

“New Humanity for Just and Lasting Peace”

Human Rights Guide 2016

WORDS OF GREETINGS AND ENCOURAGEMENT



We are publishing this Human Rights Celebration Guide 2016 saddened and terribly disgusted with experiences of injustice and un-peace in our troubled land. Things that call for the Church’s withstanding reflection and action.

One, the acquittal of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo of plunder case and even the civil case filed by the Church in 2011 for more than 18 UCCP church workers and lay members killed, disappeared, ambushed, arrested, detained and tortured during her office as commander in chief. What more we can say when the Supreme Court acquittal of plunder case against her.

Nevertheless, we cry out louder, *“We shall overcome!”* We believe just and lasting peace will reign in our land.

Two, the “war on drugs” of the Duterte government resulting to extra-judicial killings victimizing thousands of hapless and poor people. Hence, we cry out louder, *“We shall overcome!”* We call on the Duterte Government, the Philippine National Police to observe due process to see to it that rights of suspected people involved in the drug trade are protected.

Three, the enrage of people and the victims of the Martial Law opposing the thief like burial of the heartless Ferdinand E. Marcos with family and supporters trying their best to distort history through an attempt to hail the deceased as hero. And we cry out even more, *“We shall overcome!”* We are not calloused amidst treachery and falsehood. Marcos is not a hero. He is a dictator who during his presidency abused his power and authority to amass wealth and violated God-given rights of the people. Lest we forget.

Our faith in a just and loving God shall not be shaken. The Church endures as it affirms and upholds its biblical understanding of the inviolability of the rights of persons, created in the image of God.

We shall continue to educate our constituents on the Church’s prophetic task to denounce evil and pronounce the Good News of God’s kingdom until a new humanity emerge living and struggling for just and lasting peace. We shall support the ongoing peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GPH) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) to address the root cause of injustice and un-peace in our country. Finally, we enjoin you to popularize this guide for your continuing reflection and ministry.

May the God of life and history continue to bless us!


BISHOP REUEL NORMAN O. MARIGZA
General Secretary

FOREWORD



“Why do you say, Peace, Peace when there is no Peace!?” This prophetic message of protest of un-peace of the olden times continue to reverberate throughout history until today, into the atmosphere of pretensions. An outright negation that genuine peace based on justice is prevailing! From the Pharaoh of Egypt established pyramid of *power, fame and glory*, to the Roman Emperor who waged the *Pax Romana* (Roman Peace), and to shorten enumeration, to the despotic and dictator Philippine President Ferdinand E. Marcos’ *“New Society”* (Bagong Lipunan). In reality, from the prophetic perspective of the biblical faith, all these claims and/or project on *“peace”* were exclusively for the

benefit of a few at the sacrifice of the disadvantaged and dehumanized life’s dignity of the toiling masses in society.

Conscious with such prophetic stance, the UCCP will observe, once again, the Human Rights (HR) Week Celebration on December 5-11, 2016 with the Theme: ***“New Humanity for Just and Lasting Peace.”*** Without detaching from the reality of social injustices prevalent in previous administrations, the conceptualization of this theme emanates from the challenging context of seemingly controversial five months governance of the President Duterte’s administration by pursuing, among others, the resumption of the Formal Peace Talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GPH) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) on the one hand, coupled with the anti-criminality, anti-corruption and the anti-illegal drug trade campaign proliferating rampant killings on the other hand, which generate reactions from all corners in the Philippines and around the globe. Presumptuously, all of these is being done in the name of *“change”* again, for ***“peace!”*** The Church, therefore, as a bearer and ambassador of *“New Humanity,”* is being challenged to steadfastly uphold the sanctity of life by fleshing out the spirituality of building just and lasting peace in our beloved country today!

It is our hope that this UCCP Human Rights Week Celebration Guide 2016 will help enlighten, equip and encourage church’s constituents (Judicatories, Organizations and Institutions or JOIs) to manifest in her life and ministry such prophetic witness in today’s critical times.

All for God’s glory and honour!

SHALOM!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Baris', written over a faint horizontal line.

Rev. Jerome C. Baris
National Coordinator
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May I equally convey my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Bro. Jesse Emmanuel Bacon and Rev. Francisco Aviso Jr., for editing and Bro. Leandro Karlo B. Suarez for layout design.

Above all, to the Almighty God of Justice and Peace, the Source of wisdom and strength in manifesting His righteousness in season and out of season!

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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Introduction



Our genuine involvement in the defense and advocacy of human rights is basically motivated by faith and not by any kind of ideology, although sometimes there is a very thin line between faith and ideology. Faith is sometimes used as an ideology. Besides, ideology is oftentimes given a very bad name, and oftentimes refers to those who are trying to overthrow the government.

Actually, each one of us has his own ideology, whether good or bad. Each one of us has his own ideals and principles to which we commit ourselves. But what is more important is what kind of ideology do we have: Is it for the good of the people or is it used to oppress and exploit the people? In any case, the defense and promotion of human rights is one of the concrete expressions of our faith.

I listed down below at least five basic reasons why church people actively involved themselves in the defense and promotion of human rights.

Theological Reason

First of all, there is theological reason. This is our faith in God. We believe God created the heavens and the earth (cf. Gen. 1:1). We believe God is the Lord of all. The number one commandment God gave to Moses for the Israelites to obey says: *“I am the Lord your God... Worship no other god but me”* (Ex. 20:2-3).

The kings of Ancient Israel were not supposed to be absolute rulers, but rather servants of God. They should have a copy of the book of God’s laws, and read it throughout their life so that they will learn to honor the Lord and to obey faithfully that is commanded in it. This will also keep them from thinking that they are better than their fellow Israelites. They have to lead the people with the statutes of God (cf. Dt. 17:14-20).

Hence, any ruler or leader who claims ultimate loyalty and obedience reserved only to God is considered a form of political idolatry. And so Christians throughout the ages have always been suspicious of such kind of leadership. As the popular saying goes, *“Absolute power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.* This is the reason why church people stood up against authoritarian rule, particularly during the dark years of Martial Law.

Anthropological Reason

Secondly, there is anthropological reason. This is our faith in the human being. We do believe in God as the God of freedom and salvation. God created human beings in freedom in order to live in freedom. God created human beings in His own image with honor and dignity to be good and responsible stewards of His creation (cf. Gen. 1:26-27).

Thus, when the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt, God said to Moses, *“I have seen the afflictions of my people... I have heard their cries... And, therefore, I have come down to deliver them from their slave drivers... and to bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey”*(Ex.3:7-8).

Anyone who takes seriously his faith in this kind of God could not withstand seeing people being oppressed and exploited. He would surely do something to set them free in obedience to God. That’s why our church had set up human rights programs dealing with the victims of human rights violations in our country and elsewhere.

Christological Reason

Thirdly, there is Christological reason. This is our faith in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. We believe that God came to us in Jesus of Nazareth. Through his life and ministry, Jesus had shown to us the Way, the Truth, and the Life (cf. Jn. 14:6).

Like Prophet Isaiah, he said, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people”*(Lk.4:18-19; Isa. 61:1-2). *“The Son of Man did not come to be served; he came to serve and to give his life to redeem many people”* (Mk.10:45). *“I have come in order that you might have life – life in all its fullness”* (Jn.10:10).

These are different versions of the mission statements of Jesus that he himself fulfilled in words and in deeds by showing love and compassion for the poor, by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, forgiving the sinners, and by challenging the hypocrisies of the powers-that-be. And these naturally led him to the cruel cross.

To believe in Jesus Christ and to accept him as our Lord and Savior is to live exactly the same kind of life he lived. As concrete expressions of this faith, our church established and maintained schools and hospitals as well as development programs and projects for the poor and indigenous peoples in our country.

Ecclesiological Reason

Fourthly, there is ecclesiological reason. This is our faith in the church. The church is the resurrected body of Christ, the community of believers called upon to continue the

mission of God in the world by the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. The church is God's instrument in establishing His Kingdom on earth. As God's instrument, the church should manifest in itself what the Kingdom of God is all about. God's Kingdom is basically a kingdom of peace based on justice and righteousness.

When the Holy Spirit came upon the Early Christians, they were empowered to live in loving fellowship with one another. They shared each other's resources and no one among them was in need (cf. Acts 4:32-35). This is the model of a community that the church would like to live by and to share with the world as an expression of its social responsibility. This is a community where no one is in need. This is a community that tries to approximate what the Kingdom of God is all about.

That's why the church has to put all human institutions, including governments and the church itself, under the judgment and grace of the Kingdom of God. This is the reason why church leaders would issue from time to time pastoral letters and statements of concern on particular issues that would affect not only the church but also our country as a whole.

Eschatological Reason

And finally, there is eschatological reason. This is the faith that the history we know will come to an end, and that God will create a new heaven and a new earth (cf. Rev. 21). This is the faith that God will finally sit on His Judgment Throne in the fullness of time, and that all of us will give an account of what we have done before God, whether good or bad, even things done in secret (cf. Eccl. 12:14). This is the faith that our life on earth is too short, and that our present action has something to do with our future destiny.

On that Judgment Day, there is one thing that the Final Judge will say to us, *"Whatever you have done to the least of my brothers and sisters, you have done it unto me"* (cf. Mt. 25:40). We live a life of loving concern for the least of our brothers and sisters in our communities, because this is what God would expect from us to do with the life He has given us.

When God confronted Cain why he killed his own brother Abel, he answered with a rhetorical question, *"Am I My Brother's Keeper?"* (Gen.4:9). It is in God's Final Judgment when we come to realize that we are indeed our own brothers' keeper.

Saved By Grace through Faith

These are some of the reasons why church people are actively involved in social transformation - **it is because of their faith.**

One of the most basic Protestant evangelical affirmations is that **we are saved by grace through faith.** Indeed, our country is in crisis. And it is my firm conviction that our

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nation could be saved, not by the barrel of a gun, but by grace through faith – the grace of God that passes all human understanding, the kind of faith that I tried to outline above.

I know that this is not a comfortable faith. Sometimes this kind of faith would make us suffer. But nevertheless, it is a faith that saves and redeems us in many ways than we can ever imagine.

Conclusion

We must love our country. This is the only country God has given us. This is the country where God called us to do His mission in the world. Deep within our hearts, I know that we have the same dreams for our country – we all dream that our country will indeed become genuinely peaceful and prosperous.

Perhaps, what we only need to do is to open our hearts and minds to each other, to listen, understand, and respect each other, and work together for a nation that is genuinely peaceful, prosperous, humane, just and truly free. And may God grant us the grace and the courage to do this very urgent task.

**ISAIAH'S VISION AND OURS,
SOME BIBLICO-THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS**

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BIBLICAL TEXT: Isaiah 65:17-25

The Lord says, "I am making a new earth and new heavens. The events of the past will be completely forgotten. Be glad and rejoice forever in what I create. The new Jerusalem I make will be full of joy, and her people will be happy. I myself will be filled with joy because of Jerusalem and her people. There will be no weeping there, no calling for help. Babies will no longer die in infancy, and all people will live out their life span. Those who live to be a hundred will be considered young. To die before that would be a sign that I had punished them. People will build houses and get to live in them---they will not be used by someone else. They will plant vineyards and enjoy the wine---it will not be drunk by others. Like trees, my people will live long lives. They will fully enjoy the things that they have worked for. The work they do will be successful, and their children will not meet with disaster. I will bless them and their descendants for all time to come. Even before they finish praying to me, I will answer their prayers. Wolves and lambs will eat together; lions will eat straw, as cattle do, and snakes will no longer be dangerous. On Zion, my sacred hill, there will be nothing harmful or evil."

Importance of Vision

Vision is very crucial in our defense and promotion of human rights. Our human rights advocacy must be guided by a vision. The Book of Proverbs says, *"Without a vision, the people will perish"* (Prov. 29:18a). Vision provides meaning and direction to our struggles.

For our reflections, let us consider Prophet Isaiah's vision of new heavens and a new earth as recorded in Isaiah 65:17-25. Isaiah's vision could also be our own vision for our country. We could share with his vision. Let us, then, look at the basic elements of his vision and claim them as our own.

No Weeping and Calling for Help

Firstly, *"The new Jerusalem I will make will be full of joy, and her people will be happy... There will be no weeping there, no calling for help"* (v.18-19).

Throughout their history as a people, the Israelites had been weeping and calling for help (cf. Ex. 1, Lam. 5). They had been colonized by ancient superpowers, like Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, and Rome. They suffered a lot in the hands of these superpowers. But in the midst of their sufferings, they cried out unto God, and God responded by sending them God's servants as instruments of liberation and salvation.

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We, too, have been weeping a lot throughout our history, calling for help, under the Spaniards, the Americans, the Japanese, under Martial Law, and now with all the extra-judicial killings happening. Weeping and calling for help by widows and orphans are heard throughout the land, at least heard by those who have ears to listen and hearts to understand.

But we look forward to that day when there will be no more weeping or calling for help.

No Longer Die in Infancy

Secondly, *“Babies will no longer die in infancy, and all people will live out their life span”* (v.20).

In times of a nation’s crisis, it is the weak and the innocent who suffer most. When the Israelites were in the hands of the ancient superpowers, their babies were the ones who suffered so much. The Egyptian Pharaoh ordered the killings of their infants (cf. Ex. 1). Children were dying of hunger when the Babylonians invaded and destroyed the City of Jerusalem (cf. Lam. 2:11-12; 4:4-5).

Now, in the depressed areas of our country, babies are dying due to poverty, malnutrition and lack of medical care. In the evacuation centers and hamlet areas of the hinterlands, babies are dying due to illness and lack of food. But we do hope a day would come when babies will no longer die as infants, but live out their life span.

Build Houses and Live in them

Thirdly, *“People will build houses and get to live in them – they will not be used by someone else”* (v. 21).

As captives of the superpowers, the Israelites suffered a lot in building gigantic structures and beautiful palaces for the kings and emperors (cf. Ex. 1:13-14; I Kings 9:15-28; Lam. 5:2). But they were not the ones who lived in those palaces, and beautiful structures. They were used by someone else, their captors.

This was no different from our construction workers today who build beautiful houses and hotels in the metropolis, yet they live in shanties. It is our hope that a day would come when people have decent homes to live in. They will build houses and will live in them. They will not be used by others.

Plant Vineyards and Enjoy the Wine

Fourthly, *“They will plant vineyards and enjoy the wine – it will not be drunk by others”* (v. 22).

Under the bondage of being captives, the Israelites carried the burdens of working in vineyards owned by absentee landlords in lands that were given to them by God, but lost them to their conquerors. Similarly, poor Filipino peasants today till the lands of big land owners, but when harvest comes almost nothing is left for them and their families to eat.

But it is our hope a day would come when people till the land and enjoy the fruits of their labors. It will not be taken away from them.

Prayers Answered

Fifthly, *“Even before they finish praying to me, I will answer their prayers”* (v.24).

The sufferings of the Israelites under foreign powers were believed to be indications that God had forsaken them (cf. Lam. 5:20-22). But actually, it is not God who abandoned the people; rather it is the people who lived far away from God. They did not follow God’s commandments.

The absence of God in Philippine society, as indicated by being the most corrupt country in Asia despite all claims of being Christian, is very much felt when those supposedly Christian believers have reduced their faith in God into mere rituals and ceremonies. But we look forward to that day when we would feel so close to our God that our prayers are answered even before finishing them.

Genuine and Lasting Peace

And finally, “Wolves and lambs will eat together; lions will eat straw as cattle do, and snakes will no longer be dangerous. On Zion, my sacred hill, there will be nothing harmful or evil” (v. 25).

This is a picture of genuine and lasting peace. Wolves and lambs are mortal enemies; the wolves eat the lambs. But if wolves and lambs will eat together, it is like saying the AFP, MILF, and NPAs will eat together. This is political peace.

Actually, lions do not eat straw like cattle do. But if lions will eat straw like cattle do, this means that the people will eat the same food. The best indicator of an economy is not the exchange rate or the stock exchange or the GNP, but rather the food on the table. If the tenants in Malacañang will eat the same food as the squatters in Tondo, then we could say there will be economic peace in our land.

Snakes in the Bible are symbols of treachery. The reason why Israel suffered in the hands of foreign powers is because of leaders who were snakes; they were traitors to their own people and to God. They worshipped other gods – the god of money and power. They would say one thing but would do the opposite. No different from our leaders today. But

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time would come when there are still snakes around, but they will no longer be dangerous! They will no longer be poisonous!

