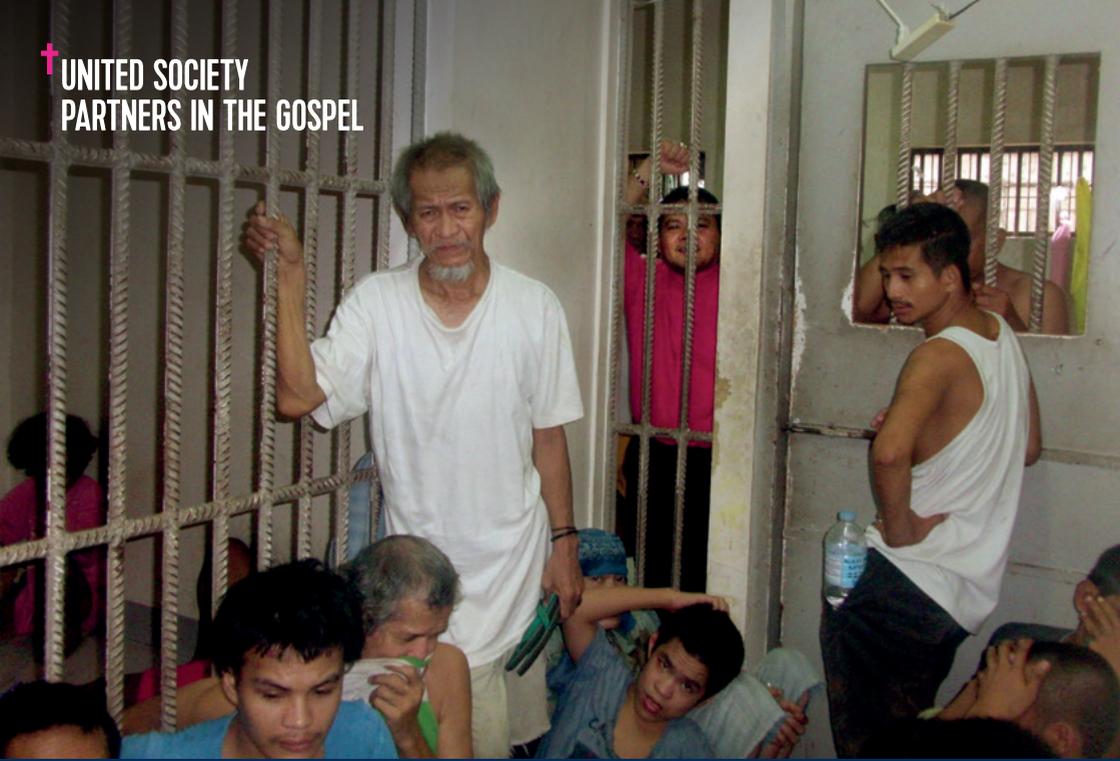


**† UNITED SOCIETY  
PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL**



# STRUCK DOWN, BUT NOT DESTROYED

2 Corinthians 4:8-9

Standing in solidarity with the church:  
Defending human rights in the Philippines.

In association with:



**USPG<sup>†</sup>**

# STANDING IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PHILIPPINES

## RICH AND DIVERSE COUNTRY

The Philippines is an archipelago comprised of more than 7,000 islands, 2,000 of which are inhabited by a population of 100 million. The rich variety of cultures, local traditions and languages is outstanding. The varied geography includes tropical rainforests, coral reefs and volcanic mountains surrounded by lakes. The Philippines is one of 17 'mega-diverse' countries in the world, with more than 500 species of reptiles and amphibians. The Philippines is ranked as the world's fifth most mineral-rich country: third for gold, fourth for copper and fifth for nickel.

## DESTRUCTION AND PLUNDER OF THE LAND

While the Philippines is rich in natural resources, most people are excluded from any socio-economic benefit. Large-scale agri-business and multinational mining companies (including UK-listed corporations) make huge profits. Government laws have opened up the Philippines' mineral resources to a global market, which has exacerbated environmental degradation, socio-economic inequity and contributed to human rights violations.

## INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Indigenous people number up to 17 million, including over 100 ethnic groups, each with their own language. Indigenous culture is focused on a deep respect for the environment. But this traditional way of life is under threat due to aggressive business enterprises. Indigenous groups are some of the most marginalised people in the country. They struggle against state-sponsored violence, lack of access to their ancestral lands and self-determination. One such group are the Lumad who comprise 61 per cent of the country's indigenous population. They face bomb attacks, school closures and forced displacement.

## RISKING THEIR LIVES FOR JUSTICE

A 2018 report by Global Witness describes the Philippines as the third most dangerous country in the world for land defenders. Since 2000, hundreds of peacemakers have been killed, including bishops, church workers, journalists, lawyers, human rights campaigners, students and rural farmers. As Christians, churches see themselves as called to speak out about these injustices and stand alongside indigenous peoples.

