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Philippines

# Mindanao: Desperate situation of non-Moro indigenous peoples

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**Open statement of the Timuay Justice and Governance (TJG) on the alarming situation of the hopeless Tëduray and Lamanagian Non-Moro Indigenous People (NMIPS) in some villages or sitios of Barangay Biarong, South UPI Maguindanao del Sur, who are affected by the feud of the Moro clan who settled in the area.**

BIARONG and the villages in its periphery were historically inhabited exclusively by the Tëduray and Lambangian Indigenous Peoples (Non-Moro Indigenous Peoples in the context of BARMM – Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao). It was not yet created as a barangay.

The areas were once a peaceful place of the Tëduray and Lambangian where life is abundant and easy because of the fertile land area.

These people were free to practice their culture, tribal self-governance, language, system of worship and livelihood system.

Today, the place was inhabited by a mix population of the Tëduray, Lambangian and Maguindanaon Moro clan from Talayan. Though majority of its population are Tëduray and Lambangian.

The place was created as one of the Barangays of South Upi when it was created in 1976.(5)

The early leaderships of Barangay Biarong were held by the Tëduray, but lately, it was held by the Maguindanaon, despite of being minority in the place, but because they are empowered by the power of guns and goons they have had.

The recent clashes between the groups of two political leaders of the Moro clan who are both aspiring for the position of a Chairman of Barangay Biarong this coming October 2023 Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Elections greatly affected the lives of the NMIPs in the area.

For fear of being caught in crossfire, the civilian Tëduray and Lambangian voluntarily fled and took refuge in the adjacent Barangay Lamud and some are in the center of Barangay Biarong.

The Local Chief Executive of South Upi, Maguindanao del Sur ordered the internally displaced Tëduray and Lambangian to return to their respective homes, but much of their desire to go back because they are in the stage of harvesting their upland palay, but they are hesitant to obey the order because there is no clear establish peace and security mechanism. They fear that any time the warring groups will stage a gun battle because they are both strengthening their respective armed groups.

In the light of the foregoing, we urge the Municipal Local Government Unit of South Upi, Provincial Government of Maguindanao Del Sur, the BARMM Government, the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs (MIPA), the Police Provincial Office of Maguindanao Del Sur, the Police Regional Office-BAR, the 6ID, Philippine Army, AFP the OPAPPRU, the NCIP and other concerned institutions to intervene in the sad plight of the Tëduray and Lambangian NMIPs in the area.

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They need more than the relief assistance but a sustainable intervention from the Government.

*PS:*

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