

October 30, 2007

The Hon. Maxime Bernier  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
125 Sussex Dr.  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2.



Dear Hon. Bernier

**Re: Response of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Petition on the Political Killings in the Philippines**

The members of Stop the Killings Network (Canada) wish to thank The Hon. Peter MacKay, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, for responding to the Petition on the political killings in the Philippines. The petition was signed by more than 5,000 Canadians and filed at the House of Commons on May 31 and June 1 by twelve Members of Parliament from all political parties. Attached is the Statement of the network concerning Hon. MacKay's Response.

Having appealed for action by our Government since the extrajudicial killings in the Philippines started in 2001, we are pleased that Canada has finally broken its silence about his grave problem.

In his response, The Hon. MacKay cited the initiatives of Canada to address the problem and "*strengthen governance, the rule of law, and conflict resolution*" in the Philippines. We support Canada's initiatives to build and strengthen institutions that promote and protect human rights.

However, we believe that these initiatives are not adequate to address the crisis of extrajudicial killings because (a) they do not mitigate the imminent threat and alleviate the immediate violence suffered by the individuals who are targeted for attack; and, (b) they do not mitigate the direct and immediate roots of the extrajudicial killings.

Local and international pressure compelled President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to take some measures, but the extrajudicial killing of civil society leaders continues to this day because, as the U.N. Special Rapporteur observed, the measures "*treat only some of the symptoms of the crisis,*" not the "*underlying causes*" of the killings. He concluded that the killings will end only if there is a strong resolve by Philippine civilian authorities "*to compel the military to change its ways*". It is therefore extremely important that the international community continue to put strong pressure on President Arroyo to address the roots of the killings and command the military to put a stop to it.

We believe that Canada should NOT continue providing support to the Government of President Arroyo without demanding tangible proofs of intent and steps to end the killings.

Once again, we strongly make an appeal to the Canadian Government to take the following actions:

- *to impose strong measures on the Government of the Philippines, including the immediate suspension of bilateral assistance, moratorium on new bilateral projects and funding from Export Development Canada, diplomatic restrictions and trade and investment sanctions in order to press President Arroyo to take specific actions to end the extrajudicial killings including those recommended by the Special Rapporteur, Human Rights Watch and other organizations*

- *to conduct a review of Canada's relations with the Government of the Philippines. Such review would focus on Canada's economic assistance, cooperation in national security and anti-terrorism programs, and trade and corporate investment, specifically pertaining to mining and other extractive industries, to determine how these contribute to the erosion of human rights*

●to invite members of Stop the Killings Network, other civil society organizations and members of the House of Commons Subcommittee on International Human Rights to a Roundtable to undertake a critical examination of the human rights performance of the Philippine Government and input into Canada's intervention at the U.N. Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of the Philippines in February 2008.

Prime Minister Steven Harper has declared the commitment of the Conservative Government to human rights when he spoke about the situation in China and met with the Dalai Lama this week. We trust that the Prime Minister will act with the same boldness to address human rights abuses in other parts of the world. Therefore, we are calling on the Government of Canada to take strong measures to press President Macapagal-Arroyo to put an end to the extrajudicial killings in the Philippines.

We look forward to hearing from you about the actions of the Government on our appeal.

Sincerely,

Bern Jagunos

**On behalf of the Members of Stop the Killings Network (Canada)**

**The United Church of Canada**

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