

How you can help?

Baktas BTL need the support of the people of Manila and the solidarity of peoples all over the world. You can extend your support in various ways:

Organize a forum or any awareness-raising activities in your schools, churches, offices or communities.

Visit the Kampuhan from October 11-25 in front of DAR and interact with the farmers, or listen to their stories and songs of struggle, see their exhibit and cultural performances, and more.

For details and other concerns, contact the following:

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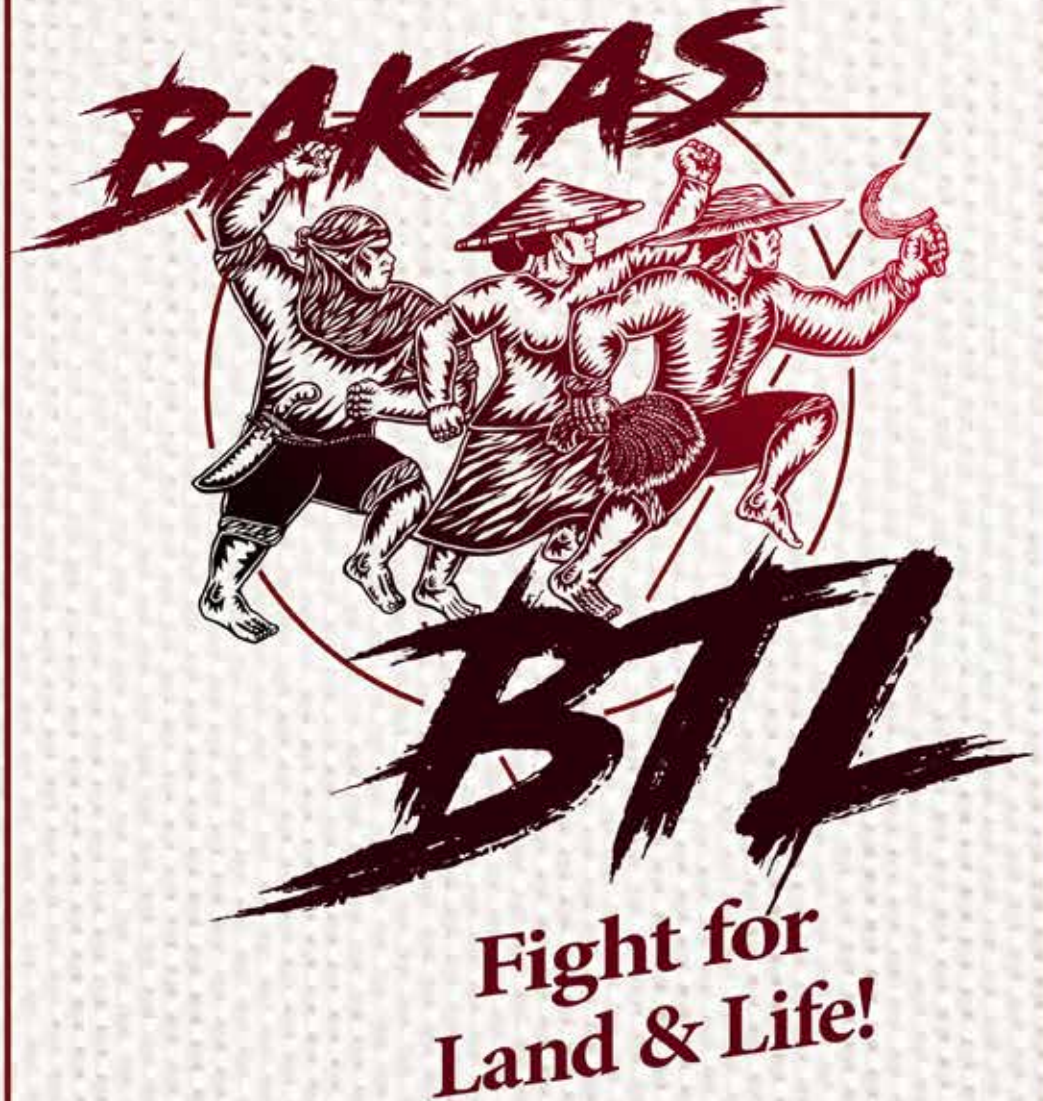
They will leave Cagayan de Oro on October 8, and pass by various provinces for some awareness-raising actions before proceeding to Manila. The farmers will be at the camp-out from October 11 to 25, and will hold forums, discussions and other actions in schools, and other support institutions.

