

AN URGENT LETTER OF APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES TO SUPPORT A UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION PROTECTING LESBIANS, GAYS, BISEXUALS, AND TRANSGENDERS FROM EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS AND UNLAWFUL KILLINGS

H.E. PRESIDENT BENIGNO S. AQUINO III

Malacañang Palace
Manila, NCR

Dear President Benigno Aquino III:

This Monday, December 20, 2010, the United Nations General Assembly is set to vote on an initiative to protect lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders (LGBTs) from extrajudicial executions and other unlawful killings through a UN resolution on extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions.

The resolution, for the past ten years, had included equal protection for LGBTs , specifically by urging States "to investigate promptly and thoroughly all killings, including... all killings committed for any discriminatory reason, including sexual orientation". However, last month, several States pushed to remove this reference to sexual orientation to exclude LGBTs from the measure. To the dismay of the international human rights community and various LGBT groups here in the Philippines, the amendment was approved. Seventy-nine States voted to remove the reference to sexual orientation, while seventy voted to retain it, and forty-three States abstained.

The Philippines, despite the country's commitment to various international human rights instruments and the clear human rights mandate provided by the 1987 Constitution, abstained in this vote.

During the UN General Assembly Side-Event on Ending Violence and Criminal Sanctions on the Basis of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity held on December 10, 2010 and attended by no less than UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, Ambassador Libran Nuevas Cabactulan, head of the Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nations, read a statement on constitutional and legal mandates in the Philippines that reflect on discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Ambassador Cabactulan, however, made no commitment to actively support the promotion of equal rights in the country's agenda.


We believe that this has to change. Since the dismantling of the Marcos dictatorship, the Philippines has consistently stood up for democracy and human rights. Our constitution embodies our deep respect for human dignity, and such recognition should be rightly extended to LGBTs, who face abuse, discrimination, persecution, and death because of their sexual

orientation and gender identity. Furthermore, with the continuing rise in labor migration in the Philippines, Filipinos abroad, which include LGBTs, need international instruments such as the Resolution on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, to protect them from human rights abuses.

We therefore urge you to inform the Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nations to vote in favor of the above resolution and to support other international measures pending before the UN that accord, affirm and promote equal rights and dignity for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders. As President, you have been an ardent supporter of human rights and has been an ally of women's rights. Your support for this initiative would send a strong message to the international community about your administration's firm commitment to the universality of human rights.

Your prompt response to this appeal would be greatly appreciated, especially in light of the forthcoming vote on December 20, 2010. Mabuhay, at maraming salamat Pangulong Noynoy Aquino!

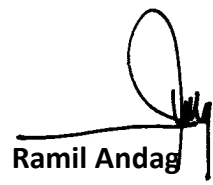
Signed,


Risa Hontiveros
Former Akbayan Representative


Hon. Kaka Bag-ao
Akbayan Representative


Perci Cendana
Akbayan Chair


Jonas Bagas
Akbayan Gay and Lesbian Collective /
TLF Share Collective


Ramil Andag
Babaylanes Inc.

Anastacio Marasigan
TLF Share

CC: **HON. JULIA ANDREA ABAD**
Chief of Staff
Presidential Management Staff

H.E. AMBASSADOR LIBRAN NUEVAS CABACTULAN
Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nations