



# **Cordillera Peoples Alliance**

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

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## **URGENT APPEAL: Drop the trumped-up case against CPA Chairperson Windel Bolinget!**

A trumped-up case of murder against Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) Chairperson, Mr. Windel Bolinget, was filed by a police officer in a court in Tagum City, Davao Del Norte, Philippines in 2020. The Cordillera Peoples Alliance learned that a warrant of arrest has been issued against Bolinget in relation to the case.

Bolinget and nine other individuals are being accused of killing Garito Tiklonay Malibato on March 22, 2018 in Barangay Gupitan, Kapalong, Davao del Norte. Bolinget has never been to the place. Also, in a news report on March 23, 2018, the Karadyawan, an organization of indigenous peoples in Kapalong, Davao del Norte, and the PASAKA, organization of Indigenous Peoples in Southern Mindanao, pointed to the paramilitary group ALAMARA as the ones who shot dead Karadyawan member Garito Malibato. In addition, a relative of Malibato expressed that Malibato has been receiving death threats from the ALAMARA prior to his killing.

Since before Christmas, Bolinget's residence and home towns have been put under visible surveillance, with members and assets of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP) swarming around in search for him. Based on information gathered by the CPA, the manhunt intensified just before the New Year.

The Bolinget family and CPA fear the "tokhang"-style execution (extrajudicial killing under the pretext of "resisting arrest" or "nanlaban/fought back") if Bolinget is arrested and even during his transportation to Davao Del Norte where he should face his case. This has been the track record of the PNP and AFP, the latest of which was the extrajudicial killings of 9 indigenous leaders and arrest of 16 others in a synchronized operation of the AFP and PNP last December 30, 2020 in Capiz and Iloilo provinces.

Bolinget did not commit any murder or physical harm against any individual. The trumped-up case is obviously meant to silence him and the CPA from asserting indigenous peoples' rights and human rights against development aggression (destructive mining and dam projects) and rights violations. It is the latest of a series of attacks against Bolinget.

In 2006, Bolinget was included in a military hitlist, along with other leaders of the CPA. In February 2018, his name and that of former CPA leaders were included in the Department of

Justice's terrorist proscription list. Their names were eventually dropped from the list because it was baseless and simply meant to malign the individuals and the CPA.

Since April 2020, the attacks against Bolinget especially through social media has intensified in an unprecedented manner. Hundreds of Facebook posts tagged him along with his colleagues at CPA as communists and terrorists, and portrayed them as evils. Worse, Bolinget's family was included in the attacks, putting their lives also in danger. Facebook posts were no doubt used by the AFP and PNP to condition the minds of the people that Bolinget is a wicked and immoral person, with the aim that when extrajudicial killing and trumped-up cases against him is committed, it may become "acceptable".

Early in the morning of December 10, 2020 (International Human Rights Day), flyers were scattered along the road 80 meters away from his house in La Trinidad, Benguet to Baguio City. The flyers showed a photo of Bolinget and other individuals, with text saying Bolinget is immoral and a recruiter of the armed revolutionary group New People's Army. The same flyers were also posted in various areas in Baguio City.

All these are part of the systematic attacks of the Duterte regime against political dissenters and human rights activists through the implementation of the End Local Communist Armed Conflict (ELCAC) under Duterte's Executive Order 70. Without evidence for the things they accused Bolinget with, the AFP, PNP and their minions resorted to red-tagging (communis-tagging), terrorist-labeling, dirty tactics of smear campaign and paid trolls, and now trumped-up murder case.

We've learned of the dangers of red-tagging from our past experiences. Over the past years, peasant leaders in the Cordillera were killed after years of harassment, red-tagging, veiled threats, death threats and surveillance perpetrated by the AFP, PNP and other state agents. In 2019, CPA volunteer Brandon Lee barely managed to stay alive after an attempted extrajudicial killing which came after years of the same intense harassment, red-tagging and surveillance against him by no less than the 54<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion of the AFP in Ifugao province.

Bolinget belongs to the Kankanaey and Bontok indigenous peoples in Mountain Province. He has been an environment defender and human rights activist for more than half of his life. To date, he served the CPA for 23 years as Education Commission Officer, Secretary General and now Chairperson. He has long been known as an indigenous activist strongly committed to his work.

The trumped-up case and vicious attacks by the AFP and PNP against Bolinget are desperate attempts to destroy Bolinget and his family, and to delegitimize the CPA. These will neither silence nor stop the CPA from defending Cordillera indigenous peoples' rights and human rights. However, these attacks must stop before worse forms of human rights violations, such as extrajudicial killings, are committed against CPA leaders and members.

We appeal to you for support for Bolinget, his family and the CPA in these trying times. The following are some of the ways that you may extend support:

1. Issue statements to condemn the trumped-up case against Bolinget and attacks against the CPA, and call for wider support for the campaigns on these. The following calls are encouraged to be used in statements and other social media posts:

Drop the trumped-up case against Windel Bolinget!

Stop the manhunt!

Safety and (Access to ) Justice for Windel!

Stop the attacks against the CPA!

Junk Executive Order 70!

Justice for Garito Malibato!

#DefendWindel

#DefendCPA

#DefendCordillera

2. Send letters of concern to the following officers of concerned government agencies:

**HON. MENARDO I. GUEVARRA**

Secretary of Justice

Department of Justice

[communications@doj.gov.ph](mailto:communications@doj.gov.ph)

**MR. ALLEN CAPUYAN**

Chairperson

National Commission on Indigenous Peoples

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**ATTY. CHITO GASCON**

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**ATTY. ROMEL DAGUIMOL**

Regional Director

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[chrpcar@gmail.com](mailto:chrpcar@gmail.com)

**ATTY. EDMUNDO R. ALBAY**

Regional Director

Commission on Human Rights – Region XI

[chrdavao@yahoo.com](mailto:chrdavao@yahoo.com)

3. Support the Defend the Cordillera campaign against plunder and State terror. Sign the Global Pact at [defendcordillera.ph](http://defendcordillera.ph). Watch what's the campaign is all about [here](#).
4. Financial and logistical support for the legal case expenses.

For inquiries, please contact the Cordillera Peoples Alliance through [cpa@cpaphils.org](mailto:cpa@cpaphils.org), [pic@cpaphils.org](mailto:pic@cpaphils.org).

Thank you and we look forward for your support and solidarity.

CORDILLERA PEOPLES ALLIANCE