

SULONG CARHRIHL
Provincial/ Community Consultation

I. Backgrounder

A. SULONG CARHRIHL

SULONG CARHRIHL is a citizens' network that aims to prevent violations and promote observance of CARHRIHL (Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law), an agreement signed by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in 1988 and put into effect in 2004.

SULONG CARHRIHL was organized in 2004 and formally launched in February 2005. Its conveners come from different peace, human rights, humanitarian and developmental NGOs, coalitions, sectoral organizations and academic and religious institutions from different parts of the country. SULONG CARHRIHL continues to reach out to other groups and individuals who wish to be part of the network and become active advocates of peace, human rights and humanitarian law in areas affected by the armed conflict between the Philippine government and the Communist Party of the Philippines- New People's Army- NDFP.

Goals and Nature of SULONG CARHRIHL

The primary activities of the network are:

1. Education and advocacy on CARHRIHL and peace building.
2. Prevention of violations and monitoring of observance of human rights and international humanitarian law in the context of the CARHRIHL through various mechanisms.
3. Network building for effective intervention locally and nationally.

In all, SULONG CARHRIHL hopes to address the needs of communities and groups affected by the armed conflict; support and sustain the peace process between the GRP and NDF; and provide additional avenues for constructive dialogue among the main stakeholders of the peace process.

As a "third party", the network will maintain its independence and autonomy from the parties to the armed conflict. It will not file complaints on behalf of the victims but will ensure that they will have recourse and that the CARHRIHL processes and structures are responsive. Most of all, it will campaign for the observance of CARHRIHL by both parties in order to prevent violations.

Organizational Form

The SULONG CARHRIHL network is led and coordinated by a Steering Committee composed of several individuals from different organizations and constituting a soon-to-be registered NGO. A Manila-based Secretariat performs the day-to-day needs of the organization. The Steering Committee and Secretariat work directly with partners in developing plans of action and providing assistance such as trainings and campaign support.

Local partners undertake advocacy and monitoring. Mutual support and coordination with national center is ensured through consultations, joint activities and other media communications such as the e-group, website and organizational reports.

In order to provide a venue for sharing lessons and experiences and drawing up plans and strategies, SULONG CARHRIHL hopes to regularize the holding of an annual consultative assembly of the network that will be attended by existing and potential partners.

B. Consultations

Public forums and/or consultations are held in affected communities and/or with prospective partners in different provinces, especially those affected by the armed conflict. In these events, the network and its work are introduced to participants. The local situation or specific concerns of the community or organization are discussed. Communities and partner organizations are encouraged to undertake advocacy, preventive action and monitoring of the observance of CARHRIHL. Activities that will address violations or respond to pressing concerns are planned.

The need to hold such consultations was identified in the network’s National Strategizing workshop held in February 2006. Consultations were identified as a means to build new partnerships to expand the peace and human rights constituency nationwide and develop the capacity to respond to the impact of the armed conflict.

Below is the list of consultations conducted in the second semester of 2006 and first quarter of 2007

Date	Areas	Partner Organization	No. of Participants
February-March 2006	Kidapawan/Arakan, North Cotabato	Arakan Council of Elders	30-40
April 22-23, 2006	Southern/Eastern Tagalog & San Jose, Bulacan		25
June 2-4, 2006	Eastern Visayas	EV Social Action Network, SIPPAD	20
June 26-27, 2006	Davao	IID and MPC	30
October 2006	Northern Quezon		35
March 15-20, 2007	Kalinga	CCAGG, BBA	10-15
March 2007	Abra	CCAGG, TIPON	15-25

Common problems identified in these consultations were:

1. Recruitment of the civilian population into the armed components of parties to the armed conflict including children.
2. Killings, displacement and other forms of human rights and international humanitarian law violations.
3. Destruction of their properties
4. Threats and harassment that restrict the mobility, affect livelihoods and cause other insecurities.
5. Lack of awareness of rights and capacities to engage the parties in conflict.

II. Objectives of the Consultations

1. To share experiences and assess local situation in relation to human rights and international humanitarian law concerns.
2. To discuss the impact of the armed conflict between the government and the CPP-NPA-NDF.
3. To promote awareness of CARHRIHL and SULONG CARHRIHL.
4. To identify needs and specializations as well as particular context or situations that will serve as the basis of the partnership, and
5. To identify possible collaborations or areas of partnership.

III. Conduct of the Consultation

A. Preparatory phase

Sulong CARHRIHL contacts existing partners and prospective partners and presents the concept paper on the provincial/community consultation. The local partner sends its feedback.

The partner agrees to co-organize the consultation. It is responsible for identifying and informing local leaders of the community/communities and hosting and finalizing the date and venue for the activity.

SULONG CARHRIHL provides logistical support according to need. Local partners are encouraged to provide counterpart funding such as transportation of participants.

It is recommended that consultations are held during, before or after planned activities of the organization so as to maximize the presence of their members and minimize costs.

Where appropriate, consultations can take the form of a roving team from SULONG CARHRIHL visiting local partners and communities instead of gathering target participants in one venue.

Considerations like security, cultural sensitivity, language support, the budget and other matters that will enhance or cause difficulties in the consultation are threshed out during this phase.

B. Actual Consultation

1. Introduction
 - Host organization/institution
 - Sulong CARHRIHL orientation
 - Participants
2. Objectives of the Consultation and corresponding expectations of participants
3. Situational Analysis
4. Brief orientation on Human Rights, IHL and CARHRIHL
5. Discussion on areas of partnership/immediate plans

C. Post Consultation

1. Submission of documentation of the held consultation for joint reference.
2. Follow-up on the activity/activities identified/planned in the consultation, e.g. trainings, dialogues, etc.