

No to Extra-Judicial Executions! Break Impunity! Assert Human Rights!

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The Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA), the Citizen's Council for Human Rights (Citizens'-CHR), different progressive organizations and human rights defenders gather here today to denounce Extra-Judicial Executions currently perpetrated by vigilante groups, members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the so called "Black Armies" allegedly headed by Major General Jovito Palparan and other powers that be. We condemn the inutile and illegitimate government of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo for not addressing the matter.

Human rights are the foremost consideration in any political condition. Their promotion, protection and fulfillment are essential pillars of human dignity and societal development. While it is the duty of every man and woman to guard universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms from any violation, it is the obligation of the state to take action whenever works for human rights are hampered or the enjoyment of these rights are threatened, whether or not the state partakes into these actions.

Sad to note, the contrary is becoming a trend in the Philippines. Violations to basic rights are seemingly consented lest the state trembles apart to its downfall. Extra-Judicial Execution among human rights defenders: media practitioners, lawyers, community leaders, union worker who express contrary opinions, is becoming a phenomenon. This condition is a blatant disregard to the rule of law and a gruesome violation to human rights.

Individuals and organizations who express views that are opposed to or question the line of action undertaken by the government or by the party in power have a basic right to exist and deploy activities in accordance with international law standards. The development of a democratic society demands for the coexistence of these different actors. They cannot be silenced by arbitrary execution with impunity by a system they strive to make more peaceful and just.

Last year alone, there were 12-recorded victims of extra judicial killings. This record adds up to 331 total number of victims of summary execution under the present dispensation (2001-2005). This statistics speaks of the government's wanton disregard to life, and the administration's failure to shield human rights defenders even from itself or its instrumentalities.

It is in this light that the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA), the Citizens' Council for Human Rights (Citizens'-CHR) together with the whole human rights community is launching a nation-wide campaign to stop Extra Judicial Executions. We call on all peace loving people to actively engage in:

- Mass education and information dissemination on the implication to human rights of the various repressive measures particularly the virtual policy of extra-judicial execution;
- Organizing of and moving with people in communities along the lines of defense and promotion of human and people's rights; and, the protection of human rights defenders;
- Forging of linkages and cooperation with other NGOs, POs, etc., locally and abroad in order to assist each other in the conduct of various forms of activities in the communities;

- Documentation of various forms of violations to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights;
- Issuance and projection of position on the current situation by highlighting State Obligations to promote, protect and fulfill human rights; hold the Arroyo regime accountable to International Statutes Governing Human Rights of which it is a signatory.
- Demand Justice for the Victims of Extra-Judicial Killings as well as other Human Rights Violations and let the perpetrators pay for their crimes.
- Planning and organizing campaign activities and actions against repressive laws, policies and brute use of force and other oppression against the people.

The signs of the times point to the urgent need to thwart the continuing repression perpetrated by the GMA government, the military and its cohorts to keep itself in power and pursue its anti-people goals. It is the duty of every Filipino committed to the defense of human rights to take immediate action against the phenomenon of Extra-Judicial Execution and all other measures taken by the GMA regime to quell all forms of dissent and protest against its illegitimate rule and oppressive activities. We are duty-bound to resist and defy a regime that no longer enjoys the people's trust and confidence.

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Break Impunity!

Assert Human Rights!

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