



CANADA-PHILIPPINES SOLIDARITY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

4 June 2009
Vancouver, BC Canada

Justice for Melissa Roxas and Juanito Carabeo! Surface John Edward Jandoc!

The Canada-Philippines Solidarity for Human Rights (CPS-HR) in British Columbia vehemently condemns the abduction and torture of **Melissa C. Roxas**, an American citizen of Filipino descent, in La Paz, Tarlac last May 19th 2009. Melissa Roxas was taken by suspected elements of the Philippine Armed Forces with two Filipino companions, **Juanito Carabeo** and **John Edward Jandoc** from a house they were visiting. All three were forcibly taken in broad daylight and in front of witnesses.

While we seek justice for Melissa Roxas and Juanito Carabeo, we also demand that John Edward Jandoc be immediately surfaced and freed.

In Melissa Roxas' affidavit which was made public and in her petition presented to the Philippine Supreme Court for a *writ of amparo* and *habeas data*, Melissa recounts in detail the physical and mental torture and the denial of her other human rights during her captivity from May 19 to May 25. The interrogation and torture she received point to the military as the perpetrators. She described, among other forms of cruel and inhumane treatment, being forced to the floor, struck and hit on the head, face and body, dragged to a van, beaten, handcuffed and blindfolded while being interrogated in captivity, her head covered in plastic, and being deprived of sleep, food and water.

Melissa Roxas is a well known community and cultural activist and human rights advocate. She is a member of the cultural group Habi-Arts and of BAYAN-USA, the progressive alliance of Filipino organizations in the U.S. She was in the Philippines to gather materials for her writing project and to help Bayan-Tarlac members conduct a survey in their area for a future medical mission.

The Canada-Philippines Solidarity for Human Rights (CPS-HR) denounces this war of the Arroyo regime against innocent people and the cruel and cowardly practices carried out by the military and its agents with the hollow excuse of tracking and capturing alleged members of the New Peoples' Army. What happened with Melissa Roxas and her two other companions is in itself an affirmation of UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston's conclusion that the

Philippine military officers and soldiers openly vilify legal personalities and organizations as enemies of the State, making them fair game in the counterinsurgency operations that the military conducts with impunity.

The Arroyo administration continues to show its utter lack of respect for the civil and political rights of the people. It has not hidden its all-out campaign to commit acts of repression to stifle political dissent, preserve the present dispensation and use this to perpetuate itself in power, well beyond 2010. It continues to wage its *Oplan Bantay Laya* counter-insurgency program, emboldened by the material and financial support from the United States government.

We admire the courage, strength and wisdom of Melissa Roxas. She resisted her abductors fiercely, kept her presence of mind in the face of torture and threats of death and bravely told her story before the world and before the court. Her story needs to be told and told loudly so that her abductors and those in command (from the Commander-in-Chief to the Defense Secretary to the Chiefs of Staff and the Chief of Police) can be held accountable and justice can be meted out.

We are aware that Melissa Roxas's testimony of what happened to her is done at great risk to herself and to her family. We support her in her decision to speak out, not only for herself but also to help surface John Edward Jandoc. Such a response should move all freedom loving peoples to find ways to defend the victims of human rights, share their stories, expose the injustices committed by the repressive Arroyo regime and work on achieving a just and lasting peace in the Philippines.

Stop the killings!
Stop enforced disappearances!
Stand Up Against Tyranny and Human Rights Violations!
Oust the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo regime!

June 4, 2009

**The Canada-Philippines Solidarity for Human Rights
Vancouver, B.C. CANADA**