Zion was the mountain where the palace and the temple – two symbols of political and religious powers, respectively – were found. The residence of God, and of God's Anointed One- the King of Israel. Mt. Zion was supposed to be God's sacred hill, but the evils happening in the palace and in the temple betrayed its sanctity.

Our country is supposed to be a sacred place, for this is the only Christian nation in Asia. It is supposed to be God's instrument in making known the Gospel of Christ – the Gospel of love and justice – in this non-Christian part of the world. But then, our country is perceived to be one among the most corrupt, if not the most corrupt, nation in Asia.

But nevertheless, we do have a living hope that time would come when there will be nothing harmful or evil in this land of our birth.

This, then, is Isaiah's vision that we could also claim as our own.

**“They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit”
Reflection and Bible Study on Economic and Social Rights in Isaiah 65:17-25**

by Rev. Andrew Tiver



As we celebrate Human Rights week we remember firstly that human rights are deeply imbedded in our identity as Christian communities. Human rights do not firstly arise with the declarations and protocols of world bodies like the United Nations, but firstly from the biblical witness and traditions of fairness and justice within other faith traditions. In Genesis 1:27 we are told that when God created us we were created in God’s very own image. In each human being there is the indelible stamp of the image of God. We are not created as objects, but as living subjects, born to act, enjoy freedom and to live life in all its fullness. Whenever **any** human being is subject to abuse, to poverty and injustice for us as Christians this is not just wrong, but

it is also an act of violence against the living God in whose image we are created.

We have also recognized as Christians, and especially as members of the UCCP, that the fundamental rights put forward in the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, and other declarations and protocols reflect in a human way and as a consensus between nations, this fundamental character of human beings as people created in the image of God with inalienable value. In the UCCP constitution we acknowledge this understanding and our obligation and responsibility to defend and protect the human rights of all people.

In recent times discussion of human rights has come under challenge from many quarters. There has been the hypocrisy of powerful nations who claim to defend human rights, have been critical of the human rights abuses of other nations, while at the same time have engaged in torture and illegal detention and wars that fail to respect the basic right to life. In our own country we have seen our president reject human rights as an inappropriate restraint on his ‘war on drugs’ and his attempts to avoid making himself accountable to the community of nations for his conduct. He has sharply reject criticism that his war on drugs fails to respect due process and the right to life. He has spoken back harshly when other countries have criticized his conduct, as though the observance of human rights is simply an issue of national concern. However, despite the president’s harsh words, states do have an obligation to be accountable to each other in how they protect and defend human rights; it is inherent in the contract they have entered into when they signed the different international human rights declarations and protocols.

Human rights, despite the rhetoric of some governments and our own President are not an imposition by powerful nations upon weaker nations; they have in fact arisen firstly out of the yearning of the peoples of the world for fundamental protections and freedoms, both civil and political, and also economic and social. States have obligations, but human rights are not the possession of states. Human rights belong to the people and have always and must continue to be advanced primarily through the people’s struggle for respect, freedom, self-determination and justice.

Human rights are also **universal**; they belong to every human being. They do not depend on whether or not we agree with a person, like them, or whether they may or may not have done something we find good or reprehensible. They are not diminished in any way by a person's physical or mental abilities or characterises. For example we cannot claim that people who are drug addicted have reduced brain capacity and therefore do not qualify as human and therefore are not entitled to have their human rights respected. If the definition of who is human became so loose it would be only a small step for example to say that someone who had brain damage from a car accident no longer had a claim on human rights. If the rights of a particular group of people can be denied, then the rights of all people can be denied, because they are no longer **human rights** but have become the rights of a particular group, class or those with particular physical or mental attributes. In the current context of the gross human rights abuses against indigenous communities in Mindanao and the current violations of human rights and due process in the 'war on drugs', we need to commit ourselves to defend the rights of **all**. We do this as Christians because we acknowledge that every human being is created in the image of God and thus demands our respect and protection. However, we also do it in defence of our own human rights, for who of us can know when some aspect of ourselves such as our political beliefs or our race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class, physical disability or whatever will at some time in the future be arbitrarily used by those in power to deny us our own human rights. A biblical passage which can help us explore a particular dimension of human rights is found in Isaiah 65:17-25. This passage speaks of Gods creating of a truly abundant life for the people of Israel and presents a biblical vision that is a very similar to the vision life embraced in the dimension of human rights referred to as Economic and Social Rights. In exploring this passage there are some questions included which may be useful in conducting a guided bible study in your local church or community.

Isaiah 65:17-25 – A New Heaven and A New Earth

We are living in tumultuous times, the world political order as we know it seems to have become very fragile, the ecological system of the planet that supports our very life is in rapid decline, and the things that we once considered solid and reliable appear as if they might melt into air. In the midst of chaos it is sometimes difficult to find direction or maintain our faith, but it is in such times when vision and faith become all the more important. Isaiah one of the most important of the biblical prophets was caught up in a similar situation of insecurity and threat and asks the question how can we maintain our faith?

With some strong parallels to our own time, the period of history covered by the book of Isaiah reflects the struggle between great imperial powers. It begins at a time when the Assyrian empire was the regional power, which is challenged in turn by the growing power of the Babylonian empire, eventually destroying Jerusalem and taking the people into captivity. Towards the end of Isaiah the Persian empire under Cyrus is seen rising on the horizon with the potential defeat of Babylon and the possibility the people of Israel being freed from captivity. In the conflict of great powers Israel is found struggling over its situation as a small nation faced by threats from different empires. The question Isaiah confronts is how can we retain our independence and identity in such a context? His answer

is simple, by maintaining our faith in God. For Isaiah the maintenance of faith in God is not so much about ritual and formal religion, but rather very practical, how as a community are we to treat each other with justice. The book of Isaiah covers such a long duration of time that most scholars consider it as the work of a number of authors which has been edited into a unified story of prophetic action.

In a time of political and cultural turmoil Isaiah courageously spoke out against the leaders of his nation challenging their deceit and dishonesty, their unrestrained greed, corruption, injustice and neglect of the poor. For Isaiah the leaders have become a danger to the nation because they had lost sight of the ethical and religious will of God, and above all have lost a sense of the vision God has for his people.

The passage Isaiah 65:17-25 comes at the end of the book and presents a vision of the future when those who have been faithful will be able to reclaim the fullness of life that God had always intended for the people of God. It is part of the concluding portion of the book of Isaiah which is often referred to as the 'Book of Comfort' Isaiah 40:1-66:24. The passage 65:17-25 is written as poetry which tries to use images to invoke a vision of what God has intended as the 'good life' that God desires for humanity. This 'good life' is not just a pie in the sky promise, but it is a vision that has taken root in the very suffering and struggle of the people, they know the suffering they have endured, they know what they have been denied by the powerful, they know what exploitation means and it is out of this that they are able to relate to and claim a vision of what God's real intention for human life has always been. *Read Isaiah 65:17-25 ... what is the situation of the people who the text is addressing? What are the things that they are experiencing?*

We can see the situation of the people through the description of those things that will be 'no more'. The people are weeping, crying in distress, new born children die almost as soon as they are born, even older people die before they have lived out their expected time, the houses the people are forced to build are for others and they never get to live in them themselves, they forced to plant in the fields and labor in the vineyards but they do not even have enough to feed themselves properly, their work has become slave like drudgery because it is nothing more than exploitation, children are born not into hope, but into sadness, because even if they do manage to survive their lives will be afflicted with the same exploitation and they will face the same or even worse terror than their parents.

How does this description of life compare with the life of people in our own society, especially the poor? What are some of the issues that are being highlighted in this description of life?

Infant mortality, lack of adequate health care, lack of adequate housing especially for the urban poor, labor exploitation, the oppression of landless farm workers on haciendas, inadequate income to meet even daily food requirements, the lack of rights and dignity that is extended to workers, and the lack of opportunities to education and employment, the sense of hopelessness when parents wonder if life has anything to offer their children other than more of the same suffering and pain they experienced. These are not abstract realities but the kind of realities that are faced by around 60% of the Filipino people. In the midst of this kind of suffering the people are faced with a choice; will we live in despair and

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resignation, believing that this is the way things are and will always be or will we believe that this is not the way God intended it and begin to struggle to challenge the structures and powers that maintain this situation of oppression. The passage we are reading bears testament to the second option and the rejection of the status quo. The prophet is clear that this is not what God has intended and thus it is never what should be accepted.

What is the vision that the Prophet Isaiah presents for the people? What does God intend for them?

Rejoicing, joy, and end to weeping and distress, they will live long fulfilling lives, people will inhabit the houses they build and enjoy the fruits of their labor, their work will be a source of joy and creativity, children will be born into hope and blessing, the generations to come will be born into hope, accepted sources of conflict (the image of even incompatible animals living in peace) will be overcome and the people will live in peace. God will no longer seem absent and distant ‘before they call I will answer, while they are still speaking I will hear’ (vs. 24)

Read Isaiah 65:17-19. Some Christians attribute these promises of God to some eschatological future (the so called end times). Do you think these are promises for the end times or are they promises that should be claimed today? Why?

The prophet Isaiah is very clear that he is not speaking about some abstract future or some experience of heaven at the end of time or after death. His concern is clearly with the present. The language of these verses is immediate ‘I am about to create’ both in vs.17 and vs.18 and the present tense ‘I am creating’ vs.18. The stress is on the action of God that is happening in the here and now. Also in vs. 17 the image is of creating ‘a new heaven **and** a new earth’ – this is not about the end of the world, but about the world transformed. It is not all about ‘heaven’ it is about ‘heaven and earth’. It is a new reality that has already begun and is coming more fully into being. This is a great poetic image to communicate that everything is changed ‘a new heaven and a new earth’. We might say in modern language something like ‘everything has been turned upside down’.

It might not be immediately evident from only reading Isaiah 65:17-25 that not everyone will be part of this new heaven and new earth, but this does become clear when the passage is read in the wider context of Isaiah 40:1-66:24. It is not that God primarily intends to exclude anyone, this vision of a new heaven and new earth is intended by God to be enjoyed by all. However there are those who exclude themselves through being unfaithful to God and this unfaithfulness is primarily seen through their conduct which is to engage in injustice and oppression.

Read Isaiah 59:1-15. Will those who are described share in the promised new heaven and new earth that is coming into being? Why or why not?

The vision of the new heaven and new earth is a vision that is inclusive of all. It requires participation, and the way that Isaiah clearly understands participation is to turn away from

acts of oppression and injustice and embrace what God is doing amongst God's people. The new heaven and new earth is not just a future utopia but rather a site of struggle. Those who suffer under the oppression that we identified above have embraced God's vision for a new heaven and new earth, but there are those who would through acts of injustice and violence seek to preserve the old heaven and old earth. Our strength comes through understanding that in this struggle God has already made the divine intention clear and those who understand it because of the suffering they have experienced will gladly and joyfully embrace what God is creating. However those who are committed to the old heaven and the old earth will reject this vision, because they will have to let go of their evil and unjust ways.

Does the passage we have been exploring from Isaiah have anything to say about human rights? How and why?

It is common when people hear the mention of human rights; they often understand them in terms of what are called **Civil and Political Rights**. These are the rights that ensure our ability to participate in the civil and political life of the society and state without discrimination or repression. These include the right to life and safety; protection from discrimination and individual rights such as privacy and the freedoms of thought, speech, religion, press, assembly, and movement. Political rights include natural justice (procedural fairness) in law, such as the rights of the accused, including the right to a fair trial; due process; the right to seek redress or a legal remedy; and rights of participation in civil society and politics such as freedom of association, the right to assemble etc.

However there are also important **Economic and Social Rights** that guarantee that every person be afforded conditions under which they are able to meet their needs. In particular, economic and social rights include:

The Right to Education enabling all persons to participate effectively in a free society and is directed to the full development of the human personality.

The Right to Food guaranteeing freedom from hunger and access to safe and nutritious food.

The Right to Health ensuring the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health including access to care, nutrition, and clean water and air.

The Right to Housing ensuring access to a safe, secure, habitable, and affordable home with freedom from forced eviction.

The Right to Social Security guaranteeing that everyone regardless of age or ability to work has the means necessary to procure basic needs and services.

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The Right to Work guaranteeing the opportunity to have fulfilling and dignified work under safe and healthy conditions with fair wages affording a decent living for oneself and one's family. It also provides for freedom from unemployment and the right to organize. *Consider the Economic and Social Rights mentioned above. How do these relate to the vision in Isaiah of a new heaven and new earth?*

In discussing human rights we need to be aware that these rights do not belong to governments or international organization like the United Nations, rather these rights belong to me and you and all people. We need to claim them, fight for them and make them a reality. They embrace a vision that is clearly like the vision we have seen in Isaiah where people have access to health, productive and fulfilling work, food, housing, education and the basic necessities of life. When our leaders say that they do not care about human rights we need to clearly say they are wrong and human rights matter to every person. When governments become engaged in calling each other hypocrites over their respect for human rights, we need to say clearly that one wrong can never be used to make another wrong right and call for all governments to respect and defend the human rights of their citizens. The system of international human rights that embraces this vision has arisen out of the desire of the people of the world for justice and for the respect of their humanity. After centuries of struggle and following on from the abuses of the Second World War governments in 1948 affirmed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and have continued into the present to affirm human rights declarations and protocols that seek to protect people from abuse and ensure the basic necessities of life. When governments affirm these international instruments they agree that they will be accountable to the community of nations for how they observe and protect these rights. Human rights are not only the concern of individual nations but of the whole of humanity. Every person should be engaged in defending not only our own human rights, but the rights of every other person, so that others will defend and protect us when our rights are threatened or remain unfulfilled.

Bible Study Guide

By: Rev. Lope B. Robin, Th.D.



Introduction:

Our theme for this year's observance of Human Rights week, **"New Humanity for Just and Lasting Peace"** is indeed relevant and timely in the context of a new social environment in our country. It is said that "without justice there will be no peace." But it is also important to emphasize that justice and peace in a given society will not last if its citizens do not undergo personal transformation or renewal. To help us digest our theme let us examine the following biblical texts:

Isaiah 65:17-25 (NRSV)

*For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth;
the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.
But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating;
for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight.
I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people;
no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress.
No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days,
or an old person who does not live out a lifetime;
for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth,
and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.
They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
They shall not build and another inhabit; they not plant and another eat;
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of the hands.
They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity;
for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord – and their descendants as well.
Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear.
The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox;
but the serpent – its food shall be dust!
They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.*

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 (NRSV)

*So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:
everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!
All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ,
and has given us the ministry of reconciliation;
that is in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself,
not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting
the message of reconciliation to us.
So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making*

*his appeal through us;
we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

I. BACKGROUND AND MESSAGE OF THE TEXTS

The tone of the passage in Isaiah 65:17-25 is completely different from that of the earlier chapters particularly 1-39. These earlier chapters depict a situation of devastating crises due to the continuing threat of wars that led to the fall of Judah and the subsequent exile of its inhabitants in Babylon. The life situation of the Israelites in Babylonian exile was extremely miserable as they were maltreated and made to work for the welfare of the Babylonians. In short they were deprived of the rights to enjoy the fruits of their labor. However, everything has changed decades later as indicated in Isaiah 65:17-25 wherein a new day is dawning for the Israelites. This was the period when the mighty Babylon had fallen to the rising Persian Empire under Cyrus. The new imperial ruler turned out to be generous to the Israelites allowing them to return to their homeland and the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem.

The new political environment has offered a new hope for the Israelites whose national life has since been disturbed even before the exile due to the persistent threat of wars waged by their neighbors. God's announcement on the creation of "*new heavens and a new earth*" indicates that since the old social order is gone a new age can now be created under a favorable political landscape. A great reversal of things would then be experienced by the people and the entire creation. The land that used to be a bloodbath and marred by deaths is now rejuvenating and becomes the source of abundant blessings upon the people. Since the Israelites have been allowed to return from exile they could now repossess their land and make it productive in order to ensure economic prosperity for sustenance of a good life. Economic prosperity will then promote longevity and enhance life's expectancy: "*No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime; for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.*"

It is also important to stress that the new "*heavens and a new earth*" that God has promised to create that is characterized by the reign of justice and peace do not only involve the humans but nonhuman creatures as well. There is peaceful coexistence between the humans and nonhuman creatures. In other words the absence of violence will be experienced all throughout the land. Indeed, this is the dawning of a new social order where justice and peace prevail.

