

The background of the cover is a vibrant, abstract painting in shades of blue, purple, and green. A large, stylized yellow cross with white outlines is positioned on the left side. In the upper center, there is a faint, ethereal image of a dove with its wings spread, set against a swirling, cloud-like background. The text is centered in the upper half, and the bottom features a group of five diverse people engaged in various symbolic actions.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
IN THE PHILIPPINES



# HUMAN RIGHTS WEEK CELEBRATION GUIDE 2020

THEME:  
"BRINGING GOOD NEWS TO THE  
MASSES IN THESE CHANGING  
TIMES,"



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## GREETINGS

Warmest greetings of peace and love to all our Churches, the Church Recognized Organizations, Schools, Church institutions and friends!

It is an opportune time for us to celebrate Human Rights Week on December 6-12, in which December 10, 2020 is the 72<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Our HR Week celebration carries the theme, “Bringing good news to the masses in these changing times” and we are grateful to all contributors who have make extra efforts to realize this study material.

Let us make use of this study material in our Bible Study session, in our sermons and other forms of meditation and theological reflection. May the God of justice peace illumine our minds and quicken our hearts as we study and relate life’s concerns and respond to the challenges for protection of human rights and civil liberties in our country and the world.

My prayers that this year’s Advent and Christmas celebrations in our churches and communities will be filled with hope for healing and restoration and our faith be strengthened with the assurance that God incarnate in Jesus Christ enables us to overcome our fears of the uncertain future. Stay safe and let us take care of our health so we may be able to care for others.+



**BISHOP MELZAR D. LABUNTOG**

General Secretary



## FOREWORD

This year's Human Rights Celebration Guide centers on Year 3 Sub-Theme of the Church's quadrennial theme: "Bringing Good News to the Masses in these Changing Times". It sets as context the new wave of intensifying and grave escalation of attacks on people's lives, on communities, and against human rights defenders in the country. "Red-tagging" of our church leaders and of our members has intensified. The government's National Task Force for the to End Local Communist Armed Conflict, with its "whole of nation approach", has been aggressively labelling those who defend the rights of the masses as "communist terrorist group" or CTGs. Thousands in communities who have fled from militarization and national disasters remain displaced. The emphasis on national security, intelligence-gathering, and red-tagging has hampered local civil society from tending to humanitarian needs of the communities in this time of the Covid-19 pandemic

The challenge of this time is for us to be genuine witnesses for Christ in the midst of the reality that our hoped-for "changing times" under President Duterte has not come. It has, in fact, worsened.


The UCCP HR Celebration Guide 2020 features, like in previous celebration guides, a Celebration Liturgy as a resource for local churches, conferences and all UCCP organizations and institutions to use on Human Rights Sunday or Human Rights day. This year, we hope to be able to do a church-wide virtual celebration of Human Rights Day using this Celebration Guide.

Our Guide offers some biblical and theological perspectives on root causes of these massive threats to life as articulated by among the best of our theologians and church leaders: a Human Rights national Situationer, a Biblico-Theological Reflection, a Youth Bible Study Guide, JPHR Reflections, as well as the latest Council of Bishops' Pastoral Statements and their statement during the eventful November 17, 2020 International Solidarity Forum.

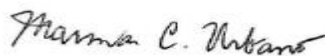
The Guide challenges everyone to participate and support campaigns which are opportunities for every believer in Jesus Christ to grow into becoming ever faithful and genuine witnesses for our Lord and Savior, bringing good news to the masses who Jesus loves dearly. May we experience freedom from doubts, fears and anxieties as we participate in God's continuing work against the forces of sin and death in the world as we engage in these campaigns.

Lastly, please fill out and send us back the "Feedback Form" at page \_\_ of this Guide.

With our heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to making this HR Celebration Guide 2020 a reality.



Joengie Enricoso  
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# **HUMAN RIGHTS DAY** **CELEBRATION LITURGY**

## **Prelude**

## **Symbolic Act of Gathering**

An indigenous musical instrument is played while worshippers congregate in a manner of processional and assembling in circle to manifest unity in spirit and desire to fellowship with God and with another in the quest for upholding human and people's rights. Lighting of Christ's candle and the opening of the Bible follows. Then everybody is seated.

## **Call to Worship**

Liturgist: Amidst hopelessness, we affirm God's hope seen in the work and ministry of the faithful and the struggling masses of people  
People: Praise be to God who dwell with us in times of trouble and injustice.  
Liturgist: Being the church of the marginalized and oppressed people, we envision a society ruled by love, justice and compassion.  
People: Praise be to God in Jesus Christ who proclaimed and lived out such Kingdom values.  
Liturgist: Such kingdom values move us in faithfulness to the Gospel mandate and not to give in to evil but standing and resisting all forms of evil, especially those evils that victimize our hapless brothers and sisters.  
People: Praise be to God's Spirit who moves us all to sincerely work towards the realization of a transformed church and society, the "new heaven and earth".  
All: Come and let us worship the living and loving God of life and history!

## **†Hymn of Praise:**

- The Loving God We Shall Worship- HFJ#8

1. The loving God we shall worship,  
In God's name we shall glory  
Draw near with reverent fervor  
Singing praises evermore.

Refrain: God of mercy, God of caring  
Do accept our glad offering  
Of our worship hearts souls commit  
Ever praising you at your feet.

2. Sins of us we are confessing



And God's pardon experience  
Yield our cares for daily living  
Blessings good God will not withhold.

3. God's will discern and live out  
Following all God's teachings  
Showing in life our commitment  
To obey God to the end.

**†Invocation: (In Unison)**

We come before you, O Lord as a people in fellowship desiring to worship you in spirit and in truth. We come before you because you are the one who called and we are just now responding to the voice calling us to come together this morning, calling us to remember you as our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer and reminding us of you as our master and ourselves as your servants. Enable us, O Lord, to keep remembering and not to forget who we are and who you are and how we are related to you and how you want us to respond to your call. Amen.

***Confessing our sins of silence and indifference***

Liturgist: Let us confess our sins of silence and indifference

**People:** Forgive us Lord for failing to listen to these cries and for the comfort that paralyzes us.

Liturgist: Cries of violence and injustice are heard here and there...

**People:** The defenders of human rights, church workers, and workers for justice and peace are red tagged, and the ministry of the church to the poor are maligned. Your sanctuary is disgusted and your people is struggling.

Liturgist: Cries of violence and injustice are heard here and there...

**People:** No improvement so far in terms of economic, social and cultural rights condition of the Filipino people. Worsen by the states neglect in securing the welfare of your poor people in this time of global pandemic, experiencing inaccessibility of education and health services and housing. Seeing and hearing people in inhuman predicament.

Liturgist: Let us confess our sins of silence and indifference

**People:** Forgive us Lord for many of us surely know what we should do but choose to remain inutile for fear of being identified with those who opt to join movements for change and those whom the government call as enemies of the state.

Liturgist: Let us confess our sins of silence and indifference: People: Forgive us Lord for we think its enough to pray for those victims of war and violence, believing that Jesus has taught us just to pray and that working with those who struggle for genuine and lasting peace is not the turf of the church.

All: O God, we appeal for your redeeming mercy and love. Lead us to where Christ went when he chose to follow your will and found himself amongst the hapless people event if it meant his very life on the cross. Amen.



*Moment of silence for sustained self-examination*

**Assurance of God's Pardon: (Minister)**

And these things we write, so that our joy may be made complete. And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:4-7)

Brothers and sisters in Christ, here's the Good News of God's forgiveness. Receive it and be light of the world. Resist evil. Pursue peace based on justice and work for it. Amen.

*Listening to the Proclamation of God's Word*

**†Through the Reading of the Scriptures:**

Song Response:       Your word is a lamp for my feet,  
                                  a light on my path. (Ps 119:105)

**Through Choral Song  
Through the Word Spoken**

**Call to Offering: (Liturgist)**

Our mission is precisely a mission to advance peace based on justice as work together to uphold the rights to life of the people we minister unto. Doing mission entails dedication of our lives and the resources that we have to support such a mission. We do this to show how thankful we are for the privilege of sustaining God's mission. Let us now with joy give our share with our offering of money.

**Offertory**

**†Doxology:**

Praise God the Source of Life and Birth,  
Praise God the Word who came to earth  
Praise God the Spirit, Holy Flame,  
All honor, glory to God's name. Amen.

**†Offertory Prayer: (In Unison)**

Accept this our offering, gracious God, as proof of our commitment to hasten the fruits of your kingdom where people's rights to food, healing and liberty are given and where a just and compassionate social order become the order in Philippine society and the world. Most importantly, we thank you for sustaining grace. In Christ's name we pray and will pray always. Amen.

**†Hymn of Commitment:**

**"We've a Story to Tell to the Nations"**  
**Words & Music: H. Ernest Nichol**

We've a story to tell to the nations,  
That shall turn their hearts to the right,  
A story of truth and mercy,



A story of peace and light,  
A story of peace and light.

Refrain

*For the darkness shall turn to dawning,  
And the dawning to noonday bright;  
And Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,  
The kingdom of love and light.*

We've a song to be sung to the nations,  
That shall lift their hearts to the Lord,  
A song that shall conquer evil  
And shatter the spear and sword,  
And shatter the spear and sword. (Refrain)

We've a message to give to the nations,  
That the Lord who reigns up above  
Has sent us His Son to save us,  
And show us that God is love,  
And show us that God is love. (Refrain)

We've a Savior to show to the nations,  
Who the path of sorrow has trod,  
That all of the world's great peoples  
Might come to the truth of God,  
Might come to the truth of God. (Refrain)

**†Prayer of Commitment:**

Minister: The God in Jesus Christ is with you in the Spirit

People: And also with you.

Minister: Go and receive the blessings  
of earth of life and story  
of parents  
of heroes and martyrs of the people  
of the promise of liberation and abundance  
of the kingdom of the Most High.

People: We shall go with joy in serving to defend human rights and life abundant for all.

All: Glory be to God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer!

**†Threefold Amen**

**†Benediction**

**Postlude**

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References: 1. UCCP Hymn of a Faith Journey





# **NATIONAL SITUATIONER**

## **In Defense of Human Rights: Witnessing the Gospel of Jesus in These Changing Times** by Karl James E. Villaranea, PhD

### **Evangelical Theology and the Human Rights Situation: An Introduction**

The most prominent Protestant theologian of the last century, Karl Barth, describes evangelical theology as “the science and doctrine of the commerce and communion between God and [humanity], informed by the gospel of Jesus Christ as heard in the Holy Scripture” (*The Humanity of God*, 11). The theological profundity of this insight and the biblical science behind this definition continue to speak the truth of the foundation that stands sure. No doubt in my mind that this will remain to us and for us the ultimate measure of all things, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, in the way we think and do as people of faith. That our life with and in God that is forged in our loyalty to the gospel of Jesus Christ is the definitive crux of our evangelical faith.

In this respect that we must understand our life situation—that is, our life is not differentiated by time (i.e., God time vs. human history, or sacred place vs. secular space)—in its fullest sense. Our life situation is always with and in and for God who reveals to us in Christ. In and through this communion and relationship with God that we see and understand, as a result, our current human rights situation in our country and the world. We always see things through the eyes of our faith.

### **The Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Human Situation**

As evangelical Christians, we do not see simply our situation through the lens of science (may this be social or human or medical or natural or even cosmological). Rather, while we share this world and this history with others, we understand our life as in communion with God, living for God, and working with God.

As our Holy Scripture tells us, the time and how we live in this time is inaugurated by God’s action in history, decisively demonstrated in the life and mission of Jesus. In particular, our time is the time of God intensified in the cry of Jesus on the cross, a cry that also echoes the cry of the slave-Israelites in Egypt. Indeed, it is a time marked by the cry of anguish and forsakenness. But it is also a cry that heralds the impending-ness of something that is utterly new—of liberation from the bondage of slavery and deliverance from the old unjust world, the coming of the “new heaven and new earth.”

And so we live in a time, marked by the end of the old and inaugurated by the coming promised of the new. Our time is filled. Importantly, this messianic time is the now which is also the site of our faithfulness to the messianic mission of Jesus that intensifies the impending-ness of the coming of the reign of God. Indeed, for us, this faithfulness is the praxis of witness; it is the walk-of-faith opened up by the cross of the Jesus to usher in the reign of God. Awakened and called to the path of Christ, we walk on this way of the cross as participant-disciples to the messianic mission.



We therefore see our “human situation” not as an objective reality but a subjective reality when we participate in the mission of Jesus in ushering the reign of God. It is in the actualization of our witness and testimony in history, not as a passive observant but as an active participant, that we see our situation as the situation in and for and with God. Simply put, the *praxis* of our discipleship allows us to see properly our human situation.

### **Disciples of the Gospel and Human Rights**

In and through the praxis of our discipleship that our human situation unfolds and becomes a site of living where our mission (the objective condition of faith) takes place, and thus, accordingly, what we do in the here and now is a vocation we embody—that is to say, we do the things that we do because this is who we are and what we are about. To elucidate this point, recall particularly the story of Jesus, as first told by the writer of the gospel of Mark, how Jesus embodies and enacts this vocation he also called us to participate:

One Sabbath, while walking through a grain field with his disciples, Jesus was reprimanded by the Pharisees for letting his disciples disrespect the holiest day of all days and for allowing his disciples to attend to their human need (hunger) and ignoring the commandment of God: “why are they doing what is not lawful on Sabbath?” Jesus responded with a more authoritative statement: “the Sabbath is made for human kind and not humankind for Sabbath” (see Mark 2: 23-28).

Here Jesus made sure that the Pharisees heard what is truly holy and what is not: “Sabbath is made for humankind.” The rebuke of Jesus is not addressed to those who transgressed the holy law of Sabbath (the disciples); his sharp criticism is rather addressed to those who thought of themselves as keepers of the holy (the religious authorities). For Jesus, what is holy are the things that we do for others to make their lives flourish. That holiness is what makes life possible and flourish. Truly, Sabbath is holy when the glory of God that shines forth through it makes us fully alive, spiritually and materially.

Such breathtaking radical inversion of value when holiness is not set aside from the sphere of the human but rather animated in and through the human led the Pharisees, however, as the writer of Mark tells us, to conspire with the Herodian’s to assassinate Jesus (see Mark 3: 6). Prioritizing the well-being of his disciples (and healing a man with a withered hand—in the subsequent account) over the most holy religious observance of Sabbath, Jesus became a target of assassination plot, indeed, an object to be destroyed.

