

- International Automotive Workers Coordination -

International Coordinating Group
Internationale Koordinierungsgruppe
Grupo Internacional de Coordinación
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Groupe de coordination internationale

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Immediate release of the arrested trade union leaders and journalist in the Philippines ! Free HR DAY7 !

At 2 a.m. on the night of December 10, International Human Rights Day, 6 trade union leaders and organizers and a journalist from the international media were arrested at home in several cities in the Philippines. Their homes were searched by state police and alleged evidence of several firearms and grenades were presented. They are now charged as a "criminal gang." Two of them who were illegally arrested are legitimate officials of the trade union KMU-NCR (Kilusang Mayo Uno - Capital Region) and members of the Regional Executive Committee, which was recently re-elected on November 29 at the 4th Congress of the KMU. Romina Raiselle Astudillo was elected as the new Deputy Secretary General. Mark Ryan Cruz was elected to the Committee At-Large. Jaymie Gregorio is a union organizer of KMU-Manila; Joel Demate is a union organizer of the Alliance Solidarity of Labor for Rights and Welfare, Rodrigo Esparago is a union organizer of the Alliance Solidarity of Workers of Quezon City, Dennise Velasco the organizer of Defend Jobs Philippines, and Lady Ann Salem a journalist of the international media.



These targeted arrests push for the repression and criminalization of militant trade unionism, including death threats and politically motivated killings. Attacks target leftist progressive activists, members and officials of trade unions, from the women's, peasant, youth and environmental movements, as well as indigenous peoples in the Philippines. Over 600 political prisoners have been incarcerated, some for years, on "fabricated" evidence. There is a climate of intimidation, constant threats to activists and their families, kidnappings and political assassinations are commonplace. The anti-communist smear and terror campaign of the fascistoid Duterte regime has already led to the murder of several influential progressive people in recent weeks.

The International Automotive Workers Coordination protests with great indignation against the arrests of the 6 trade unionists and journalist. The massive repression of the workers' and people's movement in the Philippines requires to strengthen the struggle for more democratic rights and freedoms and to organize international solidarity. In our International Program of Struggle, we have consciously extended our coordination to the struggle against the rightward trend of governments and the advance of the right and fascists.

We support the urgent call of the KMU trade unionists and the human rights organization KARAPATAN from the Philippines and declare our full international solidarity:

FREE HR DAY7 ! (Free the 7 of Human Rights Day!)

**A trade unionist is not a terrorist !
Release all political prisoners !**

Long live International Solidarity!

With internationalist greetings of solidarity,

Ed Cubelo (Philippines), Dieter Schweizer (Germany)
Coordinators of ICOG