More importantly, the "*new heavens and a new earth*" do not only cover social transformation but also personal and spiritual renewal. Unlike before wherein the Israelites would always rebel against God that was precisely the basic reason for their defeats that resulted in exile, under the new order the people would be undergoing spiritual renewal. In the new order of things, there is new level of intimacy between God and the people where God has categorically declared: "*Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear.*"

Indeed, biblically and theologically speaking genuine social transformation will only work if the citizens are also in right relationship with God who is the true architect of justice and lasting peace. In the language of the great apostle Paul, right relationship with God is obtained through one's union with Christ. As the apostle Paul affirms: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come (II Cor. 5:17)." For Paul a person's faith in Christ brings renewal or transformation in one's life in which the old is gone and the new has come. Hence, anyone who is in Christ becomes a new humanity. It is important to stress that Paul's affirmation is consistent with the core biblical message that out of God's overflowing love the sinners are always given a chance to change and transform themselves.

II. THE TEXTS AND OUR CONTEXT

Our texts have so much to say to our present socio-cultural context. Though at the outset ours may be different from that of the Israelites but in essence there is some resemblance. The election of President Rodrigo R. Duterte has offered us a new hope for peace in our land. The stalled peace talk between the Philippine government (GPH) and the National Democratic Front (NDF) has recently resumed in Oslo, Norway. The change of our national leadership has offered us a new sense of optimism for peace to finally reign in our beloved country.

We hope that the peace process will genuinely address the root causes of conflict so that like the Israelites the Filipino people will also experience a new order of things. While it is true that the Filipinos have not been taken out by any invading powers from our country yet a great majority of our people have virtually become exile in their own land. Like the Israelites in exile, the Filipino workers have been denied of a just share of the fruits of their labor because they are given unjust wages and majority of the peasants are denied of access to good agricultural lands. If we are to look at the situation of indigenous Filipinos in particular, they have literally become exile as some communities have been uprooted from their ancestral domains due to militarization like what happened to the *Iumads* who have taken shelter in our Church's property at Haran in Davao City. While some groups have returned to their areas after the assumption of President Duterte some are still in Haran hoping that soon they can also go back to their home place and live a normal life in their own land. This is just one example of the ill effects of the ongoing conflict between the government and the rebel groups in our country. Unlike the wars waged by the enemies of Israel whose objective was for the expansion of their territories, the roots of war in our country that has run for decades now are injustices, human rights violations and the unequal distribution of our national wealth. We wish that these issues will be substantially addressed in the peace negotiation.

While we are upbeat about the bright prospect of peace in our country, it is also important to stress that there is an aspect of the present administration that is a cause for concern. Inasmuch as our biblical texts talk about the flourishing of life, the administration's war on drugs has already claimed over 4,000 lives as of this time. Indeed, the drug menace in our country is so entrenched and it is a welcome development that finally we have a president

whose administration gives top priority to curving this very serious social problem. But the manner by which it is carried out is alarming considering the number of people get killed. In his column of the November 14, 2016 issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, columnist Gideon Lasco wrote:

“Today as the death toll continues to rise—and as killings remain unsolved and uninvestigated—people are becoming inured to them, numb to the ramifications of condoning, or even just tolerating, the murder of our countrymen... And in the face of routine violence, to eject the notion that it is normal for people to get killed. It is sad enough that people begging for mercy receive no mercy, and that people crying for justice are met with injustice. It is sad enough that children have to weep for their parents, deprived even of knowledge of who killed them, or why. It is sad enough that parents have to mourn their dead children, the loss of their families’ best and brightest dreams.”

What is scarier about this development is the possibility of creating a culture of violence among our children and develop in their consciousness that those perceived to be enemies deserve to die.

III. THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE IN-BREAKING OF THE NEW REALITY

In the face of the recent developments taking place in our country the church being a community of the new humanity in Christ has critical role to play. Jesus Christ the head of the church has given us the mandate to do the ministry of peace making and reconciliation as emphasized by Paul. As such, the church, the UCCP in particular should support the ongoing peace talk between the GPH and NDF but at the same time make its prophetic voice be heard in speaking out against the cycle of violence and deaths resulting from the war on drugs especially on the issue of extrajudicial killings. There is no question that the drug menace in our country has to be eradicated and the church should support the government’s drive against it. However, the rule of law should be judiciously observed by the law enforcers so that if it cannot really be avoided, killing the subjects can only happen in an extreme situation. Our law enforcers have the superior strength to neutralize the drug suspects without necessarily killing them. In view of this, former President Ramos in a television interview underscored that the police can “shoot to disable.” Indeed, all those responsible for the proliferation of the drug trade in our country will have to be made to answer of their crime but it should be done within the bounds of the law so that justice is properly carried out. Above all respect for human rights should be observed and upheld by all government authorities.

Those involved in drugs in spite of the magnitude of the damage they have inflicted in our society are still human beings created in the image of God endowed with the divine right to life. The sanctity of life has to be upheld at all times it being a gift from God. In as much as God has given the fallen humanity a chance for renewal and be reconciled to God, those who

have been involved in drugs also deserve a second chance to transform themselves. But at the same time they have to be made to pay the price of their acts as prescribed in our laws. The best area where the church can participate in curbing this serious social problem is in rehabilitation of the drug dependents particularly in the aspect of faith formation and spirituality.

Guide Questions for further Discussion

1. If you agree that there is some resemblance between the experiences of the Israelites as described in Isaiah 66:17-25 and the Filipino people under the present government, what signs of new reality have you observed or foreseen?
2. What do you think are the things that need to be done or addressed by the GPH and NDF in order to achieve a just and lasting peace in our land?
3. What can the church as a community of the new humanity contribute for the realization of the Filipino people’s dream of a just and lasting peace?
4. What can you suggest for effective implementation and success of the war on drugs without compromising the basic human rights that is the right to life of those involved in the trade?

References:

Peter R. Ackroyd, “The Book of Isaiah” in *The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Charles M. Laymon, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984).

John D. W. Watts, “Isaiah 34-66” in *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 25, eds. David Hubbard and Glenn Barker, (Waco, Texas: Word Books, Publishers, 1987).

Paul J. Achtemier, ed. *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1985).

Gideon Lasco, “When we no longer Cry,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, November 14, 2016.

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OPENING LITURGYⁱ

by Dr. Rommel F. Linatoc

Worship Preparation

Sounds from Various Ethnic/ local instruments

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist:

We see the people suffering throughout the country's history, a history written in faith challenging the fate, and we are moved to rebuke. In different times and in different contexts, there is always a life that is being marginalized. We gathered this morning as one body of Christ. Like Jesus Christ who immersed and live with the people in the margin, we are called to be with the people of God. Be the voice that prophesy, be the hand that heals, be the mind who discerns the situation and be the foot that is in solidarity with the people.

Community:

As a church, our intention is about life in all its fullness. We will celebrate life, the life that gives life. We will challenge the condition that forced people to have a limited life. This is because we believe in Christ. Our mission is with and for those who suffer darkness. Bring lights to them

In the oppressed situation where the many left behind by the few who covet bigger, higher and faster consumption and profit. We are called to challenge this greed as we hear the cries of the people reclaiming the Biblical God, struggling as a faithful expression of faith, and persevering with unyielding fortitude in a continuing tradition of our faith – and together celebrate in our struggles and hope.

Processional Song:

HYMN 310: We've A Story to Tell to the Nations (Words and Music H. Ernest Nichol)

1. 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.

Chorus: For the darkness shall turn to dawning and the dawning to noonday bright,
And Christ's great kingdom shall come to earth, the kingdom of love and light.

2. 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.

3. We've a message to give to the nations that the Lord who reigns above
Has sent us the Christ to save us and show us that God is love, and show us that God
is love.

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4. 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.

INVOCATION: All Together

God, Our Creator, guide us as we reflect on the context of poverty, injustice, and ecological damage haunt this country today and endanger future generations. The rights of the people are ignored. Bless us the wisdom as a church as we reflect on your vision of humanity, as Jesus Christ prayed, with those victimized by the economies of greed that ignore the needs of men and women and children. We must re-learn what it means to be Christ like.– as Jesus learned for himself on the cross.

[On this Part a video clips or radio clips or dramatic interpretation of the Human Rights Situation Can be played/done. It will be more effective if it is contextualized on the human right situation in the area/local/province where the church is located]

Prayer of Confession:

Pastor:

Let us continually turn towards God and away from all that competes with God in our lives.

Community:

Forgive us if we are not letting justice roll on like a river. Forgive us if we blocked the righteousness to become a never-failing stream!

Pastor:

God do not punish us in your anger as our guilt is heavier that we could carry for being irresponsible.

Community: God, Have mercy on us.

Young People:

More children and young people eyes are dim with weeping and their pillows soaked with tears. As young people of our church we kept ourselves busy on our individual concerns and forget the mission of YOUR church. Forgive us O God.

Community: God, lift us, heal us.

Pastor: We have shirked our responsibilities and been silent in the face or corruption and violence, the light in us turned into darkness.

Men: Our eyes are dim with weeping and our pillows soaked with tears, faithful God remember all of us.

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Pastor: We have hurt others and became slaves to worldly desire in spite of the teardrop to shed from the struggling people.

Women: Our eyes are dim with weeping and our pillows soaked with tears, faithful God remember all of us.

All Together: We confess our sins against humanity. The expression of our individuality departs us from the mission of our church. We consciously and unconsciously forgot our responsibility as part of the whole creation. God, don't give up on us, don't stay away from us. Come, please help us. Save us by YOUR grace O God.

Silent Prayer (..... while instrument is being played)

Assurance of Forgiveness

Pastor:

When the sincerest part of our heart and soul spoken before God. The embracing care, in all His creations, is in the midst of our fellowship. We are blessed with forgiveness even before our prayer ends. We are saved by Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will illumine the love and miracles of healing coming from God. The assurance of pardon is with you all.

Community: Amen.

THE READING OF BIBLE AND THE MESSAGE

Old Testaments: *Isaiah 65:17-25*

New Testament: *2nd Corinthians 5: 17-20*

The Singing of the Choir (*This will be more meaningful if the song(s) reflect the message of Micah 6:8 or any song that add meanings to the theme" New Humanity for Just and Lasting Peace"*)

Message from the Speaker:

"The Contextualization of the Bible Passages with the Church Mission for Peace Based on Justice"

Song of Choir: (Any Song that reflects a Christ-Like Act)

EXCHANGE OF PEACE & JUSTICE WORDS AND SYMBOLE

Prayer from a Child for Peace and Justice:

In my little voice, I pray to you o loving God. Thanks for the words that guides us on our path. We are blessed with good deeds of our parents. The faith of our church helps us grow.

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The words of thank you are not enough for all the love that you have given us. With my little hands, I would like say peace to everyone. Let us have peace that echoes justice...peace and justice are with you...Let us share it to everybody.

Community: {The congregations will greet “Peace and Justice” to everyone in the church while a song is being sung by the church choir or a soloist}

AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH

Pastor:

WE BELIEVE

In one God: Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, who provide order, purpose meaning and fulfillment to all creation; That Jesus Christ, who has born of Mary, God become human and is Sovereign Lord of life and history; That in the Holy Spirit, God is present in the world, empowering and guiding believers to understand and live out their faith in Jesus Christ.

Elders:

WE BELIEVE

That person are created in the image of God and destined to live in the community with God, with other persons and with all creation. That, by disobedience, they have become sinful, but, by grace through faith, they redeemed in Jesus Christ. That being entrusted with God’s creation, they are called to participate in the establishment of a just and compassionate social order.

Men and Women:

WE BELIEVE

That the Church in one body of Christ, the whole community of persons reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and entrusted with God’s ministry.

Youth and Children:

WE BELIEVE

That the Holy Bible is a faithful and inspired witness to God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ and in history to illumine, guide, correct and edify believers in their faith and witness.

Young Adult:

WE BELIEVE

God is at work, to make each person a new being in Christ, and the whole world, God’s kingdom in which love, justice and peace prevail.

The Kingdom of God is present 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.

All TOGETHER

WE BELIEVE

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The resurrection of Jesus Christ has overcome the power of death and gives assurance of life after death. And we look forward to His coming again in all fullness and glory to make all creation new and to gather all the faithful under God's Kingdom. AMEN

RESOLUTION AND PASTORAL PRAYER

(This is a synthesis prayer that can be prepared by the Minister that echoes meaning of the celebration in relation to call to actions and church responses)

FINAL BLESSINGS:

Pastor:

The blessings of Christ are with you all. As we step out of this sanctuary, let us make our homes and communities the sanctuaries of loving, healing, and liberating act of God. Let the peace based on justice be the connecting mission of our church. As we have the presence of Christ thru the Holy Spirit. Let us be reborn again and make our baptism in the United Church of Christ in the Philippines the continuing transformation of our Faith. By the name of our Parent God...our leader and saviour Jesus Christ...and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, AMEN.

RECESSIONAL SONG

“Buhay Na Kasiya-Siya (NCCP Theme Song)” OR ATONG NASUD NAGKINAHANGLAN p.733
/What Our Nation Needs

Words & Music Elena G. Maquiso 1972; Eng Transl. Grace R. Tabada 2001

¹ The Liturgy is prepared by Prof. Dr. Rommel F. Linatoc. He is a lay member of the First Evangelical Church, UCCP Southern Tagalog Conference. He is currently connected with the National Council of Churches in the Philippines as Program Secretary for Christian Unity and Ecumenical Relations. He is actively engaged in the preparation of liturgical resources in the wider church body such as the World Council of Churches. Also, he is the Artistic Director of the NCCP Teatro Ekyumenikal.

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A prayer service celebrating the Filipino people's journey in the quest for a just and lasting peace

by Ms. Rebecca Lawson

December 9, 2016

Note: Those preparing the service will need to prepare paper doves as well as plan where the participants can place them during the service. Additionally, a banner— such as, “Pray for Peace. Work for Justice” or “We support GRP-NDFP Peace Talks: Release Political Prisoners”— can be prepared as appropriate. When participants enter the worship area, they are handed a folded-paper dove or a dove cut out. A method for Prayers of Petitions should be decided before the service as well.

Preparation

Peace does not come rolling in on the wheels of inevitability. We can just wish for peace. We have to will it, fight for it, suffer for it, demand it from our governments as if peace were God's most cherished hope for humanity, as indeed it is. –William Sloane Coffin

Call to Worship

Liturgist: Come, Children of Israel, those held in the chains of Egypt's slavery. The God of history urges us toward exodus.

PEOPLE: WE ARE A PEOPLE WHO UNDERSTAND OPPRESSION. THE POOR OF OUR NATION HAVE LONG BEEN SHACKLED AND HELD DOWN BY GRINDING POVERTY. WE HAVE BEEN DENIED OUR SELF-DETERMINATION, FORCED INTO SUBSERVIENCE BY FOREIGN POWERS, AND LULLED INTO A COLONIAL MENTALITY. HONOR TO THE GOD OF HISTORY, WHO CALLS US TOWARD THE FREEDOM OF A PROMISED LAND.

Liturgist: Come, disciples of the Living Christ, the Prince of Peace. The Redeemer incarnate inspires us to welcome the outcasts, take up the cause of the marginalized, and walk as ambassadors of peace and reconciliation.

PEOPLE: OUR FAITH IMPELS US TO FEED THE HUNGRY, CARE FOR THE SICK, AND LET THE OPPRESSED AND CAPTIVES GO FREE. WE BELIEVE THAT CHRIST CAME SO THAT WE MAY HAVE “LIFE ABUNDANTLY.” OUR VISION, OF A WORLD MADE NEW, WHERE JUSTICE, RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND PEACE PREVAIL, GIVES US COURAGE TO STRUGGLE FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE POOR MAJORITY. GLORY BE TO THE REDEEMER, WHO RECONCILES THE WORLD, WITH GOD AND MAKES ALL THINGS NEW.

Liturgist: Come, believers in God's Shalom, who look forward to a day when God's will is done on Earth as it is in Heaven, we are drawn by the Spirit to this future of genuine peace.

PEOPLE: AS WE SEEK TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESTORATION OF GOD'S INTENDED SHALOM FOR US, WE OPEN OURSELVES TO RADICAL ACTS OF LOVE, JUSTICE, REDEMPTION, AND RECONCILIATION. PRAISE TO THE SUSTAINING SPIRIT, WHO ENLIVENS OUR JOURNEY IN THE QUEST FOR RECONCILING PEACE AND GUIDES OUR PATH TOWARD THE COMING OF A NEW HUMANITY.

