



NETWORK OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN ASIA

Email: niwa@aippnet.org

Network of Indigenous Women in Asia (NIWA) and Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) condemns the coercion and threats against the relatives of Indigenous Women leader, Ms. Bai Bibyaon.

Bai Bibyaon, who is also known as Mothers of the Lumads is the first and only Chieftain in the history of Monobo people of Philippines. Since 1994, she has been a leader and environmentalist advocating the rights of indigenous people's collective right over the land and natural resources of Pantaron Mountain Range. She has been in the frontline to defend their ancestral land against big mining corporations, logging and corporate plantations and in due course has been victim of threats and harassments by militaries.

On the 18th September, 2021 in Nasilaban, Bry. Palma Gil, Talaingod, Davao Del Norte armed soldier under the 56th Infantry Battalion forcibly gathered families and relatives of Bai Bibyaon and Coerced them through a signed document to get the woman leader from its sanctuary. Recently, the relatives of Bai Bibyaon were forcibly moved to Talaingod Municipality by the military and the Local Government which has endangered their lives.

Because of this harassment and rumors, Bibyaon said she opts to stay in her sanctuary in Manila to continue her advocacy.

"I call on my relatives and fellow tribesmen to stand firm and never let the military take our liberties by forcing us to fight with each other. They've done it among the parents of children who have evacuated in Cebu, forcing them to file charges against our teachers, even among our own children and fellow elders. No one from my community would want those who cared and taught their children even during the pandemic imprisoned. It is the military and the police who have threatened them of trumped-up charges if they will not comply" Bai Bibyaon lamented.

"I will not return. I will not join any group led by the police to bring me back to my home. The military should leave the community first before we all could return and resume our lives," Bibyaon said.

Through, this statement we join in solidarity with Indigenous Women networks, and leaders of Philippines who are raising their voices against such violation of rights of indigenous peoples and their safety. We put forth our collective demand to Philippines government to cease their militarization and human rights violation of Indigenous Women and Indigenous Peoples. We would also like to call upon all the indigenous voices to raise upon this issue to stop Bai Bibyaon from being arrested for defending her ancestral land and values.



NETWORK OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN ASIA

Email: niwa@aippnet.org

In Solidarity:

National Indigenous Women Federation, Nepal

Bai Indigenous Women Network, Philippines

Indigenous Women Forum of North East India, North East India

Bangladesh Indigenous Women Network, Bangladesh

Interstate Adivasi Women Network, India

Joringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia, Malaysia.