

EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Statement in support of indigenous human rights defenders in the Philippines

21 March 2018

The United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is joining the concern expressed by UN human rights experts¹ and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues² on the recent terrorism accusations levelled against Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These unsubstantiated allegations brought by the Philippine Government authorities constitute an unacceptable attack on her mandate, its independence, and more broadly on her work as a human rights defender. The Expert Mechanism finds it unacceptable that, as she undertakes a report on the criminalisation of indigenous human rights defenders, she has herself become a victim of this phenomenon.

The Expert Mechanism would also like to express its support to Joan Carling, former member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and Jose Molintas, former member of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, who are also the targets of these unsubstantiated accusations.

We call upon the Government of the Philippines to guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples, and particularly indigenous human rights defenders, in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other international human rights instruments, including the human rights treaties.

The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) is a subsidiary body of the Human Rights Council mandated to provide the Council with expertise and advice on the rights of indigenous peoples as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and assist Member States, upon request, in achieving the ends of the Declaration through the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the rights of indigenous peoples.

¹ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22783&LangID=E>

² <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/news/2018/03/unpfii-indigenous-human-rights-defenders-in-the-philippines/>