



World Council of Churches
Conseil œcuménique des Eglises
Consejo Mundial de Iglesias
Ökumenischer Rat der Kirchen
General Secretariat

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Geneva, 30 June 2010

Your Excellency,

The World Council of Churches (WCC) joins the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) and the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) in denouncing the extra-judicial killings of Mr. Benjamin Bayles in Negros Occidental and Mr. Jovelito Agustin in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte. Both victims were active lay ministers, known in their churches as outspoken advocates of human dignity and of the rights of the most marginalized. Bayles was a human rights advocate, involved with peasants' and workers' organizations, while Agustin was a broadcaster actively engaged in assisting victims of illegal recruitment and defending workers' rights.

We are deeply concerned by the ongoing extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances and continuing impunity in the Philippines that have caused the lives of many civilians who raise their voices denouncing human rights violations and asking for justice and lasting peace. Lay people and clergy have not been spared from this violence. These practices are directly against the principles of democracy, the Philippine Constitution and International Conventions, to which Philippines is a party.

It is for these reasons, Your Excellency, that the World Council of Churches would like to urge the Philippines government to keep its commitment to international human rights instruments and put an end to the killings and to the culture of impunity by prosecuting the perpetrators and granting justice to the victims of human rights violations committed in the country.

It is a tragedy that lives have been taken and cannot be restored. For you and your ministers now to ensure that the killings cease would send a welcome signal to your people and to the international community about the

standards that the new government will pursue. Our prayer is that the rule of law will prevail in the Philippines and that your government will become known for building peace and establishing justice.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Olav Fykse Tveit". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit
General Secretary

cc:

Atty. Agnes Devanadera, Secretary, Department of Justice
HE Norberto Gonzales, Secretary, Department of National Defense
Atty. Leila De Lima, Chairperson, Commission on Human Rights
Gen. Avelino Razon, Ret. PNP, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
The Most Revd Godofredo JH. David, D.D. Obispo Maximo, Iglesia Filipina
Independiente