



FILIPINO NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East Esplanade and Elaine streets, St Albans., Victoria AUSTRALIA 3021
PO Box 1045 St. Albans, Victoria AUSTRALIA 3021

STATEMENT AGAINST NCCP's RED-TAGGING BY THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY

We, members of the Filipino National Conference in the Uniting Church in Australia, condemn the labelling of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) as a front organization of communist terrorist groups. We view this as an attempt to silence the NCCP and its member churches by discrediting their advocacy for truth, justice and peace.

We grew up in Philippine churches and are baptised into the life and ministry of Christ Jesus who commanded us to love God above all and our neighbour as ourselves. Through the years, we have witnessed the NCCP's consistent commitment to neighbour by serving vulnerable communities through disaster relief and rehabilitation, poverty alleviation and community empowerment programs. In recent years, the NCCP has carried out works of mercy for families and communities orphaned by extrajudicial killings in the War on Drugs. The NCCP has spoken out against a culture of impunity in police, military and para-military operations that further erodes the dignity and rights of people.

The "red-tagging" of the NCCP is a slander of our faith and witness and an attack on the integrity of Christian faith and mission. This hostile allegation demeans the zeal with which we seek to live out our faith as responsible Filipino Christians, who believe that action for justice is an integral part of preaching the Gospel.

Instead of labelling religious organizations as "communist fronts", the Philippine Government would do better to address the root causes of armed conflict and in their place establish firm economic, political and social foundations for lasting peace and an abundant life for all. We note that the NCCP has regularly used its good offices to promote principled dialogue and peace negotiations among key parties in the conflict.

As Filipinos living in Australia, we seek to share our blessings so that together we may build a just and peaceful world. As members of the Uniting Church in Australia, we are committed to working towards dismantling the structural and historical causes of violence, injustice and inequality. Towards this goal, we will continue to support the NCCP and its member churches in their ministry of faith, witness and service alongside the people of the Philippines.

We pray for and covet God's blessing and accompaniment in the mission and ministry of the NCCP, its member churches and other organizations as they respond to the current crises in the Philippines.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we invite all people of goodwill to lighten the people's burden, free the oppressed, bring good news to the poor, and comfort the broken hearted (Isaiah 58: 6, 61: 1 cf. Luke 4: 18).

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The Filipino National Conference is one of 13 National Conferences within the Uniting Church in Australia. These Conferences help ensure that different communities are heard and make a distinctive contribution to the life of the Uniting Church. For enquiries: Rev Berlin Guerrero (FNC Convenor) Mobile: +61 499 303 911