

ASIA PACIFIC FORUM

Solidarity Statement on the occasion of the May 2 Ecumenical Sunday of Lament in the Philippines

*Respect and Protect God's Gift of Life and Reject the Prevailing Culture of Violence and Death!
Let us all Pray and Work for a Just and Lasting Peace.*

On April 28 and 29, 2021 the Asia Pacific Forum (APF) met in its annual meeting. The APF brings together many North American churches and agencies who engage in mission and ministry with ecumenical partners throughout Asia and the Pacific region. APF members have long relationships with churches and ecumenical organizations in the Philippines, and in particular the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) as the ecumenical body representing Philippine partner churches.

During the meeting we received updates and discussed the human rights situation in the Philippines and the urgent need to respond, particularly in the context of recent events. We received with great alarm the reports of ongoing threats to and the red-tagging of Bishop Hamuel Tequis of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines and other church leaders including Bishop Reuel Marigza, the General Secretary of NCCP. We are deeply concerned about the raids and the freezing of the accounts of the HARAN Centre in Davao City and the implications of this on its important work.

We are inspired by the courage of the churches, church organizations and other civil society organizations in the Philippines and their continued work for just peace, at great risk, in this context of human rights violations and violence. During our meeting, we also learned from church partners in the Philippines about the Ecumenical Sunday of Lament that is being organized by the Philippines Ecumenical Peace Council on Sunday May 2, 2021. As churches and ecumenical organizations from Canada, the USA, and Australia, we express our deep solidarity and collective prayers on this important Ecumenical Sunday of Lament and add our voices in the call for the end to State-sponsored violence and harassment and the resumption of negotiations for just peace in the Philippines:

*It is time for churches, from different denominations, to speak up and declare God's love for all.
Let us uphold the sanctity of life and condemn the culture of violence and death that has
enveloped our country.*

Co-Chairs, Asia Pacific Forum

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APF Member Churches and Ecumenical Bodies in North America and Partners:

American Baptist Churches USA • Anglican Church of Canada • Evangelical Lutheran Church in America • Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia • Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the USA and Canada and United Church of Christ, USA • KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives • Presbyterian Church in Canada • Presbyterian Church (USA) • Reformed Church in America • The Episcopal Church • The United Church of Canada • The United Methodist Church (General Board of Church and Society and General Board of Global Ministries) • Uniting World Australia