



Open Statement of PECOJON Germany on The Massacre in Maguindanao, Central Mindanao, Philippines, 23 November 2009

The massacre of Maguindanao, Central Mindanao, Philippines on November 23, 2009 is a humanitarian tragedy for the world, and especially for the world of journalism. A large group of armed men killed 57 victims, 31 of whom were journalists. The victims who trooped in a convoy accompanying the family of a local politician to their filing of candidacy for the upcoming 2010 elections were ambushed in the middle of the road, shot at close range and buried at low depth.

This massacre finally confirmed the Philippines as the second most dangerous country for journalists in their profession, after Iraq. The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) said this could place the Philippines among those countries where democracy failed. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) recorded this event as the journalists' worst mass murder ever recorded in history.

PECOJON - The Peace and Conflict Journalism Network – strongly condemns this massacre. In response to the tragic and horrifying event, PECOJON Germany demands justice for the death of fellow journalists and other civilian victims of the massacre of 23 November 2009 in the Province of Maguindanao, Central Mindanao, Philippines.

PECOJON Germany appreciates the steps that the Philippine government has taken to arrest some perpetrators of this massacre. Nevertheless, PECOJON Germany demands the Philippine government to resolve this case and arrest all those responsible, including the masterminds of this massacre. We ask the Philippine government to install an independent fact-finding team to uncover the facts behind this massacre. And we call on all media organizations to continue to oversee the case and to continue reporting.

We express our support to our colleagues in the Philippines and condolences to the families of those who died in Maguindanao. With journalism becoming a more and more dangerous profession we believe it is essential that, despite competition and the daily grinds of the job, we as journalists continue to support each other in our daily work and future coverage.

On behalf of PECOJON Germany,
Pia Nitz, Rüdiger Rister & Martin Zint (National Coordinating Team)