

# **An Urgent Appeal To Condemn The Assassination Policy Against AKBAYAN Chair-Emeritus Walden Bello By The Communist Party of the Philippines**

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In December 2004, the Communist Party of the Philippines published a hit list in its website containing the names of assassinated and living alleged counterrevolutionaries. Much to our surprise, AKBAYAN's Chair-Emeritus Walden Bello, Chairman Ricardo Reyes, and Parliament Representative Loretta Ann Rosales were prominently included in the Communist Party of the Philippines list.

Many AKBAYAN leaders sustain a long record of progressive politics. Walden Bello, a sociology and public administration professor, is one of the outstanding figures that provide leadership among social movements working for a more equitable and humane international social order. For this initiative, he was awarded the 2003 Right Livelihood Award also known as the Alternative Noble Prize. Loretta Ann Rosales, a highly respected human rights stalwart, now chairs the Committee on Human Rights in the House of Representatives. Another is Ricardo Reyes's staunch activism for rural land reform and for improving the lot of the Filipino peasantry.

## **Jose Maria Sison Initiates Villification Campaign**

When AKBAYAN leaders urged Communist Party of the Philippines Founding Chair Jose Maria Sison to reassess the Communist Party of the Philippines's role in the progressive movement, to promote Left discourse instead of inter-Left violence, and to uphold universal human rights, Mr. Sison quickly branded Walden Bello as a *"pro-US pseudo progressive"*. Instead of thanking Walden Bello for signing the petition for Mr. Sison's asylum in Holland much earlier, Mr. Sison opted to advance a preposterous lie and proceeded to lambast Mr. Bello of trying to *"reinforce the baseless 'terrorist' listing made by the US, Dutch, European Council and other governments."*

In the international arena, not a few political leaders and activists were astounded as to why Walden Bello emerged as the straw man of the Communist Party of the Philippines - New People's Army-National Democratic Front—as a "counterrevolutionary" marked for elimination.

The outpouring of collective solidarity for the AKBAYAN Chair Emeritus from people and comrades from all over the world was quick and overwhelming. At the recent World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, about seventy of the world's leading progressive intellectuals and activists immediately signed a statement initiated by India's Amit Sengupta and Prabir Purkayastha in support of all those Filipino activists threatened by the Communist Party of the Philippines's assassination policy. People like Naomi Klein from Canada, European parliamentarian Vittorio Agnoletto, India's Devinder Sharma, Tariq Ali, Susan George, and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez all expressed concern for Walden Bello's safety.

In condemning the threats and murders of AKBAYAN leaders and members, the Socialist International's declaration in Phnom Penh last October 2004 stated: *"In the Philippines we condemn the summary execution of several leaders of the AKBAYAN Party by the New People's Army (NPA) guerillas who have publicly also threatened to hold captive the party chairperson and possible execution if he resists."*

### **Assassination Threats Against Walden Bello Reaches Danger Point**

In a new twist of events, the Communist Party of the Philippines last week (March 25) reaffirmed its death sentence on Walden Bello by claiming that he was responsible for the deaths of several progressive leaders. This renewed threat against Walden Bello's life emerged after he appealed directly to certain organizations to intervene and dissuade the Communist Party of the Philippines from carrying out its assassination policy against him and other progressive leaders.

Since scores of the murdered progressive leaders are said to be members, associates, or acquaintances of the organizations Bello appealed to, the Communist Party of the Philippines has fabricated the astounding claim that Walden Bello was into "red-baiting", and that he set up the victims as targets of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. This is ridiculous, and the Communist Party of the Philippines's maneuver is so patently obvious: to set up Bello for elimination.

Allegations of so-called "red-baiting", especially false and foolish accusations along this line, can never warrant a death sentence.

The perverse brand of "revolutionary justice" of the Communist Party of the Philippines spells death for those with perceived "blood debts". This type of justice has no basis in international human rights and international humanitarian law.

AKBAYAN have consistently denounced the madness of extra-judicial killings, be they from the Right or Left of the Philippine political spectrum. Justice should be served to the victims of these murders, and that we must all counter the culture of violence that has plagued the Philippine psyche, and advance instead a culture of peace based on justice.

The Communist Party of the Philippines has no basis whatsoever in its persistent threat to physically eliminate Walden Bello, or any progressive leader for that matter, who disagrees with or criticizes their policies.

### **An Urgent Appeal to Stop the Madness**

Struggle of ideas, discourse and peaceful coexistence—instead of violence, hatred and murder—should animate the relationship of political parties, especially avowed Left parties.

We wish to emphasize that the Communist Party of the Philippines's policy of assassination, and threats of assassination against our leaders, is just as condemnable as any political force's policy of extra-judicial political killings against the progressive activists.

We therefore issue this urgent appeal to those concerned to lend their indispensable support to stop this madness, to condemn the death sentence imposed upon Walden Bello by the Communist Party of the Philippines.

We are optimistic that public opinion, especially international and local solidarity, can reverse Communist Party of the Philippines's assassination policy and assassination threats against legal socialist leaders.

As Walden Bello aptly emphasized: *"But you will never, never kill the vision of a pluralist, humane, open, and democratic left... Solidarity based on simple human decency is the ultimate antidote to ideological madness."*

Executive Committee  
AKBAYAN Citizens' Action Party  
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Manila