

**GENERAL SYNOD 2025
RESOLUTION**

Resolution Number A160

Subject: Just Peace in the Philippines

Moved By: The Rev. Canon Dr. Philip Der

Seconded By: The Rev. Dr. Blessing Shambaré

Be it resolved that this General Synod:

Reaffirm and strengthen the historic commitment (A252/2008) of our church to the pursuit of lasting peace with justice for the peoples of the Republic of the Philippines.

We ask:

1. The Primate to participate in opportunities for solidarity and advocacy, urging:
 - a. the Government of Canada to:
 - i. publicly support the resumption of peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in order to address the roots of the armed conflict;
 - ii. call for the repeal of the GRP's counter-insurgency policies and strategies; and
 - iii. take the following steps to ensure human rights are a priority in its relations with the GRP:
 1. Perform an audit of Canada's provision of financial, programmatic, and technical support to the GRP in order to ensure that these are used to uphold human rights and pro-people community development;
 2. Halt negotiations of the Status of Visiting Forces Agreement (SOVFA);
 3. Suspend Canada's Memorandum of Understanding on Enhanced Defence Cooperation; and
 4. Commit to the participation of women in the peace process.
2. Canadian Anglicans to engage in solidarity and advocacy through prayer and action with church partners in the Philippines, communities of faith, and civil society groups toward just peace, including the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines-Canada, to stop violations on human rights like extrajudicial killings, disappearances, and 'red-tagging - the labelling of unarmed civilians, human rights defenders, and church members as a tactic of state terror to suppress dissent - and the weaponization of laws which lead to rampant filing of trumped-up charges which have primarily targeted human rights defenders, lawyers, social activists, journalists, peasants, and church workers. There is also a need to mitigate the violations on International Humanitarian Law which has affected countless civilians in communities in the Philippines.

3. The General Synod Office to:

- a. provide prayer, educational and advocacy resources to church members, connecting local solidarity efforts with ecumenical and international efforts for just peace in the Philippines, including the annual September 1st Day of Prayer for Just and Lasting Peace in the Philippines; and
- b. continue to support the Episcopal Church in the Philippines, Iglesia Filipina Independiente, and National Council of Churches in the Philippines, in their deep capacity for and implementation of programs that work toward just peace in the Philippines.

Source: Partners in Mission Coordinating Committee

Submitted By: Partners in Mission Coordinating Committee

Does this motion contain within it any financial implications? Yes No

If yes, has the General Synod Expenditures Committee considered the implications? Yes No

Does this motion contain within it any staffing implications? Yes No

How does this resolution *Invite and Deepen Life in Christ*? This resolution strengthens the Church's pursuit of justice, reconciliation, peace and dignity for all in the Philippines. It works to dismantle structures of violence that suppress civil society and freedoms. In the work it asks of the Primate, church members, and the ministries of General Synod, this resolution aspires to nurture and sustain right relationships among people of faith in local, national, and global communities and networks.

EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND

There is critical opportunity now for Canada to influence the resumption of peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), and to demonstrate the strong commitment of Canadians to international human rights, peacebuilding and women's participation in peace processes. It is also vital that Canada ensure it is not complicit in human rights violations and extra-judicial killings in the Philippines and that human rights remain a priority in Canada's foreign policies, including the new Indo Pacific Strategy.

This motion for a just peace in the Philippines is supported by many communities of faith across Canada, including The Anglican Church of Canada, United Church of Canada, Kairos Canada, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, Iglesia Filipina Independiente-Canada, Caritas Canada, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, with longstanding partnerships with churches, civil society organizations, and human rights defenders in the Philippines, notably the Episcopal Church in the Philippines, Iglesia Filipina Independiente, and the National Council of Churches in the Philippines. As a Christian church, we firmly believe in justice and political negotiations as the way to achieve long term peace and justice for all.

Over the years, The Anglican Church of Canada has participated in many ecumenical and civil society efforts to advocate for Canadian government engagement and leadership in supporting just peace in the Philippines. This work has included statements and calls by church leaders for support for the renewal of peace talks, for independent investigation -Investigate PH -into the disappearances and killings of human rights and community leaders, including clergy, students, teachers, lawyers, and Indigenous Peoples, and

participation in the September 1st annual National Day of Prayer for Just and Lasting Peace in the Philippines. For further information: www.anglican.ca/publicwitness/peace-and-conflict/philippines.

The people of the Philippines have endured dictatorship, militarization and counterinsurgency attacks on human rights defenders for more than 50 years. Following the long dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos, there was hope for peace with the transition to democratic government in 1986 and the initiation of peace talks with the signing of the Hague Joint Declaration in 1992.

Despite several suspensions of the peace talks, significant progress had been made until former President Rodrigo Duterte terminated talks in November 2017. All agreements achieved between the two parties during those negotiations were voided and replaced by counter-insurgency offensives involving extra-judicial killings, red-tagging of civil society and humanitarian groups, and attacks on human rights defenders, including faith leaders. United Nations experts and human rights organizations point to the counter-insurgency campaign as the cause for the unprecedented escalation of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law against civilians during Duterte's administration. His presidency was characterized by Human Rights Watch as "the worst human rights crisis since the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos."

Today, the Philippines under President Marcos Jr. (son of the former dictator) and Vice-President Sara Duterte (daughter of former President Rodrigo Duterte) remains plagued by serious human rights violations. Duterte's counter-insurgency policies and strategies have been kept in place by President Marcos Jr. Church partners and many civil society human rights organizations continue to be victims of red-tagging and labelled as terrorists. International supporters, including Canadian clergy and faith-based groups have also been 'red-tagged' and worse for their solidarity. Laws like the Anti-terrorism Law and the Anti-Terrorism Financing Act have been weaponized against civil society. There are increasing cases of filing of trumped-up cases against activists and NGO workers including church workers. Those arrested for these cases result in prolonged detention of political prisoners. Furthermore, NDFP peace consultants who have been guaranteed with safety and immunity in the past have been killed or arrested which have become a major obstacle to peace talks resumption.

Canada's current trade and military policies and relationships with the GRP must not directly or indirectly contribute to the continuation of human rights abuses. An immediate audit of Canada's provision of financial, programmatic, and technical support to the Government of the Philippines is essential. This audit should be completed and publicly reported to Parliament before any new agreements are contemplated, including visiting forces agreements that could place Canadian soldiers on the ground.

Recent developments in the Philippines present an opportunity in 2025 for Canada to support a path towards a just peace. On November 23, 2023 the GRP and the NDFP released a Joint Statement indicating a possible resumption of peace negotiations. In October 2024, both parties re-affirmed their commitment to the resumption of the peace talks, and the Presidential Peace Adviser acknowledged the need to remove the conditions hindering the forging of a final peace agreement with the NDFP. Canada's public support and encouragement would be key.

PROCEDURE FOR ADOPTION (G)

In the normal course, an ordinary motion must be passed by a majority of the members of General Synod present and voting together.

Six members of General Synod may, prior to the question being put, require a vote by Orders, with a majority of each Order being necessary to pass.

If a question passes on a Vote by Orders, any six members (two from each of three different dioceses) may immediately before the next item of business require a vote to be taken by dioceses. A motion passes if a majority (or a tie) of dioceses vote in favour.

Source: Sections 4 and 5 of the [Declaration of Principles](#) and sections 18, 19 and 20 of the [Rules of Order and Procedure](#).