



Interfaith Cooperation Forum Justpeace Newsletter

May, 2016

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Bruce Van Voorhis speaks at a rally in North Cotabato, Philippines calling for justice for Kidapawan carnage victims. (Photo by Bing Yungco)

Justice for the Victims of Kidapawan Carnage

by [HKCAHRPP](#) on April 1

ICF's Bruce Van Voorhis recently took part in a rally in North Cotabato, Philippines to protest the violence against unarmed farmers and Indigenous people. Bruce signed the following document on behalf of ICF.

Statement against the Open Firing by the Military and Police on Protesting Farmers and Indigenous Peoples in Kidapawan City, North Cotabato, 1 April 2016

The starving and unarmed farmers of Kidapawan cried for rice. They were given bullets.

The Hong Kong Campaign for the Advancement of Human Rights and Peace in the Philippines (HKCAHRPP), a network of individuals and organizations in Hong Kong

advocating for respect of human rights in the Philippines, strongly condemns the recent violent and deadly dispersal of more than 5,000 protesting farmers in Kidapawan City, Philippines.

According to the update of Karapatan, a human rights organization in the Philippines, three people have died, 116 were injured, two were tortured and 89 are still missing.

At 10:00 a.m. on April 1, police and military personnel opened fire on the unarmed farmers and Lumads (indigenous peoples) who blockaded the Cotabato-Davao highway as part of an ongoing demand for the local government to provide them with immediate assistance in terms of rice subsidies. This act of desperation was not the first time that the hungry farmers and indigenous people had sought the help of the government, but they had previously been ignored.

The province of North Cotabato, where Kidapawan City is situated, was declared by the Philippine government to be in a state of emergency after being hard hit by the El Niño drought that ravaged the farmlands in the area. A calamity fund worth P238 million (around US\$5.17 million) was released by the government, but the local government, according to reports, was not intent in using this aid to help the starving farmers.

This is inhumanity. This is fascism. The ones who have violently dispersed the hungry farmers are without mercy.

Isn't it the government's responsibility to look after its ailing nationals, its starving peoples? Isn't it their role to ensure that everyone is accounted for, that their rights and lives be protected at all times and not be riddled with bullets?

HKCAHRPP was established as a response of peace-loving individuals and organizations in Hong Kong to the Hacienda Luisita massacre in 2004. Seven people were killed and dozens injured when elements of the police and military opened fire at the protesting farmers and farmworkers after the Department of Labor and Employment nullified the farmers' strike.

We cannot help but be saddened by the fact that farmers in the Philippines continue to starve. We cannot help but be angered by the fact the local government, police and military respond with brute violence like they did against the Hacienda Luisita farmers and farmworkers in 2004. There has been no progress in the way the authorities respond when the poor in the Philippines seek to air their grievances. There has been no progress in the government's respect for the people's human rights, for the lives of the poor and their dignity.

We urgently call on the Philippine government to:

- a) Ensure immediate protection to all the farmers and their affected families in North Cotabato, especially in Kidapawan City;
- b) Provide immediate medical assistance to all people injured by the police;

- c) Indemnify the families of those who died from the open firing;
- d) Pull out troops from the area and ensure that any militarization exercises in the area cease;
- e) Conduct an urgent and impartial investigation of this heinous incident and prosecute all perpetrators; and
- f) Immediately release the needed food and agricultural support to drought-stricken communities.

We demand justice for the farmers and indigenous peoples who have been victimized by this brutal attack against the already starving farmers.

ICF meets with Funding Partner

by [Max Ediger](#) on May 02

On April 20, Nam Boo Won and Duncan (APAY), Bruce and Max met with two representatives of our funding partner, Bread for the World.

Ms. Ulrike Bergmann is the project officer for Southeast Asia and Pacific, and Ms. Meike Geppert is advisor for civil society development.

During the meeting Bruce and I gave updates on ICF activities and plans. While the meeting was short, we were able to share significant information which was received with appreciation. Bread for the World has been our funding partner since we started in 2003 and we are very thankful for their constant support and interest in our work.



Students from Aziza's Place. (Photo by Taing Rathna)

Cambodia Forum member works with disadvantaged children

by [Taing Rathna](#) on May 02

Previously I was a graphic designer, but within the last year I began working with Aziza's Place, a grassroots charity for Cambodian children who live near garbage dumps and work as scavengers in Phnom Penh.

Cambodia's capital now has two garbage dump including Meanchey garbage dump and Beng Cheung Ek garbage dump.

Aziza's Place offers holistic education for children who work as scavengers with their parents. With help, the children and families can build sustainable futures.

