

Mindanao (Philippines) - Food and Justice for the Farmers: Statement on the Kidapawan Carnage

Tuesday 5 April 2016, by [MPPM](#) (Date first published: 5 April 2016).



Women farmers from Upi, Maguindanao joins the Earth Day mobilization in Cotabato in April 22, 2015. With the long drought, they are now among the many farmers who are suffering from hunger in their communities.

The Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement vehemently condemns the grave abuse of power by the state through the deployment of its police force in forcefully dispersing the 6,000 protesters in Kidapawan City on April 1.

High-powered guns were used to openly fire at the farmers, Indigenous Peoples and activists who rallied to demand for immediate government relief of 15,000 sacks of rice to the drought-affected farming communities who had gone hungry for the past months. So far, 3 people were confirmed dead and several more were injured because of this violent incident.

To demand politically for the government's immediate response on a hunger crisis is a legitimate demand which should have been addressed immediately in a manner that upholds human rights and dignity.

It is in this reason that MPPM demands for the following:

- For the government to immediately provide relief assistance especially food, water and medical assistance to the men, women, children and the aged who were affected by the said violence to in Kidapawan City;
- For the government and its concerned agencies to provide the much-needed assistance and support to all farmers in North Cotabato rural communities which are continuously affected by the long drought;
- For the government to immediately relieve from post the police officers who were responsible for the violent dispersal of the protesters to pave the way for an independent investigation;
- For the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) to conduct an independent investigation to bring into the folds of the law those who were responsible and bring justice to the victims.

This carnage showed us the clear devastating picture of hunger and its effects to food-producing communities. Food has become a commodity. Its production, distribution and consumption as well as the management of the natural resources needed in these processes are controlled politically by those who are in power and served private interests.

Hunger is political, hence, the Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement is in solidarity with the farmers in their demands for the government to provide subsidies. We encourage the community of human rights, justice and peace civil society organizations to support the farmers and to the pressure the local and national government to immediately address these said legitimate demands.

Above all, we demand that our government should do concrete actions and policies that forward sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty and serve the interests of the people.

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Chairperson

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P.S.

* <http://tripeoplesjournal.blogspot.fr/2016/04/food-and-justice-for-farmers-statement.html>