



# VANCOUVER and DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL



March 10, 2021

The Honourable Marc Garneau, MLA  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

VIA Email: [marc.garneau@parl.gc.ca](mailto:marc.garneau@parl.gc.ca)

Dear Minister Garneau,

**Subject: Canada Cannot Be Silent on “Bloody Sunday” Massacre in the Philippines**

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On March 5, in another of Philippine President Duterte’s inflammatory speeches, he declared “Kill, kill them all. Finish them. Don’t mind human rights.” This marching order led to the massacre two days later of nine civilians in the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, and Rizal, all located southeast of the country’s capital. The killings are being referred to as “Bloody Sunday” by human rights advocates. Others were arrested or are missing.

The murders took place during joint police-military raids which were synchronised in what is known as Tokhang-style operations, or the ‘barge in and shoot’ method. This tactic has been used by police to kill thousands of civilians through the government’s so-called “war on drugs”.

Five of the victims who have been identified are Emmanuel Asuncion of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (New Patriotic Alliance - BAYAN) Cavite; land rights defender-couple Chai Lemita-Evangelista and Ariel Evangelista of Ugnayan ng Mamamayan Laban sa Pagwawasak ng Kalikasan at Kalupaan (People’s Organisation Against Destruction of Environment and Land - UMALPAS-KA) whose 10-year old son is still missing; Michael Dasigao and Mark Lee Bacasno who are urban poor organisers of local group SIKKAD-K3 (San Isidro, Kasiglahan’s Fraternity and Solidarity for Livelihood, Justice and Peace).

Arrested were Esteban 'Steve' Mendoza, National Executive Vice President of Olalia-Kilusang Mayo Uno (May First Labor Movement - KMU); Nimfa Lanzanas, 61, a volunteer paralegal of rights group Karapatan, and mother of a political prisoner; Elizabeth Camoral, former union president of F-Tech and current spokesperson of Bayan-Laguna; Eugene Eugenio, member of government employees union COURAGE-Rizal; and two local farmers in Rizal initially identified as Moises and Dodong.

Pg. 2/...

The Philippines has been rife with violence and repression directed at human rights activists, labour and farmer organizers, Indigenous people and others who stand up for the rights of the people, during Duterte’s presidency. At least 300 have been killed, including 55 lawyers and judges. He, and representatives of his government, have frequently attempted to malign such persons and organizations as being associated with the drug trade or with terrorism in order to justify the ongoing state sanctioned violence.

We have written many times in recent years about the horrors perpetrated against those who dare to challenge the status quo and speak up for human rights and decency in the Philippines. Canada cannot continue to be silent in the face of these kinds of atrocities, and the impunity with which they are carried out. We urge you and your government to speak out and take appropriate actions to press for an end to the killing and repression.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Yours Truly,



Stephen von Sychowski  
President

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VDLC Executive Board

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