

# Marlene Gonzales

Marlene Gonzales is a union organizer in the Philippines. She began working with unions in response to the long hours and poor wages she suffered while working at the Chong Won Fashion garment factory, a clothing supplier for Wal-Mart.

In 2000, she was fired from Chong Won for her activities. Since that day, she has become more active in trying to protect workers throughout the export processing zone (EPZ), a zone of cheap labour encouraged with massive tax breaks for corporations by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Marlene works as a full time labour organizer and sits on the Board of Directors of the Workers Assistance Center in the Philippines, an organization set up to help workers in the EPZ defend their rights.

Today, union organizers like Marlene are being beaten and killed in the Philippines as the government pursues its free trade agenda at all costs to workers and their supporters.



# Facts

- ❖ In 2007 alone, 67 union activists and human rights defenders were killed in the country, with little or no effort by the police to make any arrests.
- ❖ The Philippines is the third largest source for immigrants to Canada, and is among the top sources for temporary workers. There are roughly 400,000 Filipinos living in Canada.
- ❖ The Canadian government has loaned approximately \$120 million dollars to Canadian companies for their activities in the Philippines, with no legislation in place to hold these companies accountable for their actions.

# Take Action

**DON'T TRADE HUMAN RIGHTS FOR FASHION.**

Shop ethically — find out which retailers support workers' rights to organize a union.  
Don't buy from retailers that don't.

Help send a message to the Canadian embassy in Manila regarding the alarming rise in killings of human rights defenders and union organizers in the Philippines.

For more information, please visit our website at

[www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org)