



PHILIPPINE ECUMENICAL PEACE PLATFORM

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PEPP Statement on the Terrorist Tagging of CPP-NPA

Just as a significant portion of our nation look toward the birth of a child that reigns as the Prince of Peace to the Christian faithful, we were greeted by the news that President Rodrigo Duterte signed a proclamation declaring the Communist Party of the Philippines - New People's Army (CPP-NPA) as a "terror organization." This followed on the heels of Proclamation No. 360 which formally terminated the peace talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). This new development is indeed very tragic as there were high hopes a year ago that peace will be achieved through the negotiations between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the NDFP after five decades of armed conflict.

This new proclamation will have far reaching and adverse repercussions on the GRP-NDFP Peace Negotiations which the Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform (PEPP) has faithfully supported and advocated. It is always the policy of the government not to negotiate with "terrorists" and this will seal the fate of the peace talks. As leaders of churches in the country, we are troubled by this announcement and the escalation of violence that will surely ensue. Abandoning principled dialogue and relying on purely military might will be very costly, both in terms of lives and resources. A militarist approach will only fan the flames of the conflict instead of truly addressing it.

We thus call on President Duterte to rescind both proclamations and we implore both the GRP and the NDFP to return to the negotiating table – to talk peace instead of waging war. We also call on both parties to declare and observe the yearly Christmas ceasefire.

As we approach the day of birth of Jesus Christ, the bearer of hope, let us all pray and work for a just and enduring peace, starting on the call to resume the GRP-NDFP Peace Talks. "So let us not become tired of doing good; for if we do not give up, the time will come when we will reap the harvest." (Galatians 6:9)


Issued and signed on this day, December 7, 2017.



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****The PEPP is a platform for 5 church institutions/groups, namely, the Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP) with organizations of Religious, Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC) and the Ecumenical Bishops' Forum (EBF), in working for a just and enduring peace by supporting the peace process between the GRP-NDFP.***