Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 1335

Introduced by
BAYAN MUNA Representatives EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT,
CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE and FERDINAND R. GAITE,
Gabriela Women's Party Representative ARLENE D. BROSAS,
ACT TEACHERS Party-List Representative FRANCE L. CASTRO,
and KABATAAN Party-List Representative SARAH JANE I. ELAGO

RESOLUTION
URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THROUGH THE COMMITTEE
ON HUMAN RIGHTS, TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION THE
STRAFING ON A LUMAD COMMUNITY IN SITIO MAGKAHUNAO, SAN
AGUSTIN, LIANGA, SURIGAO DEL SUR ALLEGEDLY COMMITTED BY
ELEMENTS OF THE 3RD SPECIAL FORCES BATTALION, PHILIPPINE ARMY

WHEREAS, Kasalo Caraga, an alliance of Lumad organizations in Caraga region, reported that
on October 28, 2020, at around 9:30 AM, around twenty (20) soldiers believed to be from the 3rd
Special Forces Battalion (SFB) Philippine Army opened fire on the house of Madelyn Atigan, a
Manobo resident of an indigenous community in Sitio Magkahunao, Brgy. Buhisan, San Agustin,
Lianga, Surigao del Sur. Eighteen (18) Lumad residents and evacuees, including children, were
inside the house when the military opened fire. Two children aged four (4) and six (6) years old
were almost hit by the bullets. Several items inside the house and the wall of the house were
damaged;

WHEREAS, after the strafing, five (5) soldiers entered the house while the remaining fifteen
(15) soldiers surrounded the area. Seven (7) Lumad inside the house were arrested and forced to
sign documents stating that they were surrenderees of the New People’s Army (NPA). The
residents refused to sign the papers but the soldiers allegedly pointed their guns at them and
forced them to sign. The soldiers allegedly told the residents they could choose between
cooperating or being arrested by the police. According to one of the victims, the name of a
certain SF Lt. Joven Hovenia was in the documents that they were forced to sign. The soldiers
allegedly held the Lumad for seven (7) hours, limiting their movement and refusing to allow
them even to get water to drink;

WHEREAS, prior to the strafing incident, on September 30, 2020, the 3rd SFB set up a military
camp in the middle of the community of Sitio Magkahunao. To ensure their safety, residents
living near the military camp evacuated and sought shelter in the homes far from the said camp;
WHEREAS, after the strafing incident, the victims were forced to evacuate again to another community to ensure their safety due to the trauma brought by the incident and the continued military encampment;

WHEREAS, the residents of Sitio Magkahunao upon which the soldiers opened fire are members of the Malahutayong Pakigsbisog Alang sa Sumusunod (MAPASU), an organization of the Lumad in Surigao del Sur. MAPASU has long been campaigning for the defense of ancestral lands from large-scale foreign mining companies. For this, MAPASU leaders and members have been the target of intense red-tagging and vilification;

WHEREAS, the incident is in direct violation of International Humanitarian Law and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law which guarantees the protection of civilians in times of armed conflict and prohibits indiscriminate firing against civilian populations;

WHEREAS, Lumad residents of Lianga, Surigao del Sur attribute the threats and harassment against them to their resource-rich ancestral lands. The Lumad in Surigao del Sur live in ancestral lands situated in the Andap Valley Complex which is rich in coal deposits and a target area for coal mining operations. According to environmental group Caraga Watch, there are 33 coal operating contracts which are scheduled to advance to the development and production phase within 2018-2020 which include Benguet Corporation, Abacus Coal Exploration and Development Corporation, and the Great Wall Mining and Power Corporation with coal operating contracts for areas in the Andap Valley Complex. In 2018, President Duterte himself mentioned the Andap Valley as one of the areas for which he would find investors;

WHEREAS, attacks against indigenous people in Lianga, Surigao del Sur have been relentless with numerous cases of red-tagging, illegal arrests, and extrajudicial killings against residents committed by state and paramilitary forces. In 2015, the Lianga Massacre was perpetrated by paramilitary group Magahat-Bagani in coordination with the 75th IBPA. This resulted in the killing of MAPASU Chairperson Dionel Campos, Datu Jovello Sinzo, and school director of Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development (ALCADEV) Emerito Samaca. These attacks against indigenous people have further intensified with the establishment of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC). The task force has been notorious for repeatedly red-tagging progressives including Lumad schools and indigenous people campaigning for the defense of ancestral lands and the right to self-determination;

WHEREAS, it is imperative for members of Congress, as representatives of our people, to defend the rights of our people and check on excesses and violations committed against them, especially in this time of crisis. Laws and rules should serve the interest of our people, and should not be weaponized to suppress their rights and oppress them;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the House of Representatives through the Committee on Human Rights, conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the strafing on a Lumad community in Sitio Magkahunao, San Agustin, Lianga, Surigao del Sur allegedly committed by elements of the 3rd Special Forces Battalion Philippine Army.
Adopted,

REP. EUREMIA C. CULLAMAT
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. FERDINAND R. GAITE
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS
GABRIELA Women's Party

REP. FRANCE L. CASTRO
ACT Teachers Partylist

REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO
Kabataan Partylist