



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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September 17, 2009

Dr. Kurt M. Campbell
Assistant Secretary of State for
East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Dr. Campbell:

The recent brutal daytime ambush and killing of Fr. Cecilio Lucero, a human rights activist, has sparked an outcry by the Catholic Church and human rights organizations in the Philippines. Fr. Lucero, who was director of the Social Action Center of his diocese, was attacked by 30 armed men as he drove along a main highway in northern Samar Island. He was killed instantly and his traveling companions in the car were seriously injured. Fr. Lucero was well known for his work defending the rights of the poor and oppressed. Ironically he was investigating suspicious deaths at the time of his own murder. Eighteen unsolved murders have occurred in the region in the last six months, raising concerns that these may have been extrajudicial killings.

On behalf of the Committee on International Justice and Peace, I would like to call your attention to a statement from the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' National Secretariat for Social Action-Justice and Peace which has condemned Fr. Lucero's murder and called for a thorough and impartial investigation to be conducted quickly. Please urge the government of the Republic of the Philippines to expand efforts to protect those who defend and advocate for human rights of all in the Philippines, including priests, journalists, and NGO activists.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard
Bishop of Albany
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace

Encl: Statement by Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines–National Secretariat for Social Action

cc: Ambassador Scot A. Marciel, Deputy Assistant Secretary, EAP