

JPICC HEADLINE

JUSTICE, PEACE & INTEGRITY OF CREATION COMMISSION
ASSOCIATION OF MAJOR RELIGIOUS SUPERIORS IN THE PHILIPPINES

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Defend Our Life, Protect Our Dignity No to the Human Security Act of 2007

"Woe to those who enact unjust statutes and who write oppressive decrees, depriving the poor of justice, robbing the weakest of my people of their rights." (Isaiah 10:1)

Inspired by the leaders of the Catholic Church pastoral exhortation to build a society more human, more worthy of the human person, we gathered today to discuss, contemplate, and discern the different provisions of the Human Security Act of 2007 (HSA) otherwise known as the Anti-Terror Law, the social and political implication of its implementation, and its moral dimension based on the framework of upholding human dignity and protecting human rights.

We believe that it is indeed part of government's responsibility to protect its citizens against acts that could endanger life and human security, however we are alarmed that the provisions of the HSA clearly provides the legal mantle that would further violate constitutionally guaranteed rights.

Discerning on the provisions of the HSA, we are deeply troubled that the law violates the right to due process by allowing the arrest of suspected terrorists even without the virtue of a warrant or the preconditions for a warrantless arrest. The law also violates the right to privacy and the right to be secure in their persons by institutionalizing "terrorist profiling", surveillance and interception of private communications. The law also expands the 36 hour detention period which multiplies the risk of torture and other forms of human rights violations being committed to suspects under custody.

We feel that instead of building community and strengthening the principle of solidarity the HSA will only exacerbate the already deteriorating state of human rights in the country, feed the continued existence of a coercive environment and growing culture of impunity, and further the political agenda and ambition of one small group by using the law to curtail any opposition against the administration of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

As religious and as members of the lay faithful we must work for the common good by participating directly in social, economic, and political affairs so as to transform society into one wherein the dignity of the human person is respected, protected, and fulfilled. And as such it is our moral obligation to take a firm but enlightened

stand against the provisions of the HSA that violates and curtail human rights.

In the words of our Church leaders "when human authority goes beyond the limits willed by God, it makes itself a deity and demands absolute submission; it becomes the Beast of the Apocalypse, an image of the power of the imperial persecutor." We must never allow this to happen. Peace and justice must prevail.

We embrace the cry and call of the marginalized by asserting that the "Human Security Act" will worsen extra-judicial killings, culture of death, and human rights violations. At present, urban militarization includes both deployment of military troops in urban poor communities with demolition threat and deployment of military personnel in schools and universities to promote this so-called "Anti-Terrorism Law." In the rural areas, militarization and the culture of violence and death bring untold suffering to our poor brothers and sisters. It is from their side, it is from their bosom that we, religious and lay faithful cry out to the heavens and say:

**DENOUNCE THE CULTURE OF DEATH!
REPEAL THE HUMAN SECURITY ACT!
NO TO STATE TERRORISM!
JUSTICE TO VICTIMS OF EXTRA-JUDICIAL KILLINGS!
JUSTICE TO VICTIMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS!
PROMOTE PEACE BASED ON JUSTICE!
DEFEND OUR LIFE! PROTECT OUR DIGNITY!**

Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines
Task Force Detainees of the Philippines
Task Force on Urban Conscientization
Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission
Women and Gender Commission
Urban Missionaries
Rural Missionaries of the Philippines
Task Force on the Orientation of Church Personnel
and 130 participants to the AMRSP-Mission Partners Forum held last July 28, 2007



FOR COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/SUGGESTIONS:

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