More significantly, what is clearly demonstrated from his disobedience to regulative and oppressive law of Sabbath is the way in which Jesus defends the fundamental right of his disciples to eat/access to food from the religious-political powers who used the law to further advance their advantage and power over others. That right not to be hungry and to be healed is not secondary. In this defense, Jesus made it abundantly clear to us what he is against: laws that deprive us of this right.

Discipleship, indeed, our faithfulness to the messianic mission of Jesus is about our resolute avowal of loyalty to God to witness life over death. Our praxis of defense to fundamental rights of the human to live and flourish is an embodiment of this witness. Witnessing otherwise, that is, replacing life with other human program as the ultimate is



disloyalty to God. Substituting human flourishing with other human priorities is idolatry. This is the offense that Jesus accused the Pharisees of committing.

### **Human Rights in this Idolatrous Time: The “Situation of Our Time”**

As opposed to Western Christian theologians, liberation theologians pointed out that the religious problem of our modern civilization is not atheism. It is idolatry. From an evangelical perspective, idolatry, as indicated above, is the moment when we replace the well-being of humankind with other human things, such as the priority of the Pharisees according to Jesus. This too is, indeed, the situation of our time—idolatry. Human rights are ignored and even discarded in favor of a political program. Human dignity and well-being are placed at the altar governmental convenience and political expediency. To demonstrate further this point, let me discuss briefly a paradigm that will also allow us to see our current situation better, namely: the security paradigm of governance or also known as War on Drugs and how this has undermined human life.

At the start of his 2018 State of the Nation Address, President Duterte reiterates once again the central and most prominent issue of his presidency—The War on Drugs. Making it clear to his critiques and detractors that this presidential issue is here to stay, he declares: “The war against illegal drugs is far from over.” And this time Duterte emphasizes: “The illegal drugs war will not be sidelined. Instead, it will be as relentless and chilling, if you will, as on the day it began.”

The intent and intensity of this declaration only echoes what he had already laid down in his first SONA delivered in 2016 which is also a reiteration of his inaugural address in June of the same year: “There will be no let-up in this campaign....We will not stop until the last drug lord, the last financier, and the last pusher have surrendered or put behind bars or below the ground, if they so wish.” As if this point is still in doubt, Duterte made it abundantly clear: “This fight against drugs will continue to the last day of my term.”

Under the presidency of Duterte, in other words, the War on Drugs is the primary engine that runs his governmental machine and one that provides the compass for his governance. The feature of this governance is like the War on Terror of the then-President of the US George W. Bush after September 11: its main objective is to zero in on what it perceives as its external threat or enemy of the constituted order.

In the case of Duterte, this is stated in his SONA. Particularly addressing to his critiques and human rights advocates, Duterte clearly stated what this fight is all about: “Your concern is human rights, mine is human lives. Lives of youth are being wasted and family lives are being destroyed.” In other words, the War on Drugs is framed as “defense” and “fight” against the forces that physically and existentially threaten human life and the political order.

In addition, Duterte framed this defense or fight against the enemies of the State with a moral tone and personal resolve: “These sons of whores [drug dealers] are destroying our children. I warn you, don’t go into that, even if you’re a policeman, because I will really kill you.” Or in the diplomatic words of his foremost enforcer of the War on Drugs, the now Senator of the Republic Bato de la Rosa: the War on Drugs is “to protect the lives of the youth.”

In political theory, this kind of governance is framed and made operational through what the Italian thinker Giorgio Agamben describes as “paradigm of security”: a governance



that is particularly attentive to the issue of human life, indeed, this is based on the idea of preservation and protection of human life from external threats. However, as it is also the case with the War on Drugs here in the Philippines, these external threats are vaguely defined, and most often than not, these enemies are simply made up. Usually, they are just made scapegoats, blamed for the ills of the society—for instance, like the African Americans or illegal immigrants (Mexicans) or even the Radical Left and Christian Progressives in the USA. Theologically, this is also called demonizing (or making demons) those who are considered as threats of the society. This is the reason why we color these demons with red and put horns and tails to dramatize their association with the source of evil who presides the affairs in hell. For indeed these demons are harbingers of bad things and death to us.

Moreover, what is important to notice is how in this governance and its operation, in the form of “war,” the language of government assumes a voice of moral authority that legitimizes a moral political good. As we have experienced and heard on radio and TV, the War on Drugs has an aura of moral tone and goodness. Indeed, it roots its reason and language in the religious ground and theological imaginary that is too all familiar and we deeply understand. Thus, in our current situation, the loss of human lives as collateral damage becomes morally acceptable and even justifiable. The alignment of governmental policies resonates with our religious worldview.

For us church people with evangelical heart and Protestant mind, the caustic political rhetoric and the insidious “moral agenda” behind the War on Drugs should not deceive us however from thinking that this War is God-ordained and divinely programmed. This War might seem to appear morally persuasive and politically rational but let it not be forgotten what this War has done and brings to human life, empirically and theologically: devaluation and destruction of what God has gifted to each one of us.

Tragically today, human rights are offered in the altar of governmental expediency. Human rights are undermined for the sake of the State. The right to life is a divine gift we have conveniently forgotten. What God has given to us is given Caesar not to the cause nor in the name of God. Contrary to the heritage of our faith. The teaching of our Reformed tradition made this rather very clear: a State must serve the interest of God. Not God in the service of the State.

In short, we become idolatrous. The confusion and conflation of God with State or State with God is idolatry. For this reason, that we are in an unholy and precarious time. We are in an idolatrous time. In this War on Drugs, idolatry is as its most lethal to human life, and alarmingly distressful, intensified and widely celebrated and supported by many who, for religious ground and theological consciousness, should have known better.

Simply put, the problem of our human situation is not only therefore a political problem. This is also a religious and theological problem of our time. In political science, any constituted human order, there is always human rights. For indeed, there is no human life without human rights. But this is theologically true as well: what it means to be a human being is to be a being human. No life is indispensable.

### **Human Life/Human Rights in the Time of Apocalypse**

In the War on Drugs, human life/human rights are considered as collateral damage in the name of something that is bigger and nobler cause. In this sense, the law of God is subsumed effectively and made into the law of “men.” Thus, correspondingly, the political



categories of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into the political system (the enemies: drug addict, drug pushers, drug lords) becomes correspondingly the enemies of God. Human life is now determined according to the priorities of the laws of “men” not to the laws of God. In the theological imaginary, this conflation and confusion of values makes our time not only an idolatrous but also apocalyptic.

In its dictionary definition, apocalypticism is a theological doctrine that has to do with the “end of history.” In its contemporary manifestation, it is a theological imagination that “expresses belief that points to a series of events that will bring history to a dramatic climax in which God triumphs over evil (Satan, death, and sin) to usher in a millennium of peace.” Leading up to this “millennium of peace” is “a series of conflicts, a series of battles until the final and concluding war in which the good ultimately overcomes the evil.”

In the current idolatrous human situation (as indicated above), the theological doctrine of apocalypse can be seen in its metamorphosis in our political imagination and democratic life: in particular, the conflict between us/the good vs. them/the bad takes place in real time in the War on Drugs of DU30; in the theological imagination of the Filipino people, this is part of a series of battles which in the end defeats the evil; and that this victory results in the culmination and dawning of a new Philippines.

Another feature of apocalypticism of our time is how we perceive our leader. While DU30 may seem to be an earthly ruler who is “against God” (i.e., cursing the Pope, the bishops, mocking Christian doctrine of creation), he is seen by many of us as an instrument that God uses to bring His people to the promised land. Thus amidst all of this dissonance and seeming inconsistencies, many people still believe that God is, in the end, in control. God uses President Duterte as an instrument for good; he is a “hostile earthly person” to rule the country in order to defend and protect the society and its youth from moral degeneration and corruption brought about by drugs. In other words, DU30 is a necessary part of the divine plan.

Viewed through this lens, we see that our current human situation is structured apocalyptically. An important empirical proof for this situation is the almost fanatical support to the War on Drugs which, through this account, is neither a deep irony nor hypocrisy. Rather such support only affirms the deeply held religious conviction that amidst in the seeming incongruent events, God is still in control. The popularity and strong support of the presidency of DU30, in short, is due to the influence and determination of the apocalyptic impulse of our present social-political order.

In short, apocalypse and idolatry are in a dangerous and potent mix at present. Unfortunately, we are in this particular time when such mixture is heightened due to its popular and mass support. More unfortunately, this time is made and continue to make human life/human rights as collateral damage and sacrifice to the human-made altar. Today, the numbers are increasing with more security procedures being implemented to make people human sacrifices.

### **The Scapegoats and Demons: Dehumanization in this Idolatrous and Apocalyptic Time**

Sociologically and theologically, human sacrifices can also be described and defined as scapegoats and demons. Their lives are dispensable for the sake of the greater good. They are blamed for the social ills and the social problems—thus, they must be taken out





(in the case of the scapegoats) or excluded and exorcised (in the case of the demons) from the constituted order.

By and large, the security procedures implemented are scapegoating and demonizing people. Instead of providing substantive program to address the ills of our society, the government is resorting to blame game—assigning people to be blamed for the woes and failures that we see and experience. As indicated in the discussion above, these governmental procedures are apocalyptic measures insofar as they are framed as good/us vs. evil/them. More importantly, these governmental procedures are incarnated in concrete governmental agency and policy that make scapegoating/demonizing operative—on the former as NTF-ELCAC; on the latter as Anti-Terror Law. Let us consider them briefly.

On NTF-ELCAC. With the termination of Peace Talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the CPP-NDF-NPA at the end of 2018 and the creation of NTF-ELCAC through an Executive Order 70 on March 2019, President Rodrigo Duterte officially implemented a security paradigm that forecloses any possibility of an agreement that might pave way for a resolution of the insurgency problem that besets the country. A paradigm of governance that makes the revolutionary group the enemy of the state, indeed, as terrorists. Effectively, this paradigm becomes a State apparatus that classifies people as enemies of the State. This is the primary role and responsibility of NTF-ELCAC.

From the perspective of political science, the soundness of this approach to insurgency and rebellion through the paradigm of security is always up for scholarly and public debate or whether or not this is relevant or effective to Philippine context is up for public discussion. But it must be clear to us that our taking issue of this matter is based on another ground: that this paradigm of governance makes conflict and loss of human lives a foregone conclusion as well as it forecloses any possibility of peace. We should not give up the commission of Christ for us to be peacemakers. Whatever the situation is, difficult if not near impossible it may be, this is our task and vocation as disciples of the Messiah. We should not give up Peace Talks. We are called to become peacemakers.

On Anti-Terror Law. Again from the perspective of law and political science, this law is up for a civil discussion and public debate—of which we have already seen and heard many on radio and TV from different sectors of our society and we all should join in as citizens of this Republic. However, and again, as Christians, our task and our vocation is fixed elsewhere—not in the science of governance but in the science of promotion of life and cultivation of cultural and political practices that allow life to thrive and flourish. Any law that intensifies and lethalizes an operation of scapegoating/demonizing in our society must be opposed. In our current political context, this is what the anti-terror law does. It makes us more vulnerable and exposed to the harshness of law. The red-tagging of outspoken and opinionated women, for instance, Liza Soberano, made no less than by Lt. Gen. Antonio Parlade, Jr., demonstrated this inevitable operation of such law. Even Sr. Mary Jon Mananzan (PhD, *summa cum laude*) whose faithful witness to the Gospel throughout these years is beyond dispute is not excluded from red-tagging. If the rich and famous is and cannot be exempted from the harsh and violence of this law, how much more the lowly and the dispensable unknown. This is why Paul, in his pastoral letters, would always remind the *ecclesia* that the gospel of the messiah not the law (Roman or Judean) instantiates the reign of God. We cannot trust and should not rely on the Law. We must remain loyal to the Gospel.



In short, the current governmental procedures that scapegoat and demonize many in our land dehumanize all of us. For us people of faith, one life devalued, one life lessened only means one thing: desecration of human life. Dehumanization is desecration of the sacredness of life.

**Discipleship, Again: Human Rights is Human Life, The Christian Vocation**

The rising tide which tends to make us believe in fear rather than in radical hope in the triumph of life over death is not, however, a foregone conclusion. Waves might still come in rush and heights. But God has risen the preacher of the reign of justice and love, of generosity and mercy, the one who showed us the way, truth, and the life, the Messiah who demonstrated who cared for the well-being of those who follow this path—that in God, life reigns supreme and over death.

In this path, human life/human rights are neither simply a universal claim of humanistic principle nor democratic assertion. For the disciples of the crucified whom God raised from the dead, to defend human life/human rights is our holy vocation; that this praxis of discipleship is indeed our act of faithfulness to the messianic mission of the Messiah. Like Jesus whose defense to his disciples against the religious frontal assault of the Pharisees to limit their access to food, we too are called to defend any assault that cheapens and diminishes the worth of human life, more so those that which that negate rights to life and to life abundant.



# **Biblico-Theological Reflection**

## **A BIBLICO-THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY IN THE BIBLICAL TRADITION**

Ferdinand Anno  
Union Theological Seminary-Philippines

No Christian who reads the Bible and prays every day should miss the fact that the protection and promotion of human rights are central to the agenda of our biblical faith.

The text of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights may be a document penned outside of the church, but this reflects much of the social thought of Christianity and other faith communities. The human right to life which is central to this universal declaration on human rights is also the heart of biblical Christianity. Was it not Jesus, the incarnate Word himself, who said “I have come that you may have life to the full (Jn 10:10)”? The “full life” is not about prosperity in the neoliberal sense as being heralded by prosperity gospels. The promise of the “full life,” in sync with the three other gospels, was said more in the context of the weaponization of the law in the dehumanization of the poor and powerless.

Thousands of years before 1948, during the age of ancient empires, imperial aggression, colonialization, vassalage, national oppression, and slavery, the struggle for the humanization of people was already the narrative of the margins. This struggle also gave rise to new religious articulations and expressions that subverted religious currents that were constructed around the sacralization of power structures. Some religions may have been reborn and some simply emerged as the sum of the yearnings of peoples whose rights to life and humane collective existence have been violated and stripped off. The Yahwistic faith, for one, rose among slaves in their struggle for mass emancipation. Thankful for their new-found freedom, these slaves also called *Habirus* (a collection of the underclass and out-caste people) by ancient chroniclers, institutionalized the protection and promotion of human rights in what is now the Law of Moses (God’s law handed over to Moses). What this ancient sacred law says is that God revealed Godself in the context of people’s struggle for humanization. Thus, the people’s awareness of their human rights and awareness of God, in the case of biblical religion, goes hand in hand. For the Hebrew slaves whose rights were violated and simply denied them, “let my people go” was the good news. It was a gospel that announced God’s solidarity with those dehumanized in body and spirit – or those subjugated and commodified sa *katawan at katauhan*.



