



**International Solidarity Mission
In Defense of a People Fighting Repression**

August 14-19, 2005 - Philippines

S T A T E M E N T

WE, 52 FOREIGNERS AND 49 FOREIGN-BASED FILIPINOS, joined the International Solidarity Mission: In Defense of a People Fighting Repression, out of great concern over the numerous reports of killings of human rights defenders and political activists in the name of the “global war on terror”, as well as over the mounting cases of other violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

We visited Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac, Central Luzon; Oriental Mindoro in Southern Tagalog; Samar and Leyte in Eastern Visayas; Surigao in Mindanao; Camp Bagong Diwa and several Moro communities in the National Capital Region – key places that exemplify the odious state of human rights in the Philippines.

We talked with survivors and witnesses. We made ocular visits. We collected and read relevant documents. We took photographs and video shots. We even made, when possible, representations with local government officials and military commanders.

We witnessed and felt the suffering of a people who were killed, abducted, forcibly displaced, tortured, arrested, harassed and detained in jails under deplorable conditions. We learned about communities being bombed and militarized, of self-help efforts being destroyed, of legal organizations being maligned and

attacked, of violations being committed with impunity, all in the name of land use conversion, mining, eco-tourism, logging, “reforestation” and “counterinsurgency” operations, the local version of the US War of Terror.

We came face to face with people struggling for their right to land, livelihood and a better life as they fight political repression. We were made aware that the deplorable human rights situation meant that thousands leave the Philippines every week to seek work overseas. They often suffer human rights abuse even more as they encounter further human rights violations and negligence in countries where they are compelled to seek work or livelihood.

We saw gross, wholesale, grievous, brutal and widespread human rights violations. Even as we were divided into five teams we heard over and over again the same stories everywhere of men and women from

among peasants, indigenous peoples, workers, local officials, church people, lawyers and, worst of all, children being targeted. The cries for justice reverberate!

We experienced harassment first hand, of streamers and flyers vilifying human rights organizations, of being surrounded by soldiers in full battle gear, of being strip searched in Camp Bagong Diwa, of intelligence agents attempting to infiltrate our ranks, of our mission being delayed and blocked by state security forces.

We realize that these violations are systematic – premeditated, committed with impunity and brazen heinousness, without semblance of any real investigation and of perpetrators not being held accountable at all.

We have come to the conclusion that these violations are not isolated events but part of the policy of the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo government, committed in the guise of a “war on terror.” In actuality they are

contrived to create a climate of fear and intimidation in complicity with the U.S. government. We also hold the US government accountable, not only for supporting the Arroyo government but more importantly, for waging its global war of terror, which is but U.S. imperialism’s assertion of global hegemony.

Major General Jovito Palparan’s statement that **“For every soldier killed, 10 civilians will be killed in their place...”** speaks a lot in terms of government policy, concretely showing the practice of state terrorism in the Philippines.

We are emboldened by the warm welcome that we received from the people, and the courage of witnesses who braved risks to tell us their stories. We see hope in the persistence of the people in rebuilding their communities, seeking a meaningful life and in the resoluteness of the Filipino people in the struggle for fundamental change. We know that only in unity will the people prevail. Long Live International Solidarity!

Our Calls

1. Render swift justice and compensation for the victims of human rights violations.
2. Immediately release all political prisoners, especially women, minors, the elderly, and those who are seriously ill.
3. Conduct a thorough and independent investigation of human rights violations. Hold accountable and prosecute President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Dishonorably discharge, prosecute and punish Major General Jovito Palparan and all other officers and members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP) who are found guilty of human rights violations.
4. Put a stop to militarization.
5. Expose and resist U.S. intervention.
6. Resolve the just demands of the workers, peasants and other basic sectors.
7. Recognize and respect ancestral rights.

8. Stop discrimination against and demonization of the Moro people. Respect their right to religion.

9. Stop the incitement to violence against unarmed civilians, communities, activists and their organizations.

10. Resume peace talks between the GRP and the NDFP, MNLF, and the MILF. Respect and implement all agreements forged during the negotiations.

11. Conduct massive information and education campaign to raise awareness on human rights and international humanitarian law.

Our Commitment

1. We will link up with and build solidarity among groups and individuals in different countries to strengthen support to the demands and struggles of the Filipino people who continue to be deprived of their rights.

2. We will make the international community aware of the stories of human rights violations through public forums and other information dissemination activities.

3. We will organize actions for justice.

4. We will campaign for the protection of human rights defenders.

5. We will put pressure on the UN and other international bodies to act on the cases brought to the International Solidarity Mission and the International People's Tribunal.

6. We will pressure our governments to withdraw financial aid and political support from the Arroyo government.

7. We will campaign against militarization and U.S. intervention.

8. We will support the struggles of the Filipino people.

9. As a special concern, we will promote and defend the rights of overseas Filipino workers.

10. We will continue to monitor and respond to reports of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

We vow to work hard to fulfil our commitments so that this Statement, as well as the Verdict, Judgment, and Call to Action of the International People's Tribunal, will have concrete meaning to the victims of human rights violations that also constitute crimes against humanity. **We shall continue to be one with the Filipino people** who continue to fight repression and state terrorism. **We shall stand by them and all peoples of the world** fighting oppression and exploitation by their governments and imperialist powers. Linking with each other in solidarity, **we will never stop until justice for the Filipino people is done!**