



AMRSP

Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines

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STATEMENT ON THE MASSACRE IN MAGUINDANAO

Forty six lives lost, twelve of them journalists. It touches the very heart of our core values – LIFE and DIGNITY.

How can anyone worthy of being called a human being plan, instigate and perpetrate these brazen, unprecedented, horrendous and abominable acts that defy all sense and sensibility.

But it is precisely that which defies logic, which taunts the norms of the civilized world, which wields terror that dealt the dark hand of death in the Maguindanao Massacre.

This tragedy wrenches our hearts and shakes the very core of our being. We grieve and wail for the lives lost. There can be no reason for the taking of human life – not for power, not for wealth, not even for an elective position.

This is indicative of the culture of violence that has been tolerated by the administration inflicted by a known ally, manifesting the continued ascendancy of warlords and a brutal assault on the freedom of the press.

We extend our hand of comfort to the families of the slain victims. No words can fully express our deep sorrow and sense of loss.

We call for an end to violence and death. We beseech everyone to restrain themselves from acts of vengeance and retaliation.

In the midst of violence and death, the government must act to protect its citizens. It must protect those who seek to engage in the electoral process in an honest and peaceful manner. It must protect those who practice the noble profession of journalism. The killings of journalists strike at the very core of our democratic rights – free speech. It must protect the innocent civilians caught in the midst of conflict.

We demand that the government act decisively – find the perpetrators, disarm them, arrest them, jail them, prosecute them and banish them from our midst. Justice must be served regardless of wealth and power, regardless of political debts and alliances.

The culture of impunity must come to an end. The agents of death must be given a message – Life is sacred and there can be no room nor nook nor cranny for assassins and death dealers.

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