



**United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues stands by indigenous human rights
defenders in the Philippines**

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The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues expresses its grave concerns about the Philippine government's accusation against indigenous human rights defenders as terrorist group affiliates. The indigenous human rights defenders include, among others, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Joan Carling, former member of the Permanent Forum and Jose Molintas, former member of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We are informed that a petition has been filed by the State Prosecutor of the Department of Justice, which seeks to declare the indigenous human rights defenders among more than 600 individuals as "terrorist and outlawed organizations and/or group of persons" under the National Security Act of 2007 of the Philippines. We believe that the charges against the indigenous human rights defenders are unsubstantiated, and that they are being targeted for their advocacy and efforts to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples. We find this unacceptable in a country that is based on principles of democracy and good governance.

We call on the Philippine Government to immediately remove the names of Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Joan Carling, Jose Molintas and other indigenous human rights defenders from the list, and to ensure their physical safety. We urge the Government to uphold its obligations under international human rights instruments and its duty to guarantee the right to promote and to strive for the realization of human rights under the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

We wish to point out that the vision of indigenous peoples' movements across the world have been to ensure implementation of democratic principles in their countries. We note with alarm that reprisals and attacks against indigenous rights defenders are increasing.

We appeal to all Member States and specifically the Philippine government to guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.