



Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines
Episcopal Commission on the Laity (ECLA)

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(Council of the Laity of the Philippines)

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LAIKO STATEMENT ON EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS

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We are now facing an important reality in our life as a nation in the matter of extrajudicial killings. Reports and statistics may vary from different sources but this issue has reached an alarming proportion.

To some people, these killings have become acceptable since they argue that if these criminals are not eliminated, they will continue to kill our people through drugs. They opined that the next generation of Filipinos faces serious challenges in the future if extreme measures are not undertaken. However, even the intention is good; the end does not justify the means.

With the increasing reports of unsolved extrajudicial killings, cases of mistaken identity, stories of people killed under questionable circumstances – we may ask the question: How many more lives, whether guilty or innocent be killed before we are convinced that there is something terribly wrong with what is happening in our country right now? As Christians who believe in the value of human life, we cannot continue being passive and indifferent amidst these spate of killings.

Two concerns come to mind:

1. The increasing culture of violence where our people become desensitized to the fact that killing are a deterrent to criminals and this will help solve our problem of drugs and bring it under control.
2. The matter of due process which may give rise to the nation becoming a police state. While we want to give our police much needed support, abuses are always a reality. We don't want to give authorities that much power to live by the gun in the name of law and order. And when law enforcers make mistakes, innocent lives are endangered. We need to observe all constitutional means as to the right to life.

We call on our national leaders, both the executive and the police to observe due process in the discharge of their responsibilities in dealing with criminality in general and the drug problem in particular.

We call on them as well to investigate with care, prudence and diligence all recent killings as a result of police operations or those committed by vigilante groups.

We pray that all peace-loving Filipinos will stand for life and for us all to do what we can that evil and lawlessness will not prevail.

"... I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19)

For the Laiko Board,


ZENAIDA F. CAPISTRANO
President