



## **UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST INT THE PHILIPPINES**

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### **ALL CONFERENCE MINISTERS AND THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS**

#### **Statement on Harassment of Church Leaders and Members via Perjury Case and Red-tagging**

Our beloved and concerned Church members, leaders, and friends:

We know that you have probably read and heard of what seemed to be alarming news but unmasked as harassment by those sowing discord without qualms of its possible impact.

The red-tagging and defamatory article on social media issued by Sprint News and Views on the alleged perjury by your UCCP Church leaders who served from 2014-2018 is factually misleading and legally infirm. Quite telling is that Sprint News and Views social media outfit is dubious and shady, with authorship and legitimacy suspect, and evidently serves suspicious and malicious objectives.

Everett Mendoza, Jessie Emmanuel L. Bacon II, and Cliff Fortugaleza, three disgruntled individuals who were once national leaders but have turned hostile toward the Church, have lodged a puny perjury complaint before the Mandaluyong prosecutor's office which later filed the case with the Metropolitan Trial Court. This latest nuisance suit is another vain effort to further their persecution of Church leaders by putting the lives of bishops, church workers, and members in danger by prejudice, misrepresentation, incitement to hatred and filing of baseless charges, coupled with malicious red-tagging.

In the end, the facts, circumstances and context of the incident and document in issue which was used, albeit wrongly, as their basis for filing the perjury complaint will be explained clearly and fully in court based on the law and evidence and will vindicate the Church as a whole and the concerned members of the subject National Executive Council (NEC) in particular. We trust that an independent and impartial tribunal will determine and establish this.

The accused Church leaders and their witnesses will henceforth directly controvert the perjury charges in court since it is already pending there and that is the proper legal forum and not in endless, counterproductive and divisive tit for tat in social media.

Meanwhile, your Bishops and Church Leaders listed as respondents and now accused to the perjury case were compelled to post bail in the Mandaluyong Metropolitan Trial Court and in other Court branches in places where they live.

We urge our Church members to thwart the destructive schemes of those who have filed the perjury case with the apparent goading of the State and its agencies and forces who are intolerant of dissent and afraid of the truth.


Pray for our Church's leaders and members, whose lives are in danger and whose personal and family lives are ruined by reckless and ill-motivated accusations of criminal acts.

May the God of justice and love will stand up for them and protect them. In the light of this, let us be reminded of Paul's encouragement to the Ephesian Church:

*...Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (Eph. 6: 10-12 NRSV).*

### **ALL CMs & THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS**

January 31, 2023

  
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General Secretary

  
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*Middle Luzon Jurisdictional Area*

  
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