

IPON AND THE INSTRUMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVATION

The International Peace Observers Network (IPON) is a German independent non-intervening and non-profit organisation which aims for improving the human rights situation in the Philippines by sending observers to conflict areas.

The Instrument of human rights observation is based on the idea that, if a country has ratified the UN "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (and/or other relevant international declarations on human rights), it is therefore responsible to enhance, respect, and implement human rights. If a country does not follow these responsibilities independent international observers will document these violations of human rights and bring it to public attention. IPON follows this legalistic approach to human rights. Since 2006 IPON accompanies organisations of human rights defenders (HRD) in the Philippines, starting with the request of the farmers organisation KMBP (Kilusang Magbubukid ng Bondoc Peninsula) in Bondoc Peninsula, Quezon Province. Since 2008 IPON observers are present

in Negros Occidental accompanying the HRD of TFM (Task Force Mapalad). IPON will not intervene in any internal conflict and will not interfere in the strategies of the accompanied HRD. The organisation will only go into a conflict area after a request from a human rights defender organisation and after preliminary studies which include an examination whether the instrument of human rights observation is suitable for the present situation.

The work of IPON is based on four pillars: **Presence:** The IPON observers will be present at the side of HRD who are exposed to human rights violations because of their work. Their presence is supposed to prevent assaults and enable the unhindered work of the HRD. The presence of international observers is believed to rise the inhibition threshold for encroachments.

Accompanying: HRD are accompanied to different ventures like political actions, meetings with governmental institutions, or conferences. In some cases individuals who are especially endangered get company by IPON members.

Observation: It can be difficult to get unfiltered information from conflict areas. The possibility to document events in situation makes the reports of the IPON observers very valuable. The documentations always take place in regard of human rights. Because of the legalistic approach the role of the state actors is essential in the critical analysis of the human rights situation.

Informing action: The information that has been gathered directly in the conflict area and has been analysed by the observers are brought to the attention of an international public. IPON is in touch with different institutions of the Philippine state and points out their responsibility of implementing human rights. In Germany the reports are handed over to the public. They serve as a basis for the work of organisations, pressure groups and politicians. This way the international pressure on the Philippines to guarantee human rights rises. IPON is convinced that the publication of human rights violations will finally lead to their decrease and prevention.



Partnergroups in the Philippines:

PADATA (Panalsalan Dagumbaan Tribal Association) (in process)

TFM (Task Force Mapalad)

AIMS AND SCOPE

OBSERVER: offers a forum for analysis, strategies and debates regarding human rights observation in the Philippines with a focus on human rights defenders. How does the implementation of the UN Human Rights Charta is performed by Philippine Institutions? Which are the elemental dangers human rights defenders in the Philippines are exposed to? These are some of the possible topics. Comparisons with other countries will expand the handling and perspectives of human rights observation. Each publication has its own thematic emphasis. Guest articles from different disciplines and organisations are welcome.

