

# Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft Hauptvorstand



President

Her Excellency  
Gloria Macapagal Arroyo  
Malacanang Palace Compound  
J.P. Laurel Street, San Miguel 1005  
Manila/PHILIPPINES

Fax 00632-736 1010

14 November 2008  
UT/mb/kg

Dear Ms President,

The GEW, the German education union representing some 250.000 members working in field of education, is committed to defending human rights all over the world. We are an affiliate of Education International, representing 26 million members worldwide.

We have been alarmed at reports that political killings and enforced disappearances continue to occur in the Philippines while impunity remains pervasive. A number of members of trade unions have been targeted in the killings and enforced disappearances to prevent workers and informal workers from exercising their freedom of association. Reported cases show that these incidents are widespread and systematic and alleged perpetrators have been linked to government authorities.

While we welcome your government's efforts to resolve the problem of political killings and enforced disappearances since 2006 and recognise the significant decrease in the number of reported cases in 2007, we note with regret that this has had limited success in ensuring justice for survivors and families of victims.

Few effective investigations have been conducted, and the arrest, prosecution and conviction of those responsible are rare. There are delays and deficiencies in each step of the criminal justice process. Many cases are never brought to court due to a lack of evidence, mostly because witnesses fear reprisals. We believe that comprehensive investigations and other measures, including the effective protection of witnesses to enable them to step forward without fear, are essential to break the chain of impunity

We urge you to ensure that all extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances in the Philippines are investigated promptly, impartially and effectively and that perpetrators are prosecuted in proceedings which meet international standards of fairness.

Please create an independent body to monitor investigations. In order for witnesses and families of victims to come forward without fear we urge you to ensure they are protected effectively whenever and for as long as such protection is necessary, irrespective of the outcome of judicial or other proceedings, and that persons suspected of harassing, intimidating or attacking witnesses are brought to justice. We urge you to include as priority legislative agenda of your administration the enactment of laws against enforced disappearance and enhancement of the Witness Protection and Benefits Act. We urge the immediate ratification of the International Covenant on Enforced Disappearance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ulrich Thöne'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ulrich Thöne  
President of GEW  
Board Member of Education International (EI)