



CORDILLERA PEOPLES ALLIANCE

*For the Defense of the Ancestral Domain
and for Self Determination*

September 23, 2008

SURFACE JAMES M. BALAO NOW!

The CORDILLERA PEOPLES ALLIANCE urgently demands that those responsible for the enforced disappearance of JAMES M. BALAO should immediately and unconditionally surface him. We are specifically calling on the military intelligence units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police to surface James. James' surveillance leading to his abduction was executed only by means of the joint operations of the military intelligence groups—the Intelligence Security Unit (ISU), Military Intelligence Group (MIG) and the PNP. Balao is not simply a missing person but a victim of enforced disappearance, and this is an urgent issue of the right to life that must be upheld and respected at all times. We challenge the AFP and PNP that if they truly are defenders of human rights and are mandated to serve and protect the Filipino people, they **MUST** immediately surface James Balao.

Balao is a founding member of the CPA in 1984 and worked in its Research and Education Commission, extending his services and expertise in this area in the Cordillera provinces such as in Ifugao. He is the president of their clan association, the Oclupan Clan Association. He hails from Atok and La Trinidad in Benguet. Balao is the second victim of enforced disappearance in the CPA, with Ama Daniel Ngayaan who was first abducted in October 1987 in Pasil, Kalinga. Balao was first arrested in 1988 for allegedly possessing “subversive” documents. The case was dismissed due to lack of evidence.

Intensified Surveillance and Harassment Towards Extrajudicial Killings

Balao's enforced disappearance is not an isolated incident. It is part of a systematic and desperate move of the State against members and officers of the CPA in its “counter-terrorism and anti-insurgency” campaign. The ultimate end-all of being unjustly branded as a “communist front” or “terrorist” is surveillance and harassment towards extrajudicial killings. In recent months, our members, including innocent civilians, became victims to the state terror unleashed thru the Oplan Bantay Laya. Through the OBL, the Arroyo regime has mercilessly claimed the lives of CPA members Markus Bangit and Alyce Claver in June and July 2006, and nearly, the life of Dr. Chandu Claver.

In November 2007, human rights worker Vangie Tadeo from the CPA-Abra chapter was abducted and it was very fortunate that Vangie escaped from her abductors. In March 2008, a youth member of our cultural member organization was abducted. She was surfaced after four days when her captors could not probably get anything from her. She was severely interrogated and remains in trauma. In their massive military operations in Tubo, Abra last March 2008, the 50th IB killed 60-year old farmer-hinter Mariano Galisen. In April and June 2008, elements of the 77th and 21st IBs mercilessly gunned down farmer-hunters Rey Logao and Rocky Aboli, both of Lubuagan, Kalinga, in what the military senselessly calls a “legitimate encounter with the NPA”. The circumstances of their deaths show that they are innocent civilians merely attending to their daily routine of farming. If the military can commit such a gruesome act to Aboli who is in fact a councilman of Upper Uma barangay, the ordinary civilians are also subject to the AFP's mad terror tagging. The 5th Infantry Division has in fact manufactured a list of 25 alleged NPA surrenderees that includes names of civilians like Max Liyang Finmon-as of Tonglayan, Natonin, Mt. Province. The barangay officials immediately issued a

resolution, also signed by Natonin Mayor Ana Rafael Banaag and the Natonin PNP Chief Eusebio Aclupen, stating that Finmon-as is NOT an NPA but a local resident whom they know.

Undaunted vigilance is very necessary at these crucial times. The regime is desperate in its attempt to prove that it is successful in quelling the revolutionary NPA, because it cannot. That is why it is manufacturing a list of NPAs which are actually innocent civilians and carries on attacking legitimate people's organizations like the CPA.

The surveillance never stopped, and now, with James' enforced disappearance, more suspicious looking drivers, taxi cabs and private vehicles have been parking near the CPA regional office and its network of organizations. The extrajudicial killings came to a lull in 2007 as a result of the sustained multi-level pressure at the extremely isolated Arroyo regime and its OBL, and while the regime underwent review for its human rights record in the Universal Periodic Review. The Philippine government's report to the UPR contained barefaced lies and half truths about the real human rights situation in the country, claiming credit for the decrease in the number of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances through supposed "measures" undertaken by the Philippine government.

Defy State Terror!

Once an innocent civilian or a member of a legitimate people's organization such as the CPA is labeled as a front organization of the CPP, an NPA supporter or a terrorist, that is already laying the ground towards surveillance, harassment and extrajudicial killing or enforced disappearance. In James' case, let the public know that an AFP dossier has actually tagged James an alleged position as head of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) Education Bureau in the Ilocos and Cordillera regions. This is outrageous and an outright desperate attempt of the AFP to claim that indeed, the State's "counter-insurgency" is yielding positive results!

We challenge the AFP and PNP to immediately and unconditionally surface James Balao. Each day that you, the PNP and AFP remain silent and indifferent to the enforced disappearance of James only validates further your accountability in his disappearance.

We, along with the Balao family, appeal to the public for support in our effort to have James immediately surfaced. This is our task as Filipino citizens to always uphold and protect the right to life and not deny it to anyone.

A State that violates basic human rights and brazenly denies the right to life must not be tolerated. We will not tolerate each passing day with passivity nor will we tolerate the impunity bred in this fascist regime. We will heighten our vigilance and most especially, resist and defy state terrorism. We will not be lameducks waiting for prolonged surveillance and harassment and the next extrajudicial killing. We will resist all forms of state terror and if necessary, through self defense as an assertion of our rights to life and self determination!

**SURFACE JAMES BALAO NOW!
RESIST AND DEFY STATE TERRORISM!**

CORDILLERA PEOPLES ALLIANCE

Reference:
Beverly Longid
Chairperson

