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H.E. Benigno Aquino III
President
Republic of the Philippines
Malacanang Palace
J.P. Laurel Street, San Miguel 1005
Manila
Philippines



Berlin, 28.06.2010

Dear Mr. President

Filipinos have elected you their President. Your presidency brings much hope for the Filipino people. On behalf of Amnesty International Germany, we congratulate you on your election.

Early in your campaign Amnesty International asked you to make public your commitment to human rights. We recognize that you have committed to fighting corruption, prioritizing education, protecting public health and delivering justice, we note that you have not answered the above mentioned questions of Amnesty International. But from press articles we noted that human rights were among the topics discussed during the meeting between you and ambassadors and heads of mission from the European Union. We appreciate that you pledged after the meeting to track down assassins involved in extrajudicial killings. But we did not notice whether you really committed to solve the key problem of impunity of the perpetrators.

The politically motivated killings of at least 100 people ahead of the recent elections, the massacre of more than 60 people including 31 journalists in Maguindanao, the hundreds of killings and enforced disappearances of activists in the last decade are all symptoms of a country whose government has failed to respect and protect the rights of its people.

We urge your administration to prioritize human rights by making concrete and measurable commitments. Amnesty International consulted with various local sectoral and human rights groups in the Philippines. Based on this, we attach a list of practicable recommendations for actions which we urge you to take on your first 100 days as President.

In this list we recommend primary steps to reestablishing priority for human rights in the Philippines. Moreover there is a very good chance for you to improve the justice administration and end the impunity for perpetrators of human rights violations if you enforce the cooperation with the EU Justice Assistance Program EPJUST. They have really experienced experts in the Philippines and we are

particularly convinced of the excellent juridical expertise of the head of EPJUST, the German leading prosecutor Mr. Detlev Mehlis. You should think of including the team of EPJUST into the investigations of actual human rights problems like the Maguindanao massacre and the Morong 43.

Mr. President, you have pledged to be the "Peoples' President", a "Listening President", and a President who will bring forth transformational change in the Philippines. The Filipino people pin high hopes on you. With the campaign period and the elections behind you, it is time to make true your promises and to put priority on human rights. We await your response to our 10 recommendations for your administration's first 100 days.

Yours truly,



Monika Lüke
Secretary General
Amnesty International Germany



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL: List of 10 recommendations for first steps towards the reestablishment of priority for human rights for the first 100 days of the newly elected President of the Philippines, H.E. Benigno Aquino III.

End political killings and enforced disappearances

1. Immediately sign the UN treaty on enforced disappearances (International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances) as a step towards ratification;
2. Establish a presidential commission that will review all reported cases of extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances during the last decade, in cooperation with impartial bodies such as the EU Justice Assistance Program, with the aim of enabling speedy prosecutions for cases with enough evidence, or reopening investigations for cases whose progress is stalled due to lack of effective investigation;

End human rights abuses by militias, paramilitaries and private armies

3. Revoke Executive Order 546, which directs the Philippine National Police to support the military in counterinsurgency, including through the use of militias and paramilitary groups;
4. Disarm and disband all private armies;

Instill human rights protections in governance

5. Implement through an Executive Order a clear and transparent mechanism that prevents the promotion or appointment of persons who face allegations or have records of grave human rights abuses to senior levels of government, law enforcement, the judiciary, and command posts for the military;
6. Declare, as a presidential priority bill, the charter of the Commission on Human Rights in the Philippines, facilitating its approval in both legislative houses;

Protect and support people displaced by the armed conflict

7. Order the relevant departments and agencies in government to take stock of the current situation of the estimated 125,000 long-term internally displaced population in Mindanao, and ensure that those who are displaced are provided with adequate food, water, shelter, clothing, as well as essential healthcare and sanitation;

Commit to global human rights treaties

8. Certify as urgent for concurrence of the Senate the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
9. Immediately sign the Optional Protocol of the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to facilitate the process of ratification within your administration's term;
10. Immediately transmit to the Senate the instrument of ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court for their deliberations.

28 June 2010