

House of Representatives of The Philippines
HOR Complex
Constitution Hills 1126
Philippines

Cologne, July 15, 2015

Dear Representative,

The Action Network Human Rights – Philippines, comprised of church-based development agencies and human rights organizations in Germany, works against situations that expose people to more risks of human rights violations, such as war and displacement. We support all efforts towards sustainable peace where human security, human dignity, and human rights are protected.

Our hopes for a more peaceful Mindanao were buoyed when the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) signed the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB). This triumphant event at peace-making can only come from hard work, fortitude, and the commitment of both Parties to come to a mutually agreed political arrangement that will give the Bangsamoro the opportunity to meaningfully exercise their collective right to self-determination within the context of the Philippine state.

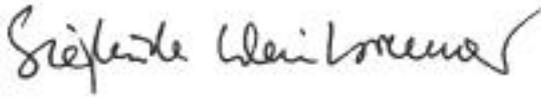
It is our understanding that a very important part of the implementation of the political agreement would be the passage of a Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), in accordance with the provisions of the CAB, e.g. as reflected in House Bill 4994. As the Philippine Congress takes on the pivotal role in executing this critical milestone, we appeal to members of Congress to view the BBL as part of this historic step towards laying the foundations for the elusive peace in Mindanao. Significant deviations from the provisions of the CAB and reduction of the existing autonomy will lead to the erosion of trust in the peaceful resolution of conflicts and to other possible scenarios that can be deleterious for the people in the Bangsamoro and the rest of the country.

We take note of the ceremonial decommissioning undertaken by the MILF, and we take this as a gesture of its willingness and commitment to fulfill the obligations under the peace agreement. We hope that this act of good faith will not be lost and buried in the noise that has accompanied the very emotive deliberations on the BBL. Peace processes inherently require mutual trust and commitment, and it is in the best interest of each Party to take every opportunity to show that it is exerting utmost efforts to deliver on its undertakings.

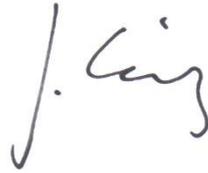
In the end, the dividends of peace do not just go to the combatants, but to each citizen who will be able to go to school, seek and get employment or livelihood, have access to health facilities and services, feel secure against violence and criminality — as guns are silenced, communities are rehabilitated and relationships are rebuilt. We bring our own commitment to contribute to the strengthening of the human rights movement that is necessary as Mindanao transitions towards structures that are designed to bring about sustainable peace.

We trust you will support the enactment of the BBL that is faithful to the signed agreement and will strengthen the current level of autonomy in Muslim Mindanao.

Yours sincerely,



Sieglinde Weinbrenner
Chair



Johannes Icking
Coordinator

The Action Network (Aktionsbündnis Menschenrechte – Philippinen, AMP) is an initiative of seven major German church-based agencies and human rights organizations to promote advocacy and information work in Germany and the EU regarding the human rights situation in the Philippines. Member Organizations of the AMP are Amnesty International Germany, Bread for the World – Protestant Development Service, International Peace Observers Network (IPON), Misereor, Missio Munich, philippinenbüro e.V. im Asienhaus, and the United Evangelical Mission (UEM). The main focus of the network lies on the core human rights issues of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and fabricated charges against political activists.