



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES

COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

877 EDSA, West Triangle, Quezon City

STATEMENT ON THE ARREST AND DETENTION OF PASTOR DAN BALUCIO

The United Church of Christ in the Philippines through its Council of Bishops strongly deplores the arrest of Pastor Dan Balucio, around 3:30 A.M. today, May 2, 2021 at his home in San Isidro, Sto. Domingo, Albay. He is a church worker of the UCCP under the South Bicol Conference. Pastor Dan Balucio was taken into custody by armed men who introduced themselves as a raiding team of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) from Camp Simeon Ola, Legazpi City who showed a suspicious search warrant issued by Judge Edgar Armes, the Presiding Judge of Branch 4, Regional Trial Court, 5th Judicial Region, Legazpi City, at his home in San Isidro, Santo. Domingo, Albay.

During the incident, Pastor Dan's family and National Council of Churches in the Philippines staff Almond del Rosario were commanded to lie face down. Shortly thereafter, 'firearms and explosives' were alleged to have been found. As a familiar pattern under the Duterte administration, the arresting state forces planted evidence as explosives were allegedly found minutes after the operatives searched the house of Pastor Balucio.

We see this as part of the continuing harassment against the church and against legitimate dissenters. Clearly, this is a product of the Anti-Terrorism Law which is now being utilized by the state as a tool of repression. It is unthinkable that the State persecutes the Church by trump-up charges in court to disparage the ministry that touches the roots of injustice and provides hope for the poor and marginalized communities.

We denounce this shameless act of state viciousness and call on the immediate release of Pastor Dan Balucio even as we also beseech the prayers and support of our constituents and partners worldwide.

Stop harassing the church and our workers! We also call on the authorities to drop all fabricated charges against Pastor Balucio! Stop suppression of political dissenters and peace and justice workers! In a darkening moment like this, we pray with the psalmist:

"May God vindicate the afflicted of the people, Save the children of the needy and crush the oppressor." (Psalm 72:4)

THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

02 May 2021

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



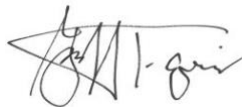
Bishop Jerome C. Baris
East Visayas Jurisdictional Area



Bishop Feliciano 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 Constante D. Claro
Bishop Ebenezer C. Camino, Sr.
Bishop Erme R. Camba
Bishop Gabriel A. Garol
Bishop Hilario M. Gomez, Jr.
Bishop Isaias L. Bingtan
Bishop Jezer E. Bertoldo
Bishop Marino I. Inong

Bishop Roel P. Mendoza
Bishop Anacleto G. Serafica
Bishop Elorde M. Sambat
Bishop Dulce Pia-Rose
Bishop Jessie S. Suarez
Bishop Rizalino Q. Taganas
Bishop Eliezer M. Pascua
Bishop Jaime R. Moriles
Bishop Modesto D. Villasanta

Bishop Reuel Norman O. Marigza