A Call for Solidarity with the Persecuted in the Philippines, and an End to Extra-Judicial Killings and other Human Rights Violations

(Resolution of Witness)

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, More than 800 people have been murdered in extra-judicial killings in the Philippines over the past 5 years, and nearly 200 people have been forcibly abducted, with none of these cases solved;

WHEREAS, Those who have been killed or disappeared have been involved in work for economic and political justice within the legal framework, yet characterized by the Philippine government as destabilizers and enemies of the state;

WHEREAS, Our sisters and brothers of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, are subject, as are most of the citizens of the Philippines, to a culture of repression and terror, and additionally live and work with the awareness that 16 of the 27 religious workers killed to date [March, 2007] have been members of the UCCP;

WHEREAS, $179.6 million has been provided by the U.S. government to the Philippines, from 2001-2004 “to equip security forces” [See GAO report, July, 2005] with then-assistant U.S. Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz referring to the Philippines as the “Second Front in the War on Terror” [See on-line AsiaTimes, May, 2003];

WHEREAS, in a country where basic needs for health care, public education, and gainful employment are neglected, the Philippine government has allocated $208 million for military hardware upgrades to combat insurgency;

WHEREAS, As people of faith we cry out to the Most High to "listen and do justice for the vulnerable and the oppressed, so that mortals may bring terror no more;"

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that General Synod XXVI calls upon

The General Minister and President

- to communicate to the United States Congress that any future appropriations from the United States of America to the Philippines should be conditioned on the demonstrated promotion of human rights through effective prosecution, trial and appropriate punishment of those alleged to perpetrate, assist, tolerate or are otherwise responsible for human rights violations against civilian populations;

- to encourage Wider Church Ministries, Justice and Witness Ministries, Conferences, and Local Churches to advocate that military appropriations be conditional upon demonstrated promotion of human rights;

- to ask individual members of the United Church of Christ, U.S.A., and Local Churches to pray for our partner church, the United Church of Christ, Philippines, in this time of upheaval, and to understand and be ultimately concerned for the economic, political, and religious dynamics of the country;
• to invite our ecumenical partners in the United States to join us in denouncing the extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances in the Philippines;

• to call upon Philippines President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to stop the executions and violence and call the perpetrators into account under the law;

• to call upon U.S. President George W. Bush to reconsider his 2003 description of the Philippines as a “model of democracy” and to pursue the realization of democratic rule in the Philippines;

• to maintain supportive communication with the UCCP;

Wider Church Ministries

• to encourage mission partnerships between Conferences and the UCCP;

• to maintain supportive communication with the UCCP;

• to provide and disseminate information on the current state of the Philippines to Local Churches & Conferences;

Justice & Witness Ministries

• to call upon U.S. government agencies and elected representatives to examine the links between U.S. funds and the violence and repression in the Philippines;

• to identify, through Justice and Peace Network communications, legislators who could be called upon to provide leadership in addressing policy and funding issues pertinent to the violations of human rights in the Philippines;

• to provide information and resources to raise awareness in Local Churches;

Conferences

• to express support and solidarity with the members of the UCCP in living out Jesus Christ’s Gospel message, particularly in promoting economic justice. (Luke 4:18-19);

• to establish linkages (dialogue, conversations, programs, etc.) toward mission partnerships with the UCCP.

Local Churches

• to seek out and employ avenues of advocacy for those persecuted in the Philippines;

• to prayerfully consider forming personal relationships with members of UCCP in affected areas for support and solidarity.

FUNDING

Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.
IMPLEMENTATION

Justice and Witness Ministries and Wider Church Ministries are requested to be the primary implementer of this resolution.