

Human Rights Violations In the Philippines 2009

**The basis of
development**

**A country rich in mineral
resources**

**fertile farm lands and
ocean resources**

**in a crisis of 'under'
development**



Poverty...

- ▣ **70 million Filipinos** (the poorest 80% of families) struggle to survive on **P110 or less** (\$2.25) a day
That's P18/day in poorest 10% of families
preliminary FIES 2006
- ▣ **79%** of Filipinos rate themselves as poor
IBON April 2008 survey
- ▣ **46 million Filipinos hungry everyday** (i.e. unmet dietary needs) - *UNDP*





Vs. Great Wealth

▣ *Top 1,000 corporations, 2001-2005:*

- Net income increased 327%
- Profits increased 20% annually

▣ *Net worth of just 20 richest Filipinos:*

- US\$15.6 billion (2006)
- Equivalent to combined annual income of *poorest 10,400,000 families (approximately 52 million Filipinos)*



Worsening Unemployment

Government Redefines Statistics show an increase in jobs, but most new jobs in 2007 – 08 were domestic household help



- 2007: 10.9 M Filipinos looking for work
- (4.1 M jobless, 6.8 M underemployed)
- Out of 861,000 additional jobs created in 2007,
 - most jobs created were domestic household help – 142,000 jobs
 - more transport, trade, real estate, construction – i.e. among the lowest-paying, most temporary and insecure jobs
 - vs. agriculture (72,000 jobs), manufacturing (4,000)
- **Unprecedented economic refugees**
 - 9-10 M overseas Filipinos in 192 countries
 - 2,900 left country everyday in 2007

Meanwhile, Miniscule Social Service Budgets

- ***Public debt paid by severe cutbacks in social services***

(real per capita spending, 2001-2006):

- Education cut by 14%
- Health cut by 13%
- → ***vs. DEBT SERVICE which increased by 105%***



Facade of Democracy

- ▣ Elections are conducted under the banner of democracy; however, only the rich can afford to run, cheating in counting and vote buying is rampant, and election violence is significant.

In addition, the targets of Extra-Judicial Killings and harassment have a high incidence of also exercising their democratic rights as campaign worker of progressive party-list groups.



Attacks on the people's movement & progressive political parties

- ▣ **900 political killings**
- ▣ **190 enforced disappearances**
- ▣ **370 assassination attempts**
- ▣ **200 political prisoners**
- ▣ These include political activists, farmers, workers, indigenous peoples, journalists, lawyers and church people
- ▣ Targeting of local organizers and voices of opposition--vilification campaigns, illegal arrests, interrogation & torture, urban militarization
- ▣ Legal attacks by filing weak/trumped up criminal charges
- ▣ In rural areas, illegal census taking and house to house searches



Current Political/human rights situation in the Philippines:

On March 26 2009, Pres. GMA announced to the graduating class of Philippine National Police academy that,
“We must bring political killings to a zero including the assassinations of government officials and media officials.”

True that E.J.K.'s have reduced by 90% and this is recognized by the U.N.'s independent study and the U.S. congress so it commissioned 2 million dollars of the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) for fiscal year 2008 and 2009 upon determination that the Philippines is making progress on this issue.

In response to the rise of these killings, Pres. GMA has created the PNP task force *Usig* to investigate, solve and prosecute the perpetrators of these actions. According to the Philippine Embassy that to date 145 cases have been investigated, of which 67 cases have been filed in court and 22 cases, are at the prosecutors' office.

According to *Karapatan's* updated report on human rights violations in 2009, sixteen people were killed before the first quarter of this year.



Among the victims was, **Rebelyn Pitao** a citizen of good standing working as a substitute teacher in St. Peter's College in Toril, Davao City. Her body was found March 5 2009, thrown in a river in Carmen, Davao Del Norte riddled with stab wounds and bullets.

Sabina Ariola, 51 and **Adelaida Calosa**, 48 were shot at around 8:25 AM, March 23, 2009. Sabina, who was hit in the abdomen died at 11 o'clock in the evening and Adelaida who was hit on the face is undergoing medical treatment.

Sabina and Adelaida are the Chairperson and member respectively of the MSRK3, an urban poor organization in Sta. Rosa, Laguna advocating for welfare, development and peace. MSRK3 stands for Mamamayan ng Santa Rosa para sa Kagalingan, Kaunlaran at Kapayapaan.



Amnesty International's review

- ▣ Dr. Gary W. King, a founding member of Amnesty International (AI) in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Minnesota, said in an interview with *Bulatlat*, that with the government's record of "protecting" potential witnesses it would be unlikely for people to come forward.
- ▣ King cited the case of **Siche Bustamante-Gandinao**, 59, who, in 2007 was gunned down after testifying before United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions Phillip Alston on the killing of her father-in-law, **Dalmacio Gandinao**, a former coordinator of Bayan Muna (People First). Bustamante-Gandinao, ironically, took over her late father-in-law's responsibility in Bayan Muna when she was shot.
- ▣ King, who has been studying the spate of human rights abuses in the Philippines since the early 1980s, said that the international community is angry that instead of condemning the epidemic of human rights abuses in the country, the Arroyo administration is instead showing signs that it is condoning these.

Workers



Farmers, Journalists, Students...





U.S. Military in the Philippines

US military are deployed in Philippines through the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). The agreement has no clear limitations or duration. The VFA allows:

- ▣ Transport/storage infrastructure, logistical network, stocking of **war material**
- ▣ American troops **full access** to military and civic facilities in the Philippines.
- ▣ **Immunity** to offenses made by American military officials on Philippine soil.
- ▣ An **unregulated** number of troops to be stationed anywhere (land , sea or air) in the Philippines, ready to counter any dangers made to the U.S. not the “host” country, the Philippines



Five Concrete Actions

Send a letter of support and encouragement to
Pastor Edwin Egar
c/o Bishop Eliezer Pascua
PO Box 718, Manila Central Post Office
1099 Ermita, Manila

Educate others on the Resolution on the Philippines passed in the PCUSA General Assembly.

Join or form a **C.H.R.P. (Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines)** in your area or another organization that is willing to mobilize to try to stop/reduce US military aid to the Philippines in light of the connection of the military to the on-going Human Rights Violations. Sign the petition to **Junk the VFA.**

Join in direct support for the schooling and survival of families who are Human Rights Violations victims (Ecumenical Movement for Peace and Development)

Keep long-term people like me in the field as concrete expressions of our partnership through solidarity work and fact finding missions.

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We are making a difference!

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