

**HONG KONG  
MISSION  
FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
AND  
PEACE  
IN THE  
PHILIPPINES**

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**Concerned groups from Hong Kong conclude  
seven-day follow-up mission on extrajudicial  
killings in the Philippines**

For the second time around, various members of the Hong Kong society held a fact finding mission with regard to the human rights situation in the Philippines.

From October 16-22, 2007, eleven (11) delegates of the Hong Kong Mission for Human Rights and Peace in the Philippines 2 (HKMHRPP2) followed up with families of victims of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances on their cases and met with government agencies to update on the latter's addressing of the said concerns.

These are the initial findings of the mission:

Generally, the frequency of extrajudicial killings has gone down. The international support as well as new developments, i.e. the passage of the Writ of Amparo, may have contributed to it.

Nonetheless, it does not mean that the killings have stopped. Enforced disappearances likewise continue.

No single conviction involving extrajudicial killings has taken place.

**On the Extrajudicial Killings (EJK)**

- There is very little development in the investigation of these cases.
- Government authorities have argued the refusal of witnesses and the families to cooperate as a hindrance in their investigation.
- Families have expressed their distrust in the police and the authorities in the resolution of the case.
- Many EJK cases have either been placed as ordinary crimes or alleged by the police as committed by members of the New People's Army.

## **On Enforced Disappearances**

- Victims of enforced disappearances have been branded as members of the NPA, abducted by the NPA, or both. The people targeted are likewise alleged to be sympathetic to or connected with the NPA.
- In the process of investigation, witnesses are the only factor that the police consider.
- The system in the Philippines heavily relies on witnesses' testimonies, but not providing necessary protection mechanisms that should make the system work.
- There are cases where some victims have resurfaced but inside prison cells while others have been seen inside military camps.

## **Meeting with Government Agencies**

- When criticized for the lack of investigation, the government agencies blame the witnesses for not coming forward. Although they acknowledge that this is due to fear, they have not taken credible measures to reinforce the witness protection program.
- Measures being taken by the Supreme Court concerning the Writ of Amparo are seen as positive and welcomed by the delegation.
- If the authorities are not behind the killings and are seeking to remedy the situation, it is difficult to understand why they are issuing an administrative order to draft a law that appears to provide protection of the police and the army from the Writ of Amparo powers.
- The lack of conviction adds to the culture of impunity that allows the killings and the disappearances to continue.
- The Human Security Act is a deeply-flawed law with most of the provisions being challenged. The Department of Justice has even admitted that 50% of its provisions need to be amended.

The delegation of the HKMHRPP2 stands to condemn the extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. We are urging the Philippine government to stop them.

We are one with the Filipino in calling on the Philippine government to (1) conduct a thorough investigation of cases (2) ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice and (3) provide full reparation for victims and their families.

An open letter containing other recommendations to the government is attached. A full report will be finalized and released soon.

The delegation of the HKMHRPP2 includes Hong Kong Legislator Leung Kwok-Hung and representatives from the Asian Human Rights Commission, Justice and Peace Commission of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese, HK Federation of Catholic Students, Asia Pacific Mission for

Migrants, Asian Centre for Progress of Peoples, Asian Students Association, and Asian Monitor Resource Centre.