
14TH SESSION OF THE UN PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES
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Agenda Item 8: Intervention on Future Work of the Permanent Forum

Presented by: Sarah Dekdeken, Cordillera Peoples Alliance

Thank you Madame Chair. This is a joint intervention of the Asia Pacific Indigenous Youth Network, Cordillera Peoples Alliance, Centre for Research and Advocacy – Manipur, Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights in Manipur and the UN, Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self Determination and Liberation, and Land is Life.

Indigenous people's right to self determination, a fundamental right that transcends all provisions of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other major International Human Rights agreements, is increasingly being arbitrated in an aggressive form. In the case of Manipur and the Cordillera, Philippines, self determination efforts of indigenous peoples are crushed with brute forms of extensive militarization, sanctioned by the promulgation of State laws and policies such as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958 in Manipur and the counter-insurgency policy Operation Plan Bayanihan in the Philippines, which derogate the fundamental non-derogable human rights of indigenous peoples.

Indigenous communities especially in Asia have long been suffering from the impact of militarization, which ranges from direct civilian killings to land grabbing, facilitating development onslaught, economic dislocation and other forms of human rights violations and violations to our collective rights, all converging in reinforcing the denial of our right to self determination as indigenous peoples.

States militarize our communities to subdue self-determination movements and to implement extractive industries and other unsustainable development projects, such as the Mapithel, Loktak, and Khuga dams projects in Manipur, and numerous mining and energy projects in the Cordillera, Philippines that are all resulting in worsening land conflicts and numerous human rights violations. Indigenous territories are being used for military activities which constitutes direct violations of State laws and the UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Land grabbing is carried out for militarization purposes. Women, youth and children are not spared, with the countless indigenous women and children who fell victim of rape and other sexual abuses by State military members as in the infamous cases of Ahanjaobi, Mercy Kabui, Chanu Rose, Thangjam Manorama in Manipur.

Militarization also continues to threaten our economic survival. Last year (2014), militarization resulted in the forcible evacuation of 1,238 families of Lumad indigenous peoples in the Philippines. The continuing military operations in the Cordillera region disrupts indigenous people's economic activities. In January this year, Manipur communities protested the restrictions imposed by Assam Rifles on the daily economic activities of villagers around the Loktak Lake in Manipur.

Militarization processes has already hastened the fast degrading food sovereignty of Manipur as huge tracts of prime agricultural lands are increasingly converted into non-productive assets, including setting-up of military camps.

Militarization also targets educational facilities and desecrate cultural and historical sites. From 2011-2014, 146 schools were under attack by State military and paramilitary groups in the Lumad communities in the Philippines through military encampment in schools, harassment of students and teachers,

divestment and destruction of school properties, and evacuation of students and their families. In Manipur, there has been a longstanding demand from the students of Manipur University to shift the Assam Rifles currently occupying the Langthabal Hills, an important historical and cultural heritage site, located within the university premises.

Militarization has disturbed the profound relationships of Indigenous peoples with their lands and territories, and military activities are taking place without the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of indigenous communities. This has enormous social and cultural impacts, and also posing threats to the physical integrity, identity and survival of indigenous peoples.

State Sponsored Infusion of Non Indigenous Population in Indigenous Peoples Territories, and Paramilitary Groups

One of the serious challenges confronting indigenous peoples worldwide is the State sponsored infusion of non indigenous population in indigenous territories, which has far reaching implications to their survival and existence as peoples. In Manipur, unregulated entry of non-indigenous populations has led to land alienation, economic subjugation, political repression, loss of indigenous culture and traditional, conflict and other social impacts. Deliberate transfer of non indigenous population is also deliberately facilitated to weaken indigenous peoples' movement for their rights.

In the Philippines, further exacerbating the problems of militarization within indigenous areas are operations of the government's paramilitary group, known as Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGUs), and tribal paramilitary groups that are organized by the State military among indigenous peoples. At least 25 paramilitary groups are sowing terror in the Lumad and peasant communities, harassing indigenous leaders, and attacking schools. Thirteen cases of extrajudicial killings from July 2010 up to December 2014 are attributed to the operations of paramilitary groups.

We have been raising our concerns on militarization of indigenous communities to our respective governments, intergovernmental agencies, and UN bodies and mechanisms including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. However, instead of being addressed, the militarization of indigenous communities is worsening. We feel that the issue of militarization of indigenous communities must be given further attention in the future work of the Permanent Forum. Hence, we forward the following **recommendations** to the Permanent Forum:

- For the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to undertake a study on multifaceted and holistic impacts of militarization, such as physical and psychological impacts
- Consider Militarization in indigenous peoples land and territories as one of the Themes of the Fifteenth (15th) Session of PFII
- Commission a study on the impacts of the infusion of non indigenous peoples and the role of State paramilitary groups in indigenous people's territories

Thank you for your attention.