It was also around this emphasis on human rights and the struggle for humanization that Yahwism (the faith/religion of the ancient Hebrews) was able to construct its own narrative of life's beginnings. The experiences of a people's liberation from imperial bondage, national oppression under tyrannical rule, and mass exile were what shaped the ancient Hebrew's imagination of how life began: when God, in an act of creation, restored order from abysmal chaos to re-position the dehumanized human into its proper place in the ordo of creation (Gen 1:26-31); or when God breath God's *ruach* into a lump of earth to create a living being (Gen 2:7) that bears God's image (Gen 1:27); or when the human was told to desire not to be god-like and terrorize others (Gen 3).

Human rights, as defined by the late senator, Jose W. Diokno, "are more than legal concepts; they are the essence of [being human]. They are what make the [human being] human. That is why they are called human rights: deny them and you deny [the human being's] humanity." But two millennia before the late Senator Diokno, Jesus the Galilean was already protesting against legalsque discourses on human rights. Repulsed by the way the keepers of the law of his time were weaponizing the law to keep others dehumanized and to "neutralize" his human rights advocacy work, Jesus protested by saying "the law was made for humans, not the human for the law (Mk 2:27)." As far as Jesus is concerned, any legal and theological interpretation of the law must be done in the service of the poor and the weak.

To understand this militancy of Jesus for human rights, it would help to read through our bible [and pray every day]. Sure, the bible cannot be reduced to a single theme that happens to be currently unpopular to the mainstream church but it is not exegetically wrong either to highlight human rights as central to the gospel agenda.

In our Bible's books of beginnings, the human is affirmed as a citizen of the earth, destined to co-exist sustainably with the rest of created reality. Together with the birds of the sky, the fish of the sea, the rivers, and mountains, the human was created to image its Creator. Early in our sacred text, the correspondence between ecological justice and human rights was already established. You cannot celebrate the beauty and majesty of the natural environment without celebrating the sacredness of human life, and vice versa.

The call of Abram, Sarah, and their household, another nodal point in the biblical narrative, can also be seen as a breakout from empire culture. Seen and retold from the perspective of the exodus experience, the story of the journeys of the parents of ancient Israel should be understood as an act of parting ways with the empire culture of the city - the ultimate symbol of the corruption of God's design for human life. The city and its struggle to be god-like were what was rejected in the offerings of Cain (Gen 4:4ff) and the construction of the tower of Babel (Gen 11:3ff). In the city, lives were objectified, commodified, and mechanized to sacralize the social edifices of god-kings. Abram and Sarah's were a story of finding or establishing a new city where each one is a blessing to the other.

The exodus, the gospel event historic to an oppressed people, is the heart of Jesus' bible. It was a story of (1) an empire fearing its subjects and labor force, (2) of ordinary and less



than ordinary people struggling for the protection and promotion of their human rights, (3) and a human rights advocate who was tagged as criminal, chased as a fugitive, and came back to engage the pharaoh and his court with the message that God has seen and heard the cries and afflictions of a violated people and that God with God's mighty hands and outstretched arms will let them, the oppressed, go.

From this experience of the exodus, the new nation made a covenant to have this experience of relief and release from forces that dehumanize instituted in laws and codes to be observed unto perpetuity. The holiness code, jubilee, and fallow laws, Levitical ordinances, and statutes in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy were all instituted to perpetuate the memory and observance of that epochal day when God let the violated and oppressed go. This must be the scriptural context of John Wesley's claim that "there is no other holiness but social holiness (the UCCP through the Philippine Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church is also an heir to this Wesleyan spirituality and theological heritage)." Personal or privatized "holiness" is more of a post-biblical phenomenon in Christianity.

Further down into the so-called historical books of the Bible, amid the macabre, bacchanalian and the banal that saturate the pages of the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Chronicles, Samuel, Kings, Ezra and Nehemiah, these books narrate and reflect on people's struggle for their right to land and abode in accord with God's justice (Joshua), the rise of advocates or judges in peoples' struggles against oppression (Judges), the right of foreigners and outsiders and their struggles to crush the walls that separate peoples (Ruth), the prophetic indictment of unjust rulers and the idea, vision, and pursuit of just governance (Samuel, Chronicles, Kings), the "chaos" of uprootment and exile and the sin of the politics of substitution (Ezra and Nehemiah), and how human rights advocates stay discerning, vigilant, resourceful and creative in rescuing masses of people from genocidal designs (Esther).

The sages of the Bible for their part taught that the fear of God is paramount in our everyday judgment and living (Proverbs); that human hubris and the vain pursuit of power, fame, and fortune at the expense of destroying the balance in the divine *ordo* of life (Ecclesiastes), and indifference to human suffering and situations where people are stripped of their rights (Job) are anathema to the faith. Violators of human rights either by commission (in the case of institutional violence and state terrorism) or omission (in the case of systemic violence) do not fear God. They may "see" God but choose to put ultimate value (*weorthscipe*=worship) to the security of the few against the human rights of many, or in the case of the "friends of Job," caricature suffering as the handiwork of the sufferers and the sinned against.

The prophets and prophecy, the office that is as old as the Judaeo-Christian faith, were from the beginning the most ardent advocates of human rights. They, as a matter of fact, existed for this purpose. Prophecy in the biblical tradition was never about forecasting future events or fortune-telling. In recorded accounts of prophecy, the prophets were there to remind people of the memory of the exodus whenever rights have been trespassed in institutional scale, or to remind people of their covenanted life in the wilderness whenever





inequity and injustice reign, or to cry, “Thus saith God ...” when people start making idols of temporal powers, wealth, national security, and the status quo - more than the interest of justice and the welfare of the poor, widows, and orphans. The prophetic vision has more to do with God’s judgment of the present state of things based on what was historically experienced in the exodus more than some delusional constructs of some abstract future and end-time scenarios.

The historical Jesus was steeped in this tradition of law-giving, chronicling, wisdom-sharing, and militant prophesying aimed at fulfilling the spirit of the law over against the misinterpretation and misrepresentation of its texts in the hands of temporal powers and interests.

No Christian who reads the Bible and prays every day should miss this bare fact: that the protection and promotion of human rights are central to the agenda of our biblical faith; and that the current human rights advocacy work of the church is a continuation of this age-old tradition. In this light, the ecumenical church welcomes and celebrates the observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as this provides another language for what the church is preaching since time immemorial vis-à-vis the rights of human beings as members of domestic, local, and national communities, the global village, and the wider earth community.

Some churches and church-related organizations in the country, the United Church of Christ and its programs and agencies included, are currently under fire for their active engagement in human rights issues and concerns in the Philippines and the global community. The National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF ELCAC) in particular, has been accusing in public forums some of our ministries and church workers as communist-infiltrated and directed. To be tagged as red-infiltrated is truly sinister in this country because this may mean not only harassment but also the issuance of a death sentence. But will the church fold up and silence itself in the face of the government’s relentless offensive against human rights work? Between human rights advocacy and capitulation to the national security doctrine, a Bible-informed faith decides for the protection and promotion of human rights ... for the scriptures say to the Christian human rights worker,

*“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you (Mt 5:11-12).”*



# YOUTH BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Hello!

This is a self-guided Bible Study. You can go through it by yourself or in a small group.

First, you need to begin with a prayer. Thank God for life, for health, for friends and family, for the opportunity to learn. Ask God to make you an instrument of God's peace and justice in a world in the midst of a pandemic. Ask God to lead you, to challenge you, to enable and equip you to work with others wherever you are to reach out to those whose only hope is God.

*Now, get your Bible and open it to Luke 4. 14-30.*



PROF. REVELATION ENRIQUEZ VELUNTA  
Union Theological Seminary, Philippines

## JUSTICE, PEACE, AND COVID

### Luke 4. 14-30

Read the passage. Use the New Revised Standard Version. If you do not have the NRSV, use the New International Version. Or another English version.

Read the passage again. This time out loud. With feelings!

Read the passage again. Out loud again. With feelings again! But this time, use a translation in your language (Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, etc.)

Please do not forget this. Ever. The Bible was written to be heard or read out loud.



**Before you continue,  
please read the following:**

*Many students of the Bible do not read the Bible. They either read books about the Bible or very small parts. A lot are experts in proof texting. One of the best ways to understand scripture is to read each passage as part of a greater whole.*

*Luke 4:14-30 is part of Luke 4. Luke 4 is part of the Gospel of Luke. The Gospel of Luke is one half of the two-volume work, Luke-Acts. One of the best ways to understand the text we call Luke-Acts is to understand the context that birthed it: the Roman Empire.*

Let us assume you have read Luke and Acts. Very good! I will do a quick summary for you.

### **Good news to the Poor**

The empire preached good news to the rich. Luke's Jesus proclaimed good news to the poor. Mary's Song of Praise celebrates the God who takes sides, the Lord who scatters the proud, brings down the powerful, and sends the rich away empty. The same Lord who lifts up the lowly and fills the hungry with good things.

Luke's Jesus proclaims, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor." His Sermon on the Plain declares blessings to the poor and woes to the rich. The rich are challenged to sell everything they have, give all the proceeds to the poor and follow Jesus. The Acts of the Apostles tell of communities where no one was in need and where ministry to widows and orphans and strangers was a priority. The Christian mission is to bring good news to the poor beyond Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, to the Gentiles, and to the ends of the earth.





This passage is one of the UCCP's favorite New Testament passages. Why do you think that is?

What does the passage say about justice and peace?

Halfway through the passage Jesus's townmates were amazed at his words but by the end of the passage they were ready to throw him off a cliff. Why?

What does this passage say about our mission in the midst of COVID-19?

At first, those who listened to Jesus read Isaiah were happy. Then, as they listened to him interpret the challenge of the Jubilee (in Leviticus 25), they metamorphosed into a mob bent on throwing Jesus off a cliff! Why? Because Jesus dared to change the beneficiaries of God's jubilee.

Leviticus 25, the year of the Lord's favor, proclaimed land, liberty and cancellation of all debts. For Jesus, Jubilee meant gospel, good news to a people suffering under Roman occupation. Jesus challenged their interpretation of "us" to include "everyone." Especially the left out.



For Jesus, there is only "all of us." If God is our parent, then we, all of us, are God's children. We are all sisters and brothers. Not just his fellow Nazarenes. Not just his fellow Galileans. During the time of Elijah, when drought and famine ravished the land, there were many widows in Israel, yet God sent Elijah to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon.

There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha, yet none of them were cleansed except Naaman the Syrian. For Jesus, God's children include the widow at Zarephath in Sidon and Naaman the Syrian. The left out.



## What are your take-aways?

What does it mean to  
proclaim good news the  
poor today?

Who are today's "Widows of Zarephath"  
and "Naamans"?

What does it mean to work for peace based  
on justice for the CYF in the time of  
COVID-19?





# JPHR REFLECTIONS

## Muted and alienated:

Musings and remorse in the season of pandemic

by Frank J. Hernando on May 20, 2020

for webpage of Silliman University Divinity School reflections on the pandemic

Scripture Texts: Psalm 143

1 Hear my prayer, O Lord;  
give ear to my supplications in  
your faithfulness;  
answer me in your  
righteousness.  
2 Do not enter into judgment with  
your servant,  
for no one living is righteous  
before you.  
3 For the enemy has pursued me,  
crushing my life to the ground,  
making me sit in darkness like  
those long dead.  
4 Therefore my spirit faints within  
me;  
my heart within me is appalled.  
5 I remember the days of old,  
I think about all your deeds,  
I meditate on the works of your  
hands.  
6 I stretch out my hands to you;  
my soul thirsts for you like a  
parched land. *Selah*  
7 Answer me quickly, O Lord;

my spirit fails.  
Do not hide your face from me,  
or I shall be like those who go  
down to the Pit.  
8 Let me hear of your steadfast love  
in the morning,  
for in you I put my trust.  
Teach me the way I should go,  
for to you I lift up my soul.  
9 Save me, O Lord, from my  
enemies;  
I have fled to you for refuge. [a]  
10 Teach me to do your will,  
for you are my God.  
Let your good spirit lead me  
on a level path.  
11 For your name's sake, O Lord,  
preserve my life.  
In your righteousness bring me  
out of trouble.  
12 In your steadfast love cut off my  
enemies,  
and destroy all my adversaries,  
for I am your servant.

## Meditation

*Muted and alienated ...*

I'm having a kind of ambivalence  
If not confusion, or worse recalcitrance---  
what to feel and more importantly  
what to expect in the coming weeks and months  
working in the National Capital Region (NCR).



I felt like I have been muted,  
unable to be physically present in meetings and conferences  
to deliver sermons or presentations.  
All my invitations in the annual sessions cancelled.  
I felt like I have been immobilized,  
unable to go farther away from the national office  
or from Project 6.  
My world got smaller everyday due to restrictions  
imposed by the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ)  
in Luzon and then the entire country.

*Anxiety driven and threats of death ...*

The pandemic has instilled the fear of infection.  
The moment one is infected,  
one has already received his death certificate  
where written COVID-19 as cause of death.  
The declaration of the Enhance Community Quarantine  
or lock down was not well thought of by the government,  
It was drastic, compulsive, militarist.

What was in their minds?  
The easy way to do a lock down  
is to do it military style of quarantine.  
It is cheaper to lock down people  
in their homes and communities,  
instead of launching mass virus testing programs.

South Korea imposed mass testing program, although not perfect at all,  
by establishing drive-in testing sites  
at the entrances and exits  
of highways and expressways  
Swabbing everyone who enters and exits key cities and towns.  
Here, armed military personnel checked on  
Quarantine pass, IDs and cargoes of trucks.