Lighting of the Advent Candles

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Approach to God

GOD OF HUMANITY, WE COME TO YOU IN THIS ADVENT SEASON, WITH HEARTS FULL OF ANTICIPATION. GENERATIONS HAVE BEEN BEATEN DOWN WITH TURMOIL, WARS, AND POVERTY THAT POUND LIKE TYPHOON WAVES ON A SHORE ALREADY BATTERED BY DAILY TIDES OF INJUSTICE. WE COME TO YOU IN THIS EVENING, SEEKING FOR PEACE AND LONGING FOR NEWNESS. WE ASK YOU TO RAISE US UP AS AMBASSADORS OF RECONCILIATION. PREPARE OUR HEARTS TO BE PEACE ADVOCATES. READY OUR LIPS TO SPEAK OF THE WAYS OF JUSTICE. GIVE US COURAGE TO ADDRESS THE ROOTS OF ARMED CONFLICT IN OUR LAND. BE WITH US, WE PRAY. IN THE NAME OF CHRIST JESUS, THE PRINCE OF PEACE, AMEN.

Opening Hymn

**God of Freedom, God of Justice
(Tune of “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence” HFJ 256)**

God of freedom, God of justice, you whose love is strong as death,
you who saw the dark of prison, you who knew the price of faith:
tough our world of sad oppression with your Spirit’s healing breath.
Rid the earth of torture’s terror, you whose hands were nailed to wood;
hear the cried of pain and protest, you who shed the tears and blood:
move in us the power of pity restless for the common good.
Make in us a captive conscience quick to hear, to act, to plead;
make us truly sister, brothers, of whatever race or creed:
teach us to be fully human, open to each other’s need.

Scripture Reading

2 Corinthians 5:17-20
(Isaiah 65:17-25 may also be considered)

¹⁷So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself,* not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Meditation

Called as Peacemakers: A Thousand Doves of Peace

In the Christian tradition, the dove has long since been the sign of peace. When Noah was on the ark, it was a dove that brought back a sprig of an olive tree, as a sign that the creation was budding anew after the great flood. We often talk about “extending the olive branch” which is believed to have been a sign of warring parties that they wanted to reconcile in ancient Greek and Roman times.

In this tradition, we would like to invite you to participate in **A Thousand Doves of Peace**, by creating an art installation in your local church, office, school, or another public place

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that uses folded or cut-out doves to show your support for ongoing peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). Having already held two rounds of formal talks under the Duterte administration, we pray for peace-building in our nation and continue to monitor developments.

As peacemakers, we are clear that, for true peace, the roots of armed conflict must be addressed. In UCCP's 1986 statement *Peacemaking: Our Ministry* lays bare that "what is considered 'insurgency' is in many ways a defensive action of people to protect their lives and rights." Our crucial role as ambassadors of reconciliation comes in supporting the talks to create a positive and conducive atmosphere for addressing the injustices of our society. With hearts of compassion for the poor and marginalized, we can seek to understand why some have chosen to take up arms and wage a revolution in the Philippines. For many, especially in the far-flung barrios, this has allowed them to defend and till the land, resulting in a tangible answer to the hunger in their stomachs as well as their concrete participation in bettering their lives. In supporting GRP-NDFP peace talks, we support dialogue, plans, and actions that will address the roots of the armed conflict and will build peace. We are seeking not merely the absence of armed conflict, but a reconciliation—a "NEWNESS"—in our nation where true peace, a JustPeace is known by our people.

We have no illusion that such peace-building is simple. We must be faithful to journey in prayer and action with the parties involved in the talks, believing that God can bring reconciliation.

Here are some concrete suggestions for how you can get your community involved as ambassadors for peace and reconciliation:

- 1. Advocate for the release of political prisoners. Releasing political prisoners is always a correct action—these are people who have been arrested, detained and imprisoned for acts in furtherance of their political beliefs. Current political prisoners are by-and-large victims of the government's "legal offensive" where trumped-up charges were lodged against them to limit participation in society, tamp down on dissent, and deny their political rights while stigmatizing them as plain criminals. Political prisoners should be released as a matter of justice; however, their release is also an action supportive of the Peace Talks. The two parties (the GRP and NDFP) are to be working to release three NDFP peace consultants, still detained and almost 200 political prisoners (the long-detained, aged, medically-ill and sickly as well as women) on humanitarian grounds as their next step. The parties are also working on an Amnesty Proclamation for the release of all political prisoners listed by the NDFP. By creating a clamor for the release of Political Prisoners, we are generating a positive energy and support for the peace talks, while also doing the work of justice.*
- 2. Participate in the study and formulation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms(CASER). The newly released draft should be of concern for everyone.*

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This should not be treated as a special text only for the two parties, but rather as a roadmap for how we can build peace in our communities. By getting people involved in the discussions around the formulation of CASER, we can gather a broader peace constituency that will work to build peace through the implementation of CASER and the peace talks.

- 3. Educate on human rights. The GRP and NDFP have already signed a Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL). We can support that Peace Talks by helping our communities to know their human rights and report any violations of human rights to the two parties through the Joint Monitoring Committee. By engaging in education about human rights, we are encouraging people to envision a just and lasting peace and to work for it. At the same time, by involving people in the mechanisms of the GRP-NDFP peace process, we will help people understand why there is a peace process and how we can support the building of peace in our nation.*
- 4. Engage conversations about the Peace Talks in our homes, schools, workplaces, local churches and communities. Keep updated on developments by engaging with others. Pray and act as peace advocates. Pray especially for the next talks anticipated to be held in January of 2017.*

Prayers of Petition

Option A: The participants spend a few moments writing a prayer for peace on their dove. Then, the prayer group prays according to their tradition/desire (one person leads or people take turns leading the prayer...).

Option B: Before the prayer service, small papers have been prepared with different key areas for prayer (i.e. *for the release of political prisoners, for the negotiating panels, for human rights and victims of human rights violations, for the on-going unilateral GRP and NDFP ceasefires, for land reform and national industrialization in our nation, for peace advocates, for President Duterte, and for a change of heart in foreign powers, and so on...*). Each participant picks a prayer concern and prayers for this during the prayer time.

Option C: *The following prayer may be used or adapted to fit the needs of the group.*

God of All, Who has Promised to Make Us New,

we pray from the restoration and reconciliation of our homes.

We pray for the homes of the landless and tenant farmers,

where their children's stomachs swell from a lack of food and a plenty of worms.

We pray that justice will come,

that the sweat of their labor can bring food to their table.

We pray for the homes of the urban poor,

where a jungle of humanity is met with despair, drugs, and desperation.

We pray that justice will come,

that jobs will answer the need for productive participation in the cities.

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We pray for the homes of the migrant workers,
where parents and children are absent and laughter has been muted.
We pray that justice will come,
that slavery in foreign lands will be replaced with economic opportunity at home.
We pray for the homes of the indigenous peoples,
where cultural traditions and values are threatened by foreign mining and so-called
“development.”
We pray that justice will come,
that the self-determination and ancestral lands of national minorities will be respected.
We pray for the homes of those who have dared to resist,
where the pain of oppression has led to a decision to fight for freedom.
We pray that justice will come,
that the victory of peace, dignity and fullness of life will be known in their communities.
We pray for the homes of the wealthy and powerful
whose fortresses tower above and seek to assure their many riches.
We pray that justice will come,
that a more equitable sharing of resources will prevail, so that they will be reconciled.
We pray for our own homes,
where we have known hardship and blessing as well as redemption and renewal.
We pray that justice will come,
that we may be ambassadors of peace and advocates of healing.
We pray for our “common home,” this home known as Earth
that from north to south and east to west longs for peace, restoration and reconciliation.
We pray that justice will come,
that we will learn to live together as a new humanity
that we will dare to transform ourselves and one another
that we will seek peace and pursue it, we pray. Amen.

Act of Commitment

The participants install their doves as a personal commitment as a peace advocate, supporter of the GRP-NDFP Peace Talks, and as an ambassador of reconciliation. The prayer group is encouraged to make sure their prayer and commitment is clear to others who see the installation by marking it with a message of support.

Song of Dedication

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel” HFJ, 117

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lowly exile her, until the Child of God appear.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to you O Israel.
O come, O Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show, and help us in that way to go.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to you O Israel.

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O come, O shoot of Jesse, free your own from Satan's tyranny,
From depths of hell your people save, and give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to you O Israel.
O come, O Key of David, come and open wide your heavenly home;
Make safe the path to endless day, to hells destruction close the way.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to you O Israel.

Closing Acclamation (In Unison)

A Thousand Doves of Peace

Our unity rises like
a thousand doves of peace.
We are a voice of hope.
We are hands of help.
We are the flutter of freedom
that skips in the heart of each one
imprisoned, exploited, and oppressed.
A thousand doves take flight
in rising possibilities
to work for peace.
They summon us
to respond to the hunger and despair of the poor.
They call us to action in addressing
the ROOTS of the armed conflict,
that stranglehold the people through poverty,
and seek to destroy
their will to pursue fullness of life.
These winged creatures help us affirm:
PEACE is not oppression, but liberation;
PEACE is not capitulation, but freedom to thrive;
PEACE is the place where justice and democracy have taken root
and the people soar the skies
with dignity and life abundant.
We dare to struggle for justice.
Calling opposing forces
to the table of peace,
we join in the uncertainty
for it also holds possibility.
Our prayers set flight
on the wings of a thousand doves
that the Philippines may dare
to nurture the budding fruits of peace.

Blessing/Benediction

Go in peace.

And though wars may rage,
believe that peace is possible.

For it is written:

“They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
They shall not build and another inhabit;
they shall not plant and another eat;
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.”

Emmanuel will come.

God’s reconciliation will come.

God’s peace will come.

Go forth as ambassadors for peace.



Personal Testimony

by Benjie C. Gomez, Human Rights Defenders-Victim (HRD – Victim)

When I began to write this testimony I really process the pain that I experienced to be able to become a source of my strength as I enjoyed the gift of God's given freedom. Because the case filed against me was already dismissed last October 10, 2014 and the order of release from my detention immediately followed on the 13th because probable cause does not exist. Clearly, I defeated the evil power and the abuse of freedom from state authorities which operates through counter-insurgency Oplan Bayanihan under the Aquino regime. I had been acquitted and live a new life and a new being in Christ. Although it was a painful experience when you are unjustly imprisoned and taken away from loved ones but I need to consider that as an evil that exist in our society today. So, we ought to struggle and fight against it and in my experience amazingly we won. Thus, my gratitude and wonder what God has done for me the rest of my life. I earnestly prayed and cried for justice to be served to all victims of Human Rights violation. Similarly, for those who were victims and still seeking for freedom for an immediate release, I continued to appeal just what Prophet Amos saying in chapter 5 verse 24 that says, "But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

LIFE BEFORE THE ARREST

My life before my arrest was far from ordinary in spite of my involvement in different people's organization. However, my experience entered into a kind of a new covenant relationship with our God that pushes me to become part of the calling to set apart. I knew consciously my life struggle still matters and always keeping in touch with the poor, oppressed and struggling sectors in our society even if I served within the Church context. I embraced the Theology of struggle long before when I was nurtured from the Lay perspective that to follow Jesus Christ is really a struggle and sufferings which shaped my principled life. I believed that following Jesus is a continuing journey and never ends. ("Bisan asa ta ibutang sa Ginoo sama kita sa liso nga moturok ug mamunga").

I was greatly involved with the church and non-church activities even during years of my college studies. The Campus Ministry and student movements was intermingling within and outside the campus for my active involvement and leadership as well. My active involvement of the Christian Youth Fellowship in our Church since when I was 12 years old mould and shape my life story for a meaningful and challenging ministry. It was a long faith journey started when I was leading the neophyte CYF conference when I became a President for four years. My pro poor and pro people stands started with a simple engagement with environmental campaign such as tree planting activities to a more serious collective endeavour in confronting Large scale Mining operation of Philex Gold Inc., operated in

Sibutad, Zamboanga del Norte and TVI Inc. in Canatuan, Siocon. From then on, integrating with the People's struggle was a common expression of my conscious, organize and liberating faith life journey. In my youthful years I was part of the Friends of the Subanen (Indigenous People's in Zamboanga Peninsula) a broad alliance with various sectors working and struggling against development aggression that caused displacement among our IP in their ancestral lands. Thus together with the IP Subanen petitioners we won the struggles against the expansion of almost a hundred of hectare Pasture land and Livestock breeding projects by the provincial government installed within IP ancestral land and territories. It was more concrete when I was volunteering to a Non- Government Organization during and after my CYF leadership into a various groups and sectors in our society. Those experiences taught me to embrace the People's struggle passionately inspired by my Faith in God. After I graduated my four year degree course in college at Andres Bonifacio College, Dipolog City in 1996, I was with the Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace, Zamboanga Del Norte chapter. It was an institution that provides basic human rights services and advocacy in the province. Through linkages and networks the institution also provided including health care services, relief goods for the victims of Natural and Man-made disasters, extended support for the urban poor demolitions and Labour disputes. When I was getting married I was transferred going back to a Church related projects with a particular task as a community development worker staff for the District Conference of Northern Zamboanga – under CONCORD Inc. special project for the Development programme in Mindanao. It was basically serving the Poor Lumad and farmer communities in our areas for cooperative endeavour and organizing People's organization since years 2000 to 2009. OPLAN BANTAY LAYA I and II during Arroyos regime started and at the near end of her term killings of activists, organizers, PO leaders were rampant and abating. A culture of impunity was still going on. I continued to handle such dreadful and tensions events despite of the harsh conditions and that even my life put into a danger situation. I was part of those working individuals to help organize and expand various Party list groups in our province such as ANAKPAWIS, BAYAN MUNA and KATRIBU. I helped to facilitate the project implementation such as the livelihood programs, health and medical assistance for the poor, Students scholarship and even Infrastructure projects were most of the beneficiaries came from the poor communities. Then, I worked as a volunteer staff to an NGO lead project focus on Justice, Peace and environmental campaign networks which lead to the broad formation of the Environmental groups and alliance in the Province as well as in the regional level the so called PROTECT WEST which lead us to the hosting of PANALIPDAN Mindanao in coordination with the Defend Patrimony National. I became a Media liaison Officer for Initiative for Peace in West Mindanao area, and at the same time a volunteer staff for Ecumenical Bishops Forum (EBF-West, 2010 until March 2011) which the major activity culminated in hosting the North West EBF Assembly held in Dipolog City with the host Bishop of Roman Catholic church. Upon entering the Aquino administration through the Inter-faith People's response we were reactivating the Prison Ministry and caring for all Political detainees through jail visitation, providing material and legal support in the region because many were also victims of abduction and the government popularly implementing trumped up and fabricated charges for known activist and organizers through the listing of Military Intelligence list of Order of Battle (OB). During those times my engagement to our local Church and conference was not disconnected yet it was continuing because I was elected

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Chairperson in our local Church years 2009 to 2011. This time I noticed that Arroyo's implementation of the Oplan Bantay Laya II was intensifying and I was included for the surveillance from the Intelligence authorities because of my work and involvement together with the late Rev. Beltran Pacatang. The so called Sgt. Flores and officer-in-charge 1st Lt. Suelto under the Civil Relation Service of the AFP 1st Tabak Division implicated us an NPA supporter or they alleged us a "lecturer" simply because of the nature and kind of projects that we had implemented to the Peasants and Lumad communities. Because of those allegations they wanted us to clear our names in the list of Order of Battle through signing on a certain document as part of their campaign. Besides, my cousin also a former Mayor in our Town always reminded me that I was in the list and even discouraging me in doing such kind of work for justice, peace and environmental advocacies. But I was persistent and I continued my involvement simply because of my Faith in God that inspired me. Probably I think they were frustrated in stopping me even they tried it several times to persuade and used different approaches and means. One time Chief of Police in our town visited our house and they invited me in the Municipal station because someone from Military Intel wanted to talk with me. But the chief of Police was frustrated in bringing me because I vehemently denied the allegations and I was never attempted to collaborate with their effort because I was doing in accordance with the law and obedient what God commanded us to serve its people.

