

RATIONALE: Since President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo took office in 2001, there have been over 900 men and women murdered and abducted in the Philippines. They include students, clergy, activists, teachers, social justice advocates, peasants, farmers, journalists, lawyers a bishop and many more. Witnesses believe that the military is responsible for these murders. To this date, no one has been tried or convicted. So, we as socially responsible young adults of the United Methodist Church, are called to respond to social injustices in our society.

WHEREAS, President Arroyo has declared an all-out war campaign to “defeat Asia’s longest-running communist insurgency,” and has given the right to the military to prevent any kind of social uprisings and to keep constituents in order, and

WHEREAS, anyone who speaks out against the government, sympathizes with communists, or advocates on behalf of social change is seen as a threat to the government and the establishment thereof and therefore has led to abductions, harassments and killings of innocent and unarmed civilians in the provinces, and

WHEREAS, official policies and actions of the Government of the Philippines are oppressing working class citizens, farmers in particular by harassing or even killing anyone who in any way tries to help these citizens rise above the challenges of poverty, and

WHEREAS, the Philippine government sees the New People’s Army as a threat as the communist rebel group, but the NPA claims to seek economic and political justice for the people, and has been fighting an underground war against the government for more than forty years. Recently, the United States has linked the group to Osama Bin Laden because

of their high Muslim population. In fact, since September 11, the Philippine military has received a substantial amount of financial assistance to fight the global war on terror. It is believed that this has accelerated the campaign to stop opposition to government policies, resulting in over 900 deaths, and over 200 forced disappearances.

WHEREAS, most victims are middle-class citizens who are speaking out about human rights and the need for social change in the Philippines.

THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED, that the United Methodist Student Forum condemn the oppression and killings of the Filipino people, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Student Forum calls upon the General Board of Church and Society, Council of Bishops, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and every campus ministry unit to engage in efforts to encourage the United States Government and the United Nations to pressure the Philippine government to cease oppression against civilians and to halt all forms violence, including but not limited to harassment, forced disappearances, and killings, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Student Forum supports non-violent intervention from the international community to intervene in bringing justice to the region to ensure that the human, civil, and environmental rights of the people are guaranteed, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Student Forum calls upon the Board of Higher Education to provide the study guide and DVD, *Live to Tell: Witness and Survival in the Philippines* to

all campus ministries so that students can engage in active prayer, education, worship, and social justice ministry surrounding the killings in the Philippines, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we suggest that awareness – raising on this issue be intensified across connection, including, if possible, the conduct of fact-finding missions to the Philippines that include young peoples.

*Portions of this resolution were inspired by a similar resolution passed in 2007, written by United Methodist young adults, regarding the genocide in Sudan.

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Note: This resolution received the necessary two-thirds majority vote to be an official position of the Student Forum of the United Methodist Student Movement.