*Employment and wages lost ...*

Millions of people have to stop working,  
the pandemic revealed the ugly consequences  
of the nation's class society.  
The metropolis was in a standstill.  
The nearby public school has no more children playing,  
or chanting their songs and rhymes,

No longer can be heard the noisy Lambada music from the jeepney  
leaving the compound to have its pasada to Quiapo and Pier  
The jeepneys have been parked here since the first day of ECQ  
drivers are either stranded in location  
or gone to their homes, and just like us, locked down.  
EDSA has been decongested of vehicles



and the noisy deafening beep sounds of impatient motorists gone,  
And there was silence, at times eerie.

*Quarantined ...*

Means staying indoors for most of my waking hours,  
Occasionally, going to the talipapa to get fresh meat  
and fish supply has become a routine for the last nine weeks  
Going to the grocery store in big malls  
means taking your whole afternoon  
as you slowly move forward in the long cue of customers  
Just to get a pack of ground coffee, fruits,  
and other basic supplies good for a week

Hoarding of groceries was a common scene  
in grocery stores of shopping malls  
practiced by those who have the money,  
Too little or nothing at all for those with less in life  
Cooking for yourself, eating alone, singing alone, praying alone  
Listening to daily morning and evening newscast,  
Newscasts give the head count of infected, deaths, recoveries  
Complaints of poor citizens waiting for food relief packs,  
social amelioration fund, DOLE unemployment support  
was hard to access and come by.

*Rights violated, hopes dimmed ...*

People losing control of their economic life,  
those asserting their right to economic support  
were jailed, killed, penalized  
Those who like to stay outdoors were called 'pasaway' and punished,  
as if their right place is indoors all their lives  
Those who resist the quarantine were ordered shot or jailed  
Government judges were alerted to issue warrant of arrests  
For those who violate quarantine protocols  
Why would Bayanihan for Healing as One Act seemed iron fisted?  
The people have further been abused and their rights doubly violated.  
"We will not die of COVID-19  
But surely we will die of hunger, patay sa gutom,"  
People in distress murmured.

*Domicile becomes hallowed spaces ...*

Working from home--  
Means not leaving your familiar domestic spaces,  
Your dining table is also your desk,  
Plastic chairs have practically replaced  
the cushioned executive swivel chair  
You don't have to walk several meters away to refill your coffee cup  
It is just literally within your reach,  
But be careful not to spill your hot coffee on your laptop computer.



Ah very tempting, when brain fatigue occurs,  
The comfy bed is just few steps away.

You received requests from workmates,  
answered emails, write project proposals,  
and all that are necessary for the invisible office to run.  
The absence of face-to-face meetings  
Makes my mind and heart crave for very personal interaction  
It might be good to read messages and emails  
Or sit in teleconferencing in Zoom or FB messenger  
No personal and cultural nuances exposed.

So there are people who likes to impose on others their prerogatives,  
Compulsions disclosed, repulsions kept.  
I hope that someday, somehow, what has been coined as "new normal"  
Will restore our humanity, our human touch, sensitivity,  
Intimacy and empathy as God's people.

*Praying for God's strength ...*

Dear God strengthen my heart and empower my will,  
My spirit is weakening, my resilience is diminishing,  
Let me hear of your steadfast love in the morning  
for in you I put my trust.  
Teach me the way I should go,  
for to you I lift up my soul. Amen. +

## **The Cross of Jesus as symbol of Servanthood**

REV. RAYMUNDO GELLOAGAN

As we celebrate life in its fullness (Jn. 10:10) , may we then be reminded as people of God and  
shepherds of the church on how to be an instrument and empowered society of believers in Jesus,  
the Christ whose life is set as a model of Servanthood.

Let us reflect on the text of the Lukan Gospel, chapter 4:18-20, and let us use the  
phrase as a call of lament to the authorities who are arms of the constitution that protect  
civil liberties, guns, mandate of the people's government and God's morals. STOP THE  
ATTACK, a resounding call that echoed through the heart of people that are silence by  
fear, a mind that is silence of criticism, and life that is silence by bullets.



"S" - spirit of the Lord is upon us to preach the Good News, a mandate to each one since we are confronted by state authorities who are already not true to their mandate. The COVID 19 pandemic becomes an opportunity to corrupt, the terror law is not for the poor to be "full of life" but to be more oppressed and deprived of justice.

"T" - terrorized people and Church servant are the word of the day. Catriona Gray, Angel Locsin, Liza Soberano are only few to mention those who are warned of execution through bullets because of their laments, who have seen injustices and maltreatment of the poor people. The Church is not also spared of this death threat, trump - up crime charges, warrantless arrest, red tagging and poison letter. Let me mention some of the names of our leaders, Bp. Reuel Marigza, Bp. Joseph Agpaoa, Bp. Hamuel Tequis (whose life presently endangered) Rev. Dan Andres from Bicol, who was arrested due to fabricated criminal charges and so on...

"O" - our land is a land of promise for the afflicted people, they cherished that they may have the same fate and faith experiences of the 'Israelite' people whom God brought them out of bondage from Egypt. Yet at this time it is a far cry of the Lumads whose ancestral domain are bombarded due to mining, the peasant farmers who always cry of government protection and subsidy from tyrant landlord and opportunist, the fishermen whose territorial rights to fish were deprived by the capitalist and our service workers, professionals and others were deprived of employment, fair labor wages, health plan and other benefits.

"P" - prophetic task is the demand of our time. The Lukan Gospel call is to set freedom to the oppressed, liberty to the captives, give sight to blind, food to the hungry, and for the thirsty to drink.

"T" - tyranny flourish and tyrant reign if our lips are sealed, our eyes closed, our hands tied and our feet are fainting to walk in journey with God to do His Mission, bringing Good News to the masses in this trying time.

"H" - hope, Peace, Joy and Love are symbolized by the candle we lit during Advent Season. We do this because this is what we want in life, and the birth of Emmanuel (God is with us), promises liberation during Jesus time.

"E" - explore God's Divine providence at this time, let us not waver but be vigilant in our time. Come in the Lord's Table and lay the mantle of unity. Let us remove the dark clouds of injustices, and let the Light of God shine so it may bring abundance of life.

"A" - affirm your beliefs in our Statement of Faith as a Church and renounce the devil's advocates and its doing to "Stop the Attack" on people and respect the right to life.

"T" - terrorism is not our vision and to be a terrorist is not our pursuit in life. Totality of life through God's Promise is what we aspire for.

"T" - tomorrow is a new day, for everyone and hopeful for a better world if our government is of the people, by the people and for the people. Therefore, we continue to rally and shout to the street, preach in the pulpit, comment and write in social media





to demand for total respect of people's right, abolishing terror law and call for a promotion of equal justice. Demand for the abolition of resolution of death penalty.

"A" - mongst us all, we as followers of Christ are not in adherence to death penalty. Life is of God and we do not have the right to deprive one individual of its breath because of his/her sin. God is the giver, then He is the taker.

"C" - ome, let us worship God in Spirit and Truth. Commitment to follow Him is our faith journey to usher the Gospel's proclamation of abundance of life. We commence to steadfastly call to Stop the Attack of the Church people, let our government authorities hide to voice the toiling masses.

"K" - ingdom of God reigns when we submit ourselves to His Will. " KAPAYAPAAN, KAGINHAWAAN, KAGALAKAN, KARUNUNGAN, KALUWALHATIAN, KARAPATAN, are few words to describe of what is this Kingdom of God all about. Stop the attack and forward God's reign. AMEN.

# **LATEST COB STATEMENT & INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY**



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE  
PHILIPPINES  
Council of Bishops

## **Statement on State Attacks on the Church**

CRY OUT! “RESCUE US, O GOD”

INTERNATIONAL VIRTUAL SOLIDARITY FORUM  
17 NOVEMBER 2020 9:00-11:00 P.M.

*The UCCP Council of Bishops, Church leaders both from the clergy and the laity have been deeply concerned of the deteriorating social situation in the country.*

The entire social, economic and political milieu of the Philippines have been deteriorating, wherein large number of people have been suffering from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and exacerbated by the series of super typhoons that destroyed farmlands and crops, rendered millions homeless, left almost a hundred dead.

***Apparently, the hopeless and hapless situation overwhelms local government units as people demands from their political leaders to account for the destruction they experience and come to provide much needed relief assistance.*** The State, as well, has been confronted with the immense economic need of the people due to prolonged repressive and militarist lock down. But the government has been busy legislating and implementing tyrannical laws like the Anti-Terrorism Law of 2020, that aims at intensifying anti-insurgency campaign, increasing budget for National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF ELCAC). This is damnable lopsided priority of the Duterte government.

***The Church has been at the service of people as part of its faith and witness. But scores of Church workers, leaders and ordinary members have been harassed, persecuted, red tagged, hurled trumped up criminal charges and at the extreme, extrajudicially killed.*** The staunch advocacy of the Church for protection of the integrity of life, respect for human rights, the pursuit of justice and peace have been considered by the State as anti-government stances. This persecution of the Church is intended to stop the Church from its prophetic witness in the midst of intensifying authoritarian regime in the country even in the midst of the urgent call of the masses for reparation and rehabilitation from the impact of series of typhoons and the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is not coincidental that the State has singled-out the Church in its attempt to silence the prophetic witness of the Church in the light of the insurmountable sufferings and alienation of the majority of the Filipino people. The Church CRY-OUT to God for rescue from its detractors and known enemies (Psalm 59: 1-2).

***Until justice is served to victims, until the Church is vindicated, and until enduring peace is achieved, we will unceasingly CRY-OUT to God to rescue us from our enemies.*** We know that our persecutors and those who are out to tarnish the image of the Church as the station of salvation and respite for the suffering people will not succeed even if they destroy the physical aspects of our faith and mission.

Like the Psalmist, the Church believes that those blood thirsty, ready to kill prophetic Church leaders and members, God will thwart their evil intentions.

***We have called on our national and international partners and friends to manifest their solidarity. The Church greatly appreciates their responses and unqualified support through messages of solidarity on this International Virtual Solidarity Forum,*** as well as their commitment for a conduct of an impartial international and ecumenical investigation on the human rights violations of the Duterte government. These strengthen our faith-witness in making the life of God in Jesus Christ real in the struggle against the powers-that-be that attempt to destroy the Church and strangle the doing of God's mission for justice, abundant life and tenable peace.



***Finally, the UCCP through the Council of Bishops together with our national and International Partners call on the government of President Rodrigo R. Duterte and the responsible State Agencies to stop harassing and persecuting the Church, repeal the Anti-Terrorism Law of 2020; Channel precious resources budgeted to NTF ELCAC to relief and rehabilitation of devastated communities of typhoons Quinta, Rolly, and Ulysses; and provide sustainable economic support for the economically displaced workers.***

***There is no other way to address the grave economic injustice, the roots of the volatile social unrest and the exigencies of armed conflict fraught with violence and destruction but in sustained and committed peace process. Peace talks should resume in earnest.***

We are reminded by prophet Jeremiah when he warned his people of the impending destruction of the nation when they refuse to work out justice and peace amongst the people, listen:

*They have healed the wound of my people lightly,  
saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace.  
Were they ashamed when they committed abomination?  
No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush.  
Therefore, they shall fall among those who fall;  
at the time that I punish them, they shall be overthrown,"  
says the Lord. (Jeremiah 6: 14-15 RSV).*

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## UCCP COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

November 17, 2020



**Bishop Melzar D. Labuntog**  
*General Secretary*



**Bishop Joseph G. Agpaoa**  
*North Luzon Jurisdictional Area*



**Bishop Emergencio D. Padillo**  
*Middle Luzon Jurisdictional Area*



**Bishop Joel E. Tendero**  
*South Luzon Jurisdictional Area*



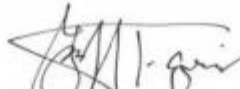
**Bishop Jerome C. Baris**  
*East Visayas Jurisdictional Area*



**Bishop Feliciana P. Tenchavez**  
*West Visayas Jurisdictional Area*



**Bishop Ligaya F. San Francisco**  
*West Mindanao Jurisdictional Area*



**Bishop Hamuel G. Tequis**  
*South East Mindanao Jurisdictional Area*

### Bishops Emeritus

**Bishop Arturo R. Asi**

**Bishop Jezer E. Bertoldo**

**Bishop Isaias L. Bingtan**

**Bishop Erme R. Camba**

**Bishop Ebenezer C. Camino, Sr.**

**Bishop Constante D. Claro**

**Bishop Gabriel A. Garol**

**Bishop Hilario M. Gomez, Jr.**

**Bishop Marino I. Inong**

**Bishop Roel P. Mendoza**

**Bishop Jaime R. Moriles**

**Bishop Eliezer M. Pascua**

**Bishop Dulce Pia-Rose**

**Bishop Elorde M. Sambat**

**Bishop Anacleto G. Serafica**

**Bishop Jessie S. Suarez**

**Bishop Rizalino Q. Taganas**

**Bishop Modesto D. Villasanta**

**Bishop Reuel Norman O. Marigza**





# Christian Conference of Asia

• Payap University, Muang, Chiang Mai 50000 Thailand  
Tel: +66-(0)53-243906, 243907 Fax: +66-(0)53-247303

13 November 2020

## Red-tagging in the Philippines: CCA General Secretary's Message to UCCP

It is with great distress that we often hear news about the malicious and brutal practice of red tagging – the labelling of groups or individuals perceived to be critical of the government as “communists” or “terrorists”. It has become a common trend and a practice that in the Philippines the red-tagging is a prelude to persecution and even summary execution. The vilifying and red tagging of church and ecumenical leaders has become a grave concern not only for the churches in The Philippines, but also for the churches and ecumenical movement in Asia.

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), a regional fellowship of churches across Asia and its 65 million members condemn such red-tagging which causes fear for the lives of pastors, priests, bishops as well as ecumenical leaders who are at the forefront of facilitating and coordinating the Church's mission and witness. We believe that instead of maligning and endangering people for their right to the lawful exercise of freedom of expression, the Philippines government should address legitimate criticisms against undemocratic policies and practices prevailing in the country for decades of authoritarian and military dictatorships. By way of red-tagged individuals, organizations and their leaders, those who are critical of government's anti-people policies become the targets of harassment, threat and even extrajudicial killings.

The CCA and its leadership view that a member church of CCA in the Philippines, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) is under attack by the State, and the UCCP and its leaders have been branded as supporters of “communists” or “terrorists”. Many within the country and overseas believe that such actions are part of tyrannical tactics of lumping the Church and its the mission with the revolutionary movement and cast aspersions against the Church. It is alarming that by way of registering criminal charges against many church leaders ranging from the Bishops of the Church, local church pastors and the laity, the authorities and the military are trying to suppress the prophetic voice of the Church.

