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Harrassment of Alter Trade: a letter to Luis Jalandoni, NDF

Tuesday 20 February 2007, by [WILLS Carol](#) (Date first published: 15 February 2007).

from Carol Wills cwills oxfordhr.co.uk

to Luis Jalandoni nddfpf ndfp.cjb.net

date Feb 15, 2007 1:44 AM

subject Harrassment of AlterTrade

Dear Sir,

Last October 2006 I was fortunate enough to spend a week with AlterTrade in Negros. I visited farmers associations and talked to the farmers. I went to the sugar mill where the farmers' sugar cane is processed for sale as Fair Trade organic muscovado. I spoke at length to many of AlterTrade's dedicated and efficient staff. I have the highest regard for AlterTrade's social development work.

I am writing to you, as Chair of the NDF Panel at the NDF International Office, to ask you to stop the intimidation and harrassment of AlterTrade which has now gone beyond demands for so-called "rebel taxes" to criminal death threats.

No doubt you are aware of the background to this: Demands for taxes of Pesos 30 million in 2001, further demands in 2006 followed by truck burnings. Then on 24 January 2007 accusations that the Alter Trade leaders are "big NGO bureaucrats, promoters of semi-colonial unfair trade and anti-communist propagandists of the US-Arroyo regime."

The statement issued by Mr Frank Fernandez's ends with the threat: "The NPA will punish these NGO bureaucrats of Alter Trade Corp as equivalent to the exploitation, oppression and sufferings that ATC inflicted on the masses."

AlterTrade's initial successes in poverty alleviation assure them that what they are doing is helping poor, rural people on Negros towards a better life. They cannot give up this social development work. They cannot abandon the farmers, co-workers and staff who rely for their livelihood on Alter Trade's programs and operations. They have to stand steadfastly for them and for their social mission. So they have decided to stand their ground.

AlterTrade asks the armed groups on Negros to drop their demands; what they are asking and doing will not only harm the Alter Trade Corporation but also its beneficiaries-and in the long run, even their own revolutionary organizations. The CPP-NPA should come to realize that what they are doing will only bring harm to the marginalized sectors in the Philippines, the very people that they have vowed to serve.

I appeal to you to use what influence you have to stop this harrassment of AlterTrade.

Yours sincerely,

Carol Wills

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