



# VANCOUVER and DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL



January 21, 2019

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A2

Dear Right Honourable Mr. Trudeau:

**Subject: Continued Attacks on Workers' and Peasants' Organizations in the Philippines**

I write on behalf of the Vancouver and District Labour Council, with its approximately 100 affiliate unions and over 60,000 members, regarding the massacre of the “Sagay Nine” and the ongoing crisis of workers right in the Philippines.

In November of last year, I wrote to you regarding the horrible massacre of the “Sagay 9”, members of the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW) who were murdered in cold blood October 30, 2018. Unfortunately, I am writing you today because that violence has continued in Negros, and elsewhere in the Philippines.

Just after Christmas, December 27, six people (Jesus “Dondon” Isugan, Delia Isugan, Dominador Isugan, Reneboy Fat, Jaime Revilla, and Demetrio Fat) were killed by members of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and military on the island of Negros. An additional sixteen were arrested arbitrarily and are facing trumped-up charges.

This new wave of repression represents a continuation of efforts by government and landlords to crush farm worker and peasant movements in the region. Working people in Negros are struggling to feed themselves and have taken to occupying land which was to be redistributed through the government land reform program and using it to grow sustenance crops for themselves, their families, and their communities.

The violence they face for merely fighting for survival and standing up for the rights and entitlements denied them by their government is inexcusable and must be condemned.

At the same time in recent weeks the Philippine National Police has begun pressing education officials for lists of members of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT), in order to profile, harass and intimidate those fighting for better teaching and learning conditions.

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Re: Philippines

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This effort to single out ACT members and extract their personal information for dubious purposes is a clear violation of the right to organize, freedom of expression and assembly, and the right to privacy. ACT leaders have received death threats and faced widespread intimidation and surveillance.

Canada must call for an end to the repression of workers' and peasants' organizations in the Philippines and for respect for human rights. Specifically, we must condemn the murders and arrests, call for the release of imprisoned workers and peasant activists, and for an end to attacks on the rights of ACT and its members.

We reiterate our call for the federal government to exert whatever pressure it can toward establishing respect for workers rights in the Philippines, which remains one of the most dangerous countries in the world for union activists. We also reiterate our call for the Canadian government to stop funding and cooperation with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police, and other groups who have been linked with human rights violations.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours truly,



Stephen von Sychowski  
President