



## **International Ecumenical Conference on Terrorism in A Globalized World**

September 23–26, 2002  
Bayview Park Hotel, Manila, Philippines

### CONFERENCE DECLARATION

## **Manila Covenant on Peace for Life: ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE!**

*A call on churches around the world  
for inter-faith solidarity to resist war and globalization*

### **Introduction**

Motivated by urgency and the passion we share in response to the massive threat to life posed by the global situation, 135 people from 28 countries gathered in Manila, Philippines, upon the invitation of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, the World Council of Churches and the Christian Conference of Asia. We are women, youth and men from countries that are either or both perpetrators and victims of terrorism. We are Christians, Muslims and people of other faiths. Little more than a year after the terror of September 11, we meet as an ***International Ecumenical Conference on Terrorism in a Globalized World*** in the context of the ongoing struggle of the people of the Philippines against violence in all its forms. We have come to share experiences, reflect, analyze and act together in the face of mounting global hegemony.

We grieve with the American people as we remember the pain resulting from criminal acts of terrorism on September 11. We grieve the death and destruction inflicted on the people of Afghanistan that began the so-called 'war on terror' on October 7. We remember as we grieve the victims of the U.S. wars of direct and indirect intervention and aggression on the people of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Vietnam, Korea, Philippines, China, Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Columbia, Indonesia, Iraq, Palestine. Indeed, the story of U.S. aggression on many countries in the world and the massive affliction of terrorism did not just begin on September 11. Today, the entire human community, as with all of creation, suffer the devastation of this despicable 'war on terror', and we ask *why?*

### **Old and New Terror**

Globalization has resulted in the further exclusion and marginalization of vast numbers of people, particularly women and youth. It has spawned the worst forms of social fragmentation. Economic globalization has brought about even greater monopolization and concentration of wealth and has further widened the gap between the rich and the poor.

The participants in the Women's International Peace Mission and the Women's International Solidarity Forum made visible the impact of militarized globalization on the lives of women, children and youth in the Philippines. Their stories as well as of those from all over Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, Africa and the Pacific filled us with compassion for the victims and rage at the violence of war. We are pained that women, children and youth must bear the brunt of globalization and terrorism. Their perspective and full participation will contribute significantly to the shaping of an ecumenical agenda that will bring forth peace. As a conference we commit ourselves to the key role of women in building a world of peace.

Christians and Muslims have both suffered the ravages of war. The 'war on terror' has worsened the vulnerability of religious minorities in many countries. It has eroded inter-religious relations and has polarized Muslim and Christian communities, pushing India and Pakistan to the brink of nuclear war.

The 'war on terror' is demolishing the gains of long and tortuous years of human struggle for self-determination, human rights, civil liberties and democracy. They are being sacrificed in the U.S. quest for national peace and security.

The U.S. 'war on terror' has justified violence inflicted on any state, nation, group or individual deemed threatening to national interests as defined by the U.S. alone. This is a major threat to global security. This is a re-ordering of global politics and a repudiation of international law. On September 11 the U.S. became a victim of terrorism, an experience many other countries have known for so long. Now, after Afghanistan and the obscene loss of human life, the U.S. is directing its guns and bombs against other so-named 'rogue states', and singled out several countries with Islamic nationalists as harboring terrorists groups.

The 'war on terror' is state terrorism of historic dimensions. It is not a just response to the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>. It is an opportunistic use of violence to consolidate and expand U.S. economic, political, cultural and military hegemony. This U.S. global hegemony has a name. It is Empire.

The poor experience an even greater violence, intensified by the impact of state- and corporate-led globalization. Consolidating hegemony in Asia is an imperative of the U.S. Empire. Asia's undeveloped markets for goods and technology and the availability of resources, particularly oil, are valuable to the Empire only if governments and people are servile. The control of oil and natural resources is the driving force behind U.S. threats against Iraq and other countries. US state terrorism encourages national state terrorism. Israeli state terrorism against Palestine forms part of the U.S. agenda in the Middle East. The Bush government's naming the Philippines and Southeast Asia as a whole the second front of the 'war on terror' threatens human security and people's sovereignty.

