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PROPOSED RESOLUTION OF THE 29TH IFC Congress

On the Situation of Journalists in the Philippines

-CONCERNED about the safety and security of journalists in the Philippines following the May 31 pronouncements of President-Elect Rodrigo Duterte justifying the murder in 2003 of a broadcaster in his own city of Davao because of corruption allegations.

-FINDS appalling Mr. Duterte's assertion that a journalist should not expect to be "exempted from assassination if you are a son of a bitch."

These statements do not send a good signal about how he intends to solve the problem of journalist killings in the Philippines which is already the second most dangerous country in the world to practice journalism.

These statements are also inconsistent with his avowed goal of eradicating crime and bringing those involved in criminality before the bar of justice.

-REMINDING Mr. Duterte that when he assumes as President on June 30, 2016, he will swear to uphold the rule of law and to protect the rights and welfare of Philippine citizens, including journalists whose work on reporting about the affairs of state he may either like or dislike.

-NOTING the fresh pronouncements from his spokesperson that Mr. Duterte will not condone journalist killings, after the protest voices from both international organizations and the Philippine media community.

-HOPING these recent conciliatory statements are founded on the incoming administration's recognition of the role of journalism in deepening democracy and the importance of truth-telling in Mr. Duterte's own drive against the scourge of corruption and malfeasance in the government given the good crop of "crusading journalists" in Philippine media.

-HOPING Mr. Duterte can make a difference in the continuing problem of journalist killings in the Philippines, underpinned by a persisting culture of impunity which past administrations failed to address. His promise of creating a special task force on media killings will be an initial step in the right direction.

The litmus test in the search for justice for journalist deaths will be the case of the grisly Ampatuan massacre of November 23, 2009 that killed 32 media workers, the worst attack ever.

In this crusade, it will be significant for Mr. Duterte's presidency to set the example that nothing justifies the murder of journalists.

National Union of Journalists of the Philippines