

# MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST. COLUMBAN

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10 Downing Street  
London SW1A 2AA

10<sup>th</sup> September 2006

Dear Prime Minister,

We are very concerned about political killings in the Philippines and hope that the British government will take serious note of the current situation in the Philippine on the occasion of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's visit to London on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2006.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo must be urged to hold the security services, especially the military, accountable for the extraordinarily large number of extra-judicial killings in her country since she took office in 2001, (The Tablet, 9 September 2006, '*Since 2001, 623 Filipino activists have lost their lives*').

The president seems to be allowing the Department of Defence, and some Armed Forces of the Philippine generals in particular, to act as architects of their own policy which is based on the elimination by assassination of perceived opponents to the state. If the president has no control or has ceded control over the military then the human rights situation will continue to worsen. The military must not be given autonomy from civil government as this sets a dangerous precedent for democratic rule in the country.

It is extremely urgent that western governments especially the UK government makes it absolutely clear to the Philippine president that she must act decisively to stop the continuing and indeed escalating violations of human rights in the country. She too must respect the right of indigenous peoples, political activists, farmers, trade-unionists, lawyers, women, religious workers and youth to criticise the direction and policies of her administration.

Sincerely,

Fr. Frank Nally SSC  
House Superior

cc. Rt Hon Margaret Beckett MP ,The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London  
HE Ambassador Edgardo Espiritu, The Philippine Embassy, London

HE Mr Peter Beckingham, The British Ambassador, Manila