**How to Support a Political Prisoner**

ICHRP structures its support for the Filipino people using a three-part framework of political support, educational support, and material support. This document explains how these forms of support are made concrete in the campaign to free all political prisoners.

1. Political Support

Most prisoners have been targeted for their activities in particular sectors, such as worker or peasant activism, reporting on human rights abuses, mobilizing youth and students, or consulting on the peace process. To build political support for particular prisoners we organize prisoners by sector, and approach Canadian organizations to ask them to “adopt” or sponsor prisoners in similar sectors.

Political support can include actions like:

* Passing organizational resolutions in support of the campaign
* Calling for the release of your sponsored prisoner by writing to the Philippine and Canadian governments
* Making organizational connections with sectoral organizations in the Philippines
  + Particularly making connections with the organizations your sponsored prisoner has been active within

Organizational connections between Canada and the Philippines are a crucial aspect of building long-term, bilateral links of solidarity. ICHRP-Canada can help introduce your organization to equivalent sectoral organizations in the Philippines. For example, a student or teacher union could be put in contact with Anakbayan (a progressive youth organization) or the Alliance of Concerned Teachers, both organizations with members detained on political charges.

1. Educational Support

Educational support is a critical component of building support for political prisoners. We provide resources on political repression in the Philippines, and also the social, economic, and historical basis for political struggles in that country. Many prisoners are detained because of their struggle for genuine land reforms, or against demolitions in neighbourhoods of the urban poor. Through this educational work, people in Canada can come to understand how people become political prisoners, and why they should be released.

Educational support can include:

* Sharing ICHRP-Canada’s educational materials on political repression and struggles in the Philippines with your organization’s members
* Organizing teach-ins or information sessions for members on the political situation in the Philippines
* Participating in days of action in support of particular prisoners or sectors in the Philippines facing particularly intense repression (as in indigenous areas in the northern Cordilleras, or on the sugar-producing Negros Island)
* Meeting with and learning from activists and organizations in the Philippines

1. Material Support

ICHRP-Canada works with several organizations to provide material support for prisoners and their families. These include Kapatid, an organization made up of families of political prisoners, as well as the United Church of Canada, which has a legal defense fund for human rights defenders in the Philippines. We also accept donations to the campaign to cover small expenses, although all received funds are shared with prisoners’ families via Kapatid.

Material support can include:

* Donations to ICHRP-Canada, Kapatid, or the United Church of Canada’s legal defense fund for human rights defenders
* Purchase or creation of postcards to be sent to political prisoners in the Philippines
  + This can be an important source of morale for prisoners, particularly given the brutal conditions of prisons in the Philippines
  + Such correspondence also serves as a reminder to prison officials and the government that people across the world are watching the treatment of these prisoners
* Purchase/creation of postcards to be sent to Canadian and Philippine government officials, demanding prisoner release
* Sponsoring or supporting educational exchanges with Philippine organizations facing repression in the Philippines