The CCA expressed its concern and anguish a few months ago when Bishop Reuel Norman O. Marigza, a member of the Executive Committee of CCA and the General Secretary of the NCCP was red-tagged on television, internet news portal and the social media accusing that he is a member of the revolutionary New People's Army. CCA also expressed earlier a concern when the UCCP was accused by the government's anti-insurgency National Task Force, on the basis of the church's decision to provide sanctuary for internally displaced indigenous people in a UCCP compound, in Davao City.

As the churches in The Philippines are struggling and crying out for justice, the CCA and its member churches spread across Asia, from Iran in West Asia to Japan in East Asia, from Nepal in the North of Asia to New Zealand in the south express solidarity with the churches and the ecumenical movement in the Philippines who cry out for their rescue. The CCA appeals that any

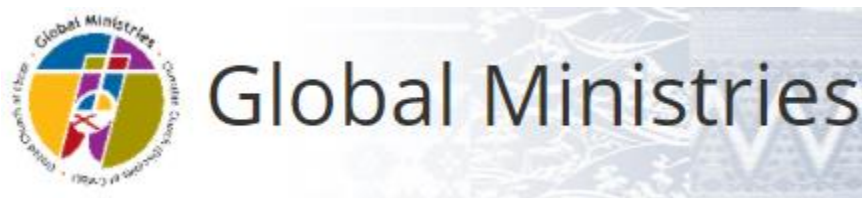


form of attack be stopped, and that the government to opt for principled negotiations to address the problems especially the armed insurgency prevailing in the country for decades due to the failure of successive governments in resolving people's genuine concerns.

While CCA remains deeply concerned on the increasing killings as well as the arbitrary arrests and detention of red-tagging individuals especially church leaders, CCA reiterate its commitment to accompany and be in solidarity with the UCCP and other churches in the Philippines.



Dr Mathews George Chunakara  
*General Secretary, Christian Conference of Asia (CCA)*



### **Global Ministries Message of Solidarity with United Church of Christ in the Philippines**

November 12, 2020

Global Ministries, a common witness of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the US and Canada and the United Church of Christ in the US, stands in solidarity with our historic partner the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. The church-workers, national staff, and leadership of the UCCP represent local fellowships of believers who follow the Gospel of Jesus Christ by engaging in ministries that serve all people of the Philippines, including the poor and those vulnerable to violence, marginalization, and natural disasters.

We are deeply concerned about the rise throughout the Philippines in incidents of human rights violations and attacks against grassroots leaders, indigenous communities, and civil society activists. While these have been recurring problems under successive governments, the Duterte Administration has been implicated in using its controversial war on drugs and COVID-19 pandemic restrictions as cover to target political enemies and social justice advocates.

The June 2020 report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation of human Rights in the Philippines highlighted thousands of deaths and abuses of human rights committed by Philippine forces and called for decisive action to monitor the situation and hold the Government of the Philippines accountable. While at its 45th session the Human Rights Council and international community failed to take robust action on these recommendations, the international faith community and civil society remain committed to call attention to these concerns and to advocate for an end to this state violence.



As an ecumenical partner of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, we are especially troubled by recent official allegations that the UCCP is a front for communist or terrorist groups. Along with arbitrary and false criminal charging, such “red-tagging” of church representatives seeks to delegitimize and constrain essential ministries through harassment and intimidation. This labelling is dangerous, as it condones and encourages violence against workers and members of the church. The arrests, attacks, and even killings of UCCP clergy and other individuals associated with peace and human rights organizations or impugned for providing humanitarian relief to indigenous communities is intolerable.

We remain steadfast in supporting the Christian ministry and faithful public witness of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. We CRY-OUT against the baseless criminal allegations and red-tagging of UCCP members and leadership, and we appeal to the Government of the Philippines to end its attacks against the church and civil society advocates. We CRY-OUT for political leaders in the Philippines and around the world to ensure the peace and welfare of all, especially the poor and vulnerable, and to hold accountable those who abuse their power to commit acts of violence against them.

Our prayers are with you. God bless you all!

Derek Duncan

Area Executive for the East Asia and the Pacific

Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ



OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THE REVEREND J. HERBERT NELSON, II  
STATED CLERK OF THE GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY

**Bishop Melzar Labuntog**

UCCP National Office

877 EDSA

West Triangle, Quezon City 1104

PHILIPPINES

**“Cry Out! Rescue Us, O God!”**  
**Solidarity Statement from Presbyterian Church**  
**(U.S.A.)**

Friends in Christ, when you cry out to God in anguish over the red-tagging of church leaders in the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), we hear you. We stand with you both in lament and in hope that justice will be served.



As a partner in Christ with the UCCP since its formation, we affirm our shared history and long-standing relationship. Today, we stand in solidarity and support as UCCP church leaders continue to live out their commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ and his promise of fullness of life for all. These leaders preach a gospel not only in pulpits but also among vulnerable communities of the urban poor, peasants, and indigenous peoples. These very church leaders are community leaders who seek to address root causes of poverty and injustice.

The UCCP commitment to peace and justice in the Philippines has created opportunities for mutual learning and transformative experiences between our churches. Through our Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, International Peacemakers from the Philippines have met with U.S. college students, local church members, and other groups eager to learn about the Philippines. PC(USA) young adult volunteers who once served in the Philippines have become pastors and church leaders in the PC(USA), serving in congregations, in seminaries, and in mission service.

Our longstanding relationship of solidarity was recently demonstrated through the PC(USA) General Assembly overture to address the human rights violations, originally scheduled for June 2020. This overture highlights instances of how the current administration of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has contributed towards the escalation of attacks against faith leaders and the communities that they serve, and how the PC(USA) will respond in solidarity and accompaniment. This overture has been deferred until 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is aware of the United Nations Human Rights Council report on widespread human rights violations and persistent impunity in the Philippines under the present administration. We stand with the United Nations wherever and whenever injustice raises its ugly head in the world. We are in solidarity with all peace-loving Filipinos who see more opportunities for impunity and violation in the newly adopted Anti-Terrorism Law of 2020.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) joins the efforts of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines and the ecumenical civil society organizations who demand an independent investigation into the red-tagging of church leaders and human right defenders throughout the Philippines. We will amplify your concerns and raise awareness to our local churches, and to our local, national, and international network of partners, until the light of justice and the rays of peace radiate across your beautiful country.

In the Faith that we share,



The Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson,  
II Stated Clerk of the General  
Assembly Presbyterian Church  
(U.S.A.)



## **Solidarity Message**

### **From the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) To: The United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP)**

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Greetings from the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK).

My dearest sisters and brothers in Christ of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines,

It is my honor to express our solidarity with you in these testing and difficult times! While the whole global community is struggling to overcome COVID-19, our sisters and brothers are facing even another level of challenges and dangers that threatens basic livelihood.

Not only are the frequent typhoons posing a significant threat to the people of the Philippines, extreme oppression and persecution merely based on human ideological frames and power struggles oppose God's mandate of living together in God's household.

The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea firmly re-affirms its stance of standing by the sisters and brothers in Christ of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. The PROK shares the experiences of being framed, persecuted and red-tagged. We treasure the experience of having the UCCP standing by us in difficult times. As much as you prayed for us and stood by, be assured our prayers and support on your pilgrimage for justice and peace.

As we move forward yearning for justice and peace and longing for healing and reconciliation, we trust in God and believe that we are anointed to preach the Good News and thus be the witnesses to God's righteousness. We call upon all partners and friends in Christ to cry with you together for rescue and recovery.

We share with you the Word of God and shall remain in faithful prayers:

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." (Deut 31:6) AMEN.

REV. DR. CHANG JU-KIM  
GENERAL SECRETARY  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA







**United Evangelical Mission. Communion of Churches in Three Continents  
Solidarity Statement on the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the Philippines**

The United Evangelical Mission is deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation of human rights defenders in the Philippines in the context of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 which does affect sisters and brothers in our member Church, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) and in the National Council of Churches (NCCP).

The United Evangelical Mission together with other international ecumenical church partners and organizations have been shocked when they had been informed about the killing of Zara Alvarez on 17 August 2020 in Bacolod City.

The UEM expresses its solidarity with the UCCP and the NCCP where sisters and brothers have been labelled as terrorists and suffer from intimidation and threats.

The UEM calls upon the Philippine Government to:

- Immediately stop all intimidation, threats, and violence against church people, human rights defenders by state security forces, civil servants, and government officials in the Philippines,
- withdraw the Anti-Terror Bill of 2020.

The UCCP is a longstanding member in the UEM Communion which has enriched the work of UEM members Churches and institutions in Africa, Asia and Germany by its strong witness for justice and peace.

As a communion of churches and church institutions in Africa, Asia and Germany the UEM stays together in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the Philippines at this time of suffering and struggle.

We, the members in the ecumenical family of the UEM are praying that our Lord may protect and safeguard you, we pray that justice and peace will overcome all intimidation, terror and violence.

On behalf of UEM – Dr. Jochen Motte – Deputy General Secretary  
11 November 2020





# World Council of Churches

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## **Solidarity Message to the United Church of Christ in the Philippines virtual solidarity forum: “Cry Out! Rescue Us, O God” – November 17, 2020**

Your Eminences, Your Graces, Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

The worldwide fellowship of churches joins with you in praying for healing and recovery of humanity and all of God’s creation, especially during this time of uncertainty and fear caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the human rights situation in the Philippines continues to deteriorate, the World Council of Churches (WCC) conveys its solidarity to the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP).

A member church of the WCC, the UCCP has shown unwavering commitment to standing up for justice and peace for the Filipino people, and for respect and protection of human dignity and human rights in the Philippines. The UCCP has truly lived out the Christian calling to “defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and oppressed” (Psalm 82:3 NIV).

For your humanitarian and educational work with rural, urban poor and indigenous communities and for your prophetic critique of the current political situation, the UCCP has been unjustly ‘red-tagged’. Consequently, UCCP pastors and church workers have been threatened and arrested on false charges. Several church workers have even been killed.

Throughout this ongoing ordeal, the UCCP has refused to be silenced. Such faith and courage are a powerful inspiration to the worldwide ecumenical fellowship and beyond.

In alignment with the numerous statements the WCC has issued on the human rights situation in the Philippines, we call on the Philippine Government to stop ‘red-tagging’ churches and civil society organisations, to end the war on drugs, to take measures to hold human rights violators accountable, and to respect and uphold the human rights of the Filipino people.

At the same time, we pray for rich blessings on the UCCP and its transformative ministries. We pray for the safety of her leaders, pastors members and followers.

We continue to pray, may the God of Life lead you on your pilgrimage toward justice, peace, and dignity for all. God bless the United Church of Christ in the Philippines! God bless the people of the Philippines!

*Ioan Sauca*

Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca  
Interim General Secretary  
World Council of Churches Geneva,  
12 November 2020





## World Communion of Reformed Churches

Dearly beloved in Christ, I bring you Christians greetings of solidarity and a common commitment to justice in such a time as this.

We at the World Communion of Reformed Churches are deeply concerned with the situation in the Philippines and particularly that of our partners the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. We have heard the cries of the Philippine people and particularly of those ministers of the church and we uplift you in prayer and will make every effort to stand with you as you struggle for justice and for peace. The Accra Confession reminds us "We have heard that creation continues to groan, in bondage, waiting for its liberation (Rom 8:22) We are challenged by the cries of the people who suffer and by the woundedness of creation itself." . Your cry-out has been heard the world over and we echo your cries to the world as well.

In a global moment of COVID19 which has served to unveil the deep-seated inequalities and injustices that abound around us we are called to particularly direct our attention to the Philippines that is suffering under an authoritarian regime. In recent years we have seen the rise of authoritarian governments the world over and the continued abuse of indigenous people, those belonging to racialized communities, women, the dispossessed and the impoverished as well as those struggling for justice and human rights defenders.

In the Philippines there have been an increase in the number of arrests, imprisonments, red- tagging of leaders as being members of insurgent organizations, and extra-judicial killings. Even worse we find that the mission of the church as being transformative agents of justice for peasants, workers and indigenous people has been criminalized.

We recognize that this present emergency that the UCCP in the Philippines face is a consequence of your prophetic engagement in society and is an attempt to threaten and muzzle your voices. We see this as a dictatorial attempt to stifle dissent and we acknowledge your bold and courageous stand for truth.

The Accra Confession says, "We recognize the enormity and complexity of the situation. We do not seek simple answers. As seekers of truth and justice and looking through the eyes of powerless and suffering people, we see that the current world (dis)order is rooted in an extremely complex and immoral economic system defended by empire." We commend you as you work towards the reign of God in the world through discernment and witness, looking at the world from the perspective of the oppressed. And we join you in your struggle against a scandalous world that has fallen among thieves. We look forward to a time of justice for all the oppressed.



### **Solidarity Message to the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) from the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF)**

The World Student Christian Federations (WSCF) extends its greetings of solidarity to the United Church of Christ in the Philippines in the occasion of this International Solidarity Forum. WSCF is a 125 years old worldwide federation of 120 ecumenical movements in 95 countries. Coming from diverse denominations and traditions, WSCF believes that is through our common ecumenical witness and action that we are able to effectively show God's grace and love for all of humanity and creation. We empower grassroots ecumenical movements to work for peace and justice and to stand united against inequality and injustice.

It is therefore in this spirit that we express our strongest solidarity to the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) in its call for international support to end and defend itself against vilification, malicious red tagging and unlawful attacks of its Bishops, clergy and members by the Duterte Administration and its military forces. We join the call to denounce consistent attempts by this government to discredit the good name and integrity of the UCCP by associating the church with the so-called terrorist organizations in the Philippines. We are deeply concerned that the Philippines Anti-Terror Law will be used to suppress legitimate dissent and justify human rights violations against those critical to the government, including church people and ecumenical workers.

UCCP's track record and long standing work for social justice and peace, uplifting the lives of the poor and marginalized, responding to urgent call for help in times of disasters, providing sanctuary to the displaced Indigenous People, accompanying the victims of Martial Law and of human rights violations are expressions of its deep faith commitment and theological imperatives enshrined in its Statement of Faith as a church.

