

08 September 2011

Dear friends:

Greetings of peace based on justice!

September 17, 2011 marks the 1097<sup>th</sup> day since the indigenous people activist James Balao was abducted by state security forces in La Trinidad, Benguet. Here in Baguio City, we will be commemorating this day and reiterating our demand for the government to surface him through an activity with the theme, **“Never again to Martial Law! Surface James Balao! Justice for all Victims of Human Rights Violations!”**

It has been three long years since James Balao was taken away and still we continue to search for him. The administration of President Benigno Aquino III has been silent on the issue despite the thousands of postcards sent to his office since June 12 of this year appealing for him to take action on the matter. Since President Aquino took oath, there have been eight documented cases of enforced disappearances and other human rights violations similar to the ones perpetrated under martial rule.

On September 17, we will gather to condemn the Philippine government’s inaction regarding the enforced disappearance of James Balao and the continuing human rights violations. We will also take this time to continue to impart the lesson from the darkest years of Martial Law as former Senator Jose Pepe W. Diokno stated in one of his famous speeches, “ I knew then that martial law could crush our bodies; it could break our minds; but it could not conquer our spirit. It may silence our voice and seal our eyes; but it cannot kill our hope nor obliterate our vision. We will struggle on, no matter how long it takes or what it costs, until we establish a just community of free men and women in our land, deciding together, working and striving together, but also singing and dancing, laughing and living together.”


We encourage you to organize solidarity actions this coming September 17 to call on the government to surface James Balao and to put an end to enforced disappearances. The continuing struggle for justice is not only for him but for all victims of human rights violations in the country.

We are very optimistic that you can join us on this day and in the continuing pursuit for peace based on justice.

Attached herewith is the program of activity for September 17 here in Baguio City, Philippines for your information.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jude Baggo  
Secretary General



**KARAPATAN**

**Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights.**

# **CORDILLERA HUMAN RIGHTS ALLIANCE**

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## **Program**

AM		
Part I		
8:00-10:00		
Set Up at the Venue Public Announcement		
Part II		
11:00-11:05	Invocation	
11:05-11:10	Introduction of the Activity	Ms. Joana Cariño, Afong-Selda
11:10-11:20	On the Human Rights Situation	Mr. Jude Baggo, Secretary-General, CHRA
11:20-11:25	Introduction to the video documentary entitled <i>Rimbaw</i> *	Ms. Audrey Beltran, Deputy Secretary General, CHRA
11:25-12:00	Public Viewing of <i>Rimbaw</i>	
PM		
12:00-12:05	Message	Balao Family
12:05-12:10	Challenges	Ms. Chie Galvez, Coordinator, Hustisya Northern Luzon
Part III		
1:00	Poetry Reading	

\**Rimbaw* is a video documentary that chronicles the struggles of families in Northern Luzon who have been subjected to human rights violations, through Operation Plans Bantay Laya I and II and Bayanihan. It is also a narrative of courage mustered by these families and their communities in their assertion of human rights. The video was produced through the efforts of Hustisya-Northern Luzon, Dinteg (Cordillera Indigenous Peoples' Legal Center), Cordillera Human Rights Alliance, Cordillera Women's Education, Action, and Research Center, Inc. (CWEARC), and the European Union – Delegation to the Philippines.

\*\*simultaneous with the program is a **mural painting activity** depicting the struggle for justice for the enforced disappearance of James Balao and the victims of human rights violations under the Oplan Bantay Laya I and II and Oplan Bayanihan.