your respective area of responsibility and elsewhere in the country.

Millions of foreign aid and public funds from the nation’s coffers have been spent in so many so-called human rights trainings among State security forces. Yet, there has been no great departure from the policy and practice of political repression that the Philippine government has employed against the Filipino people through the Armed Forces of the Philippines – from the Martial Law period up to the present BS Aquino regime.

The numerous victims of extrajudicial killing, enforced disappearance, torture, illegal arrest, threats, forcible evacuation and other brutal violations against civilians enforced by the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, the Philippine Army and the whole AFP and the Aquino administration are testament not only to the futility of the said activities, but to the opportunism and deception that your institution employs to legitimize the said human rights abuses.

In fact, a week before your invitation was sent, on August 18, 2015, your fellow mercenaries from the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Forces Battalion under the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division massacred five Manobo farmers in Pangantucan, Bukidnon. Your fellow soldiers accused them as NPA members during military operations in their community and brutally killed them. Herminio Samia’s body was found near a coffee tree, shot at the stomach, his intestines exposed and has an exit wound at the back. Emer Somina’s body was found near the house’s door. Norman Samia was found a few

steps away, with his ear removed from his head and his jaw broken. Welmer Somina's left hand was cut off from his wrist and had a gunshot on his nose, which disfigured his face. Jobert Samia's body was found near Welmer's.

A day after your so-called "human rights training," 443 individuals from 81 families, including women and children, evacuated from Nalindog, Nahikayad, Bishop and Tambunon communities in Brgy. Bolhoon, San Miguel, Surigao del Sur due to harassment and threats to the community of paramilitary groups under the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

We do not find your charades amusing nor will we be fooled by your failed attempts to appear respectful of human rights through such trainings, because of the policy of political repression by this administration and the fascist character of your mercenary institution called the AFP. The Aquino administration touts activities like these as among the components of its "security sector reform" under Oplan Bayanihan. But it begs the question: Can such reform change the fascist character and orientation of the Philippine military, when it pursues the same objective of suppressing people's actions for meaningful change? Clearly, the answer to the said question is NO, since the implementation of these so-called "reforms," the human rights situation in the country has gone from bad to worse. So much for "peace and development."

While it is distressing to know that some non-government organizations are your partners in the said trainings to lend credence to your opportunist and deceitful practices, we are confident that the people see through all the lies and remain as steadfast as ever in defending and upholding human rights and genuine peace based on justice.

For KARAPATAN,



Cristina Palabay  
Secretary General