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ASIA/PHILIPPINES - Assault on a human rights activist in Mindanao: his 11-year-old son killed

Zamboanga City (Agenzia Fides) - The objective of the attack was him, Timuay Locencio Manda, tribal leader of the community Subanen, an activist for human rights, but yesterday, September 4, when the gunmen shot him at 7. 20 am, Timuay was only wounded, while his 11-year-old son, Jordan Manda, was killed. According to the human rights groups, the tribal leader was hit because in recent weeks he had publicly opposed to the underground mining exploitation, just when the government granted three new licenses to mining companies to explore the underground area of Zamboanga.
These projects, complain the activists, violate the "ancestral domain" of indigenous peoples, destroying their lands and their livelihoods, they threaten the very life of local communities. For this reason they are disputed on the basis of national and international laws. The activists are now calling for the government to "an immediate moratorium on all mining activities in the peninsula of Zamboanga."
Catholic missionaries present in Mindanao confirm existing tensions. Fr. Giulio Mariani, PIME, of the Euntes Center in Zamboanga, told Fides that "the situation has worsened: there are continuous killings in Zamboanga." "We are very concerned," says to Fides another PIME missionary, Fr. Peter Geremiah, committed to the defense of indigenous peoples in Mindanao. "In recent months there have been many victims of this kind. It is important that the media brings to light the events " remarks Fr. Peter, recalling one of the victims of the trail of extrajudicial killings: his confrere Fr. Fausto Tentorio, PIME, who was killed a year ago. Local authorities, missionaries, human rights groups will remember him along with all the other innocent victims on 17 September, with a large gathering in Davao. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 05/09/2012)

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