

PALEA (Philippines) : Message to supporters on settling outsourcing dispute

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Greetings of solidarity to brothers and sisters in the labor movement !

A bit of good news from the Philippines amidst the national tragedy of the super typhoon Haiyan : Last November 14, Philippines Airlines and PALEA signed an agreement to end the long-running labor dispute over outsourcing. PALEA members will be going back to work as regular workers ! Under the agreement, the PALEA members at the picketline will receive an improved separation offer and then be re-employed within three months from the date of the signing.

Resistance saved PALEA's regular jobs. If PALEA had accepted outsourcing then its members would have become contractual workers trapped in an endless cycle of precarious jobs. Or worse they would have become unemployed in a jobless growth economy. Instead PALEA members will be returning to their regular jobs in a few months.

PALEA expresses its deep gratitude for the passionate support of the labor movement across the world to its struggle against job outsourcing and contract work. At its peak, a global day of action spanned four continents. The international solidarity not just sustained the fight but inspired PALEA to continue the struggle until victory.

Looking back at the three long years of PALEA's fight, it is clear that the old school tactics of direct action at the workplace, the traditional picketline, labor solidarity and community support was crucial in developing the struggle. Every single instance PALEA lost the outsourcing case before government bodies and the labor courts. Yet in the end, PALEA won its demand through negotiations but drawing strength from resistance and solidarity. PALEA owes this hard-won victory to the steadfast fight of PALEA members and the fervent solidarity of workers, community and Church groups in the Philippines and abroad.

However, even as PALEA celebrates its win, the union sympathizes with the victims of typhoon Haiyan. For PALEA, the disaster is up close and personal. PALEA's vice president grew up in the worst hit city of Tacloban and still has family living there. After a few agonizing days, he learned that they are safe though shaken. Scores of PALEA members work at the Tacloban airport which was utterly destroyed save for the runway.

PALEA's affiliated labor party, Partido ng Manggagawa or PM, is appealing for assistance to workers and the poor who have suffered from Haiyan. PM is calling for solidarity so it could offer relief at least to its affected members and organized communities. Among them are PM members among informal drivers and the urban poor in Tacloban. Relief would complement the organizing efforts of PM on the basis of working class issues.

PALEA's victory is the victory of all workers. PALEA believes its victory will jumpstart the revival of the labor movement in the Philippines. PALEA wishes too that its win will inspire union brothers and sisters around the worldwide. PALEA pledges its solidarity to workers fighting everywhere as it has done for comrades in Qantas and Turkish Airlines.

P.-S.

* <http://www.partidongmanggagawa2001.blogspot.fr>