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Organizations join the International Day of Action Against Trade Union Repression and Political Killings in the Philippines on Nov. 16

Washington, DC: A number of US-based organizations have responded to the call for an International Day of Action Against Trade Union Repression and Political Killings in the Philippines by organizing a picket at the Philippines Embassy in Washington, DC on November 16, 2006 at 12:30pm. The event brings together a range of human rights activists who are condemning the intensified, and often violent, attacks being carried out by the government of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo against Filipino workers and other pro-democracy organizations.

Since Arroyo became president in 2001, sixty-four trade union leaders and organizers have been murdered in extra-judicial executions. In addition to assassination, the Center for Trade Union and Human Rights has reported roughly 980 cases of other forms of intimidation which include assaults on the picketline, illegal arrest and detention, disappearances, death threats, abduction and various other forms of harassment.

Katrina Abarcar, an event organizer from the organization Katarungan: Ad-Hoc Committee for Peace, Justice and Human Rights in the Philippines, said, "The repression of Filipino workers is a clear violation of their democratic rights." She continued, "We are joining our colleagues in the Philippines in calling on President Arroyo to ensure that the violence and harassment ends immediately."

Brian Campbell of the International Labor Rights Fund added, "Independent investigations into the participation and collusion of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police in the killings must commence at once. Only by doing this can the people of the Philippines live in a free, prosperous, and empowered society without fear. Justice and due process of the law must become the cornerstone of a strong Philippine society."

The protesters will hold tombstones bearing the names of some of the murdered workers and will deliver a letter on behalf of all the supporting organizations to Embassy officials. Similar events will be held on November 16 in Seattle and Los Angeles as well as in the Philippines, Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, South Korea and the UK.

November 16th was chosen for the Day of Action to commemorate the 2 year anniversary of the murder of 7 workers by police, military and paid goons as part of a massacre of union members striking at Hacienda Luisita.

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