

## Solidarity message for the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the abduction of Jonas Burgos

Brussels, Tuesday April 28<sup>th</sup> 2015

Dear friends,

Warm greetings from Belgium.

As Stop the Killings platform Belgium we would like to send our solidarity greetings to the Free Jonas Burgos Movement in the Philippines. At this same moment we are touring with Edita, the mother of Jonas and the movie 'Burgos', we managed to meet officials of the European Union and the European Parliament, and will be received by a bishop later on this week.

In december 2009 we marched with 350 brothers and sisters through the streets of Brussels asking for the whereabouts of Jonas. Almost 1500 Belgians had their picture taken in solidarity. We regret that 6 years later there still has been no news from Jonas.

Jonas' case has been recognized in March 2013 by the Philippine Court of Appeals as a case of Enforced Disappearances. The same Court holds Maj. Harry Baliaga, Jr. responsible for the abduction of Jonas, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines accountable. A legal victory we could call it. A hope for so many other families of victims of enforced disappearances.

But how can we call it a 'victory', if two years later there is still no news about Jonas?

### ***Fighting impunity?***

Since years the European Union is giving a support to the Philippine government to tackle the issue of impunity. This EU-Philippines Justice Support Program (EPJUST II) aims "to assist all citizens of the Philippines in general, and the poor and disadvantaged, including women, children, minorities, indigenous peoples and human rights and social activists in particular, to achieve equitable access to and efficient enforcement of justice". In which way is this effective if rule of law is not applied?

One of the soldiers Mrs. Burgos indicated as responsible, Sr. Año, has been appointed chief of the Intelligence Service of the AFP in December 2012. Army general Baladad who was responsible for the illegal arrest of the 43 health workers, also called 'Morong 43' recently got promoted. The several complaints against him got 'cleared'.

These are signs that there is no real will to end impunity.

As a platform we hope that truth prevails and that the family and friends of Jonas can finally have peace after this long, exhausting and painstaking crusade that has been going on for 8 years already.

In solidarity,

Stop the Killings platform Belgium

