



National President: Father Claude Mostowik MSC

March 16, 2018

H.E. Rodrigo Duterte
President of the Republic
Malacañang Palace,
JP Laurel St., San Miguel
Manila Philippines

Your Excellency

Pax Christi Australia is part of the international Christian peace movement Pax Christi International, based in Brussel. Pax Christi International also has consultancy status at the UN.

We are writing to you to express our concern on the recent spate of attacks against human rights defenders, activists, and political dissenters in the Philippines, through the inclusion of the names of more than 600 individuals in a Justice Department petition to proscribe the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People's Army (NPA) as terrorist organizations. Such listing endangers the lives and security of these individuals, as well as that of their families and fellow activists, given the baseless, arbitrary, malicious and repressive motives behind the said act.

The use of Human Security Act of 2007 to suppress legitimate dissent is a dangerous and underhanded move that indubitably worsens the climate of impunity in the Philippines. We deplore this and other acts that intimidate, threaten, harass, target and criminalize persons and defenders who have been working for people's rights and welfare.

We call on the Philippine government to:

- Junk the baseless, malicious and arbitrary Justice Department petition and stop the criminalization of the work of activists, human rights defenders, and political dissenters through the practice of filing trumped-up criminal charges;
- Stop the labeling of members and leaders of progressive people's organizations and patriots as "terrorists" both in the national and international forums. Stop the threats, intimidation and harassment of human rights defenders;
- Repeal the Human Security Act of 2007 and all legislative, administrative, executive and judicial acts that violate human rights;
- Effectively address and immediately prosecute and punish acts of terrorism and human rights violations by agents of the State;
- End the counter-insurgency program Oplan Kapayapaan which directs and funds State security forces to threaten, harass, arbitrarily and illegally arrest individuals tagged as "enemies of the State";
- Immediately abolish the Inter-Agency Committee on Legal Action (IACLA), a body created by the PNP and the AFP, which further legitimizes and systematizes the political persecution and illegal arrest and detention of rights defenders and activists;

*Pax Christi is a Christian worldwide movement for peace and disarmament.
It regards justice and human rights as central to peacebuilding
and fosters the spiritual dimension of peacemaking.*

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- Continue the peace talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines and comply with its obligations and commitments under the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL), which includes the right to freedom of thought and expression, freedom of conscience, political beliefs and practices and the right not to be punished or held accountable for the exercise of these rights, and the right to free speech, press, association and assembly; and
- Adhere and respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, and all major Human Rights instruments that it is a party and signatory.

We wish you well and look forward to hearing from you

Sincerely,

(Father) Claude Mostowik msc
President
Pax Christi Australia

Copies to:

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Hon. Vitaliano Aguirre
Secretary, Department of Justice
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Hon. Jose Luis Martin Gascon
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