Speak against this case of state-sponsored land grabbing. Issue a solidarity message, write CMU officials or President Duterte and international bodies, or voice out your opinions in social media and other channels in support of the BTL farmers.

Donate to support the farmers' cause for land and life. Help them sustain their camp out with rice, food and other material or cash donations, or you may buy their organic rice produce to augment their organization's income.

**Baktas BTL is organized by the BTL Farmers' Association | Kahugpungan sa mga Mag-uuma sa Bukidnon (KASAMA-Bukidnon) | Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas.*

Supported by Sentro Para sa Tunay na Repormang Agraryo, Rural Missionaries of the Philippines | AMIHAN National Federation of Peasant Women | Sinagbayan | Rise for Education | Alliance of Concerned Teachers | Congress of Teachers and Educators for National Democracy-UP Diliman | People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty | International League of People's Struggles.



BTL to DAR & Duterte: Distribute 517 has. of CMU lands to BTL Farmers!

The 'Baktas BTL'

Dubbed as 'Baktas BTL: Fight for Land and Life!', 100 farmer leaders and supporting organizations and individuals will traverse 1,497 kilometers separating their homes and the national capital to set up camp at the Department of Agrarian Reform at the Quezon Circle on October 11. The collective journey and the campout aim to press the government, through the DAR, to officially declare the farmers as the rightful owners of the BTL-tilled lands, and at the same time recognize the rights of the Lumad to their ancestral domain. They will officially submit their petition to DAR and gain public support for their demand.

They will march from Manila to Quezon City, passing by churches and other government institutions on the way.



RATIONALE for the CAMPAIGN

Many of the BTL farmers have been tilling the land since they were hired by Philippine Packing in 1975. Throughout the changes in the university administration, the farmers were able to continuously work on the land because of their unified assertion of their right, first as individual reactions to their need for livelihood in 1986, then as organized groups from 1988 onwards. Functioning like a big landlord, CMU leases its lands to agribusinesses instead of allowing the farmers to utilize the land for their food.

This experience shows that farmers can only rely on their collective strength if they would want to win their fight against the continuing feudal land relations.

The BTL believes it is not through the use of prime agricultural land for income generation of the university that will address the problem in its budget, but a higher state subsidy for education.

“ We are human. We need to eat. We need to send our children to school. We need to give medication to the sick members of our family. Thus, we need to till. If you rob us of our lands, this means death to us. And if we will not fight, we will die a dishonorable death. -Wennie Loable

BTL Chairperson

Brief Time line

•1958

Then called the Mindanao Agricultural College, President Carlos Garcia granted what is now known as Central Mindanao University (CMU) 3,401 hectares of land through the Presidential Proclamation No.478

•1975

Part of the university lands was leased out to Philippine Packing Corp. (PPC) for a period of 10 years. This was for the cultivation of rice fields where the farmers were employed.

•1986

Refusing to give up their only means of livelihood, 1,200 farmers formed the Bukidnon Free Farmers and Agricultural Laborers Organization (BUFFALO) to petition for the land.

•1986

The university allowed the farmers to rent the land that had been previously leased by PPC. However, even before the farmers could harvest their crops, they were already given a memorandum informing them that their lease contracts would not be renewed.

•1989

The Department of Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board (DARAB) approved 400 hectares for distribution to 252 of the petitioners under Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA).

•1990

More farmers united to apply for the land that wasn't granted to BUFFALO, TAMARAW and LIMUS were formed. They also won with the Omnibus Decision of the DARAB. Together, they formed BTL much later in 1998.

•1987

The government started the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). The farmers under BUFFALO applied for the 1,200 hectares of land that they had been tilling.

•1992

Supreme Court orders the cancellation of the CLOAs on the grounds that the land is exempted from CARP for educational purposes. Attacks and harassments against the farmers intensified.

Florentino Macote, Jr., then president of BUFFALO, survives an attempted assassination at his home.

•1999

BTL was able to negotiate a five-year extension of their lease.

•2002

Because of the unified actions of BTL, the CMU was forced to enter a contract with the farmers leasing the lands to them for five years. From 2002 - 2007, there were no harassments / active conflicts between the farmers and CMU.

•2007

CMU offered relocation sites for the BTL farmers. The relocation areas - in San Fernando and in Cabanglasan - were on steep slopes and are not feasible for farming.

•2011

April, then-new CMU Pres. Maris Luiza Soliven banned the farmers from the land. To protest, farmers set up a camp-out outside the main gate of the university. CMU guards, opened fire at the protesters hitting six of the farmers. Around 40 others were wounded.

2016

Administrative case against Soliven dismissed, after which the farmers faced harassments anew.

