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la justice

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10 April 2014

H.E. Benigno Simeon Aquino III
President of the Republic
Malacanang Palace
Manila, Philippines

Dear President Aquino:

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives is eleven churches and religious organizations working together for ecological justice and human rights. For years, KAIROS has monitored the human rights situation in the Philippines, and supported the work of our partner, the Ecumenical Voice for Peace and Human Rights in the Philippines (EcuVoice), a coalition of faith-based and human rights organizations that includes the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, KARAPATAN and the National Union of People's Lawyers.

KAIROS joins its partners in condemning the recent extrajudicial killings in the Philippines, which have targeted members and leaders of community organizations, Indigenous communities, progressive organizations, and ordinary citizens.

The number of extrajudicial killings since the beginning of 2014 is staggering:

- **Marcelo Monterona**, killed on January 5 in Maco, Compostela Valley
- **Arman Padino**, killed on January 13 in Hacienda Dolores in Pampanga
- **Henry Orbina**, killed on January 30 in Cabid-an, Sorsogon City
- **Rolando Ambungan**, killed on January 31 in Buenavista, Agusan del Norte
- **Julieto Lauron**, killed on February 5 in Haindangon, Valencia City
- **Rosauro Rayteran**, killed on February 6 in San Pascual, Libon, Albay
- **Rasty Rayteran**, killed on February 6 in San Pascual, Libon, Albay
- **Noel Archival**, killed on February 18 in Dalaguette, Cebu
- **Candido Minoza**, killed on February 18 in Dalaguette, Cebu
- **Alejandro Jaime**, killed on February 18 in Dalaguette, Cebu
- **Licuben Ligiw**, killed on March 7 in Baay, Licuan, Abra
- **Fermin Ligiw**, killed on March 7 in Baay, Licuan, Abra
- **Eddie Ligiw**, killed on March 7 in Baay, Licuan, Abra
- **Romeo Capalla**, killed on March 15 in Oton, Iloilo
- **Julio Labiano**, killed on March 22 in Gata, Caramoan, Camarines Sur
- **Rene Labiano**, killed on March 22 in Gata, Caramoan, Camarines Sur
- **Jessie Brondia**, killed on March 22 in Gata, Caramoan, Camarines Sur
- **Salem Virtus**, killed on March 22 in Gata, Caramoan, Camarines Sur
- **William Bugatti**, killed on March 27 in Bolog, Kiangon, Ifugao

According to reports from KARAPATAN, the national alliance of human rights defenders in the Philippines, some of these recent victims were named in the military's Order of Battle.

William Bugatti, a human rights worker and regional council member of the Cordillera Human Rights Alliance-KARAPATAN, was No. 21 on a list of 28 people circulated by the 5th

Infantry Division (ID) and the 86th Infantry Battalion (IB) in Tinoc, Ifugao in October 2012. Those listed were identified as members or supporters of the New People's Army.

Romeo Capalla, Chair of the Board of Directors and former manager of the Panay Fair Trade Center (PFTC), a member of the International Federation of Alternative Trade, has been listed in the Order of Battle of the 3rd ID of the Philippine Army since 2004. He was identified as commander of the New People's Army in the island of Panay.

Members of the 41st IB are alleged to be responsible for the **Ligiw** killings. According to reports from the Cordillera Human Rights Alliance, on 19 February soldiers from this Battalion forced **Fermin** to serve as a guide in their operation against suspected New People's Army combatants in the area. Subsequently, **Fermin**, his brother and father, were reported missing. Their bodies were found on 7 March. You may be aware that the 41st IB has a long record of human rights violations in Abra province that includes harassment and intimidation, political vilification, arbitrary arrest, and the arrest and detention of ordinary civilians.

Members of Bantay Kalikasan Task Force, a unit under the provincial government of Camarines Sur, are alleged to be responsible for the deaths of artisanal miners **Julio Labiano**, **Rene Labiano**, **Salem Virtus**, and **Jessie Brondia** in Caramoan, Camarines Sur.

These nine leaders, all killed in March 2014, are among 188 men, women and children summarily killed since your election as President of the Republic in July 2010.

Mr. President, as people of faith, we are deeply troubled by your administration's lack of response to these acts of violence against citizens of your country, allegedly by state agents, including members of the state security forces and the Philippine Army. This silence and inaction are difficult to understand considering your government's stated commitment to human rights.

We understand from our partners that these killings are linked to the intensification of Operation Plan Bayanihan, the Philippine government's blueprint for counterinsurgency. The United Nations and human rights organizations around the world have identified this plan as being at the root of the extrajudicial killings.

KAIROS joins its partners in the Philippines, the families of victims of extrajudicial killings, and their communities in calling on the Philippine government to bring justice to the victims of the extrajudicial killings by;

1. Immediately creating an independent fact-finding team comprised of representatives from human rights groups, churches, local government, and the Commission on Human Rights, to investigate these and other human rights violations, and arrest and prosecute the perpetrators;
2. Ending Operation Plan Bayanihan, the counterinsurgency program that gives state agents the authority to target human rights defenders and citizens, victimizes innocent and unarmed civilians;
3. Upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all the major international human rights instruments that the Government of the Philippines has ratified;

4. Resuming formal peace talks between the Government of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines;
5. Ending the militarization of communities.

With the support of our partners, KAIROS will continue to monitor the human rights situation in the Philippines and to inform KAIROS members and networks here in Canada on how you are working to improve this situation.

I look forward to your prompt response to this urgent matter.

Yours sincerely,



Jennifer Henry
Executive Director
KAIROS

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