

## **Solidarity statement for AFAD Congress**

### **"Strengthening AFAD in its Second Decade of Struggle Towards a More Effective and Enduring Response to Enforced Disappearances in Asia"**

In faith and solidarity, we, the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, extend our greeting to Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD) and all its member organizations.

During a time of alarming increase of enforced disappearances in Asia, there is a need for a strong and independent civil society which continues to raise the public concern about the corrupt state of the rule of law in our countries. Enforced disappearance is a serious violation of fundamental human rights. As an organization which advocates for social structures and actions that promote human rights nationally and globally, we are concerned with the lack of accountability of the recent violations, disregarding the international standards providing for the right to life and fundamental freedoms.

Given this background, we express our gratitude that AFAD continues to foster solidarity and cooperation between organizations by providing assistance and strengthening the kind of capacities that the members need in order to carry out their core mission. Most importantly, AFAD has played a crucial role in the protection of the rights of the victims, alleviated their imminent suffering and at the end, empowered them with hope.

We also support AFAD and its member organizations' endeavor to lobby for the Asian states' signing and ratification of the legal instrument for prohibiting EDs - the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1992 that provides that "no exceptional circumstances whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification for enforced disappearance." (Article 1(2)).

We wish AFAD every success as it continues during its second decade to strive to end enforced disappearance in accordance with its vision for "the attainment of truth, justice, redress and the reconstruction of the historical memory of the disappeared" for the benefit of the victims of EDs and their families, and the whole society.