

Republika ng Pilipinas Komisyon ng Karapatang Pantao

(Commission on Human Rights)

ADVISORY ON THE CALL FOR A HUMANITARIAN CEASEFIRE IN THE CALAMITY AREAS OF NORTHERN QUEZON AND AURORA CHR-A2005-002

Nationality is best demonstrated in times of a nation's suffering. When disaster strikes, personal interests must be laid down, principles must be mellowed and unity for one purpose must be strengthened.

The international community displayed the inspirational expression of unity especially in the 911 Terrorist Attack, the SARS Outbreak and the latest Asian Tsunami. It showed that peoples of different cultures, principles and denomination can amalgamate to help those who are in need.

The local community is likewise not exempt. The Philippines had its share of national disasters and calamities, the last of which being the typhoons which devastated much of the Quezon and Aurora provinces.

In times like this, nothing is more basic than the human being's right to life, to survival and existence. The Commission on Human Rights is calling the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front to thoroughly and conscientiously consider not only the possibility but more importantly the necessity of a humanitarian ceasefire.

The call for a lengthened humanitarian ceasefire is not a surrender of principles but, rather, a response to the greater call of unity and nationality in order to bring the indispensable public service to those in need – our fellowmen who had been victims of what we can say as "acts of God." Those who have been deprived of their houses, of their livelihood, of their loved ones and of their very right to exist demand the nation's highest attention. Prastic circumstances call for drastic measures.

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Under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) to which the Philippines is a signatory, the community of nations recognized the right of the people to "life, liberty and security of persons" (Article 3, UDHR). Article 21 of the same provides that "Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country." It is noteworthy to stress that during times of suffering, this right to access to public service shines the most. Finally, under Article 25, it is stated that "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."

"Salus populi est suprema lex." The welfare of the people is the supreme law.

The Commission of Human Rights, being the bulwark against humanitarian violations and the promoter of human rights, supports and encourages the national call for a humanitarian ceasefire not only to show our sincere sympathy to the sufferings of our fellowmen but more importantly as a manifestation of our national unity in times of tragedy.

Done in Quezon City, Philippines on the 28th day of January 2005.

PURIFICACION C. VALERA QUISUMBING

ELIGIO D'MALLARI

Commissioner

DOMINADOR N. CALAMBA II

Commissioner

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QUINTIN'B. CUETO III

Commissioner