

Friends of the Earth Asia Pacific

is hosted at:

No. 258, Jalan Air Itam, 10460 Penang, Malaysia

Tel: +604 228 6 930

Fax: +604 228 6 932

Email: foepacrf@foei.org



**Friends of
the Earth
Asia Pacific**

Datu Victor Danyan, indigenous leader
of the T'boli tribe in Mindanao,
Philippines

Picture credit: Keith Bacongco,
Philippines



Press Statement

10 December 2017

Recognise, Respect and Protect Environmental Human Rights Defenders

Friends of the Earth Asia Pacific (FoE Asia Pacific) calls on all governments to recognise and respect the significant role of all Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs) in protecting the environment against destructive human activities. As EHRDs, they are defenders of their territories and collective people's rights and therefore should be accorded full protection rather than silenced for the risk they take in ensuring that we continue to have a habitable planet.

FoE Asia Pacific denounces the increasing militarisation in indigenous peoples' ancestral domains and the harassment, intimidation and killings of defenders of land, environment, as well as disrespecting indigenous and local communities' rights in their struggles against mining, dams, agribusiness and logging.

In the past year, we have seen many indigenous and local communities across the globe experience human rights abuses at the hands of governments and transnational corporations. Just a few days ago on December 3, Datu Victor Danyan (pic), his two sons and son in law were killed by the Philippine military under the guise of counter-insurgency operations. Datu Victor has led the opposition of the T'Boli-Manobos against coal mining and the

encroachment of coffee plantations inside their ancestral territory in Barangay Ned, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato.

Many cases involving environmental rights defenders are still unsolved: from the murder of Berta Caceres in Honduras to the assassination of Sikhosiphi Rhadebe in South Africa, from attacks on the indigenous community leaders in the Philippines to the killings of environmental and indigenous rights defenders in Mato Grosso Do Sul, Brazil. No one has been made answerable for these crimes.

We reiterate the calls made by Michel Forst, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, in 2016 for states in Asia and the Pacific to recognise the role of EHRDs, to develop protection mechanisms for EHRDs, include EHRDs in relevant decision-making mechanisms, and to sign the UN Treaty on Business and Human Rights, among others.

The protection of the environment and environmental human rights defenders is a responsibility of states and the international community. We call for an end to corporate plunder of community resources, and end to attacks on environmental human rights defenders, and an end to impunity of government and corporations for environmental destruction and human rights violations. //ENDS

For further information, please contact:

Romel de Vera
FoE Asia Pacific Human Rights Defenders Project
Coordinator
Tel: +63 917 700 2301
Email: mel.lrcksk@gmail.com