



International Labor Rights Fund

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September 21, 2006

We, the undersigned individuals and organizations, join our voices in a call for an end to the wave of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines. Over the past five years, a stark increase in politically-motivated violence has claimed the lives of pro-democracy activists, human rights defenders, political opposition figures, lawyers, teachers, peasants, students, union leaders, and religious leaders. These murders are committed under the auspices of an anti-leftist, anti-communist military offensive that targets village and community leaders in communities that are suspected of supporting or being sympathetic to leftist insurgent groups.

We voice a special concern for acts of violence perpetrated against trade unionists. These hard-working men and women who organize to protect their basic rights have paid a heavy price. According to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the Philippines is now the second most dangerous country on earth for trade unionists. Both government officials and the corporations that employ union members must take strong action to safeguard the lives and rights of all working people in the Philippines.

Tomorrow, September 22, marks the one-year anniversary of the murder of Diosdado "Ka Fort" Fortuna, a leading figure in the Filipino trade union movement, at the hands of unidentified assailants. As the Commission on Human Rights Philippines (CHRP) would later declare, this killing was a human rights violation and not an isolated incident of tragedy. Fortuna worked at the Nestlé Philippines facility in Cabuyao, Laguna, where the workers have been on strike since 2002; he was shot and killed on his way home from the picket line. We urge Nestlé Philippines to bring a quick and amicable resolution to the labor dispute at the Cabuyao facility. We call on Nestlé and the Filipino government to respect and protect the lives of all trade unionists, guarantee the right to union activity, and investigate the murder of "Ka Fort" and all extrajudicial killings in the Philippines.

In solidarity,

Bama Athreya, Executive Director
International Labor Rights Fund

Omega Bula, Executive Minister
Justice Global and Ecumenical Relations
United Church of Canada

Joseph Calugay
Katarungan: Ad-Hoc Committee for Peace, Justice
and Human Rights in the Philippines

Annalisa Enrile, Chair
GABRIELA Network

Rev. Kathryn J. Johnson, Executive Director
Methodist Federation for Social Action

Robert B. Kingsley, Director of Organization
United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of
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Zack Knorr, International Campaigns Coordinator
United Students Against Sweatshops

Daniel Kovalik, Associate General Counsel
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British Columbia Committee for Human Rights in the
Philippines

Dr. Edith Rasell, Minister for Worker Justice
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness
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CC:

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