Despite of those trials in life, it was on April 2011 until April 2012 KALUMARAN Mindanao Inc. hired me as a researcher for the Indigenous People's (Subanen-West) research project called *Strengthening Lumad Self-Identity* for Western Mindanao Area. I remember several times that I was part of the Indigenous People's Consultation nationwide together with IP leaders in Zamboanga Peninsula. There was a time that I attended the IP policy Agenda chaired by Rep. Baguilat held in UP Diliman Quezon City. I was even implemented Basic ecology trainers training for the IPs in the region in partnership with the Center for Environmental Concern network. Then, I was employed as Field Officer of the *DINTEG-Cordillera People's Legal Center for Human Rights Based Approach to Development* project in Zamboanga Del Sur in partnership with the Subanen People's organization from April 2012 until June of 2013, and served for a volunteer capacity until March of 2014. The institution which is part of the implementation for the Ancestral Domain of the Indigenous People's Protection Program (ADSDPP) in partnership and supported by the European Union. Indeed, it was a tough job because my engagement with the Indigenous Peoples widen and my deep commitment was strong being part of their continuing journey and struggles. We were engaging with the local government unit and dialogue with them in order to support the IP right for Ancestral land and environmental issues particularly in Mining. Similarly, during 2013 election I volunteered to help the KATRIBU Party-list during the National and Partylist election which I facilitated and joined several campaign activities to push for IPs representation and struggle for IP rights and Self Determination. After the election, however I took my rest for the meantime when my illness occurred oftentimes due to my Uric Acid and cholesterol that cause my hypertension. Thus I submitted myself for several check-ups and medical laboratories per advised by my physician.

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Such circumstances eventually pushes my decision to serve in a full capacity for a Lay Preacher in the church. The local Church was endorsing and accepting my intention and I acquired favourable approval by the Conference Council to join the review and examination for the Conference Licentiates and Lay Preachers on February 2014. It was during the Annual session of the Conference that I was confirmed and appointed as a full time Lay Preacher. It was a great challenge on my part because our Church has no assigned fulltime Pastor. In fact as I recalled that when I was a staff of the Conference I was encourage to become a Local Lay Preacher at the same time. But I refused to join in the Lay ministry before because I wanted to focus on the program implementation set for and to some extent to meet the expectations within the time frame as stated in the proposal.

My appointment as a Lay Preacher was timely and within the right direction started in June 2014 until May 2015. I knew the fact that Lay Preacher's primary tasks were doing the Preaching and teaching Ministry of the Church. However, I've done an extra functions doing Pastoral ministry thru home visitations, prayer for the Sick, practical counselling, birthdays and other services together with officers and members of the Church. It was a worthy faith journey that my beloved wife was also assisting me as partner in the ministry and she was in-charge with the choir and with the young people as an adviser. Our partnership in the ministry was tough even if she was doing her job as DEPED teacher.

Unfortunately, it was interrupted by the desperate move of the Fascist regime of US-Aquino Oplan Bayanihan by implementing the tramped up and fabricated cases for those known progressive personalities whose services in the poor communities have done a significant contributions in asserting with the collective Rights of the poor and underprivileged sectors in our society. Probably, I was included in the targets because of my almost two decades involvement with the people' struggles.

I thought I was already in my comfort zone within the Church but the Fascist authorities were not satisfied and they continued their ordeal against me and my whole family. They wanted us to silence and stop my resolved to serve the people of God especially to the poor. They tried to disengage and disconnect my faith in God and basically they wanted to abandon the kind of faith that I was nurtured long before as the Bible taught me since when I was in the CYF leadership that is found in the gospel of Luke Chapter 4: 18- 19 that says, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." May be they were thinking that I will abandon this cause for the sake of my own interest so they started humiliating me through filing of three murdered complaints that perhaps buried my whole life in the detention cell.

During my Arrest

In effect, I was arrested by virtue of a warrant of arrest on July 27, 2014. I was terribly surprised being arrested for a criminal charge that I never committed. I was supposedly plan

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to have a death anniversary celebration of my Father's deceased on July 30 in the same year and I was repairing the cemetery site. But unfortunately on July 27, in the morning, while riding on my motorcycle from pastoral house of UCCP church La Libertad to fetch my wife and son supposedly who were in our house, on my way I was suddenly blocked by a pick-up vehicle and plain clothes personnel forcibly nabbed me to get inside the vehicle were several back-ups and others wearing mask/bonnet w/ high powered rifles w/out identifying themselves. I was insisting of my arrest and shouted several times for help in nearby houses but it seems my neighbours were shock also and look at me while I was confronting and struggling against the estate authorities. I was forcibly carried and pushed to get inside the vehicle as I continued asking their identity and reasons for my arrest. But I could not avail relevant explanation from unidentified persons wearing bonnets who closely guarded me inside the vehicle. However the driver of the pick-up a police officer responded my inquiry and I confirmed that the group arrested me from joint Regional Intelligence operatives and they were only doing as instructed from their Senior Officers. Meanwhile, my wife was informed by the people who had witnessed the incident and hurriedly followed me while I was brought to the municipal police station. The tensions followed because my wife was emotionally and extremely annoyed at the police station because she demanded angrily the warrant of arrest. Later on a print copy was availed through the local police who take the picture through phone from the warrant of arrest copy from their higher units who arrested and they forced to reproduce it because my wife asserted to avail such document as a right of an accused or as a respondent. Supposedly they were not able to disclose such warrant of Arrest because the et al for such case was about 50 persons being listed. Meanwhile, my wife and I were talking in the vehicle's window while she was insisting for health reasons while I took also my medicines for my hypertension. Then, finally I knew that "Murder Case" filed against me. I was terribly shocked because I knew such case has no bail recommended. Claiming for a due process and violations for an actual implementation of the warrant of arrest was never happened and violated the Miranda rights upon the actual arrest.

Since the municipal police station nearby in our Church Vicinity and it was Sunday so members of the church were getting into alarmed and started to go through in our direction at the police station while Chairperson of our Church coming the two vehicles started to travel towards unknown direction. I was eventually brought to PNP Provincial Headquarters at camp Hamac Sicayab, Dipolog City.

They accused me of three cases for murder committed on December 5, 2012, October 15, 2012 and January 19, 2012 complaints that allegedly happened along with many other persons that lead to the issuance of warrant of arrest for the December 5, 2012. It was a desire of the authorities to completely silence me because the criminal case filed against me were three which carries a penalty of *Reclusion Perpetua*. We demanded for a due process because I was not given the opportunity to undergo Preliminary Investigation considering that these are grave offenses and I was not served with any subpoena from the office of the Provincial Prosecutor.

The Importance of the Quick Reactions Team for the HRVs

As I arrived in the said Provincial Police Headquarters I was detained and tactical interrogation was done by the Police Intelligence unit as it seemingly instructed by their Military intelligence counterparts because of their line of questioning me. They continued extracting information about my involvement and the people included in the list of the said warrant of arrest. But they were failure after all because I invoked my Miranda rights to end up their investigation. Besides, my wife, close friends, minister of the city church quickly visited me while I was at the CIDG office for technical procedure. My lawyer was informed by my wife already before I was brought out to the temporary detention facility in the said camp. I was detained from July 27, 2014 to July 30, 2014. Few days in the detention cell together with other suspected drug pusher in one cell. I received different visitors from members of the Church and close friends. However, I observed that the PNP Custodial personnel tighten their security measures for the visitors and finally they said to me that only my immediate family will be able to visit. I analysed that it seems the so called “high risk” personality policy was already implemented and my analysis was to deprive any moral and legal support with me. So this time I always push for an immediate committal and turned over with the permanent Jail facility enabled us to have a concrete legal actions and basically to avoid further interrogation and intervention with the military Intelligence using their Soft and hard approach to extract any information.

I was turn over to the Judge at the RTC Sindangan Branch on July 30, 2014 who issued the warrant of arrest together with the so called “Nanay Minda” being arrested also with a similar case with me. Prior of my travel I was check by the medical doctor at the provincial Hospital for Medical Clearance. This time my wife was accompanying me in the travel and we decided already as per as my lawyer advised to file a motion for **a preliminary investigation** or re-investigation of the murder case availing the due process because I was not able to receive any subpoena beforehand to answer such complaints. Upon my committal the letter of intent of my lawyer Atty. Claver Pajaren has prepared already for submission and that the judge has granted for a hearing schedule because it was stated in the **law that the respondent has given a chance for fifteen days to avail such remedy for a due process.**

The so called “Pastor” in Jail

When I was at the Sindangan District Jail, Sindangan Zamboanga Del Norte I couldn't imagine the crowded and congested Jail facility that I had experience. It was supposed to accommodate only 60 inmates but it was 156 already during that time when I arrived. We were just like a sardines in can or a filed clothes in the Cabinet.

We were three political detainees in the said Jail, the two female with a separate cell. We often consulted by the inmate Mayors and Inmates commander for their problem inside the jail such as food, over- crowded status that caused the jail inmates having sickness and even death. When the International Committee on the Red Cross was visiting us we lobbied our situation for an immediate action to all inmates to decongest hopefully to build another

cell to decongest the status. They replied and considered the Jail as priority because in the entire Region 1X our detention facility was the most congested and populated detainees.

When I was in jail I continued my ministry because as I entered inside the cell the inmates and the Mayor (head of the Inmates) called me already “Pastor”. They were happy and warmly welcomed me. In the following day I was ask to Preach in their Weekly Worship. During meetings of the inmates I was also consulted and asked for some advices for our common interest as inmates. They oriented me with their policies, their groups that existed such as Batang Mindanao (BM), BCJ etc. The so called tusokado and neutral group of inmates I already understood basically why they are existing. Because of the worse condition of inmates they organized themselves, they cared for their own safety as well for their health status. They created safety officer for evening to watch out those inmates experienced excessive-dreams (bangungot) that might simply cause death, and some bad dreams and simply to avoid chaos and disturbance during sleeping hours. They organized inmate duty hour for the CR to arrange whose priority and assigned their cleaners for the urinating facilities because of the many inmates in the cell. The one CR could not accommodate inside the cell so they acquired 2 gallons for urinating that’s why they assigned so called “Minarya”. They had also a gatekeeper. The most respected in all inmates aside from trustees and Mayors are the ex-convicts who has the special privilege. There was also a Bastonero who implemented the punishment after the decision made by officers for those who break policies. They gave punishment responsibly because they implemented it as part of the disciplinary actions so that there will be an order and harmonious relationship within the cell inmates. The detainees acted and help one another like a family or a little community inside the cell or in Jail. The cooking for food were done by inmates-Trustees and they were sometimes in-charge for the detention Jail gate. Inmates were also vulnerable for Jail guard exploitation in taking advantage for their own interest even if it is in violation of in-mates basic rights.

It was really a nightmare for me but I am thankful that I was visited and supported my loving and caring wife constantly, the whole family at least once a week we done our fellowship in my two and a half months in the said detention facility. The all out support of my parents-in law and relatives, our local church members and some local churches who were visiting me whether it was an initiative or an organized effort it was greatly commendable and appreciated respond. Some close family friends, UCWO members, JPHR National and NWMJ CMs and staff, and other Church Personalities like Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church, Priests of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente and Lay leaders visited me in Jail as a way of caring and sympathizing my whole family as a victim.

“If God is for us who can be against Us”

The letter of Paul in Romans chapter 8 continue to inspire me in God’s future glory. In verse 17 says...In fact we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. 18 I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. 28 We know that all things work together for good for those who love

god, who are called according to his purpose. Finally, in verse 31 says, what then are we to say about these things? ***If God is for us, who is against us?***

The joint effort in all our undertakings made by our legal counsel's defence made so strong and convincing that upon submitting our ***consolidated Judicial counter-affidavit*** refuting the allegations was a bulk of documents that the office personnel could hardly believe we could provide it such materials of all documented evidence. Similarly, supportive witnesses leaders and members of the local Church, relatives and friends who were supporting in a small and little way with my financial, technical, material and moral needs. I could not even mention one by one but I believed how the Spirit of God worked amazingly with all the people and became part of my life journey those critical times and the great turmoil that struck in my life and to our family. My released has greater impact and a sense of real drama that was greatly amazing because the day of my released order I was confine in the hospital because of dehydration. Perhaps it was an effect of my three consecutive nights and days of prayers to acquire a release paper from the judge immediately before he took his medical leave of absence for checked- up. I prayed for an immediate release and not to stay any longer in jail before complainants could make another move interrupting my release from the detention. Because I knew the fact that the decision was favourably upon me that was already on Friday October 10 by a court hearing but the judge however studies the result of the Preliminary report by the prosecutor before making any final judgement and released order as procedural and technical. Based on the information from a reliable source the judged will took his almost two weeks of medical leave and after that the supposed release order might be given. Without such release order I may stay in Jail for a weeks. And that started also of my worries and tension inside the Jail because I knew the fact based on my experienced when I facilitated political detainees before. Because I think employing such delaying tactics and processes if ever release order received for a detainee after all another warrant of arrest served and obviously it was just transferring to another detention facility facing another complaints or charges. And I was vulnerable on it because I was already implicated with other complaints that's why the so called "Trumped up and fabricated charges were popular. So, I prayed and appealed to God to intervene those crucial days of my final release. Finally, I think God answered our prayers and appeals. It was Monday morning that I realized that I was brought out to the hospital and confine for the very first time with a dextrose because I was unconsciously assist by inmates and jail guards and suddenly brought out to the hospital. It was amazing story because on that day the judge was able to return in his office before he was finally living and issued immediately the release order and was already available in the afternoon. We had process right away the two release papers, one for the hospital and one for the Jail Warden in custody was ordered to release me immediately. Jail guards in the hospital and other inmates could hardly believe the fast tract of my release. It was a month of October that our Church celebrating Indigenous Peoples and peasant solidarity month. It was really a solidarity month in effect of my timely released and of course my son's coming birthday on the 19th. It was really a big and great victory celebration and thanksgiving because I finally came up my decision to take the path in the formal Ministerial Journey whatever happens. In fact in that month my whole family rushed and went on to the Divinity school for inquiry and even to enrol right away for schooling. That was second semester already.

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Truthfully, I think it was part of an escape goat out from that painful and traumatic experienced at all. But it was not realize instead I followed the advised to continue my Lay Preacher's assignment in our Local Church until May of 2015. In addition to that the formal endorsement from Conference assembly was also needed.

The help of JPHR National for financial support in my continuing ministerial journey, Conference and sponsors and the Silliman University Divinity School considerably was a concrete contributions in the over-all healing and caring process out of my traumatic experienced as God's worker that made my life more meaningful. Thanks to you all for the Glory of Christ's Ministry. Let us all together celebrate the Victory and triumph through Christ the Liberator, the source of New Humanity. Amen.

SEMINARY LIFE

Two years ago that I revisited and celebrated the freedom that I enjoyed out from the dark side of my incarceration and being a political detainee due to Trump up and Fabricated criminal charges. I found new meaning as I was reminiscing the past and the footprints that helps me to face the reality. Indeed, the struggles continue amidst the difficult situation that sometimes shaken our life journey as a worker in God's vineyard. My wife suffers emotionally until today as we were remembering the hardships of those terrible and traumatic experienced. Our children also recovering of those nightmare in their lives and I knew deep inside their hearts and minds continues in their struggles coping up those tragic and devastated incidents that could affect may be in their emotional growth. However, God gives us new hope and new challenge embracing the commitment for discipleship as to our faith expression as we believed the liberating God of history and of life experienced.

I remembered of those helpless and crisis situation in my life when I was arrested and incarcerated. However, from then on it turned out more meaningful when I entered in the seminary as I re-affirmed God's calling and basically it was more on historical and biblical. The book of Joshua chapter 24 verses 5 reminded us and clearly stated that says, "Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods of your ancestors serve in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living: **but for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.**" In the seminary, I learned and taught that part of the healing process was to learn how to forgive? But of course to remember as well those days when my freedom temporary curtailed from the dark side of bars, walls and barbed wires matters still. Though it was dark side experienced yet it was inspiring story of my life because I learned concretely the real stories of being a Political detainee. I learned the very nature as I was Integrated with the suspected inmates on various crimes they were committed. This affirms my understanding what kind of society we have today manifested in a micro level through my experienced behind bars and to a larger context nowadays. Although it was a kind of mental torture when you were there together because majority of them were suspected in drugs, rape/acts of Lasciviousness cases, murders, piracy, various theft and qualified theft cases and etc. I keep on explaining to them the difference between Political case and common crimes. Basically we came up the sharing for a basic

human rights and the problems of the society as well. And so they were able to understand and realize the real presence of mine why I was with them in Jail. Keeping strong and embrace the political detainees sayings, “although we were physically imprisoned but our hearts and minds have freedom and it will never be imprisoned”. I realized and experienced that was true because inside the detention cell a need for education and awareness could change also their perspective in life after all. Acknowledging and appreciating them could not be avoided because they were kind and respectful that helps change my views also towards them amidst the worsening condition inside the Jail specially during sleeping time we were just like sardines inside the can. They fondly called me “Pastor”. I made it successfully because they supported and understand me. They were so concern with my health status, thus going out from a cell was easy for me and a privilege because they understand my status specially I have my hypertension. They said to me “dili man gayud ka angay dinhi Pastor” makagawas ra lagi ka. Yes! Indeed inmates were true in their point of view opposite from those others who perceived to be a “Christians” yet they are collaborators of the state authorities who also persecuted me during the time. I realized that was a positive support statement and turn it as a high point of my life while I am in the seminary today. (nga duna diay giila nga criminals sa atong katilingban yet they will understand easily on the people’s cause because they were a victims). The positive feedback from inmates made me strong and hopeful that justice prevails in all victims of trumped up and fabricated charges as well as to all victims of Human Rights.

