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## **KAIROS Statement of Solidarity and Prayer for Peace in Mindanao**

KAIROS joins with its partners in the Philippines and the people of Mindanao in expressing grave concern with the Philippine government's *Declaration of Martial Law* in Mindanao on March 23, 2017. The declaration was the government's response to an armed encounter in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur between the Maute Group- which is affiliated with the Islamic State (IS) militants – and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

We agree with our partners that imposition of martial law will only jeopardize an already fragile peace process, contribute to further destabilization in the area and in the whole of Mindanao, and lead to increased human rights violations. Instead of martial law, KAIROS calls on the Philippine government to conduct a thorough investigation into the armed encounter in Marawi, and to address the root causes of armed conflict in Mindanao and across the country. KAIROS also calls on the government to not allow this incident to derail the official ongoing peace process between the Government of the Philippines, the National Democratic Front, and other liberation groups.

On March 20-9 April 2017, KAIROS hosted a 5-member delegation from the Philippines that included two women Indigenous leaders from Mindanao, an Anglican/IFI priest from Zamboanga del Sur, a member of the Philippine House of Representatives, and the Coordinator of a faith based peace and human rights network. All the delegates, and in particular the women Indigenous leaders, spoke of heavy militarization and ongoing human rights violations in the region, especially in Indigenous communities affected by mining and other large scale development projects, including agribusiness. The delegates spoke of how the Philippines Armed Forces is providing support and security to mining companies, some of which are Canadian. Declaring martial law and revoking the rule of law puts human rights defenders and Indigenous communities in grave danger. KAIROS is deeply concerned about and prays for the safety and security of our partners and the people in Mindanao.

We urge the Philippine government to look for a better solution to the current conflict in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, and to resolve the decades long armed conflict that continues to grip the country. We pray for sobriety as we continue to work for a just and lasting peace.

Jennifer Henry  
Executive Director