



October 21, 2020

The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Global Affairs Canada
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

Dear Minister Champagne,

KAIROS unites ten Canadian churches and religious organizations, including the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) and the United Church of Canada (UCC). We have a long history of working with partners in the Philippines for human rights, gender justice and inclusive equitable peace. Our advocacy is informed by these partnerships.

We are writing to you at this time, together with KAIROS members, ACC and UCC, to reiterate our concerns about the human rights situation in the Philippines and to call on the Canadian government to use your voice at the United Nations and with the government of the Philippines to raise concerns about ongoing human rights violations and impunity in the Philippines. Specifically, we are asking for your support in the implementation of the UN Human Rights Council Resolution on technical cooperation and capacity building for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Philippines, adopted on October 7, 2020.

Our ecumenical partners in the Philippines, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) and the Ecumenical Voice for Human Rights and Peace in the Philippines (EcuVoice), have developed significant experience, expertise and respect advocating for human rights in the Philippines nationally as well as at UN, including around this recent resolution. On September 17th, KAIROS, UCC and ACC joined several international church organizations and institutions in signing a [Unity Statement](#), calling on the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to investigate human rights violations in the Philippines. Specifically, the statement called on the UNHRC to support the recommendations of the United Nations Office High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) and recommendations from at least two dozen UN human rights experts for the UN Human Rights Council to “establish an on-the-ground independent, impartial investigation into human rights violations in the Philippines”. The statement was launched

during the International Ecumenical Convocation on the Defense of Human Rights in the Philippines, an online gathering attended by 268 participants and viewed by thousands from across the world.

The statement also drew attention to the escalating human rights crisis in the Philippines including:

- A growing militarized response to the pandemic
- The passage of an Anti-Terrorism law that further undermines civil liberties and violates international law
- An increase in extrajudicial killings, including killings of thousands of people under the guise of the “war on drugs”¹
- An increase in criminalization, vilification (“red-tagging”) and killings of human rights and Indigenous rights defenders.

Both [NCCP](#) and EcuVoice have released press statements about the UNHRC resolution passed on October 7. Although they express profound disappointment that the resolution falls short of establishing an independent investigation mechanism and fully recognizing the recommendations of UNOHCHR, they emphasize that the resolution remains a strong affirmation of severity of the human rights situation in the Philippines and the need for accountability mechanisms.

KAIROS, UCC and ACC join our partners in supporting the resolution, at the same time as continuing to call for an independent human rights investigation mechanism. We ask that the Canadian government use its voice at the UN and with Philippines government to ensure that the resolution is implemented in good faith. Meanwhile, we reiterate our call for an independent international investigation into the human rights situations in the Philippines.

We would also like to request a meeting with you to discuss how Canada can strengthen its support for human rights in the Philippines, both bilaterally and multilaterally.

We look forward to your response to this urgent matter.

Yours sincerely,



Jennifer Henry, Executive Director, KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives

¹ <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/188186/unhrc-report-near-impunity-in-ph-drug-war-killings-tokhang-must-end>



Patti Talbot, Team Lead for Global Partnerships, The United Church of Canada



The Most Rev. Linda Nicholls, Primate; Anglican Church of Canada



The Most Rev. Mark MacDonald, National Anglican Indigenous Archbishop

CC Peter MacArthur, Canadian Ambassador to the Philippines

Attached/Enclosed

[Unity Statement for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the Philippines](#)

[The UNHRC resolution on the Philippines: A time for reckoning shall soon come](#), NCCP press release