'The IFI, being an indigenous church, has the moral obligation to support the struggle of the Lumad and all the indigenous people in the country. It can relate with their situation, as the IFI has felt the pain of persecution since its formation in 1902.'

The Most Revd Rhee Timbang, Obispo Maximo of the IFI

'Historically the Episcopal Church in the Philippines has a long experience of peace-building. Part of our self-definition as a province within the worldwide Anglican Communion, is to be peacemakers.'

House of Bishops, ECP

## PEOPLE AND CHURCHES ARE SPEAKING OUT

Standing with indigenous communities, churches and human rights groups are engaging in non-violent protest to highlight socio-economic injustice. Since 2015, each year thousands have taken part in *Lakbayan* – a peaceful pilgrimage to the capital Manila – where they are calling on the government for change. The IFI also facilitates an accompaniment programme where church members live alongside Lumad communities providing a protective presence.



Churches in Britain and Ireland are invited to join USPG in standing with churches in the Philippines in the defence of peace, human rights and justice for all people. USPG's partners are the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) and the Episcopal Church of the Philippines (ECP).

# DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

'We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.'

2 Corinthians 4:8-9

Human rights defenders, including those from churches, who speak out for justice are being arrested, sometimes attacked, and even killed. Here are some stories from the churches:

## BISHOP IMPRISONED WHILE ADVOCATING FOR PEACE

In May 2017 Bishop Carlo Morales (depicted on the front cover and top right), of Ozamiz Diocese (IFI), was falsely arrested while refusing to leave the side of a peace consultant who had been wrongfully arrested. Bishop Carlo was imprisoned for over 300 days before temporary release. His case is not resolved.

## HARASSED FOR DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES EVERYWHERE

In February 2018, the Philippines Department of Justice published a list of alleged members of terrorist organisations. It includes members of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines: Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Beverly Sakongan Longid, Coordinator of the International Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self-determination and Liberation.

## ARRESTED FOR DEFENDING ANCESTRAL LANDS

In February 2017, Sarah Abellon-Alikes (of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines) was wrongfully charged with bombing transport vehicles used by a mining company in Northern Luzon. Sarah has dedicated her life to protect ancestral lands against destructive mining. Former Prime Bishop Abibico said: 'This shows that anyone can be vulnerable.'

