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The honorable Benigno S. Aquino III
President of the Republic of the Philippines
Malacanang Palace
JP Laurel St., San Miguel
Manila
The Philippines

August 6, 2014

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to you as a Member of the German Parliament (Deutscher Bundestag). As spokesman on development policy of the green parliamentary group I am very much concerned about the human right situation within your country. Recent media reports point to a high the number of political killings and describe an alarming degree of legal impunity related to this issue. My colleagues and friends in the Philippines furthermore informed me about the formation and deployment of militias by mining corporations. These developments appear to be a severe threat to a free and open Philippine society.

As an example I want to refer to the killing of Italian missionary Father Fausto Tentorio, who was killed on October 17, 2011. The case brought international attention to the alarming situation within your country. I strongly condemn this brutal crime and call on you to bring those responsible for the murder to justice. As you know, Father Fausto had received numerous death threats before the assassination as a result of his work with the indigenous communities and as an anti-mining advocate. Furthermore he was under surveillance for weeks before the killing. In 2003, he already survived an attack by a paramilitary group called "Bagani". Taking this into account his assassination could have been prevented. The tragedy of Father Fausto's death exemplifies the horrible consequences of impunity in the Philippines where certain groups continue to be impervious to the rule of law.

I have been in close contact with various civil rights groups in the Philippines for many years and I know the situation in your country quiet well. Recently I filed a minor interpellation to the German government in order to gain information on the circumstances of Father Fausto's death and the impunity with regard to political killings. Please be aware that the German government, the civil society and I will continue to monitor the human rights situation in your country.



The Philippines are an important partner country of German development cooperation. Therefore, I express my deep concerns about the treatment of civil rights activists and indigenous people within the country. In addition, human rights defenders and members of the civil society have to be protected.

Therefore, I am calling on you to carry out an immediate, impartial and thorough investigation on the murder of Father Tentorio and bring the alleged criminals to justice. Especially the possible involvement of state agents or paramilitary groups has to be investigated. In addition, security for human rights activists who are under threat has to be guaranteed. Eventually order EO 546 which directs the recruitment of paramilitary groups for counterinsurgency has to be revoked.

Since you stated the intention to stop extrajudicial killings and other human right violations, I encourage you to maintain your efforts to resolve the issue. I look forward to receive information about the concrete action that you take in order to resolve the case of Father Fausto and to fight the problem of judicial impunity.

With kind regards,

Uwe Kekeritz