

# **The December 9-11, 2006 Mindanao Peoples' Caravan for Human Rights and Peace**

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**The December 9-11, 2006 Mindanao Peoples' Caravan for Human Rights and Peace: A Celebration for Human Rights and a Prelude to the 4<sup>th</sup> Mindanao Peoples' Peace Summit in Lamitan, Basilan, December 12-17, 2006.**

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## **Rationale and Background**

The 4<sup>th</sup> Mindanao Peoples' Peace Summit will be held on December 12 to 17, 2006 in Lamitan, Basilan. In order to drum up support for the Summit and for the peace processes in Mindanao, the Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement (MPPM), sponsor of the Summit, will also hold a Mindanao-wide Peoples' Caravan for Human Rights and Peace to mark the 58<sup>th</sup> Year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to serve as a prelude to the 4<sup>th</sup> Mindanao Peoples' Peace Summit in Lamitan, Basilan. All groups working for peace including local government units have been invited to join.

The Peace Caravan shall commence on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2006. The Caravan is open to members of MPPM and other organizations who share the commitment of MPPM in solving the Mindanao conflict through peaceful ways. One such means is the UN-Supervised/Managed/Facilitated Referendum on Political Options in the Bangsamoro Areas of Mindanao and Palawan and the Entire Island Provinces of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-tawi or MinSuBaTaPa. This should be held within the next ten years after a thoroughgoing education and organization work in these areas and after ensuring that the mechanisms for a clean and honest balloting are installed. MPPM is committed to work with all groups committed to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Mindanao and the world over. The Caravan and the Summit are points of convergence for all groups interested to join us in our quest for peace in MinSuBaTaPa.

## **Converging Points: Rallies in Cotabato, Iligan and Pagadian Cities; Forum in Zamboanga City**

The first converging point is Cotabato City where delegates from North Cotabato, Davao Provinces, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat and the SOCSARGEN areas shall meet and hold a Rally on Dec. 9.

The second is Iligan City where delegates from Lanao del Norte/Sur, Misamis Oriental/Occidental, Bukidnon and the CARAGA region shall meet also on December 9<sup>th</sup>. A Rally will also be held there.

The third is Pagadian City where colleagues from the areas of Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga del Sur shall meet on Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>. Guests and invited organizations from Negros Oriental and Cebu will also converge in Pagadian. They may also go straight to Zamboanga City for the Forum on Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>.

The caravan will commence on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2006 when delegates from the above-named areas travel to Iligan and Cotabato City, hold rallies and spend the night there. They will then depart in the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> for Pagadian City. A program shall be prepared by our network in Pagadian City on the afternoon of the 10<sup>th</sup> to commemorate the 58<sup>th</sup> Year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It will be a Rally-cum-Concert. Talent presentations will be expected from member-organizations of MPPM and other groups sympathetic to the MPPM cause. The group will spend the night there. Human Rights Commissioner D. Calamba, Jr., the military and others have been invited to speak there.

On the 11<sup>th</sup>, the caravan will leave for Zamboanga City to be joined by delegations from Zamboanga Sibuguey along the way. The caravan will now be composed of the groups that gathered in Iligan, Cotabato, & Pagadian/Zamboanga delegations. They will finally converge in Zamboanga City for the Forum on Human Rights and Peace where former Vice-President Teofisto T. Guingona, Jr. will speak.

CHR Chair Dr. Purificacion V. Quisumbing has also been invited to this Forum on Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> evening.

The Forum will be from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. after which delegations will be billeted in Western Mindanao State University (WEMSU) gym, which is also the venue of the Forum. Vehicles that will not be ferried across to Basilan can be safely parked in WMSU. Delegates shall prepare for the boat trip to the venue of the Peace Summit in Lamitan, Basilan in the morning of December 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **Organization of the Mindanao Peoples' Caravan for Human Rights and Peace**

A five-member team shall be organized to coordinate with groups and concerned government offices and institutions in the major converging points: one for the Cotabato Area, one for Iligan Area, one for Pagadian City/Zamboanga Area, one for Zamboanga City and one that will serve as the Caravan Marshall. Ivan Paypa, Deputy Secretary-General for Mindanao Migrants has been designated by the MPPM Executive Committee as Marshall and Chair of the Caravan Team. Vehicles for the Marshall and a medical team shall be also identified to perform the following functions:

1. Vehicle for the Medical Team - shall respond to any health problems of the participants along the way and shall make referral to the nearest hospital/clinic if required.
2. Vehicle for the Caravan Marshall - shall maintain the order and distance of the vehicles in the caravan. It shall be equipped with two-way radios so that fast communication is possible. It shall also have mechanics and vulcanizing equipment, etc, extra jacks and towing ropes!

A steering committee composed of vehicle representatives plus the Caravan Team with the Marshall as Chair shall meet daily to evaluate the caravan progress and plan the next day's trip.

### **The Caravan and the 4<sup>th</sup> Peace Summit: Vehicles for Concrete Peoples' Participation for Peace**

The period from December 9-17, 2006 total eight (8) days. These are **Eight Days for Peace** when we will try to live out our commitment to peace by working together, traveling, eating, and living simply together, discussing, debating, laughing and building relationships with one another thus creating a core of people who are genuinely committed to peace in Mindanao and the world over.

Thus every member delegation shall carry or equip themselves with food provisions during the caravan thus avoiding centralization of supplies. Every vehicle shall as much as possible have a two-way radio set for fast communication to every unit with the Marshall vehicle serving as control vehicle. A public address system shall be installed at the fore, middle, and rear of the caravan

playing MPPM theme and other peace songs along the way. Organizations are encouraged to display individual vehicle streamers/banners during the Mindanao Peoples' Caravan and the 4<sup>th</sup> MPPM Peace Summit.

Participating Groups are expected to take care of all expenses related to the Caravan such as fuel, food and lodging. The Caravan Team will try and organize food and lodging in the cities of Cotabato, Iligan, Pagadian and Zamboanga. But expect to sleep in schoolrooms and gyms. Make sure you have a malong and personal provisions such as mosquito killers/off or your own medicines. Let us consecrate these eight days (Dec. 9-17, '06) as **Eight Days for Peace** in MinSuBaTaPa [1] and the whole world.

IVAN PAYPA

MPPM Deputy Sec-Gen

Caravan Marshall

AMABELLA L. CARUMBA

MPPM Secretary-General

ALVARO O. SENTURIAS, JR.

Chair, Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement (MPPM)

1. MinSuBaTaPa: Mindanao-Sulu-Basilan-Tawi Tawi and Palawan.