Inside the Jail I remember that I always challenged the leadership of inmates through their Mayors and their Commanders to stand up for their rights as a human being, fighting for the common good inside the Jail especially on the health issues, like common diseases acquired because of congestion, foods, maltreatment and speedy trials on their cases. Because many of them were over staying and they supposedly release and enjoy the freedom but the processed were very slow in our judicial system. In the same manner today I think Duterte administration has deserved to hear the cries and voices of the victims. The signing of the final agreement of the Peace talks of the two parties between GRP and CPP –NPA-NDFP especially on the substantive agenda the so called CASER and Political reforms will open the just and lasting peace and so to stop filing of fabricated cases might end instead. Thus, “the cry for justice serve as my energy and the silence of my studies serve for a temporary retreat drawing lessons out of my life experiences while preparing for a final blow by blow in my Journey as a Future Worker in Christ’s vineyard and to serve the people’s cause as mandated by our faith for genuine freedom and abundant life for all.”

TESTIMONY

by Vincent Joel Salvador

Ako si Vincent Joel Salvador. 14 na taong gulang. Isang mag-aaral sa Baguio City. Hindi naman laging ganito noon. Normal at maayos ang naging buhay namin noon. Kahit may problema, kung minsan, sa pamumuhay namin bilang pamilya, gaya ng mga gastusin sa pagkain at iba pang pangangailangan, nagagawan naming ito ng paraan sa tulong ng aking ama't ina, at ng mga nakakatanda kong kapatid. Ang aking ina'y naging ilaw ng aming tahanan, tulad ng iba pang ina. Sinusuportahan ang kanyang mga anak at ginagawa ang makakaya kahit pagod. Siguro, hindi ko man lang naisip ang kanyang pinagdaraan araw-araw noon, ngunit siya pala ang gumawa ng hakbang para makatuntong ako sa kinaroonan ko noon hanggang ngayon. Nasa Ika-anim na Baitang ako noon at nag-aaral sa Saint Louis School Center nang mangyari ang hindi inaasahan. Ang kanyang biglaang pagkawala sa mundong ibabaw.

Simple lang naman ang kanyang naging trabaho sana. Pupunta lang sa mga liblib na pook ng Kordilyera, titignan ang mga proyekto ng NGO na kanyang pinagtatrabahuan, at babalik. Madalas mang walang pasalubong ay ksya na ang mahigpit at mainit na yakap, na tanda ng kanyang pagka-miss sa akin. Makailang beses naman nang kanyang ginagawa ito. Pero nang siya ay bumalik noong Setyembre 7, 2014, wala nang higpit at init na dala ang aking ina. Nasa kabaong na siya! Hindi talaga namin inashan ang sinapit ng aking ina. Wala siyang ginagawang masama, bagkus, nagtatrabaho para kapakanan ng mamamayang Kordi. Walang dahilan upang siya ay pagmalupitan. Buo ang aming paniniwala na siya ay walang awang pinaslang ng mga pwersang militar ng AFP. Dapat silang managot sa kanyang kamatayan.

Nang dumating ang kanyang katawan sa punerarya, nakita namin ang mga bakas ng ginawang pagmamaltrato at kawalanghiyaan sa kanya: mga bakas ng tortyur, sugat mula sa matalim na bagay, pagbasag sa kanyang bungo, at mga tama ng baril. Akala ko noon na hindi namin malalaman ang katotohanan, subalit, may mga lumapit na mga saksi na tumulong sa pag-ilaw sa kaso. Malinaw sa amin, na ang nangyari ay hinuli siyang buhay noong September 5, 2014, dinala siya sa kampo ng mga militar. Doon, ang ginawa lang naman nila'y saktan, pahirapan, at patayin lamang siya. Pagkatapos ay isinama ang kanyang bangkay sa mga pinaslang ding mga NPA, sinabing ang aking ina daw ay puwersa ng mga rebelde, ang NPA, kaya ganoon ang kanyang sinapit.

Nang nalaman ko itong balita na ito, hindi lamang lungkot ang nadarama ko. Galit din ang emosyon na pumasok at bumalot. Hindi ko pa rin matanggap ang kanyang sinapit hanggang sa ngayon. Lubos kong dinamdam ang kanyang biglaang pagkawala, at ang katotohanang hindi makatarungan ang paghuli, pagpapahirap at pagpatay sa kanya. Gabi nang matanggap ko ang balita mula sa aking ama. Akala ko masamang panaginip lamang ito, ngunit, natulog ako at nagising sa katotohanang wala na siya, at sa paraang hindi pa inaasahan. Ngunit, alam kong hindi na namin siya kayang ibalik pa. Hindi siya isang diyos, ni isang makapangyarihang taong may kakaibang kakayahan tulad ng mga nasa TV. Hindi rin ito isang laro sa kompyuter

na kung saan kaya mo pang mabuhay ng madami pang buhay at kung may kasama kang namatay, kayo mo silang buhayin. Ang aking ina ay tao, at hindi kahit ano. Mga tanong na lamang na wala pang sapat na kasagutan ang bumabalot sa aming panahon ng kadiliman.

Akala namin mag-isa lang kami sa panahong ito, ngunit, maraming mga taong may ginintuang puso ang nagsilbing gabay at tulong tulad ng mga NGO na nagsusulong sa karapatang pantao at katarungan para sa mga biktima sa paglabag nito, gaya ng Hustisya at Cordillera Human Rights Alliance. Kabilang sila sa mga organisasyong nagpapatuloy sa paghahanap ng sagot mula sa mga dapat managot. Hindi lamang sila ang tumutulong. Higit na nakatulong din ang UCCP, ang simbahang kinabibilangan ng aking pamilya, sa pagsulong ng ilang mga programa at movement para sa katarungan sa sinapit ng aking ina, at iba pang mga biktima sa anumang paraan. Ito ay bukod sa kanilang tulong-ispiritwal, na nakapagpapalakas sa aming mga loob bilang isang pamilya.

Matapos ang pangyayaring ito, biglang nagbago ang takbo at ikot ng aming mundo. Nagbago ang aming buhay bilang isang pamilya. Matapos kami mawalan ng isa sa mga pangunahing nagdedesisyon, malaking bagay din ang nawala sa amin, kabilang na ang dagdag na kita para sa pamilya, kung kaya ang aking ama ang siyang pangunahing nagtatrabaho para sa amin. Naging mahirap din dahil nawalan kami ng nagsilbing ilaw ng aming tahanan, at isang bahagi ng pagdedesisyon para sa pamilya ang matagal din naming hinanap. Ang mga nakatatandang kapatid ko na lamang ang pumuno sa mga pagkukulang na ito. Ang aming panganay ang nagsisilbing isa pang ulo sa pagdedesisyon, at ang pangalawa namin ang tumutulong sa mga gastusin sa bahay.

Ngayon na tumuntong na ako sa Ikawalong Baitang, unti-unting nabuo ang aking kaisipan ngayon. Kung hindi dahil sa pangyayaring ito, hindi rin magbabago ang aking pag-iisip. Nahubog ng pangyayaring ito ang pagkatao ko sa kasalukuyan: isang matibay, matalino, at may kamalayan sa mga nangyayari ngayon. Inaasahan ko na sa mga susunod pang panahon, makakamit din natin ang isang lipunang patas at walang pinapanigan sa anumang paraan at pagkakataon. Umaasa ako sa isang lipunan kung saan hindi magiging mahirap ang pagkamit ng katarungan para sa mga nangangailanan, kung saan ang lahat ay magiging masaya sa pamumuhay at hindi na maririnig ang umaalingasaw na putok ng baril kung saan hindi ito kailangan. Umaasa akong maging ilaw rin sana ang mga kabataang tulad ko nang malaman din ng ibang tao ang tunay na nangyayari at makialam din sa mga isyu para na rin sa susunod na henerasyon. Umaasa rin ako na balang araw, maririnig ang aming kwento, kasama ang iba pang kwento ng mga pamilyang nilabag ang mga karapatang pantao, upang mabuo ito. Pwede itong mabuo sa pamamagitan ng mga reporma sa ilang aspekto ng pamamalakad ng bansa, mga batas na magpapauna sa kapananan ng taumbayan, at iba pang paraan bilang isang demokratikong bansa.

UPDATES OF THE JUSTICE, PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM

1. Introduction

This update report covers JPHR programs and activities implemented from the last quarter of the last E.Y. June 2015-May 2016 until December of E.Y. June 2016-May 2017. This contains concrete expressions of the UCCP consistent manifestation of its Prophetic Witness or Ministry within this particular historical milieu in response to the reality of continuing social injustices accumulated from the past government administrations of the Philippines which are still prevailing until this “change” promising government under President Rodrigo Roa Duterte. These programs and activities are manifestations and articulations as well in particular of the UCCP’s three-point goals: 1) *To strengthen the Faith Community*; 2) *To Enrich the Life of the Community where Local Churches are located*; and, 3) *To Deepen the Impact of our Collective Response to the Societal Issues and Concerns* under its mission of creating and uniting faith communities for the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus essential to the realization of its vision for a transformed church and society towards an abundant life for all!

2. The Four Major Focus:

- a) **Capability Building** – *refers to educational mechanisms that enable the church constituents (Judicatories, Organizations and Institutions) knowledgeable on what Prophetic Ministry of the UCCP is all about through the Justice, Peace and Human Rights Program and therefore engage accordingly in their respective area of mission and ministry.*

a.1. Gave Input on the Prophetic Ministry of the UCCP to: 1) The Southern-Western Leyte Conference (SWLC) United Church Workers (UCWO) Training on Human Rights Advocacy held December 3-4, 2015 at the UCCP Maasin City, Southern Leyte. The JPHR Program distributed to all who attended a resource material on “*Churches As Human Rights Defenders*”; 2) The National Christian Youth Fellowship CEN Commission during their production meeting process of the Youth Bible Study Materials held on July 29, 2016 at the Conference Room, 3rd Floor UCCP National Office Building, 877 EDSA, West Triangle, Quezon City; 3) The United Church Workers Organization (UCWO) of the Southern Tag-alog Conference Peace Forum with some invited ecumenical partners held last August 2, 2016 at the UCCP San Pablo City, Laguna; 4) The UCWO of the Manila North Conference during their Continuing Theological Education (CTE) Meeting on August 23, 2016 at the UCCP Penaranda, Nueva Ecija, and, 5) The 2nd NUCWO Encounter 2016 Interest Group Discussion on Peace-Making held on October 26, 2016 at the Union Theological Seminary, Pala-Pala, Dasmaringas City, Cavite.

a.2. Revival of The Wednesday Forum – Historically, the Wednesday Forum was organized originally by prominent personalities, no less than the late Senator Jovito R. Salonga and the late Rev. Dr. Cirilo Rigos, among others, during the dark

days of Martial Law under the dictator President Ferdinand E. Marcos. Eventually, it faded away even after several attempts had been initiated for continuity in recent past.

The recent revival of The Wednesday Forum (TWF) started with series of meetings of the new wider set of Convenors from different UCCP church judicatories and one ecumenical partner within the National Capital Region (Metro Manila). This emanates as a result of collective realization and acknowledgement of its (TWF) significance as venue for the church constituents to engage in study and discussions on critical social issues affecting the Philippines as a people, as a nation in the light of the Biblical faith, coupled with the challenging course of events at the advent of the “change” promising government of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte.

The Re-Launching was held at 1:00-4:00PM on October 26, 2016 at the UCCP Cosmopolitan Church, Taft Avenue, Ermita, Manila which focused on “*The GPH and NDFP Peace Process: Its Impact to the Plight of the Filipino Indigenous Peoples*” with OPAPP Secretary Jesus Dureza, NDFP Consultant Benito Tiamzon and Ka Satur Ocampo of MAKABAYAN as Main Speakers and three (3) IPs leaders as Reactors. The second fora was held November 23, same time and venue which discussion focused on “*Crime, Drugs & Human Dignity: The Government’s War on Drugs and the Church’s Response*” with PNP Director General Ronald “Bato” M. De la Rosa, thru PSSupt. Joel Napoleon M. Coronel, MPD Director and PSSupt. Mario Navarro Rariza, Jr., and Rev. Dr. Mariano Apilado, Jr, as Main Speakers, and Mr. Jigs Clamor of KARAPATAN, NCR as Reactor. This is projected, so far, as a monthly activity which schedule has already been set until June 2016.

a.3. Participated in the Training on Churches as HR Defenders sponsored by the NCCP – The UCCP JPHR Program Coordinator attended the Training on “Churches As Defenders of Human Rights” sponsored by the Commission of Christian Witness and Service of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (CWS-NCCP) held on September 5-7, 2016 at the Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Bishop La Verne Mercado Bldg., NCCP Compound, 879 EDSA, West Triangle, Quezon City.

a.4. Participated in the ICPRP 2016 – The JPHR Program Coordinator, together with two youth interns from the United Evangelical Mission (UEM), Jenaba Samura and Flora von Mikulicz Radecki, participated in the 2nd International Conference on People’s Rights in the Philippines held July 16-25, 2016 in Davao City. Such participation generally ***aims to concretely manifest the UCCP’s commitment and dedication to prophetic witness by deepening the impact of our collective response, with other ecumenical and multi-sectoral partners, to the societal issues and concerns that affect the life-work of the whole nation, the global community and all of God’s creation.***

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a.5. The production of the HR Week Guide 2016 – We tried to ensure the production of this project every year timely implemented during the second week of December simultaneous with the celebration of the UN Declaration of Human Rights Day (Dec. 10). This project aims to provide our church judicatories, organizations and institutions (JOIs) with a suggestive resource-material, to strengthen our congregational life's faith, as we continue to journey together, thru study and worship that will inspire us to manifest our public witness in living out a kind of spirituality we need so badly to give flesh to our faith profession in these critical times.

b) Direct Services – *refers to concrete support in terms of finance and other relevant interventions as expression of our continues pilgrimage with the surviving families, groups, and/or communities who have been victims of human and/or people's rights violations, in their search for justice and as they recuperate from pain and loss of loved ones towards a future life with hope and meaning.*

b.1. Educational Support to Studying Children of UCCP Church Workers and Lay Leaders who were victims of Human Rights Violations – Continues educational support to children of UCCP Pastors and Laymen who were victims of human rights violations. At present, we still have twenty-two pupils/students from elementary, high school and college. Last E.Y. June 2015-May 2016, we extended Educational Support the amount of P 374, 000.00 to 17 children/students. There are five (5) selected students at present who are receiving P4,400.00 monthly from the PROK. Unfortunately, there are four (4) students who quitted from schooling starting last school year June 2015 to May 2016. But five students had already graduated from college since this program started in 2007.

The JPHR Program held two meetings for Assessment, Monitoring, and Debriefing processes supposedly with all these students. For the Mindanao Group, the meeting was held last May 20, 2016 at the UCCP Aleosan, North Cotabato attended by six (6) students and three (3) chaperons. While the meeting for Luzon and Visayas Group was held in May 25, 2016 at the UCCP National Office, 877 EDSA, West Triangle, Quezon City, attended by thirteen (13) students and four (4) chaperons. Three (3) students were not able to attend for some reasons beyond control.

