

Resolution Number A252

Subject: Philippines

Moved By: The Very Rev. Louise Peters, APCI

Seconded By: The Rev Canon John Steele, Diocese of British Columbia

Note: The mover and the seconder must be members of the General Synod and be present in the House when the resolution is before the synod for debate.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this General Synod:

1. Request the General Secretary to write to the Prime Minister, urging the Government of Canada to:

- Welcome the decision of the President of the Philippines to invite Professor Philip Alston, Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Human Rights Council on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions to investigate the phenomenon of extrajudicial executions in the Philippines since 2001;
- Welcome the decision of the President of the Philippines to finally release to the public the report of the Melo Commission inquiry into the extrajudicial killings;
- Commend the Special Rapporteur's Initial Report and Recommendations (February 2007) to the Government of the Philippines towards continued investigation of extrajudicial killings and creation of legitimate political space for opposition groups, with particular focus upon the complicity of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in these killings, and the encouragement of leftist groups to enter mainstream politics;
- Commend the Melo Commission recommendation to the Government of the Philippines towards holding responsible all members and commanders in the military who carried out these killings;
- Ask Canada's Subcommittee on International Human Rights to: a) investigate the risks for Canadian mining companies operating in the Philippines of being complicit in the political killings and other forms of human rights abuses, and b) Canada's cooperation with the Philippines Government on trade, investment and the fight against terrorism, and the impact of our cooperation on human rights.

2. Appeal to all Canadian Anglicans to stand in solidarity through prayer and action with church partners and people of the Philippines seeking full investigation by our Government into the extrajudicial killings, which have primarily targeted human rights defenders, lawyers, social activists, journalists, peasants, and church workers since 2001.
3. Request the Partners in Mission Committee, and the PWRDF Board to continue its solidarity work with Philippine partners, and national and international ecumenical partners, towards raising awareness within Canada about how Canadian trade and investment policy, and Canada's fight against terrorism, impact human rights in the Philippines.

EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Since 2001, reports have arrived of reported cases of hundreds of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines. To this day the killings continue. The pattern of killings shows that victims are being targeted. Victims largely include social and indigenous activists, human rights defenders, lawyers, church workers, journalists, and peasants who openly criticize the Government and oppose its policies.

The response of the Government of the Philippines to the crisis of these extrajudicial killings has varied dramatically and has led to the erosion of the rule of law. The impact of these killings and the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators intimidates vast numbers of civil society actors, sends a message of vulnerability to all but the most well connected, and severely undermines the political discourse central to the resolution of problems confronting the country.

The recent invitation by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to Professor Philip Alston, Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Human Rights Council on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and the long overdue public release of the Melo Commission Report, were welcome steps towards effective investigation of the crisis. Professor Alston's full report will be released in May or June 2007. Despite the inevitable element of propaganda in allegations of responsibility for the killings, Alston's initial report confirms that the situation of the killings is real and serious investigation of perpetrators is urgently needed. The Melo Commission confirmed complicity of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in the great majority of these killings.

Sadly, the Armed Forces of the Philippines "remains in a state of almost total denial of its need to respond effectively and authentically to the significant number of killings which have been convincingly attributed to them" (UN Rapporteur Preliminary Report, February 2007). The President needs to persuade the military to acknowledge the facts and take genuine steps to investigate.

Sadly, the national level of government has abandoned strategies of reconciliation between the Government of the Philippines and leftist groups. The President must also actively defend and develop increased democratic space within mainstream political process for all legitimate political opposition.

Philippine church partners of the Anglican Church of Canada have been among those targeted and killed. Despite this, they are also among those leading local, national and international campaigns to raise awareness of the killings and to call for effective investigation. Philippine church partners include the Episcopal Church in the Philippines, Iglesia Filipina Independiente, and the National Council of Churches in the Philippines.

Source: PIMC, ECJC, PWRDF Board

Submitted by: Partners in Mission Committee

A) Does this motion contain within it any financial implications?

Yes _____ No X_____

B) If yes, has the General Synod Expenditures Committee considered the implications?

Yes _____ No _____