



# UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES

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## UCCP GENERAL ASSEMBLY OFFICERS 2018-2022

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**Ms. Evelyn V. Yap**  
*Vice Chairperson*

**Bishop Melzar D. Labuntog**  
*General Secretary*

**Mr. Lauro C. Millan**  
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**Mr. Segundino T. Zantua, Jr.**  
*National Auditor*

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*North Luzon Jurisdiction*

**Bishop Joel E. Tendero**  
*South Luzon Jurisdiction*

**Bishop Emergencio D. Padillo**  
*Middle Luzon Jurisdiction*

**Bishop Feliciano P. Tenchavez**  
*West Visayas Jurisdiction*

**Bishop Jerome C. Baris**  
*East Visayas Jurisdiction*

**Bishop Ligaya F. San Francisco**  
*Northwest Mindanao  
Jurisdiction*

**Bishop Hamuel G. Tequis**  
*Southeast Mindanao  
Jurisdiction*

## UCCP COUNCIL OF BISHOPS DENOUNCES ILLEGAL ARREST AND DETENTION OF A CHURCH WORKER, CHURCH MEMBERS AND ORDINARY FARMERS AND CIVILIANS IN HIMAMAYLAN, KABANGKALAN AND SAGAY TOWNS OF NEGROS OCCIDENTAL

The UCCP Council of Bishops denounces in the strongest terms the unlawful arrests of seven (7) civilians, yesterday June 26. They are mostly members of our church and IFI in the remote area of Buenavista Himamaylan, Negros, including Pastor Jimmy Teves, UCCP Lincientiate Pastor who together with a co-pastor has been serving 17 UCCP local churches in Himamaylan, Negros. Aside from them there were other arrests made by the local police, two (2) in La Castellana and two (2) more in Sagay town all in Negros Occidental Province.

According to verified reports as of today June 27 from the Office of the Bishop of West Visayas Jurisdiction, the seven (7) were arrested on charges of murder and frustrated murder which are obviously trumped up. Two of the four arrested were brought to an undisclosed place. They were arrested without the benefit of subpoena and no preliminary investigation.

We strongly refute the claims of the military that they are members of the New People's Army (NPA). They are subsistence farmers who are trying to eke out of their dire economic situation by practicing Christian diakonia and biblical forms of sharing of farm produce. Most of them are active members of UCCP, IFI and Roman Catholic churches.

We believe this action is part of the ongoing "Operation Sauron" the undeclared Martial Law in Negros, Samar and Bicol region and operationalizes the Executive Order/Memo Order 32 that declared the "state of lawlessness" in these islands and region. This legitimizes the targeting of farmers and rural communities that resist onerous usury in land rental and displacement of rural communities to give way to large scale agri-business and mining operations.

Farmers are subjected to harassment by government security forces and the Philippine National Police because of their diaconal food production and their stand for justice, peace and human rights. In recent months, scores of farmers had been pitilessly killed in Negros.

Quadrennial Theme: **"Doing Christ's Mission in these Changing Times"**

Member: National Council of Churches in the Philippines • Christian Conference of Asia • World Council of Churches • World Alliance of Reformed Churches  
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had been pitilessly killed in Negros. Among those extra-judicially executed is human rights lawyer Attorney Benjamin Ramos and a few other human rights workers. Justice has not been meted out for the victims of extrajudicial killings and their families are scattered and now fear for their lives. We call on the government of President Duterte to halt these killings and stop the climate of impunity in the whole country.

These harassments clearly depict the vicious schema of this government that fails to respect the right to life and right to decent livelihood of farmers and workers and rights of those who advocate and call for social justice and peace in our country. Such violations are the handiwork of those willing to blatantly transgress upon the fundamental rights of the human in pursuit of their rancorous strategy.

As Shepherds of our flock, we firmly stand against this appalling reality, where now even our pastors and members have become helpless targets of military transgressions and government harassments. Yet the fearless faith and fiery Christian witness of pastors and members of the Church will not be quelled by the powers of the evil ones.

The words from Proverbs 31: 8-9 compel us to abhor ungodly acts like this. *“Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.”*

We demand that:


1. All those illegally arrested be released immediately;
2. The President of the Philippines order police and military forces to stop harassing and intimidating civilians and advocates of peace and human rights;
3. The Duterte government ensure the safety of every Filipino and stop the climate impunity and extrajudicial killings;
4. In areas of unrest, the root causes of conflicts be squarely addressed, in peaceful ways.

RELEASE THE DETAINED CIVILIANS NOW! RESCIND EO/MO 32!


### THE UCCP COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

June 27, 2019

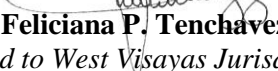
  
**Bishop Melzar D. Labuntog**  
*General Secretary*

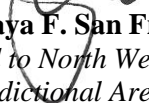
  
**Bishop Joseph G. Agpaoa**  
*Bishop Assigned to North Luzon Jurisdictional Area*

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

  
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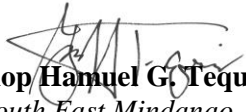
  
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Quadrennial Theme: **“Doing Christ’s Mission in these Changing Times”**

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**Bishop Hamuel G. Tequis**

*Bishop Assigned to South East Mindanao Jurisdictional Area*

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**Bishop Jezer E. Bertoldo**  
**Bishop Isaias L. Bingtán**  
**Bishop Erme R. Camba**  
**Bishop Ebenezer C. Camino**  
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**Bishop Dulce Pia-Rose**  
**Bishop Elorde M. Sambat**  
**Bishop Anacleto G. Serafica**  
**Bishop Jessie S. Suarez**  
**Bishop Rizalino Q. Taganas**  
**Bishop Modesto D. Villasanta**

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