



World Organisation Against Torture

P.O. Box 21 - 1211 Geneva 8

Switzerland

Tel.: 0041/22 809 49 39 / Fax: 0041/22 809 49 29

E-mail: omct@omct.org / Web: www.omct.org

OMCT welcomes the European Parliament's positive response to its call to address the economic, social and cultural root causes of extrajudicial executions in the Philippines

On 22 January 2009 the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) [presented to the European Parliament](#) Subcommittee on Human Rights a [report](#) on the economic, social and cultural root causes of extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in the Philippines. OMCT drew attention to the specific situation of those defending their economic, social and cultural rights, emphasizing that most victims of summary executions are activists struggling for more equitable distribution of resources, for better land policy, and for a better protection of the rights of farmers, indigenous peoples, and workers. OMCT recommended that specific measures be taken to end extrajudicial killings and summary executions by addressing their economic, social and cultural root causes.

OMCT welcomes the attention that the European Union (EU) is giving to the alarming level of human rights violations taking place in the Philippines and welcomes the adoption, on 12 March 2009, by the European Parliament of a [Resolution](#) on the Philippines that reflects many of the concerns expressed by OMCT.

In particular, OMCT welcomes the Parliament's recognition that ***"in order to put an end to abductions and extrajudicial killings it is necessary to address the economic, social and cultural root causes of violence in the Philippines"*** and its call on the Council and the Commission ***"to ensure that the EU's financial assistance towards economic development in the Philippines is accompanied by scrutiny of possible violations of economic, social and cultural rights, with special attention being paid to encouraging dialogue and inclusion of all groups in society."***

The Parliament in its resolution of 12 March also denounced the hundreds of cases of extrajudicial killings of human rights activists, trade unionists and journalists that have occurred in recent years in the Philippines, and the role that the security forces have played in orchestrating and perpetrating those murders. It also called on the Government of the Philippines to investigate cases of extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances and establish an independent monitoring mechanism to oversee the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators; to adopt measures to end the systematic intimidation and harassment of human rights activists, members of civil society, and witnesses in criminal prosecutions, and to ensure truly effective witness protection. The Parliament further reiterated its request to the

Government to guarantee to UN human rights bodies unrestricted access to the country and to adopt and implement international human rights legislation.

OMCT welcomes the fact that the European Parliament recognised the crucial role the European Union can play in helping to address human rights violations in the Philippines. On different occasions, OMCT has underlined that the EU is in a strategic position to promote respect for human rights in the country. The EU is in fact one of the largest source of foreign direct investments that have flowed into the Philippines in the past decade, and therefore it can influence the policies and operations of EU-based companies in their activities. The EU can also work through the implementation of various instruments such as the EU-Philippines Country Strategy Paper 2007 – 2013, the EU Guidelines on Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment as well as other projects and initiatives such as the EU Justice Assistance Mission and ASEAN-Human Rights project, funded by the EU itself.

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For further details please contact Tom McCarthy, tmc@omct.org