We stand-by with the UCCP in fulfilling its mission as a church striving to "live out their faith in Jesus Christ" and "called to participate in the establishment of a just and compassionate social order."<sup>1</sup> We share with the UCCP the belief in the building of the Kingdom of God here and now "where faith in Jesus Christ is shared, where healing is given to the sick, where food is given to the hungry, where light is given to the blind, and where liberty is given to the captive and oppressed."<sup>2</sup>

UCCP's courageous historical journey speaks for itself. The church stood by the persecuted, oppressed and marginalized, amplifying their voices in the national and international arenas. UCCP has shown courageous discipleship in the face of persecution by the powers that be.

In this international forum, WSCF commits to journey with the UCCP as it continues to speak truth to power and confront the evils of structural and systemic injustice in the world today.

In the powerful words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "we are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself."

Once again, solidarity greetings to UCCP and mabuhay po kayo! In Christ,



Necta Montes  
WSCF General Secretary (out going) 16 November  
2020

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<sup>1</sup> UCCP Statement of Faith

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

# **SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGNS**

## **A Call to Participate in Project INVESTIGATE PH**

### **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

The human rights situation in the Philippines has worsened under the four-year old Duterte regime. Cases of extrajudicial killings, abductions, vilification and other attacks against government's perceived critics have increased. Forty-eight Church leaders and members of the UCCP have been victims of either "red-tagging", harassment, threats, illegal arrests or false charges for "the crime" of proclaiming the Gospel and for being at the fore of providing sanctuary to displaced indigenous peoples. There are several documented cases of bombings by the military in indigenous communities resulting to hundreds of thousand individuals remaining displaced in Mindanao alone. There has been widespread and systematic killings in Duterte's war on drugs, the most conservative figure, based on government data, is 8,663. The report of non-state actors triple this number.

As a result of tireless efforts of local and national organizations and of partner churches in seeking justice for the victims and their families, a growing number of advocates in the international community have raised their voices and have called for action to stop this human rights crisis.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet reported to the June 44<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC ) that extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations in the Philippines are widespread and systematic. The High Commissioner found that countering terrorism and illegal drugs, the two over-arching focus of the Philippine government, permeated the implementation of existing laws and policies and adoption of new measures often at the expense of human rights. She reported that domestic mechanisms have failed to ensure accountability, and that there is persistent impunity for human rights violations. Among her recommendations to the Philippine government is to "Empower an independent body to conduct prompt, impartial, thorough, transparent investigations into all killings and alleged violations of international humanitarian law with view to prosecution and remedies for victims and their families."

The 45<sup>th</sup> UNHRC Session passed Resolution 45/L.38 that shall provide "technical assistance and capacity-building to the Government of the Philippines for the promotion and protection of human rights in the country". To civil society organizations that cooperated with the UN's mechanisms on human rights, this Resolution falls short of the growing calls of victims of human rights violations for government accountability. Civil society and the international community continue to press for an independent,

international investigation.





## INVESTIGATE PH, WHAT IT IS

In response, the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP) in collaboration with the NCCP, the UCCP, with Karapatan and the National Union of People's Lawyers, is organizing an "Independent International Commission of Investigation into Human Rights Violations in the Philippines: a Global People's Initiative" or INVESTIGATE PH.

The purpose of INVESTIGATE PH is to create a space for the international community to help ensure that justice is served to victims and their families; provide further substance to the Bachelet Report to include issues of rule of law, impunity, and crimes against humanity; and help create a favorable climate for the Human Rights Council to do its work.

## INVESTIGATE PH: HOW AND WHEN

INVESTIGATE PH will undertake a virtual fact-finding through two sequential Sub-Commissions. The online investigation and work of Sub-Commission 1 will take place this December 2020 to March 2021. The investigation of Sub-commission 2 shall build on the findings and analysis of the first and will take place in February to July. The combined work of both Sub-Commissions shall serve as the basis for the final High-Level Commission Report.

INVESTIGATE PH shall deliver a report to the UNHRC Sessions this February-March 2021, in June-July 2021 and in September-October 2021 when the High Commissioner will deliver an update on the implementation of Resolution 45/L.38. The report will likewise be presented by the High-Level Commission to the UNHRC 48<sup>th</sup> Session in September 2021 and to other international bodies like the International Criminal Court.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

### **1. PARTICIPATE IN THE INVESTIGATION**

- Form or be a part of a **UCCP group** in your Jurisdictional Area that will immediately meet to
  - identify human rights violation **cases** in the Jurisdiction to be investigated
  - help prepare the **witnesses** and their testimonies (a guide will be provided)
  - work with a **national team in the JPHR / National Offices** to prepare for the actual conduct of the IFFM/ investigation sessions (instructive guides will be provided)
- Recommend eminent persons in the international community to be part of the **High-Level Commission** or the **Sub-Commission**
- Join the **Secretariat** (writers, graphic artists, researchers, etc. are needed)
- Invite friends and contacts in the international community to be **Endorsers**.

### **2. SPREAD AWARENESS ON INVESTIGATE PH**

- Talk about the investigation; organize virtual forums in your respective Conferences or Jurisdictional Areas to share the results of the international fact-finding missions or investigations



- Launch parallel events to publicize the investigation and eventually its Final Report
3. **DONATE or FIND DONORS to help defray expenses for the investigation project.**

**THANK YOU!** You may contact [uccpjphrministry@gmail.com](mailto:uccpjphrministry@gmail.com) and/or [secretariat@ichrp.net](mailto:secretariat@ichrp.net) for any further queries.



## Choose Life: A Declaration of Opposition to the Death Penalty

The President has once again raised his call for the passage of a bill that restores the death penalty, having campaigned for it during the 2016 presidential election. We note the support for the reinstitution of capital punishment (death penalty) in the House of Representatives and the Senate, with deep sorrow and regret.

We declare our absolute opposition to capital punishment and we call on all people of good will to join us in our fight. The second century Christian martyr, Irenaeus of Lyons, who received a sentence of death from the Roman Empire, once wrote, “The glory of God is a human person fully alive.” At the heart of our Christian faith is the belief that each human person is loved into being by God, created no less in his very image of God (Genesis 1:27), predestined from the beginning to become the image of the Son of God, Jesus Christ himself (Romans 8:29). There is no higher view of humanity than this: that each human person is given the gift of life to share in the image and likeness of God.

An attack on any human person, the image of God, is an attack on God. Moreover, at the core of our proclamation of the Good News (evangelion), the Gospel of Christ is that God’s Son came not to condemn (John 3:17), but to offer redemption, and forgiveness: “The Lord is long suffering towards us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to turn to him.” (2 Peter 3:9)

Rather than take the life of sinners, Christ came to offer his own life for our redemption: “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8). Such is the depth of the



love of God for us, sinners.

NOTHING- neither human sin, nor injustice, nor evil, “nor anything else in creation can separate us from the saving love of God that is in Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 8:39) This is the faith we confess, and we oppose the death penalty because it is contrary to the Christian principles of respect for human life, mercy, forgiveness and charity.

Furthermore, we also oppose the death penalty on the following grounds:

- Capital punishment will disproportionately impact poor communities. The poor do not have adequate resources and recourse for competent legal representation.
- In the Philippines, the death penalty had historically been meted out to some of the most vulnerable, for example, both children and the frail elderly. Given our broken judiciary, this could occur again.
- The very serious flaws in our judicial system could mean that the death penalty would be wrongly imposed on the innocent.
- A death penalty could be used to weaken democracy and silence political opposition, by sentencing human rights activists and political dissidents to death in the name of national security.
- Capital punishment does not act as a deterrent to crime, and serves only the purpose of revenge, contrary to the Gospel ethics of loving one’s enemies. (Matthew 5:44)

Our declaration of opposition to capital punishment should not be taken as a statement that persons who commit serious crimes should not be held accountable. In consonance with our Christian faith, we call on the government to offer offenders rehabilitation, so as to restore them to communion with God and the human community. Instead of crafting laws that marginalize the poor, we call on our government officials to devote their energies on the betterment of the majority of its citizens who live in poverty.

In these islands where the wealth of the fifteen richest individuals equals that of the poorest seventy-seven million Filipinos, the focus of our government should be on reducing social inequality that is at the root of so many of country’s problems. Peace eludes us because there is no justice. Furthermore, rather than weaken democracy and attack the defenders of democratic freedoms, the government ought to protect and strengthen our democratic institutions, our liberties, and those who guard them. The nobility of their vocation lies in the defense of human life and freedom, and service to the people.

To our President, to our lawmakers, and to our citizens, heed the word of God: “I set forth before you life and death. Choose life.” (Deuteronomy 30:19)##

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# **GLOSSARY OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS**

Prepared by: Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights 2011

## Introduction

KARAPATAN – is a national alliance composed of organization, groups and individuals active in the promotion, protection and individuals active in promotion, protection, defense and advance of human rights [HR]. It upholds that human beings have the inalienable right to life. Liberty, security of person and pursuit of happiness; and have such fundamental freedoms as those of thought, expression, belief and assembly, as well as from want and fear. It asserts and addresses the full range of rights of individuals and people: civil and political, economic, social and cultural.

KARAPATAN – asserts that the State, as a party to various international HR instruments, has the primary responsibility to uphold and protect human rights. Guided by the national democratic movement's extensive experience and arduous defense of human rights and consistent with the United Nation [UN] systems and mechanisms, karapatan's mandate in monitoring and documentation work focuses mainly on the compliance of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines [GPH] with UN human rights instruments such as the international Covenant On Civil and Political Rights [ICCPR] and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [ICESCR] among others, and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines [CARHRIHL].

The Karapatan 2011 Glossary of Human Rights Violations [HRVs] serves as a continuing attempt at setting a working reference of HRV definitions based on standards set by International Human Rights Law [IHRL] as specified in various United Nations covenants and other international treaties and conventions. It includes other rights which have been identified and defined in later years as a result of people's struggle not only for human rights but comprehensively for national sovereignty and democracy all over the world.

KARAPATAN's efforts are in line with its objective of developing an accurate, timely, comprehensive and useful system of HRV monitoring and documentation as bases for:

- Getting justice for the victims of HRV violation and their families
- Coming up with regular periodic reports on human rights situation in the Philippines
- Calling attention to and campaigning against HR violations; and
- Generally reporting to the public on the status of the government's compliance with the international instrument that it signed or acceded to as a state party.

The Glossary is a companion document to KARAPATAN's Gabay sa Pagsasanay sa Gawaing Dokumentasyon [**Training Guide on Documentation Work**].



## **Definition of Terms**

### **INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW [IHRL] Also commonly referred to as HUMAN RIGHTS [HR]**

A set of international rules and norms established by treaty, convention or customs, on the basis of which individuals and groups can assert and/ or claim certain rights, behavior or benefits from governments. Human rights are inherent entitlements which belong to every person as a consequence of being human. IHRL lays down rules binding governments in their relations with individual, communities and peoples.

#### **Person in Authority**

- a. Any person directly vested with jurisdiction, whether as an individual or as a member of some court or government owned or controlled corporation, board or commission;
- b. Include a barrio captain and barangay chairman; any person who, by direct provision of the law, by election or by appointment; by competent authority, is charged with the maintenance of public order and the protection and security of life and property, such as a barrio councilman, barrio policemen and barangay leader;
- c. Regular state security forces [military and police].

#### **Agents of persons in Authority**

- a. Any person who “comes to the aid of persons in authority are agents of person in authority” [Article 152, RPC];
- b. Paramilitary groups, vigilante groups, security services, hired killers, etc  
Civilians

Are Warmed individuals, with or without political affiliation. However, those individuals who are armed with firearms or bladed weapons for economic/cultural purposes other than political and are not engaged in armed struggle are deemed civilians under this lexicon (e.g. Tribal communities, hunters, or private individuals who own or process guns for leisure or self-protection).

#### **Combatants**

Armed persons organized in a more or less rigid manner with a definite political goal and engaged in armed struggle/conflict to pursue the same. For this purpose, regulars of the New People’s Army, Bangsamoro Army and the Armed Forces of the Philippines are considered combatants. These also include those armed and engaged in counter-insurgency operations and controlled, directly or indirectly, by the State, including but not limited to paramilitary units like Civilian Home Defense Force [CHDF], Civilian armed Forces Geographical Units [CAFGU], Barrio Self defense Unit [BSDU], Civilian active Auxilliary [CAA], civilian volunteer organization [CVOs] and other paramilitary units that state security forces will form in the future, included also are private armies and vigilante groups.

#### **Hors de Combat**

A situation where a combatant is no more in a position or has no more capacity to take part in hostilities or commit any hostile act (Literal translation: out of combat who is wounded injured, sick or surrendered or in no position or capacity anymore to do any hostile act).

#### **Children**

Every human being below the age of eighteen years [18] unless under the law applicable to the child majority is attained earlier (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). (Mentally-ill persons- persons





who are mentally retarded or whose mental capacity does not exceed that of a child, as can be verified by scientific means.)

### **Family**

Basic unit of society which is entitled to protection by the State and society. For statistical purposes, six will be used as the average number of members of a Filipino family.

### **Property**

Any physical or intangible entity that is owned by a person or jointly by a group of persons. Important widely recognized types of property include real property [land, structure, personal property [physical possessions belonging to a person], private property [property owned by legal persons or business entities.

### **Writ of Habeas Corpus** [English translation: “produce the body”]

A judicial mandate to a prison official ordering that an inmate be brought to the court so it can be determined whether or not that person is imprisoned lawfully and whether or not he should be released from custody. The writ is “the fundamental instrument for safeguarding individual freedom against arbitrary and lawless state action. “Harris v. Nelson, 394 U.S. 286, 290- 91 (1969)

### **Extrajudicial**

Physical punishment without the permission of a court or legal authority or outside the legal or judicial process.

### **Miranda Rights**

The rights to remain silent and to have counsel when placed under custodial investigation or detained and interrogated/ investigated in connection with a crime and the right to be informed of such rights at the time when he/she is placed under such custody or detention.

### **International Humanitarian Law [IHL]**

A set of international rules and norms, established by treaty, convention or custom which are specifically intended to humanize and govern armed conflicts and solve humanitarian problems arising from such international or non-international armed conflicts. It protects in the main civilian persons and property that are, or maybe, affected by an armed conflict and limits the behavior or acts of the parties to a conflict to use methods and means of warfare of their choice.