#### **We say,**

- International law, the role of the UN, and human rights and humanitarian law, conventions and standards must be upheld.
- The economic and geopolitical agenda of U.S. foreign policy must be exposed and opposed.
- All governments, including the U.S. and Philippines, have the responsibility and duty to ratify the Rome statute and support the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- The U.S. armed forces must leave the Philippines immediately. Their presence and activity violate national sovereignty and territorial integrity, aggravate armed conflicts and give rise to social and cultural degradation.
- The U.S. action designating the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army foreign terrorist organizations and the subsequent actions by the Philippine and Dutch governments have jeopardized the peace process. It is vital that the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines immediately resume the formal peace negotiations on the basis of previous agreements. The peace process with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front must likewise resume.
- The peace process in Sri Lanka needs to be encouraged and supported. Likewise a peace process in Kashmir should be put in place. In both, people's aspirations for just peace must be given priority.

#### **We condemn and resist**

- terror in all its forms – institutional, militaristic, economic, state, and criminal
- the use of theological and religious language to justify war and the agenda of the Empire
- religious extremism and religious intolerance of all forms, and any action that degrades the lives of people, regardless of one's faith, race or ethnicity. We affirm our common humanity and our common commitment to justice and peace in all religious traditions.
- the injustice of institutionalized socio-economic violence suffered by many at the hands of the forces of globalization
- U.S. moves to undermine peace efforts such as the Sunshine Policy in Korea
- the indiscriminate branding of people, groups, nations and organizations as terrorists
- the impending U.S. driven war on Iraq, and Israel's U.S. backed aggression against the Palestinian people. We demand peace with justice.

## **We therefore**

- call on the church representatives to the United Nations to press for the implementation and the upholding of international human rights and international law
- call upon Christians in general to take a position against militarized globalization and raise their voices unambiguously to stop the U.S. government from continuing its war against people and peace
- invite the U.S. churches and the wider ecumenical movement to join with us as we seek to establish forums to critique and confront the U.S. global agenda
- urge the WCC, CCA and NCCP to explore the possibility with Asian women's regional network the convening of an Asian Court of Women that would focus on the brutal violence that is being experienced by women migrant workers, particularly the undocumented and their children, who are threatened with deportation.

## **Not in God's Name**

We confess that the Church has often been complicit with the power of Empires. As people of faith we must choose to resist the death-dealing domination of the Empire and engage in the struggle for life in all its fullness for all God's creation.

We believe that the living God is saying '**not in My name**' to those who would invoke God's name or divine will to justify or legitimize domination, repression and state violence. We join with families of victims in the U.S. who say '**not in our name**', to those who would kill and repress as a response to September 11<sup>th</sup>. We stand in solidarity with those who suffered from terrorist attacks and those who suffer from and resist the violence and domination of the U.S. global empire and the oppression of national states and transnational institutions.

We believe in the power of the resurrection in history. In the face of repression and violence, death does not have the last word. The Christian church is to give witness to Christ's lordship and so resist oppression and idolatry of any state or group that claims divine justification for power over others.

We humbly seek to be with Jesus in his mission as declared in Luke 4: 16f:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me  
because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor,  
he has sent me to proclaim release to the captives,  
recovery of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed  
and proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.*

## **Choice for Life**

We call upon the Conference organizers to facilitate a global coalition of ecumenical, inter-religious and multi-faith movements in solidarity, in resistance and opposition to expanding state terrorism and U.S. global hegemony. This may include the creation of an African, Asian, Latin American and Pacific solidarity network. This could take the form of a People's Forum on Peace for Life, which is a contribution to the ecumenical 'Decade to Overcome Violence'.

In the face of the massive threat to life posed by this global situation, we choose life! We will not be silent! We covenant with each other to take up the issues in our own countries and settings. We commit ourselves to work in the spirit and discipline of interfaith solidarity. We commit ourselves to making another world possible, a world of peace with justice and integrity of all creation.

In unity and solidarity, we say again: **Another World is Possible!**