



National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

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Hon. Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

February 17, 2010

Dear Madam Secretary:

I am writing to express the concern of member communions of the National Council of Churches USA since the detaining of 42 Filipino health workers by Philippine military and police forces on 6 February. One of the persons detained, Dr. Alexis Montes, is a long-time staff member of the United Church of Christ of the Philippines and he and his family are well known to many U.S. churchpersons.

As you may know, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, has written to President Arroyo to express his distress at reports the detainees have been subjected to inhumane treatment. And Bishop Eliezer M. Pascua, The United Church of Christ in the Philippines general secretary, has asserted that charges that the detainees were involved in any activities supporting violence are "ludicrous." Bishop Pascua has also reported that Montes and his co-workers have been victims of "illegal arrest, disappearance and detention."

It is a matter of the deepest concern to us in the United States whenever Christian sisters and brothers are threatened by governments and other forces or slanderously accused of illegitimate activities for political purposes. We take Bishop Pascua at his word that Dr. Montes and the other detainees were merely pursuing tasks related to their profession of healing, and we are anxious for their safety and wellbeing.

We urge you to look into this matter and express the concern and attention of the United States Government.

With every good wish to you,

Yours faithfully,

Michael Kinnamon
General Secretary