



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES

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UCCP SEMJA Official Statement

As a church, ours is a duty to act as shepherds for the poor and the deprived.

In fulfilling this duty, we opened our doors in Haran to the Lumad bakwits for the past years. Haran has been the second home of these Lumad brothers and sisters, as they find time to heal from the trauma of attacks from elements of paramilitary in their ancestral territories, and at the same time continue the schooling of their children through the bakwit school.

We have prayed for a resolution to their plight that will be based on justice and peace. However, the country's discord especially with Martial Law in Mindanao has subverted the united voice of the Church and the Lumads longing for peace.

And like shepherds, Haran is vulnerable to attacks, as recently, there are calls for prosecution for shepherding the Lumads.

Like Christ, we face these challenges with courage and faith.

Our service and solidarity with the poor, with the Lumads is the foundation of such courage and it will be the foundation of truth that would shun these false charges.

We faced this persecution before but truth prevailed and these cases were dismissed.

We raise our prayer that the truth shall prevail always, and justice for the Lumads who long for their safe return to their ancestral homes. #

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. — Proverbs 31:8-9

Bishop Hamuel G. Tequis

Jurisdictional Area Bishop,

South East Mindanao Jurisdictional Area