

July Alert

In recent months there have been a number of killings of church workers in the Philippines. These assassinations are believed to be perpetrated by elements of the government. According to Amnesty International, there were 66 fatal shootings of activists and community workers in 2005. As of June 26, there have been 21 political killings in 2006. Among the most recent murders was Noel Noli Capulong who was a committed church worker of the United Church of Christ, a staunch advocate of Justice and Peace and a spokesperson for the Southern Tagalog Environmental Action Movement. He made valuable contributions to creating a climate of justice in the Philippines.

Send email to:

Mr. Mervin H. Toquero – Asst. Program Secretary, FAITH, WITNESS and SERVICE
National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCCP)
EMAIL:pcpr_nat@tri-isys.com

Ms. Sharon Rose-Joy Ruiz Duremdes [General Secretary-National Council of Churches in the Philippines]
EMAIL:pcpr_nat@tri-isys.com

(This statement is in solidarity with the Good Shepherd Sisters and the national ecumenical networks Promotion of Church People's Response, the Ecumenical Bishops' Forum and the National Council of Churches in the Philippines for publicity and pressure about the situation.)

Dear _____

I join with and call on all citizens of conscience, church workers, NGOs, academics, people of faith and the Catholic Church to send a strong and clear message to the Arroyo Administration to: Stop all the killing. Stop the political repression. Bring all those responsible and those complicit in these murders to be judged under the full force of the judicial system. Investigation of these killings must be done by credible people who represent all sectors of society and who do not have vested interests. We ask the Arroyo administration to ensure integrity.

Sincerely,

Name

Congregation/organization

Additional Background for Letters:

-In its latest statement on human rights and peace concerns, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines expressed deep concern and alarm over President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's announcement allocating one billion pesos for the military to crush the communist insurgency. The NCCP also denounced the irresponsible labeling of the

brutal and unabated killings of unarmed civilians-journalists, pastors and priest, church workers, peasants and workers as collateral damage.

-The National Council of Churches in the Philippines reiterated it's position that peace can be pursued through meeting at the table where the warring factions are engaged in principled talks and rising from the to mutually agreed principles.

-According to Amnesty International, allegations that President Arroyo was linked to vote-rigging and corruptions during the 2004 elections heightened political tensions. President Arroyo denied the allegations and responding to the crisis called for constitutional reforms including change from a presidential to a federal parliamentary system.

-Public confidence in the ability of the authorities to conduct prompt, thorough and impartial investigations of human rights violations and other crimes, and to deliver justice remains fragile.

-Lack of confidence in the criminal justice system contributes to an apparent public tolerance of killings of suspected criminals including alleged petty thieves and street-children.

For more information:

www.amnesty.org/report2006/phl-summary-eng

<http://contakphilippines.tripod.com/speaknow>