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# PAGTATANIM

CONFERENCE DECLARATION

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# Sowing Seeds of Solidarity for the Filipino People's Struggle for Peace

We, friends of faith in solidarity with the Filipino people, gathered together on June 27-28, 2025 in Rome, Italy for **Pagtatanim: Sowing Seeds of Faith Solidarity for the Filipino People's Struggle for Peace** to strengthen our resolve to work for peace based on justice in the Philippines. Together, we commit to sow the seeds of solidarity inspired by the words of Pope Francis that *"solidarity is more than a few sporadic acts of generosity. It is a call to act against the structural causes of poverty. Yes, there is an invisible thread joining every injustice - and we are all either complicit or courageous."*

We journeyed to Rome to reflect on the essence of Leviticus 25, which speaks of the Year of the Lord, the Jubilee. We find hope and inspiration that every 50 years, God commanded the people to liberate all slaves, cancel all debts, let everyone return to their ancestral lands, and let the land be renewed.





We are a movement that is conscious of our history of accompanying the Filipino people's struggle – from the Stony Point conference in the early 80's against the Marcos dictatorship; to the Pastoral and Ecumenical Delegation Visits; to International Observers' Missions during elections; and, to the recent International People's Tribunal that found the Duterte and Marcos Jr. regimes guilty of war crimes with the Biden administration's complicity. We are also peoples of faith supporting an existing people's movement that has continued to persist and persevere to struggle against the roadblocks to peace, and we remain committed to supporting the Filipino people's struggle to remove these roadblocks.



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# Testimonies

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In our coming together, we heard from Filipino faith and community leaders that the Philippines is a country where the majority of the people grapple with landlessness, joblessness, massive poverty fueled by inequality, endemic corruption and foreign domination—the root causes of unpeace. Local big landlords and national and foreign big businesses, through the acquiescence of the Philippine government, control the land and the resources. The police and military protect these big businesses and extractive industries, including large-scale mining and agricultural plantations that disembowel mountains, poison the rivers and seas, and destroy the land.

We heard firsthand testimonies of how the Philippine military, supported by the US, continues to terrorize communities. We heard about the cases of violations of international humanitarian law including the bombing of civilian, rural communities forcing countless people to abandon their homes and livelihoods. We also heard about the continuing movement for justice and accountability of families of victims of the drug war.



Further, we learned how the Philippine government continues to use practices of red-tagging against anyone who speaks up for the rights of the people.

The National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), which was recently appointed by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to head its Unity Peace and Development Plan, along with other state agents, continues to red tag, a practice that threatens the life, dignity, and freedom of those targeted. Many are illegally arrested, tortured, harassed or even killed after being initially red-tagged. Those illegally arrested languish in jails even after years of waiting for trial.

Laws like the Anti-terrorism Act (ATA) and the Terrorism Financing and Suppression Law (TFSL) have been weaponized for financial surveillance, asset freezes, and indefinite asset preservation orders applied to bank accounts, funds, and properties of individuals, organizations and even churches.







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We know that in our shared beliefs, we must continue to shine an international light on these violations taking place.

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As friends of faith, from many generations, we stand alongside the Filipino people in their struggle for human dignity and human rights. We will work together for a just and lasting peace in the Philippines where the rights of the Filipino people are recognized, advanced and defended. We will join the Filipino people's struggle for peace in the Philippines, that is not simply the silence of guns, but must be the active presence of justice and meaningful change for the majority of the people. It must be tangible and manifest through food on the table, decent jobs and wages, clothing, shelter, education and access to means that meet people's basic needs. Peace with justice means people living sustainably in their communities without fear or threat to their lives and livelihood.

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With renewed commitment we will help plant, nurture, and harvest justice in the Philippines by addressing the root causes of unpeace.

Thus, we pledge to:

1. Organize theological reflections on just peace tied to real campaigns.
2. Organize visits for non-Filipino faith leaders to witness and accompany the most marginalized, poor, and oppressed in the Philippines, especially in the rural areas.
3. Advocate for an end to foreign military aid, especially from the US, used for repression.
4. Accompany and support vulnerable communities, human rights defenders, and church workers, including the peoples' lawyers defending the human rights defenders.
5. Push for the release of political prisoners, including organizing prisoner visits from faith leaders, and support for the families of the disappeared.
6. Join ecumenical "Push Back" campaigns to defend the oppressed and stop red-tagging.



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7. Continue to accompany the families of victims of the “drug war” and support the movement for accountability and justice for victims of extrajudicial killings and political killings.

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8. Support the Filipino people’s call for justice and accountability by investigating Rodrigo Duterte and Ferdinand Marcos Jr. for crimes against humanity and war crimes via international bodies such as but not limited to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

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9. Call for genuine peace talks not dependent on surrender and preconditions, but aim to resolve the roots of the armed conflict – eradicate the roadblocks to peace.

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10. Support and seek justice for those lodged with charges of “financing terrorism” for doing development work for the poor in rural areas, especially but not limited to the case of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines (RMP).

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11. Support the Right to self determination and to ancestral domain of indigenous peoples in the Philippines.

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Support and defend the rights of Filipino migrant communities in different countries.

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Support the Filipino people's call for human rights, genuine land reform, and environmental justice.

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Support the work of children's organizations in the Philippines to ensure the rights of Filipino children and families are upheld and defended.

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15.

Develop international lobby and advocacy efforts for the Filipino people's interests to various governments and inter-governmental bodies such as the European Union and the United Nations Human Rights Council.

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