The financial support of this program comes from our UCCP mission partners abroad, namely, the United Evangelical Mission (UEM), United Church in Canada (UCC), United Church of Christ-USA (UCC-USA), and the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea (PROK).

b.2. Financial support to the fisherfolks in Maragondon, Cavite – We extended financial support amounting P 100,000.00, requested by the South Luzon Jurisdiction (SLJ), for the Ecumenical Relief and Mercy Mission spearheaded by the

SLJ for the benefit of the fisherfolks in Maragondon, Cavite who are victims of enforced displacement due to the Public Private Partnership on tourism project development in that coastal area. Likewise, an amount of P10,000.00 was granted thru SLJ for the Environmental Investigative Mission in Calaca, Batangas participated by Church Workers from NESTCON, STC and BAC with ecumenical and multi-sectoral partners relative to the issues of land grabbing and environmental degradation that are being unfortunately experienced by residents along the sea coast of Calaca due to the coal mining and power plant operation by multi-national corporations.

b.3. Financial support to NWMJ (P25,000) – The said amount was contributed for the Relief and Mercy Mission to the clan of Lumad from San Fernando, Bukidnon having temporary encampment in front of the Provincial Capitol building in Malaybalay City, Bukidnon due intensive harassment thru massacre and EJK allegedly perpetrated by Alde “Butsoy” Salusad and his accomplices, a leader of the paramilitary group, the New Indigenous People’s Army for Reform (NIPAR)

b.4. Financial Support to SEMJ project of Sanctuary of Lumad Refugees at the UCCP Haran Missin Center – In partnership with the United Evangelical Mission (UEM), we were able to provide financial support to the on-going sanctuary program to the Lumad taking refuge at UCCP Haran Mission Center for almost two years now. Recently, on November 8, this year, we turned-over various farming tools and agricultural production inputs to help start their livelihood for economic rehabilitation as they (Lumad) go back to their respective tribal communities.

b.5. Trumped-Up related Cases and Counter Filing of Case Against Likewise, we extended same kind of support for legal expenses in defence to our Pastors and Lay people with trumped-up charges filed by state agents, military and/or police. Aside from those trumped-up charges that had already been dismissed by courts for lack of legal evidence during the previous E.Y. June 2014 to May 2016, to include that of Pastor Francisco Bunoan of the North Luzon Jurisdiction (NLJ), Bro. Benjie Gomez of North-West Mindanao Jurisdiction (NWMJ), Rev. Roger Rafalez, Rev. Allen Bill Veloso and Rev. Jurie Jaime of the South-East Mindanao Jurisdiction (SEMJ), and Rev. Irma M. Balaba of the East Visayas Jurisdiction (EVJ-assigned to NCCP), there are two most recent cases where the UEM financial assistance for this project was expended.

The **first**, was the **Filing of Petition for Lifting the Issuance of Warrant of Arrest and Dismissal of the Case** by the “Haran 14” at the Department of Justice, Manila. The Warrant of Arrest was issued by the Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 10, Davao City against 14 identified leaders of human rights advocates and defenders including a nun, a UCCP pastor (Rev. Jurie Jayme) and a son of a Lumad UCCP pastor (Kerlan Fanagen), **allegedly for kidnapping and illegal detention** related to the scuffle between Lumad evacuees and the police at the UCCP Haran in Davao City,

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July 23, 2015, which was led by North Cotabato Representative Nancy Catamco. This recent harassment by the state happened at the tail-end of the administration of President Benigno Aquino III. UCCP wonders why this case was re-filed by the Department of Justice when it was **already dismissed** last September 2015 by the Davao City Prosecutor's office for **insufficiency of evidence**. This appears as mere harassment and intimidation against the church and human rights defenders, contrary to the actions of the Davao City government as ordered by its former mayor now President Rodrigo Duterte to assist and help the Lumad evacuees. The UN Special Rapporteur Dr. Chaloka Beyani who personally visited the LUMAD at UCCP Haran Mission Center in September 2015 attested in his statement, "Let me be absolutely clear, the indigenous persons in Davao are not victims of human trafficking."

The **second**, was the counter filing of **Administrative Case No. D3-005-15**, on "**Grave Misconduct**" filed by Bishop Hamuel Tequis (UCCP-SEMJ), et.al. versus Colonel Mervin Pepino, et.al. related to the forcible entry breaking the closed gate number 2 of UCCP Haran Mission Center and other related violations by elements of Philippine National Police (PNP), last July 23, 2015. The case was filed before the Department of Justice (DOJ) through the City Prosecutor's Office, Davao City on July 31, 2016. The first preliminary hearing of this case was held on November 12, 2016 before the People's Law Enforcement Board (PLEB), 3rd Congressional District, Sanguniang Panlungsod (City Councilor's) Bldg., Davao City.

b.6. Continues support to the on-going campaign to SAVETHELIFE OF MARY JANE VELOSO – Since last E.Y. June 2015-May 2016 until today, we continue to support the on-going campaign of the Church Task Force to SAVETHELIFE OF MAY JANE VELOSO from death penalty by the Indonesian government. Honesty & truth in the testimony of MJV related to her case and the sanctity of her life that need to be respected and uphold are key factors that inspire and challenge faith-based organization, including UCCP, to respond passionately to this concern.

- c) **UCCP Legal Suit versus the former President Gloria M. Arroyo (GMA)** – A special project for Justice to HRVs victims and end the Culture of Impunity in the Philippines. A "Damage Suit" filed in court on 2011 making the former President liable for human rights violations against several UCCP Pastors and Lay Leaders allegedly committed by state agents military and police) and operatives who, by law, were then all under the ultimate control and command responsibility of GMA as the country's President and Commander-in-Chief implementing anti-insurgency Oplan Bantay Laya program under the National Security Act of the government.

On September 9, 2016, the Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 226 of Quezon City made a ruling in favour of the Defendant who filed a "demurrer" on the case. After a case consultation of our lawyers and UCCP leaders, we decided to file a Motion for Reconsideration before the Courts of Appeal, Manila, in order to pursue the

litigation of the case. A pattern has been noticed that almost all cases filed in court against the former Pres. Gloria M. Arroyo has been dismissed allegedly with "political influence." The UCCP legal retainer observed that the UCCP Legal Suit versus Pres. GMA is much **stronger in terms of evidence** than the case of "Morong 43" which won in court.

- d) **Linkages/Alliances with Ecumenical and Multi-Sectoral Mission Partners local and abroad on JPHR Advocacy, Campaign and Mobilization** – refers to our humble engagement and/or participation in various Justice, Peace and Human Rights advocacy, campaign and mobilization programs and activities recognizing that we have not the only monopoly of doing these things.

d.1. Participated in the International Solidarity Mission (ISM) – This (ISM) was part of the International Conference on Peoples’ Rights in the Philippines on July 16-25, 2016. This was basically a Fact-Finding Mission to know the real situation of the peasants, small farmers, fisher folks and Indigenous Peoples in different parts of the Philippines. I was assigned to the International Group that went on July 16-20 to Maramag, Bukidnon, particularly to the Buffalo, Tamaraw & Limus (BTL) peasant’s communities who have been struggling for land of their own as provided by government’s Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) and Program (CARP), versus the Central Mindanao University (CMU). Violation of peoples’ rights to land and food security committed by the state thru the CMU is the **severe harassment and intimidation** by filling a case of **“Illegal Entry”** to the 400 hectares of agricultural land concession by CMU against the BTL peasants who have been occupying and telling that idle land since 1980’s (even though it was made legally valid by virtue of the Department of Agrarian Reform’s (DAR) declaration in 1986 as under the CARP for land distribution), and other related violations committed by the “blue guards” of the school. The real score is because CMU is going to have that area of land be leased by multi-national corporations such as Dole Philippines and others. The ISM Group assigned to this area instituted a Press Statement of support to the BTL peasant peoples’ victories and struggle for their rights to land and life during the Press Conference held in Valencia City, Bukidnon Province on July 20, 2016.

The two UEM interns, Jenaba Samura and Flora von Mikulicz Radecki, joined the groups assigned to Tandag-Lianga, Davao del Sur and Talaingod, Davao del Norte respectively related to know the miserable plight of the IPs (Lumad) who have been victims of **“forced displacement and evacuation”** due to development aggression and intensive militarization in their tribal communities.

d.2. Participated in the NIFSM in Malaybalay, Bukidnon on Sept. 27-29, 2016 – The Ecumenical Voice of the Philippines, of which the UCCP is a part of, organized a National Inter-Faith Solidarity Mission (NIFSM) to know the real situation of the Lumad headed by Datu Jimboy Manglait belonging to a tribe in San Fernando,

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Bukidnon Province, who have been encamping for several months now since August 2016 in front of the Provincial Capitol Building of Bukidnon as a way to save their lives from intensive harassment by the NIPAR, headed by Alde “Butsoy” Salusad, who killed Datu Jimmy Liguyon in 2015 and other IP leaders in the area, and massacred Lumad people belonging to this tribe, while having a wedding ceremony. The mission team, during the Press Conference held in Cagayan de Oro City, called and challenged appropriate government agencies, including Bukidnon Governor Jose Maria Zubiri, to intentionally expedite the arrest Alde “Butsoy” Salusad and his accomplices of the NIPAR, who already has two pending Warrant of Arrests, in order that the administration of justice be processed accordingly.

d.3. Contribution to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Watch 2017 – The UCCP thru the JPHR Program was given a slot as one of the different sectors contributing for the production and presentation of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) 2017 to the UNHR Council on May 2017. (See full copy of UCCP Alternative Report of UPR at the Annex pages for recent Press Releases and/or Pastoral Statements of the UCCP).

e) JPHR Program Photo Gallery



(Meeting of the UCCP JPHR Scholars, Mindanao Group, 6 students and 3 chaperons with the National Coordinator held at UCCP Eleosan, North Cotabato on May 2015)



(Meeting of the UCCP JPHR Scholars, Luzon-Visayas Group, 13 students and 4 chaperons with the National Coordinator held on May 25, 2015 at th UCCP National Office)



(A Press Conference culminated the Peace Forum held at Candon City, Ilocos Sur on September 3, 2015 which highlighted the release of Pastor Francisco Bunoan, Jr. (Photo A: seated at extreme left with chequered white polo; Photo B: Inset) after the court ordered to dismiss the case for no legal evidence on the trumped-up charges against him of three counts murder and 2 counts of frustrated murder filed by the state agents – military and police)



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Pastoral visit by members of the North-West Mindanao Jurisdictional Area Cabinet with JPHR Program National Coordinator, Rev. Jerome C. Baris to Political Prisoner with Trumped-up/Criminal Charges, Local Lay Preacher Benjie Gomez at Sindangan District Jail, Zamboanga del Norte.



Rev. Irma M. Balaba (left) and Rev. Allen Bill Veloso (right), UCCP Pastors who are HR advocates and defenders with dismissed Trumped-Up Charges



The “Haran 14” having consultation with Human Rights lawyers while waiting for a dialogue with the new Department Of Justice (DOJ) Secretary, Atty. Betaliano Aguire at the reception area of the DOJ Bldg., Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila.

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The “**Haran 14**”, HR Lawyers and Advocates having dialogue at DOJ Conference Room, with DOJ Sec. Betaliano Aguire who assured to dismiss the Trumped-Up Charges against the “**Haran 14**” (including UCCP Pastor Rev. Jurie Jaime with clerical collar) filled by the DOJ of previous administration under Pres. Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III.



Consultation of the complainant party, Bishop Hamuel Tequis, et.al., with Human Rights Lawyers on the **Administrative Case No. D3-005-15** versus Colonel Mervin Pepino, et.al., in preparation for the first hearing scheduled on November 12, 2016 before the People’s Law Enforcement Board (PLEB), 3rd Congressional District, Sangguniang Panlungsod Bldg., Davao City.



School kiddie and primary pupils attending classes belonging to the children of the remaining tribal groups from Talaingod and Kapalong Davao del Norte at the UCCP Haran Mission Center.



Two students' cottages of UCCP Haran Mission Center caught by fire including a motorcycle of a student allegedly perpetrated by men belonging to the ALAMARA Para-military groups.





Turn-over Ceremony of various farm tools and agricultural inputs (hundreds of cassava stems and certified vegetables seedlings) by the UCCP-SEMJUR intended for the rehabilitation of livelihood of the Lumads belonging to the tribal groups of Talaingod and Kapalong, Davao del Norte held November 8, 2016 at the UCCP Haran Mission Center compound, Davao City.



This pictures are taken in one of the Prayer Vigils held in front of the Quezon City Hall of Justice simultaneous to the courtroom hearing of the UCCP Legal Suit versus the former Pres. Gloria M. Arroyo seeking justice for some UCCP Pastors and Lay people who were victims of human rights violations. The case is now elevated to the Court of Appeals, Manila to pursue the litigation.



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August 24, 2016

ON THE RESUMPTION OF THE PEACE TALKS

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."

For over four (4) decades now, the armed conflict between the government of the Philippines and the New People's Army CPP/NDFP had been disturbing the Filipino people especially those in the peripheral areas of the countryside. Such conflict had, in fact, caused the senseless death of countless Filipinos.

As a Church, the UCCP unequivocally affirms the wisdom of the Scriptures "**So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.**" (Romans 14:19)

Hence, we laud the efforts of no less than President Rodrigo R. Duterte on the resumption of peace negotiation between the government and the CPP-NDFP and other armed groups precisely to address the decades-long problem of unpeace in the country and finally put an end to the horror of armed hostilities.

Even as we say this, we also reiterate our earlier pronouncement as a Church,

"Genuine peace comes when justice is served.

- ***For as long as peasants remain landless,***
- ***For as long as laborers do not receive just wages,***
- ***For as long as we are politically and economically dominated by foreign nations,***
- ***For as long as we channel more money to the military than to basic social services,***
- ***For as long as the causes of social unrest remain untouched,
... there will be no peace."***

(Peacemaking: Our Ministry, August 21, 1986)

In our desire to be true to our calling, we emphatically declare our resolve to support the resumption of peace negotiations between the government and the CPP-NPA-NDFP. Resumption of peace talks is necessary to conjointly arrive at an agreement that addresses the root causes of conflicts. There may be hurdles or complications along the way, but that is precisely the reasons why peace negotiation is necessary.

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We therefore support the on-going formal peace talks between the government and the CPP-NPA-NDFP that the genuine and lasting peace our people so ardently yearn for may finally be attained.

On behalf of the UCCP National Council, UCCP COUNCIL OF BISHOPS


Bishop Reuel Norman O. Marigza
General Secretary


Bishop Elorde M. Sambat
*Bishop Assigned to North Luzon
Jurisdictional Area*


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


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


Bishop Jaime R. Moriles
*Bishop Assigned to East Visayas
Jurisdictional Area*


Bishop Jezer E. Bertoldo
*Bishop Assigned to West Visayas
Jurisdictional Area*


Bishop Melzar D. Labuntog
*Bishop Assigned to North West Mindanao
Jurisdictional Area*


Bishop Hamuel G. Tequis
Bishop Assigned to South East Mindanao Jurisdictional Area

Bishops Emeritus

BISHOP ARTURO R. ASI
BISHOP ISAIAS L. BINGTAN
BISHOP ELMER M. BOLOCON
BISHOP ERME R. CAMBA
BISHOP EBENEZER C. CAMINO
BISHOP CONSTANTE D. CLARO
BISHOP GABRIEL A. GAROL
BISHOP HILARIO M. GOMEZ, JR.
BISHOP MARINO I. INONG

BISHOP OSIAS B. JAIM
BISHOP JUAN A. MARIGZA
BISHOP ROEL P. MENDOZA
BISHOP ELIEZER M. PASCUA
BISHOP DULCE PIA-ROSE
BISHOP ANACLETO SERAFICA
BISHOP JESSIE S. SUAREZ
BISHOP RIZALINO Q. TAGANAS
BISHOP MODESTO VILLASANTA



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August 24, 2016

NO TO KILLINGS

"You shall not kill"

(Exodus 20:13)

"For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

(John 3:17)

LIFE is a sacred gift of God. It must, therefore, be defended, protected and safeguarded.

The proliferation and use of illegal drugs disrespect life and the campaign against the drug trade must be relentlessly pursued by government as it puts the lives of people and the future of the nation at stake. We, therefore, laud and support the Duterte administration on its effort to rid our country of this social scourge.

However, in the pursuit of this noble objective, there has been a rising number of killings and violence that are apparently consequences of the government's intensified efforts to quell illegal drugs syndicates and their minions.

This is a troubling development, thus, we are compelled now to voice out our sentiments in keeping with our Christian faith.

Everyone must be accorded the right of due process. But the alarming spate of extra-judicial killings since the onset of President Duterte's administration undeniably tells us that the dignity and sanctity of human life is unashamedly desecrated; and that due process is ignored in the zealotry of the law enforcers to their duty.

We are afraid that such brutal way will eventually be used to cover up for possible executions of those human rights advocates and defenders.

We cannot simply remain quiet and unmoved. We cannot condone all those killings. The killings must be abated and stopped. Rid the country of drug lords and drug syndicates without forfeiting the God-given life.