### **International armed conflicts**

Wars involving two or more states and wars of liberation, regardless of whether a declaration of war has been made or whether the parties involved recognize that there is a state of war.

### **Non-international armed conflicts**

Those in which government forces are fighting against armed insurgent, or rebel groups are fighting among themselves.



## VIOLATION OF CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

### **Extrajudicial, summary or Arbitrary Killing**

Though different from one another all three types taken together are commonly referred to as extrajudicial killing or EJK adopting the practice of the office of the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution.

#### **a. Extrajudicial Killing**

The act of unlawful and deliberate killing carried out without due process of law and outside of the judicial process by state agents or with their complicity, inducement, tolerance or acquiescence.

b. **Assassination**, as an example of extrajudicial killing, is characterized by well planned, swift, clandestine or otherwise sudden attack resulting in the instant or subsequent death of the target or victim who is usually a well-known, politically important personage.

#### **c. Summary Execution**

This is a form more commonly known as salvaging which can be characterized through the following:

- Against those who have been neutralized or placed under custody and control of state agents; or
- Are in no position to make any hostile act against the perpetrator/s

#### **d. Arbitrary Killing**

Indiscriminate execution carried out by state agents with no specific individual target. Examples are deaths due to strafing and random or indiscriminate firing.

#### **e. Massacre**

The wholesale killing of three or more individuals as a specific target usually at a common time and place. It can be due to strafing and random or indiscriminate firing.

As mentioned before, they are all classified as extrajudicial killing or EJK.

### **Frustrated Extrajudicial Killing**

- When the perpetrator commences the commission of acts constituting extrajudicial killing with intent to kill but does not complete its full execution due to causes independent of his will. Example, the victims escapes;
- When the perpetrator/s completes the act of killing but the victim survives.

### **Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance**

The abduction, arrest and detention or any form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or group acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the state, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the victim with the intention of removing him/her from the protection of the law.

The missing person is considered disappeared if his/her whereabouts remain unknown for more than seventy-two [72] hours. For purposes of its HRV statistics, Karapatan report as victims of EID only those who remain missing. Those who are eventually surfaced, which the UN still counts as disappeared, are reported under extra-judicial killing or illegal detention as the case maybe.



### **Enforced Suicide**

A person is driven to commit suicide after having been illegally detained tortured and threatened with death and / or further torture to be committed against his/her person and/ or a member of the immediate family, including rape of wife and daughter/s

### **Abduction or arbitrary/ Illegal Arrest**

Abduction is the act of taking into custody or any form or manner of restraint of a person's liberty such as taking away of a person by state security forces who do not identify themselves as such, and subsequent release within 72 hours.

Arbitrary or illegal arrest is the act of taking custody or any form or manner of restraint of a person's liberty through a defective or without a warrant or arrest even when not in the act of committing a crime nor about to commit or having just committed a crime. It can take the form of "picking up", taking into custody or "inviting" for questioning. It includes the use of a blanket warrant using generic names of John Does to justify or legalize an otherwise questionable arrest. Or the arbitrary arrest is "cured" by subsequent issuance of a warrant. Arbitrary Arrest also includes the seemingly harmless practice of the police and military of inviting individuals and asking the latter questions in connection with supposed crime or wrongdoing or inquiring about their membership in organization and political affiliation.

The person who is arbitrarily arrested can be subsequently released within 72 hours after undergoing interrogation, being held incommunicado and / or subjected to torture.

The illegal arrest of five or more persons can be termed as illegal arrest.

### **Torture**

- The intentional and systematic act of inflicting severe physical;
- Psychological/mental and/ or sexual humiliation, degradation, fear, pain, suffering, injuries, torment or terror against an individual;
- Including the employment of drugs, chemical agents; hypnosis, sleep or food deprivation or other similar methods;
- With the intent to extract information or extrajudicial involuntary confession or as a punishment for an act that such individual is suspected to have committed or for other similar motivations.

#### **Rape**

- Rape by sexual assault by any person which can be done either by inserting his penis into another person's mouth or anal orifice, or by inserting any instrument or object into the genital or anal orifice of another person, including the fingers, act of lasciviousness, and all form of sexual abuse.
- Committed by public officers, persons in authority or their agents; regular state security forces (military and police). Paramilitary forces (CAFGU and CVO) and their agents (vigilantes, private security guards, hired goons or killers, etc.);
- Against an individual or individuals;
- While the latter is in custody, control, supervision or authority; or
- For the purpose of either extracting information or an involuntary confession, humiliating or degrading such individual who is within their power, dominating or overpowering said individual and for other reason related to the exercise of state power.

### **Sexual Molestation**

Short of rape, a woman's body is forcibly subjected by military and State agents to mashing, kissing and/ or biting as a form of torture, harassment or intimidation. Another example is the detainee being



kept handcuffed and blindfolded while being assisted in her toilet needs with her private parts being washed by unknown persons. Men can also be subjected to sexual molestation although cases are much less than those of women.

### **Physical Assault and/ or Injuries**

- The act of employing unlawful and/ or unnecessary force and harm
- By mauling, beating, manhandling an individual;
- By public officers, person in authority or their agents; regular state security forces [military and police], paramilitary forces [CAFGU and CVO] and their agents [vigilantes, hired goons or killers, etc];
- For the purpose to extract information or an extrajudicial involuntary confession or as a punishment for an act that such individual is suspected to have committed;
- Or simply for the purpose of exercising state power;
- Resulting to the wounding or injuring an individual;
- Physical assault and injuries can be committed during breaking up of a picket, demonstration or similar protest action, demolition, strafing, indiscriminate firing and bombing/shelling/aerial bombardment.

### **Threat, Harassment or Intimidation**

These are done to instill fear or anxiety on a suspect or target individual by threatening his/her person, security officer, privacy, honor, liberty and property or that of his family. Any group organization or community can be targeted. Specific forms include verbal abuse; name-calling; verbal threat of bodily harm or through e-mail, SMS and other IT methods or devices; intimidating words or gestures; taking of one's photo without consent; surveillance; random interrogation, "ethnic or racial profiling" of national minorities.

Recent cases especially targeting human rights defenders include threat or filing of harassment suits and other malicious, nuisance and persecutory legal cases and issuance of spurious arrest warrants; placing an individual's name in a military roster of "enemies of the state" like an Order of Battle or OB; and demonizing through the media, public forum, assemblies and similar venues thus instigating violence against individuals, groups and organizations.

### **Surveillance and other Violations of the Right to Privacy of Communication**

Not anymore limited to intercepting, pilfering and opening of mail matters but also information gathering by tapping telephone, hacking cell phones and the internet and planting electronic listening devices. It also includes stationing overt and covert stalkers.

### **Violation of the Rights of Arrested or Detained Persons**

**a. Of Miranda Rights**—failure of the arresting unit to read the arrested person his/her Miranda Rights to remain silent and be informed of the fact that anything he / she says can be used against him/ her; the right to have counsel of one's choice; and the right to be informed of such rights in the presence of counsel at the time when placed under custodial investigation or detained and interrogated or investigated in connection with a crime

**b. Of right to freely communicate** – depriving, delaying, denying, limiting or restraining an individual under arrest and/or detention from talking by landline, mobile telephone, etc, to any of the following; counsel, family, relative, religious leader, doctors counselor and representative/s of human rights



organizations for any purpose including but not limited to communicating whereabouts, circumstances of arrest and/or detention, update on his/her condition.

**c. Of right to counsel** – depriving, delaying, denying, limiting or restraining an individual under arrest and/or detention from exercising his/her immediate right to counsel of his/her choice.

**d. Right to Visit by Family**

The act by public officers, persons in authority or their agents [warden, sheriff]; regular state security forces [military and police], paramilitary forces [CAFGU and CVO] and their agents [vigilantes, hired goons, etc.] of depriving, delaying, denying, limiting or restraining an individual under arrest and/ or detention of immediate rights to counsel of his choice.

**e. Incommunicado**

The act of depriving or denying an individual of access or use of any form of communication with individuals other than his custodians, whether or not during arrest, custodial investigation/”tactical interrogation” or detention and regardless whether it is a result of solitary confinement or not.

**f. Solitary Confinement**

The act of physically isolating a detained person, either for a definite or indefinite period of time, from other detainees or inmates, whether the isolation is in form of further punishment or not. This is also known as “bartolina”

**g. Right to Presumption of Innocence or Against Public Condemnation/Trial by Publicity**

The act by public officers, persons in authority or agents [warden, sheriff]; regular state security forces [military and police] and paramilitary forces [CAFGU and CVO] of presenting an arrested person or a person deprived of liberty before the tri-media [print, radio, and television] without his consent and of counsel of his own choice and declaring, portraying or insinuating that such person is guilty of certain crimes and alleged possession of certain materials.

**h. Inhumane, Cruel and/ or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**

The act by public officers, persons in authority or their agents; regular state security forces [military and police], paramilitary forces [CAFGU and CVO] and their agents [vigilantes, hired goons or killers, etc] which tends to or has the effect of mocking, ridiculing, scoffing, degrading, taunting or dehumanizing an individual or such other similar intention or effect either by way of treatment or punishment.

**i. Criminalization of Political Offenses or Acts**

The act, policy and practice by persons in authority, the state through its police, military, investigative, prosecutorial, and judicial arms or agents of arresting, investigating, charging, prosecuting, trying and convincing individuals with common crimes instead of the proper or corresponding political charges with respect to political offenses or acts and/ or agrarian/labor cases. This is otherwise known as the violation of the People vs. Hernandez doctrine [99 Phil 515].

**j. Unreasonably delayed court proceedings** – a violation of an individual’s right to speedy trial which includes delaying tactics by the prosecutor or a judge whose probity is in question, intervention by the military and state agencies

**k. Forced labor or involuntary servitude**





## **I. Other forms of coercion**

The act by public officers, persons in authority or their agents, regular state security forces [military and police]; paramilitary forces [CAFGU and CVO] and their agents [vigilantes; hired goons or killers, etc] who, by means of violence, harm or intimidation, prevent an individual from doing something not prohibited by law or compel him to do something against his will or out of fear.

Specific forms of coercion include the following:

- a. Use of Civilians in Police and/or Military Operation as Guide and/ or as shield The forcible act to compel an individual to participate in any police and/or military activity [patrolling, actual armed engagement, intelligence and “civic” operations and using as a hostage] either as a guide or for the purpose of using such individual as a shield or buffer against any attack directed at state security forces. If as an incident or consequences of hamletting, forcible reconcentration, or forcible displacement, state security forces are shielded or buffered from attack then the violation must be categorized as hamletting, forcible reconcentration or forcible displacement , as the case may be.
- b. Forced Recruitment/Conscription The act of forcing an individual to become an intelligence agent, asset, spy or directly recruiting him into the state security forces [ including paramilitary groups], whether there is any offer or award of financial or other consideration or none.
- c. Forced Labor/involuntary Servitude The act of forcing individual to perform any kind of work against his will
- d. Force/Fake Surrender The act of compelling, misrepresenting or forcing individual into surrendering to the authorities or to feign or pretend to be a surrenderee or “rebel returnee”

## **VIOLATION OF THE RIGHTS TO FREEDOM FROM ASSOCIATION**

Unjustified and unlawful restriction, denial or prohibition to form or be a member of an organization and arbitrarily declaring an organization illegal or terrorist one. This also includes union busting, restriction, denial or prohibition to form or be a member of a union; monitoring, restriction or prohibition on student organization, councils, publication or any collective activity. The restriction, denial or prohibition are tolerated, condoned supported or sanctioned by the government and are keeping with or are consequences of a national policy program

## **VIOLATION OF THE RIGHT TO LIBERTY MOVEMENT**

An individual is arbitrarily included in the Bureau of Immigration’s hold order list and is therefore not allowed to leave the country, or is included in the watch list and is either not allowed to leave or is stopped at the airport immigration desk or office for questioning or harassment. Or an individual is not allowed to return to his / her country of origin.

## **RESTRICTION ON OR VIOLENT DISPERSAL OF MASS ACTIONS, PUBLIC ASSEMBLIES AND GATHERING**

Unreasonably or arbitrarily restricting, limiting or preventing the free holding of mass actions, public assemblies and gatherings; and / or the violent breaking up or forcible dispersal of such activities, regardless of whether such activities are covered by government permit or not. This is also includes assault and breaking up of picket lines and violations of the right to strike.



## **MEDIA REPRESSION**

Various human rights violations are committed against media practitioners and institution in an attempt to silence or punish them. Aside from those already mentioned, below are some examples:

- A mass media practitioner or institution is charged with slander, inciting to sedition, libel or burdened with multiple libel suits when found to be too critical of the government and administration's close associates.
- A local radio station or newspaper is temporarily or permanently close down when found too critical of the local ruling elite. Programs are temporarily or permanently stopped
- Stations are being burned, equipment being confiscated or destroyed, radio staff being beaten up, interrogated and temporarily detained
- Officers of grassroots program sponsors subjected to violence and harassed.
- Worse, they become victims of EJK and EID, in which case the violation is classified under EJK or EID..

## **VIOLATION THAT TARGETS COMMUNITIES**

### **a. Illegal Search and Seizure**

The unlawful search conducted by public, person in authority of their agents; regular state security forces [military and police], paramilitary forces [CAGFU and CVO] and their agents [vigilantes, hired goons, etc.], of personal property allegedly used or intended to be used for committing a crime when any of the following is present:

### **b. Violation of Domicile**

The act by public officers, persons in authority or their agents; regular state security forces [military and police], paramilitary forces [CAGFU and CVO] and their agents [vigilantes, private security guards, hired goons, etc] of illegally entering any private dwelling of an individual without being authorized by judicial order or against the consent the will or consent of the owner and/ or occupant whether the entry is to search the said dwelling or not. This violation is being considered as violation not only to an individual but applied to all member of the family.

### **c. “ZONING” or Saturation Drives**

Surprise deployment of a big number of police or military units and encirclement of an urban or rural community that lead to residents especially men being forced to line up on the street. The systematic encirclement of a specific civilian community usually conducted during nighttime where individuals are forced to get out of their houses and are arbitrarily, frisked, and/ or arrested without any arrest or search warrant.

### **d. Illegal Checkpoints**

The arbitrary, random or systematic setting up of fixed or mobile checkpoints in public roads and places and conducting intrusive questioning and physical frisking, actual search and/ or visual searches without any search warrant.