My work now is very different now than it was when I was a graphic designer.

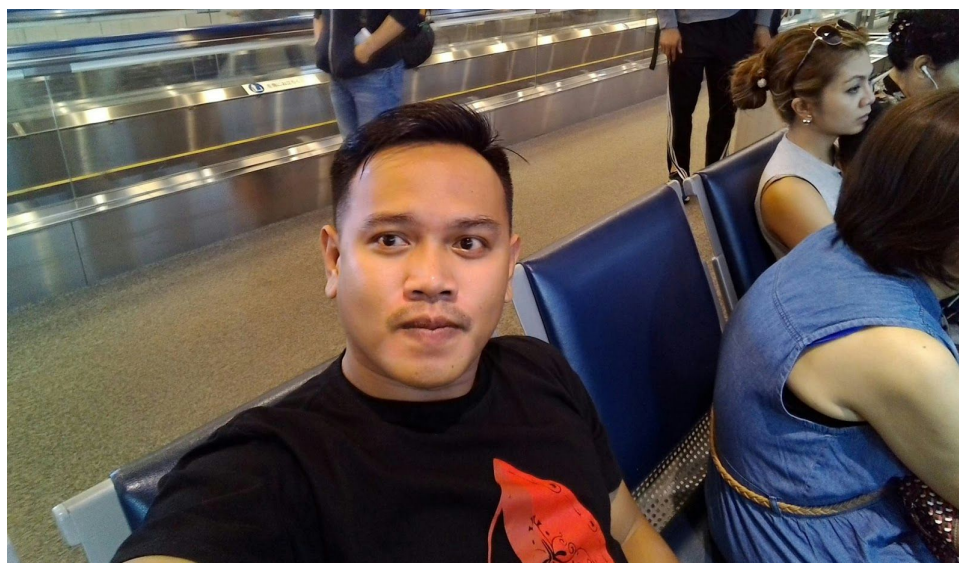
The difference is that I have the strength to work harder, more patience and endurance. Many good points that I seen in this work including: Children get enough food with vitamin and protein, the children get health care, children get proper training, they get counseling regarding family and themselves, children get attention and love from all staff

But while have many good points there are also challenges. The children do not have a good relationship with their relatives and families, they are lazy and have poor attitude.

Seeing such negative, both the organization and the Cambodian Ministry of Social Affairs are working together to integrate the children back into their community means let them live in their family or relatives.

Another bad point that I've seen in this work is have many organizations working on children but do not have any organization working on their parent. So it makes their parent lives without any changes, they still the the scavengers. This case affect children's learning

Children may not be succeeding because they are concerned about the difficulties of their parents.



Gunawan "Wawan" Primasatya takes a selfie on the way to the United States. (Photo from Facebook)

Alumnus to take part in YSEALI academic fellowship

by [Rachel Bergen](#) on April 26

ICF wants to formally congratulate Gunawan "Wawan" Primasatya on his [Young Southeast Asia Leadership Initiative \(YSEALI\) academic fellowship](#). At the end of April the SOP 2010 alumnus from Poso, Indonesia left his home to participate in the leadership training program.

These five week institutes, held on the campus of a U.S. university or college, will include an academic residency, leadership development, an educational study tour, local community service activities, and opportunities to engage with American peers. The

program will conclude in Washington, D.C., to allow for engagement with policymakers, governmental representatives, businesses, and think tank.

From the airport Wawan wrote: “If i remember 2010 the first time I went abroad for SOP, I was just an ordinary young man. But it start to open my life to be something for my family and community. And another door just open for me on this outstanding moment to go to America.”

ICF coordinator Max Ediger believes he will be successful in this fellowship.

“Wawan, along with Ningsih have been strong leaders in the interfaith justpeace movement in Poso, Indonesia since 2010. It is a special honour for ICF to have Wawan accepted in this program and we wish him all success. We know that, upon his return, he will continue his important work and also share with all of us what he has learned and experienced during this fellowship.”



A mangrove forest in the middle of a calm ocean. This photo won an award at a Biak Island photo competition.
(Photo by Barce Rumkabu)

SOP alumnus wins Photography Contest

by [Rachel Bergen](#) on April 18

SOP 2012 alumna and photographer Barce Rumkabu from Papua won three awards for his entries in the Protection of Ecosystem and Nature at Biak Island photography exhibition in February.

The purpose of this competition was to promote Biak island as a tourist destination and to protect them for future generations. Biak island is in Papua province and rich with sea life and many wonderful beaches. The island is not well-known, though. The organizer hopes this event will improve the popularity of the island.

