



*Approved*

**STATEMENT ON THE DETENTION OF BISHOP CARLOS MORALES, AND  
THE SITUATION IN MINDANAO, THE PHILIPPINES**

The executive committee of the World Council of Churches meeting in Amman, Jordan, lifts up in prayer Bishop Carlos Morales of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (Philippine Independent Church), who has been in detention since May 2017 on suspicion of possession of explosives. Bishop Morales' arrest on 11 May 2017 in Ozamiz City occurred against the background of escalating tensions and violence in the longstanding conflict in the southern Philippines island of Mindanao.

Bishop Morales is a respected church leader from the IFI, a member church of the World Council of Churches, and is well-known for his activism for dialogue, justice and peace in Mindanao.

Believing strongly in his innocence of the charge/s laid against him, we call for the legal proceedings in Bishop Morales' case to be concluded expeditiously, for his release on bail, and for his ultimate exoneration.

We further call for:

- The lifting of martial law in Mindanao – in effect since May 2017 – as soon as possible;
- No wider geographic application of martial law in the Philippines;
- Reconstruction of the city of Marawi destroyed in fighting between government forces and militants linked to the so-called 'Islamic State' group; and
- The release of all political prisoners in the Philippines – as President Duterte committed to do during his campaign for election to this office.

We especially call for renewed initiatives for dialogue and negotiations, in order to bring a sustainable end to the violence and bloodshed which has so long prevented the realization of a just peace in the region.

We pray for Bishop Morales, that he be strengthened, comforted and supported through this ordeal, and that he be affirmed in his ministry for justice and peace.