### **e. Forcible Re-concentration**

The act of the public officers, persons in authority or their agents; regular state security forces, paramilitary forces and their agents of forcibly reconcentrating or relocating the residence of a group of individuals or a civilian community against their will and in a place chosen or designated by said officers, authorities, agents or forces for the purpose of giving way to an extensive or otherwise military operations.



In general, a Forced Evacuation or Displacement occurs when a group of individuals are forced or compelled to transfer residence either to another locality which may not be the same as those which the others are transferred to.

#### **f. Hamletting**

The act of public officers in authority or their agents; regular state security, paramilitary forces or their agents of enclosing an entire civilian community in the same place or locality and placing its resident, their lives, livelihood and movement [including the imposition of curfew hours and the maintenance of a list of residence per household] under direct and strict military control and against their will.

During hamletting there are instances where individuals are not arrested but their movements are restricted including but not limited to the requirement of ID's to resident of the community. There are also instances where the individuals are confined to their houses and their movements are likewise restricted. In both cases, the violation should additionally be categorized as arbitrary detention

#### **Forcible Evacuation and Displacement**

- The act by public officers, person in authority or their agents; regular state security forces, paramilitary forces and their agents.
- Of forcing a group or individuals or a civilian community;
- To leave, against their will, either in an organized way or otherwise, their place of residence and/or livelihood for other place;

#### **Food and other Economic Blockades**

The act by public officers, persons in authority or their agents; regular security forces, paramilitary and their agents of restricting, limiting, monitoring and controlling the kind and quantity of food supplies and other household items to be brought by an individual into and out of his place of residence or community as well as restrictions on economic production and activity.

### **DENIAL OF HUMANITARIAN ACCESS**

### **VIOLATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE MEDICAL PERSONNEL**

#### **SOME VIOLATIONS SPECIFIC TO CHILDREN**

##### **1. Violation of Children's Rights**

Provisions from UN Convention on Children's Rights and the Philippine Republic Act 7610 which may be categorized as Follows

##### **a. Violation of Children's Right to Survival**

- (1) Children orphaned when their parents became victims of extrajudicial killings;
- (2) Occurs when children were forced to be separated from their parents;
- (3) Resulting from the violations enumerated in Violation of the Right to Life and Violation of Other Civil and Political Rights;
- (4) Children victims of food and/or Economic Blockade.

##### **b. Violation of Children's Right to Protection or Safety by the State or its Agents**

- (1) Not being given special and due attention in cases of forced evacuation, forced reconcentration etc; also include not being granted the right to rehabilitative care [ Art 39, id];



(2) Children being forced to work [Art 32, id];

(3) Include violation of rights not to be subjected to torture, cruel treatment, or punishment and deprivation of liberty [ Art. 37]; right to be protected against situation of armed conflict with the law to treatment which promotes his dignity and worth [ Art 40]

In cases where children are direct victims of torture, cruel treatment or punishment and deprivation of liberty, violations will be recorded as torture, cruel treatment or punishment and any form enumerated under illegal Arrest and/ or Detention and violation against children's rights to protection.

### **c. Violation of Children's Right to Development**

(1) Children who were forced to stop schooling brought about by direct violations to them and/or to their parents and/ or community

(2) Children victims of Use of School for Military Purposes and Endangerment of Civilians, Zoning, Hamletting, Destruction and/ or Divestment of Property, Violation of Domicile.

### **d. Violation of Children's Participation Rights**

(1) Children being persecuted as they exercise their right to express their opinion freely and it to be taken into account in any proceeding affecting him her [Art 12]; Right to freedom of expression, receive and impart information [Art 13]; Right to Freedom of thought, conscience and religion [ Art 14]; Right to freedom of association and of peaceful assembly [Art 15];

(2) Children victims of Destruction and/ or Divestment of Property Violation of Domicile, transfer to violation of Children's right to protection or safety

## **ON IHL VIOLATIONS**

International Human Rights Law applies at all times, whether during peacetime or in situations of armed conflict. On the other hand, International Humanitarian Law intends to "humanize and govern armed conflicts". Violations of IHL are human rights violations. Some HR violations are categorized as IHL violations when they are committed during military operations or under any other situation of armed conflict:

- Arbitrary and frustrated killing due to shelling from mortar and artillery barrage, detonating of bombs, aerial bombardment, spraying from helicopters, landmines
- Hamletting, forcible evacuation, re-concentration and displacement of communities
- Destruction or divestment of property
- Illegal checkpoints, illegal search and "zoning" or saturation drives in rural communities;
- Food and economic blockade;
- Threat, harassment and intimidation of whole villages;
- Physical assault or injuries inflicted on villagers especially suspected rebels and their sympathizers
- Inhumane, cruel or degrading treatment;
- Forced labor and involuntarily servitude of captured combatants and suspected supporters;
- Attacks on, harassment and intimidation of medical and religious personnel
- Violations specific to children, and many others

## **VIOLATION OF THE RIGHTS OF HORS de COMBAT**

Any act committed either intentionally or through negligence which result in the aggravation or prolongation of physical injuries, sickness or suffering; or resulting in the eventual death; or the deliberate act of injuring, maiming, torturing and killing 55 a combatant who is wounded, sick, injured,



or has surrendered [hors de combatant] or violation of any other rights under intentional humanitarian law.

### **Denial of Medical Attention**

- The act of denying or preventing immediate and/or adequate first aid medical care or attention;
- To a sick wounded or dying person or persons
- By public officers, persons in authority or their agents; regular state security forces [military and police], paramilitary forces [CAFGU and CVO] and their agents [vigilantes, hired killers, etc];
- Thereby aggravating or prolonging such person's death due to such denial;
- Whether such denial is deliberate or not

### **HOSTAGING**

### **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

### **COERCION**

The act by public officers, persons in authority or their agents, regular state security forces [military and police]; paramilitary forces [CAFGU and CVO] and their agents [vigilantes; hired goons or killers, etc] who, by means of violence, harm or intimidation, prevent an individual from doing something not prohibited by law or compel him to do something against his will or out of fear.

Specific forms of coercion include the following:

#### **e. Use of Civilians in Police and/or Military Operation as Guide and/ or as shield**

The forcible act to compel an individual to participate in any police and/or military activity [patrolling, actual armed engagement, intelligence and “civic” operations and using as a hostage] either as a guide or for the purpose of using such individual as a shield or buffer against any attack directed at state security forces. If as an incident or consequences of hamletting, forcible reconcentration, or forcible displacement, state security forces are shielded or buffered from attack then the violation must be categorized as hamletting, forcible reconcentration or forcible displacement, as the case may be.

#### **f. Forced Recruitment/Conscription**

The act of forcing an individual to become an intelligence agent, asset, spy or directly recruiting him into the state security forces [including paramilitary groups], whether there is any offer or award of financial or other consideration or none.

#### **g. Forced Labor/involuntary Servitude**

The act of forcing individual to perform any kind of work against his will

#### **h. Force/Fake Surrender**

The act of compelling, misrepresenting or forcing individual into surrendering to the authorities or to feign or pretend to be a surrenderee or “rebel returnee”

### **Use of Schools, Medical, Religious and Other Public Places for Military Purposes and Endangerment of Civilians**

The improper use of school, medical, religious, civic and other public places for police or military purposes or operations by regular state security forces, paramilitary and their agents or the endangerment of the lives of civilians by reason of establishing military camps, detachments or outpost within civilian communities or at or near residence.





### **Desecration of Place of Worship or Offending Religious Rites/Practices**

The act by public officers, persons in authority or their agents; regular state security forces, paramilitary and their agents of disrespecting, scoffing, insulting, destroying or desecrating a place of worship or offending religious rites, practices, rituals, assemblies, gathering, or days of commemoration and disregard of religious and cultural sensibilities.

### **WITH REGARDS TO THOSE WHO ARE KILLED IN COMBAT OR WHO DIED IN CAPTIVITY**

#### **a. Desecration of Remains**

The act by public officers, persons in authority or their agents, regular state security forces [military and police], paramilitary forces [CAFGU and CVO] and their agents [vigilantes, private security guards, hired goons, etc] or the act of scoffing, disrespecting corpse either through mutilating the dead body, parading or leaving unattended the said corpse, presenting before the tri-media [print and television] or through other similar acts.

#### **b. Denial of Decent Burial and Refusal to Tender Remains**

The act by public officers, persons in authority or their agents; regular state security forces [military and police], paramilitary forces [CAFGU and CVO] and their agents [vigilantes, private security guards, hired goons, etc] of denying or disallowing the decent and/ or timely burial, of refusing tender of the remains to the family or next of kin or their representatives.

### **References**

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR]
- International Convention on Civil and Political Rights [ICCPR]
- Comprehensive Agreement on Respect of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law [CARHRIHL]
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [UN-CRC]
- Revised Penal Code of the Philippines

### **ARTICLE III, BILL OF RIGHTS** (1987 PHILIPPINE CONSTITUTION)

Section 1. No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor shall any person be denied the equal protection of the laws.

Section 2. The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures of whatever nature and for any purpose shall be inviolable, and no search warrant or warrant of arrest shall issue except upon probable cause to be determined personally by the judge after examination under oath or affirmation of the complainant and the witnesses he may produce, and particularly describing the place to be searched and the persons or things to be seized.

Section 3. (1) The privacy of communication and correspondence shall be inviolable except upon lawful order of the court, or when public safety or order requires otherwise, as prescribed by law. (2) Any evidence obtained in violation of this or the preceding section shall be inadmissible for any purpose in any proceeding.



Section 4. No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances.

Section 5. No law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed. No religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights.

Section 6. The liberty of abode and of changing the same within the limits prescribed by law shall not be impaired except upon lawful order of the court. Neither shall the right to travel be impaired except in the interest of national security, public safety, or public health, as may be provided by law.

Section 7. The right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized. Access to official records, and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions, as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitations as may be provided by law.

Section 8. The right of the people, including those employed in the public and private sectors, to form unions, associations, or societies for purposes not contrary to law shall not be abridged.

Section 9. Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation.

Section 10. No law impairing the obligation of contracts shall be passed.

Section 11. Free access to the courts and quasi-judicial bodies and adequate legal assistance shall not be denied to any person by reason of poverty.

Section 12. (1) Any person under investigation for the commission of an offense shall have the right to be informed of his right to remain silent and to have competent and independent counsel preferably of his own choice. If the person cannot afford the services of counsel, he must be provided with one. These rights cannot be waived except in writing and in the presence of counsel. (2) No torture, force, violence, threat, intimidation, or any other means which vitiate the free will shall be used against him. Secret detention places, solitary, incommunicado, or other similar forms of detention are prohibited. (3) Any confession or admission obtained in violation of this or Section 17 hereof shall be inadmissible in evidence against him. (4) The law shall provide for penal and civil sanctions for violations of this section as well as compensation to the rehabilitation of victims of torture or similar practices, and their families.

Section 13.

All persons, except those charged with offenses punishable by reclusion perpetua when evidence of guilt is strong, shall, before conviction, be bailable by sufficient sureties, or be released on recognizance as may be provided by law. The right to bail shall not be impaired even when the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus is suspended. Excessive bail shall not be required.

Section 14. (1) No person shall be held to answer for a criminal offense without due process of law. (2) In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall be presumed innocent until the contrary is proved, and shall enjoy the right to be heard by himself and counsel, to be informed of the nature and cause of the



accusation against him, to have a speedy, impartial, and public trial, to meet the witnesses face to face, and to have compulsory process to secure the attendance of witnesses and the production of evidence in his behalf. However, after arraignment, trial may proceed notwithstanding the absence of the accused: Provided, that he has been duly notified and his failure to appear is unjustifiable.

Section 15. The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended except in cases of invasion or rebellion, when the public safety requires it.

Section 16. All persons shall have the right to a speedy disposition of their cases before all judicial, quasi-judicial, or administrative bodies.

Section 17. No person shall be compelled to be a witness against himself.

Section 18. (1) No person shall be detained solely by reason of his political beliefs and aspirations. (2) No involuntary servitude in any form shall exist except as a punishment for a crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.

Section 19. (1) Excessive fines shall not be imposed, nor cruel, degrading or inhuman punishment inflicted. Neither shall death penalty be imposed, unless, for compelling reasons involving heinous crimes, the Congress hereafter provides for it. Any death penalty already imposed shall be reduced to reclusion perpetua. (2) The employment of physical, psychological, or degrading punishment against any prisoner or detainee or the use of substandard or inadequate penal facilities under subhuman conditions shall be dealt with by law.

Section 20. No person shall be imprisoned for debt or non-payment of a poll tax.

Section 21. No person shall be twice put in jeopardy of punishment for the same offense. If an act is punished by a law and an ordinance, conviction or acquittal under either shall constitute a bar to another prosecution for the same act.

Section 22. No ex post facto law or bill of attainder shall be enacted.

## **UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)**

Source: United Nation

Preamble Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,



Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

**Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS** as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.



Article 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11.

(1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13.

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14.

(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution. (2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15.

(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16.

(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17.

(1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.





#### Article 19.

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

#### Article 20.

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- (2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

#### Article 21.

- (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
- (3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

#### Article 22.

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

#### Article 23.

- (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

#### Article 24.

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

#### Article 25.

- (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
- (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

#### Article 26.



(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

#### **Article 27.**

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

#### **Article 28.**

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

#### **Article 29.**

(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

#### **Article 30.**

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.



# FEEDBACK FORM

Your opinions and suggestions are very much welcomed. Please feel free to complete the “feedback-form” below and send it to the Justice, Peace, and Human Rights Ministry’s official Email: [uccpjphr@gmail.com](mailto:uccpjphr@gmail.com).

Or you can submit it to your respective Conference Office for the National Office to collect. You can also have it deliver directly to the National Office with the address: **877 EDSA, West Avenue, Quezon City.**

Item	Strengths	Weaknesses	Recommendation
Theme and text			
Layout / Design			
The outline of topics/items			
Others please specify:			

1. What other topics/items/additional would you recommend for the improvement of next year’s HUMAN RIGHTS CELEBRATION WEEK GUIDE?

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2. What topic/item in the guide that you find helpful a made some impact on you?

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3. What topic/item would you recommend for next year’s celebration?

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4. Any techniques/methods’ do you want to share for the improvement of this guide?

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Thank you so much for taking the time for answering this feedback-form. We hope that with your contribution, we can be more united in celebrating the life and dignity of God’s people.