**On behalf of the UCCP National Council,
UCCP COUNCIL OF BISHOPS**


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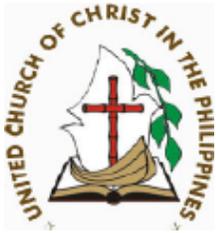

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ALTERNATIVE REPORT ON THE PHILIPPINES

SUBMITTED TO THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER ON HUMAN RIGHTS

*For the 27th Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
in the United Nations Human Rights Council on May 2017
Third Cycle of the UPR on the Philippines*

SUBMITTED BY:

United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP)

The United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) is an ecumenical protestant denomination that is committed and dedicated in manifesting prophetic witness of the Church as a collective response to the need to bring wholeness of life all of God's creation. It was established in May 25, 1948 when five distinct church's denominations which originated from the United States of America (USA), United Brethren, Church of Christ (Disciples), Congregational, Presbyterian, and the Philippine Methodist Church, have transformed into one organic church. *"The UCCP believes, that persons are created in the image of God and destined to live in community with God, with other persons and with all creation. That being entrusted with God's creation, they are called to participate in the establishment of a just and compassionate social order, a foretaste of God's Kingdom. The UCCP believes further, that the Kingdom of God is present 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."* (UCCP Statement of Faith)ⁱ.

1. This report focuses on the recent persecution and harassment being experienced by the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) and some of its constituents as a result of its commitment and engagement in manifesting its prophetic ministry as a faith imperative, through its justice, peace and human rights program and advocacy.
2. The human rights violations perpetrated by agents of the state against some UCCP Pastors and laypeople shifted from Extra-Judicial Killings (the latest being the murder of Datu Jimmy Liguyon in March 5, 2012)^j into intense surveillance, intimidation, vilification and trumped-up charges filed in courts in different parts of the country during the period of January 2013 to the present.

In regard to the trumped-up charges and harassment cases, we have been able to prove legally that cases were fabricated and all have been dismissed due to lack of evidence.

3. On August 20, 2013, surveillance operations on Pastor June Ver Mangao were conducted by intelligence agents of the 1st Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army, under the command of Col. Jose Augusto Villareal based in Sta. Maria, Laguna. Two unidentified persons visited three UCCP Mabitac Church Council officers in separate incidents within that day. Using different fictitious stories: namely, being CAFGU looking for a born-again Church in Paagahan where the UCCP Mabitac Chairperson resides; asking the name and whereabouts of the Pastor just three houses away from the UCCP Chapel while pretending to ask about other church affairs. All of these UCCP members were asked the same questions about Pastor June Ver and his whereabouts. They even attempted to secure Pastor June Ver's picture. The Chief of Police of Mabitac and his police intelligence officer confirmed that the surveillance was done by elements of Philippine Army in order to verify Pastor June Ver's alleged links to the revolutionary movement.ⁱ
4. After he graduated from Union Theological Seminary in March 2013, Pastor June Ver started his ministry with the UCCP Mabitac in Laguna where he has shown exemplary passion for Church mission. Within a short time, he successfully organized a mission outreach in Brgy. Kabulusan, Pakil, Laguna which is about 15 kilometers away and was able to put up a community center for children and parents' development, serving the poorest among the poor in the community. Proven with his capability and potential, he was entrusted by the North-East Tagalog Conference as Chairman of its Community Ministries Committee where his passion for the ministry to the poor was seen as a way of life. He leads the Prison Ministry in Laguna Provincial Jail giving regular visit to the so called "Lumban 3" political prisoners and effectively organized the church people's presence during court hearings. Both Pastor June Ver and the Conference have no other inkling as to the reason why he was threatened, harassed and intimidated.
5. We view Pastor June Ver's surveillance as an affront to the UCCP as a whole. The UCCP Northeast Southern Tagalog Conference has reported persistent surveillance. It is an example of the ongoing harassment and assaults on the UCCP. In August 2013, Pastor June Ver, upon the advice of the church, filed a case on harassment before the Commission on Human Rights. After the case was dismissed, Pastor June Ver never experienced harassment anymore.ⁱⁱ
6. Trumped-up charges were also brought against Pastor Francisco Bunoan Jr., involving 3 counts of murder and 2 counts of frustrated murder and was subsequently dismissed on August 26, 2015 for having no legal merit. The attempt was to implicate Pastor Bunoan in an incident on November 10, 2014 when members of the New People's Army (NPA) attacked members of the 81st Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army (IBPA) illegally holding the detachment at the basketball court of Bugbuga, Sta Cruz, Ilocos Sur. Pastor Bunoan is 62 years old, a resident of Aringay, La Union, a retired UCCP pastor who has been serving as volunteer research staff for the Community Ministry Program of the UCCP-North Luzon Jurisdictional Area (UCCP-NLJA).ⁱ
7. Trumped-up charges were also been filed against Bro. Benjie Gomez, Local Lay Preacher of UCCP La Libertad, Zamboanga del Norte, involving 1 Count of Murder and 2 Counts

of Frustrated Murder before the RTC Branch 11 of Sindangan, Zamboanga Del Norte, by plaintiff 1Lt. Arlene Quijano Palafox of PA 10th IB “Alpha Coy based in Leon B. Postigo. He was illegally arrested on July 27, 2014 while riding his motorcycle on his way to fetch his wife and son to go to Church for Sunday worship at Poblacion La Libertad, Zamboanga del Norte. He was implicated in the killing of CPL Marwin D. Ybanez during an encounter between the Philippine Army and the NPA on December 3, 2012 at Sitio Napolan, Bgy. Tinuyop, Leon B. Postigo, Zamboanga del Norte. The case was quashed for lack of evidence in May 2015.ⁱ

8. In Southern Mindanao, two UCCP ordained ministers, Rev. Roger Rafalez and Rev. Allen Bill Veloso, were among 20 activists and human rights defenders who had trumped-up charges filed against them on June 17, 2015 involving attempted murder, violations of RA 7610 and RA 9851 otherwise known as the “Philippine Act on Crimes Against International Humanitarian Law, Genocide, and other Crimes Against Humanity.” Charges were filed by PO2 Jegz Bryan L. Salutan of Philippine National Police Alabel and PFC Charlito B. Tunggak of 73rd Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army. The attempted murder case related to an encounter between New People’s Army (NPA) and 73rd Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army in Brgy. Upper Suyan, while the Violation of RA 7610 and RA 9851 was related to the evacuation of B’laan Lumads whom they supported in seeking refuge and access to foods and medicines at the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) Compound, Brgy. San Isidro, General Santos City from May 23 to June 13, 2015.ⁱ
9. Trumped-up charges of Kidnapping, Serious Illegal Detention, and Human Trafficking were filed against Rev. Irma M. Balaba of UCCP Faith Bible Church, Quezon City, and serving as Program Assistant of the Christian Unity and Ecumenical Relations of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP). This stemmed from her participation in an Interfaith Mercy Mission which was held on August 29-31, 2014 in Barangay Gupitan, Kapalong, Davao del Norte over the harassment, killings and displacements of Lumad.ⁱ Rev. Jorie Jayme, Christian Witness & Service Worker of Southern Mindanao District Conference, Pastor of UCCP Dolo and Member of the Board of Trustees of the UCCP Brokenshire College, Davao City was also charged in the same case arising from his active participation in the humanitarian response of the UCCP in cooperation with ecumenical and multi-sectoral mission partners providing sanctuary for hundreds of Lumad people at UCCP Haran Peace Center in Davao City. After a few months of court litigation, their case was dismissed for no legal merit.ⁱ

On UCCP Haran Incidents: *Desecration of Church Mission and Ministry of Upholding Human and People’s Rights*

10. In the early morning of June 23, 2015, elements of the Philippine National Police (PNP) in full riot gear, along with a paramilitary group named ALAMARA and with fire trucks and military vehicles began massing outside the UCCP Haran Mission House Compound. They

were led by a certain Col. Marvin Pepino. Without presenting any warrant or court order, they forcibly entered the Church premises by destroying the gate. This happened as Church officials were facilitating a dialogue between the indigenous leaders and representatives from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the National Commission for Indigenous People (NCIP). The DSWD Assistant Director Perlita Demaquiling stated that they were ordered by the Office of the President through the DSWD Secretary to get the women and children in the Haran Mission Compound. The *datus* refused the offer. The UCCP National Program Coordinator of the JPHR, Rev. Jerome C. Baris, suggested that the concerned agencies extend their services in the evacuation area, instead of forcing them to go back to their tribal communities without definite assurance of their security. The dialogue had just ended when for unknown reasons, a command was given to the PNP present to force their way in. Apparently there was no coordination with the local government unit, as the PNP immediately withdrew when Davao Vice-Mayor Paolo Duterte arrived on the scene.

11. The PNP did not have any warrant to enter and search the Church facility, a private property. HARAN Mission Center, owned by UCCP, has long been a Peace Sanctuary for the least of our people. It is a place purposely created to accommodate individuals or communities that have been deprived of their civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. Our fellow *Ata-Manobos* have sought help and refuge in our Church since 1994, the first of a series of internal displacements due to militarization that happened in the countryside.
12. Providing sanctuary in our peace haven is a ministry we embrace arising from our own UCCP Declaration of Principles., to wit: *“In accordance with the biblical understanding that all persons are created in the image of God, the Church affirms and upholds the inviolability of the rights of persons as reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights . . . and those that specifically to refugees, women, youth, children, minority groups and other persons who cannot safeguard their own rights.”* (Art II Sec 11, UCCP Constitution). *“The United Church of Christ in the Philippines affirms its historic faith and its pastoral and prophetic witness in the life and culture of the Filipino people. The Church supports the people’s aspiration for abundant life and holistic redemption from all forms of bondage, in accordance with the vision of the reign of God* (Art II Sec 8, UCCP Constitution).ⁱ
13. Intentional desecration of the UCCP properties and ministries continued when in the early morning of February 24, 2016 at around 2:30 am, the Lumads were frightened upon finding that two cottages were intentionally set on fire as well an attempt made to burn down the evacuation camp in the UCCP HARAN Compound. Two unidentified men who forced their way inside the premises of HARAN Mission House were seen departing from the area on a motorcycle.ⁱ

14. The most recent harassment by the state at the tail-end of the administration of President Benigno Aquino III was the issuance of an arrest warrant by the Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 10, Davao City against 14 identified leaders of activist groups including a nun, a UCCP pastor and a son of a UCCP pastor, allegedly for kidnapping and illegal detention related to the scuffle between Lumad evacuees and the police at the UCCP Haran in Davao City, July 23 last year, which was led by North Cotabato Representative Nancy Catamco. The UCCP wonders why this case was re-filed by the Department of Justice when it was already dismissed last September 2015 by the Davao City Prosecutor's office for insufficiency of evidence. This appears as mere harassment and intimidation against the church and human rights defenders, contrary to the actions of the Davao City government as ordered by its former mayor now President Rodrigo Duterte to assist and help the Lumad evacuees. The UN Special Rapporteur Dr. Chaloka Beyani who personally visited the LUMAD at UCCP Haran Mission Center in September 2015 attested in his statement, *"Let me be absolutely clear, the indigenous persons in Davao are not victims of human trafficking."*
15. Even worse is the obvious effort to despoil and smear the integrity of our church people and human rights defenders and put their lives in danger by posting unsigned banners and *"wanted"* posters in public places around Davao City.
16. The UCCP deplores all these acts of harassment committed against our church people and against peace advocates and human rights defenders.¹
- 17. The UCCP makes the following recommendations to the United Nation Human Rights Council to call on the Philippine Government to:**
- I. Stop all forms of threats, surveillance, intimidation, vilification and other form of harassment against Church people exercising their religious and political beliefs
 - II. Stop the desecration of places of Church mission and worship and other places offending religious rites/practices and ministries.
 - III. Discontinue the practice of criminalizing political offenses and actions for acts in pursuit of one's political beliefs at the arrest, investigation, prosecution and trial stages and uphold the political offense doctrine by charging the proper political charges instead of trumped-up common crimes.
 - IV. To undertake every effort towards the punishment of human rights violation perpetrators in order to bring justice to victims. This may involve making changes in country's criminal justice procedures. Punishment of the perpetrators is a huge first step in the ending of impunity.
 - V. Discontinue the arbitrary, unfounded and malicious labelling of Church people manifesting their prophetic witness as *"terrorists"* both at national and international forums.

- VI. Act on the recommendations of Mr. Chaloka Beyani, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons with regards to the displaced indigenous people taking refuge at UCCP Haran in Davao City
- VII. Put an immediate stop to the military coercive actions of recruitment among Indigenous Peoples for Counter-Insurgency programs of the state causing rampant HRVs among IPs people and communities; immediately implement the recommendation in UPR 2012 from some member state for the “*disbandment of the para-military groups*” by repealing E.O. 546 creating and use para-military groups in *Oplan Bayanihan*.
- VIII. Put an end to the state’s terror against the IPs rights to Ancestral Domain and Self Determination.
- IX. Stop Counter-Insurgency Program *Oplan Bayanihan*, instead, pursue the resumption of formal peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and other armed group in Southern Philippines, including the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) as a means to achieve just and lasting peace.
- X. To implement and uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and all human rights treaties and instruments to which the Philippine government is a party or signatory.
- XI. **Encourage the conduct of international investigative missions to look into the gross violations of the basic human rights of the people of the Philippines.**
- XII. **Issue invitation to UN special procedures mandate holders to investigate various forms of human rights violations in the Philippines.**

ⁱ Datu Jimmy Liguyon, Chairman of the Church Council of UCCP Dao, San Fernando, Bukidnon was the latest UCCP victim of extra-judicial killing in March 4, 2012

ⁱ Under the government’s counter-insurgency program, Oplan Bayanihan, human rights defenders and advocates were vilified as part of the underground left and in the process harassed, threatened and intimidated.

ⁱ **These assaults include the extra-judicially killed on May 27, 2006 of Brother Noli Capulong. The abduction and torture on May 27, 2007 and the following detention under trumped-up charges of Pastor Berlin Guerrero. The abduction on May 6, 2008 of Pastor Rodel Canja in an attempt to coerce him to testify against Pastor Berlin.**

ⁱ This account is based on information gathered from the UCCP South Luzon Jurisdiction (SLJ) and made public in a Press Statement released on September 4, 2013

ⁱ This account is based on information gathered from the UCCP North Luzon Jurisdiction (NLJ) and also information made public in a Press Statement entitled: “Stop Persecution of All Church Workers and Lay Leaders” released by the Karapatan – Ilocos Human Rights Alliance August 21, 2015 over the recent harassment among UCCP Pastors and Lay Persons actively involved in the justice, peace and human right advocacy.

ⁱ Information was gathered from UCCP La Libertad, Zamboanga del Norte and subsequently made public in a Fact-Sheet of the case written by Rev. Isaias B. Morales on October 18, 2014.

ⁱ Information was gathered from UCCP South-East Mindanao Jurisdiction (SEMJ) and made public in a Fact Sheet prepared by Zadrach Sabella of the South-East Mindanao Jurisdiction (SEMJ) and released on June 26, 2015

ⁱ Information gathered from an interview with Rev Balaba, also a publically available written account by Rev. Irma M. Balaba in the UCCP publication *UCCP Human Rights Week Celebration Guide 2015*

ⁱ The account on the case of Rev. Jorie Jayme is included in the Fact Sheet submitted by the SEMJ, June 26, 2015

ⁱ The Incumbent Bishop of the UCCP issued a Pastoral Statement on the forcible entry of state agents/authorities to the premises of UCCP Haran Peace Center on July 23, 2015

UCCP HR Guide 2016

ⁱ The facts of this account can be found in the Letter Request by SEMJ Area Bishop, Bishop Hamuel O. Tequis addressed to SFO4 ORENCIO B. GRADO, OIC, IIS-DSFD, Bureau of Fire Protection, Alvarez Cor. Monteverde Sts., Davao City, February 24, 2016

ⁱ This testifying statement by the UN Special Rapporteur Dr. Chaloka Beyani on Human Trafficking was his means of clarifying the public about the coercive misinterpretation by a high-ranking military officer on his observation on the plight of more than 700 Lumad taking refuge at the UCCP Haran Peace Center, Davao City he visited in 2015.

ⁱ An account of this incident can be found in the Pastoral Statement of the UCCP Incumbent Bishops relative to the recent harassment by the state agents/authorities against 14 human rights defenders (including Rev. Jorie Jayme and a son of a UCCP Pastor) issued July 11, 2016

Written by:



Rev. Jerome C. Baris

National Coordinator

Justice, Peace and Human Rights Program

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 awaing Dokumntasyon [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.

- 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

- a. 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;
- b. 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**
- l. **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 [CAFGU 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 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 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.

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- 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.

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