



## MINDANAO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES YOUTH ORGANIZATION INC (MIPYO)

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### POSITION PAPER OF THE MINDANAO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES YOUTH ORGANIZATION (MIPYO) ON PROPOSED HOUSE BILLS:

**HOUSE BILL NUMBER 015;** AN ACT DEFINING THE RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS, DECLARING THE STATE RESPONSIBILITIES AND INSTITUTING EFFECTIVE MECHANISMS FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THESE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS.

**HOUSE BILL NUMBER 161;** AN ACT DEFINING THE RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS, DECLARING THE STATE RESPONSIBILITIES AND INSTITUTING EFFECTIVE MECHANISMS FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THESE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS.

**and HOUSE BILL 240;** AN ACT DEFINING THE RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS, DECLARING THE STATE RESPONSIBILITIES AND INSTITUTING EFFECTIVE MECHANISMS FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THESE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS.

The Mindanao Indigenous Peoples Youth Organization (MIPYO) is a Mindanao-wide IP Youth organization representing the different Ancestral Domains, Ethnographic Groups/Tribes and the six (6) regions in Mindanao.

As our National Hero Gat Jose Rizal said “the youth is the hope of our motherland”. The same is true for us the IP Youth considering that most of our IP Elders have little access on formal education, that the burden of the future lies heavily on our shoulders.

We the IP Youth, had been the primary victims of the different modus operandi of recruitment of the Communist Terrorist group for the last five (5) decades. We were deceived in enrolling to their “Lumad schools” believing that this will give us education and bright future Only to be bombarded with their propaganda and systematically molded into activist against our government through their curriculum titled “Makabayan, Makamasa at Siyentipikong Edukasyon”. We were deceived into believing that the government will attack this “Lumad schools” therefore we must moved into the “Bakwit Schools” in Haran for Mindanao, University in san Carlos in Cebu and UP Diliman in Quezon City.

Those who choose to remain in our communities are target of NPA recruitments through their NPA units operating inside our Ancestral domains or through their aboveground Front Organizations under KATRIBU KAMMP and KALUMARAN in Mindanao.

Amidst this threat and realities, majority of us through the leadership of our IPS, IPOs, Council of Elders (COE) and IPMRs, had remain steadfast in our desire to participate and help our communities and Ancestral domains.

Through the help of National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), we are now in the process of Empowering the IP Youth nationwide. We had undertaken a 3 days Capacity Building by studying the 36 specific rights provided by IPRA under the four (4) bundle of rights. We are also studying the 11 building blocks to make our ICCs/IPs resilient and empowered.

As part of our inter-generational role in the ICCs/IPs, we the IP Youth are continually training from our Elders about our Customary Laws, Culture and Indigenous Knowledge, Systems and Practices (IKSP).

In this way, we are trained and developed by our Elders and the NCIP to be future IP Rights and Human Rights defenders whether we are in formal educational institutions or in our communities.

As the future leaders of our community, we are therefore responsible to the implications of the different House bills stated above and to the future of the ICCs/Ips and their Ancestral Domains. We are therefore, forced by circumstance, to add our voice and position regarding this matter.

We look up to our Elders as the GENUINE defenders of our Rights. Elders to us and our communities means our IPS, IPO, COE and IPMRs. As their next in line, by the process prescribe in our Customary Laws, we are also the IP Rights and Human Rights Defenders of our ICCs/IPs and Ancestral Domains. Along with our Elders, we must secure our future and that of the next generations. And what kind of future is that? A future where Peace reigns; a Society that is Just and Humane; and where no individual or person will be discriminated because of the color of his skin, his faith, his race or his economic status.

When will we start? We will start now by expressing our position on the threats and current situations where the Human Rights Violators and supporter of violence means of overthrowing our present legally constituted democratic government may gain protection from our Laws and be passive of their circumvention of our Legal system and Exploitation of our Democratic Space. We start by telling our TRUTH LOUDER.

We may be weak when the parameter is academic knowledge base on the mainstream system of education but we are enriched with the deepness and abundance of wisdom from our culture and traditions. Our situation where our knowledge is based in our actual experiences belonging to the ICCs/IPs in the Geographically Isolated and Disadvantage Areas (GIDAS) is our source of strength. Our perspective is based on the actual condition on the ground. We are the grassroots

and from there we will raise our voices to be heard in the Honorable Chambers of the Lower and Upper House of Congress.

We are and we are being trained as HUMAN RIGHTS and IP RIGHTS DEFENDERS by our Elders and the NCIP. We will be assertive in embracing these responsibilities and obligations as members of the ICCs/IPs and as ordinary citizen of this Country.


We will “Break our Silence, and tell the TRUTH”, to be worthy of our role as Human Rights and IP Rights Defenders.

So, we therefore declare that our revered Community Leaders, we call them in the titles given by their communities as “Timoays, Datu, Fulong, Matikadong, Pangat, Bae, Boi and in other dialects, who are also our IPS, IPO, COE and IPMRs, are our HUMAN RIGHTS AND IP RIGHTS DEFENDERS, not because they wanted to but because they are mandated to by their own communities. THEY MUST ACT as Human Rights and IP Defenders, so it’s them that must be respected, recognized, promoted and protected by the law promulgated by the Congress to be protected as Human Rights and IP Rights defenders.

We also declare, that we recognize the role of NCIP as the duly mandated government agency that will ensure that IP Rights are respected, recognized, promoted and protected as provided by IPRA Law.

We also declare that from our own experiences backed by evidences, affidavits and testimonies from IP Youth themselves who were victimize and exploited by CTG influence, controlled and led organizations, that there organizations cited in the propose house bills are pretending to be Human Rights Defenders but are in fact Human Rights Violators and they are affiliate or in connivance with groups that are promoting armed struggle or violence means to destroy our current democratic government and way of life for Socialism or Communist ideology.

Thus, as IP Youth and our Hope for the future, we appeal to the members of Congress and Senate to oppose or make the necessary corrective actions to make sure that Human Rights and IP Rights are truly promoted and protected by groups and individual that does not support violence nor have interest of destroying our government and our democracy.



**JERRY JAKE HANGGAM**  
Chairman, MIPYO