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Let Mary Jane Veloso Speak

*For the tyrant shall be no more, and the scoffer cease to be;
and all those alert to do evil shall be cut off –
those who cause a person to lose a lawsuit, who set a trap for the arbiter in the gate,
and without grounds deny justice to one in the right.*

Isaiah 29: 20-21 (NRSV)

But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Amos 5:23-24 (NRSV)

Mary Jane Veloso's testimony is in danger of not being included in the trial against her traffickers. On December 13, 2017, the Philippine Court of Appeals promulgated a decision on a petition by the accused, to prevent the court permanently from the taking of Mary Jane's testimony in Indonesia. She has already spent over seven years imprisonment in Indonesia. The three-year anniversary of her temporary reprieve granted by Indonesian President Joko Widodo, approaches this April. Since April 2015, the trial against her traffickers, has happened in the Philippine regional court system, with examination and cross-examination of witnesses. It is high time to hear from Mary Jane.

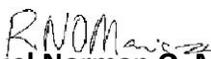
The prophets of old admonished the people who grew complacent with the growing inequity between the rich and the poor. God rebuked leaders and people in their attitudes and actions that directly benefited them in their treatment of the poor. Through its labor export policy, the Philippine government stands to benefit from the sweat and tears of migrant workers. The receiving countries also profit from the exploitation of cheaper labor and the additional economic force in their countries. While the workers toil away to provide for their families, many also get caught up in schemes that profit their recruiters.

If the prophets were speaking today, they would criticize the yawning gap between the testimony of Mary Jane's recruiters and her testimony. God's call for justice and righteousness is lived out in how we maintain our economic systems and in our personal character – especially in how we treat the poor. According to the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers, Mary Jane's traffickers have an extensive list of witnesses to testify to their character. A list of

character witnesses for Mary Jane’s traffickers, is no substitute for Mary Jane’s testimony of events that transpired and led to her arrest and imprisonment.

Echoing Mary Jane’s appeal to President Rodrigo Duterte, we call upon him to exercise his authority to ensure that the justice systems in the Philippine and Indonesia will include Mary Jane’s testimony. We appeal to the President Joko Widodo to grant her executive clemency for humanitarian reasons.

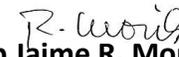
As churches and individuals who seek to affirm prophetic words in contemporary society, we pray and call upon the authorities to work towards the inclusion of Mary Jane’s testimony in her trial. Let her speak!


Bishop Reuel Norman Q. Marigza
General Secretary


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Bishop Assigned to North Luzon Jurisdictional Area


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Bishop Assigned to Middle Luzon Jurisdictional Area


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