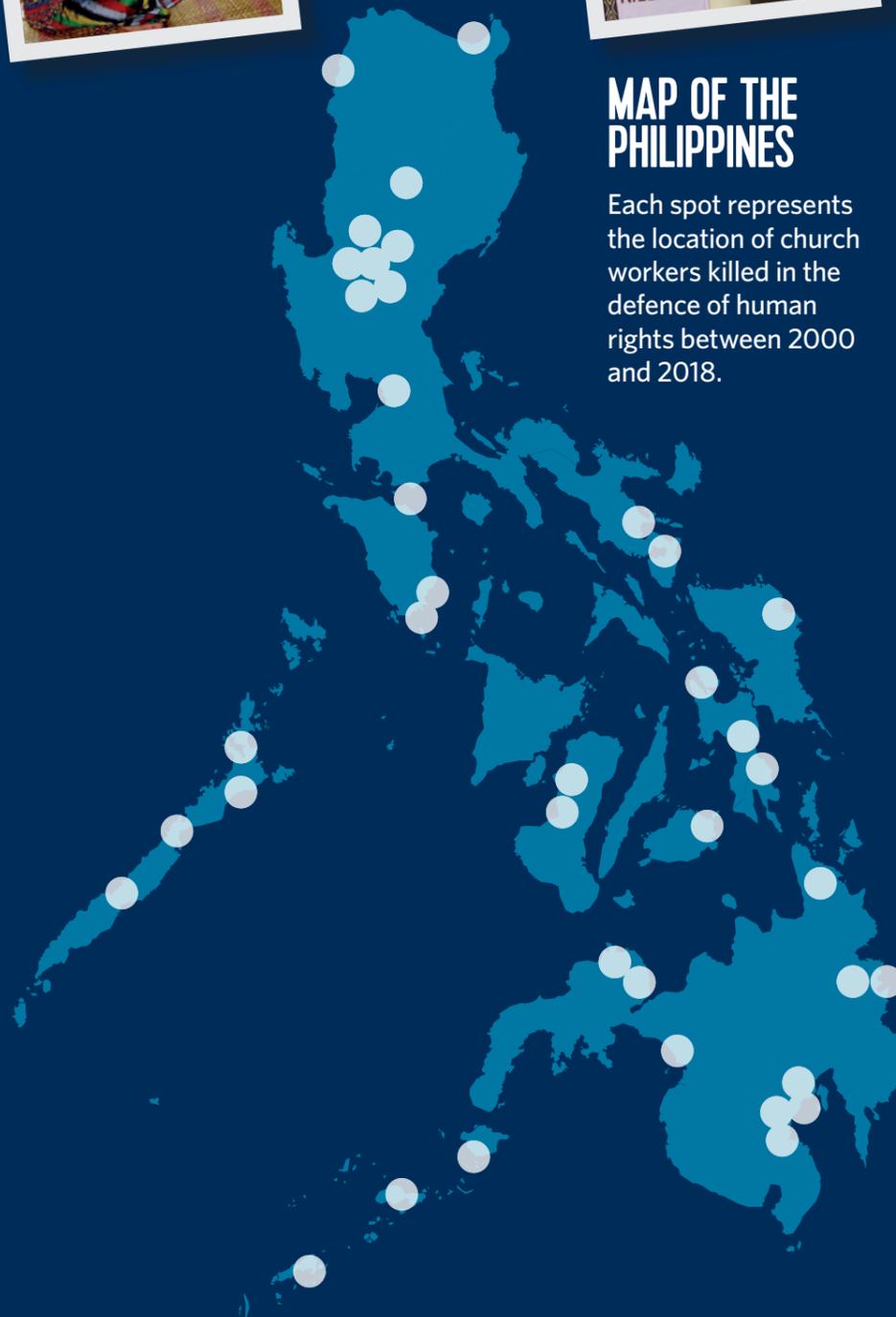
## SILENCED FOR AMPLIFYING THE CRY AGAINST SOCIAL INJUSTICES

In the summer of 2018, two IFI priests received death threats. They had opposed mining in their parishes and founded the group People's Solidarity Against Large-Scale Mining in the Province of Ilocos Norte. One of the priests said: 'They want to silence us because we are amplifying the cry of the poor against social injustices.'



## MAP OF THE PHILIPPINES

Each spot represents the location of church workers killed in the defence of human rights between 2000 and 2018.



## † IN MEMORY

2000-2003

Fr Rhoel Gallardo, Fr Benjamin Inocencio, Gertrude Curamen, Leo Gallardo, Fr Rufus Halley, Pastor Marcelino Dela Cruz, Pastor Jose Buendia

2004-2005

Isaias Manano, Joel Baclao, Juancho Sanchez, Vicente Olea, Abe Sungit, Fr William Tadena, Pastor Hablito Solina, Alfredo Davis, Rev Edison Lapus, Rev Raul Domingo, Jose 'Pepe' Manegdeg III, Junico Halem

2006

Mateo Morales, Nestor Arinque, Rev Jemias Tinambacan, Pastor Andy Pawican, Noel Noli Capulong, Tito Marata, Pastor Madonna Castillo, Rei Mon Guran, Pastor Isaias Sta. Rosa, The Most Rev Bishop Alberto B. Ramento

2007-2012

Renato 'Atong' Pacaide, Fr Jesus Reynaldo Roda, Rev Filimino Catambis, Fr Cecilio Lucero, Benjamin 'Benjie' Bayles, Jovelito Agustin, Rabenio Sungit, Fr Fausto Tentorio, Jimmy Liguyon, Willem Geertman

2017-2018

Willerme Torado Agorde, Erning Aykid, Domingo Edo, Pastor Perfecto 'Boy' Hoyle, Pastor Lovelito Quiñones, Fr Marcelito 'Tito' Paez, Fr Mark Anthony Yuaga Ventura, Fr Richmond Nilo

## PRAY

Pray for Filipinos in their struggle and share this need with your church, family and friends.

## REFLECT

- What have you learned from reading about the people and churches in the Philippines?
- How might you pray and act to support marginalised communities in the Philippines?
- Who are the most vulnerable in your community and how might you respond to their needs and issues?

## PLAY YOUR PART

- Stay informed with news through the Campaign for Human Rights in the Philippines ([www.chrp.org.uk](http://www.chrp.org.uk)).
- Stand in solidarity by writing to the IFI to support their call for Bishop Carlo to be cleared of all charges (details on [www.uspg.org.uk](http://www.uspg.org.uk)).
- Consider your part. Does your bank profit from destructive mining? Consider London Mining Network and ECCR's work on mining & consent in the extractives sector ([www.londonminingnetwork.org](http://www.londonminingnetwork.org) and [www.eccr.org.uk](http://www.eccr.org.uk)).

**Photo captions:** Demonstrations and protests in support of the Lumad Tribe on National Day of Protest September 21 in the Philippines (credit: Wikimedia Commons/Judge Floro). A group of Mansaka tribeswomen in their formal attire from the Lumad community, Davao Province (credit: Wikimedia Commons/Mansaka Tribe). The landscape scarred by mining, Toledo City, Cebu, Philippines (credit: Wikimedia Commons/P199). Bishop Carlo Morales with his wife, Darling, and their two daughters at Ozamiz City Jail, in the city of Ozamiz, in the Mindanao region of the Philippines (credit: USPG/Richard Bartlett).

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USPG is the Anglican mission agency that partners churches and communities worldwide in God's mission to enliven faith, strengthen relationships, unlock potential and champion justice. Founded 1701.

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