

## **PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

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Our society nowadays is indeed miserable and meaningless. We could barely see this fact if we just keenly observe our environment. Everyday seems a day of new political issues, economic crises and numerous problems in the society continuously exists. If we are just aware of the happenings in our country these past days and were concerned enough to crave for peace and human rights, if all of us are unified in establishing the goal of pursuing a harmonious living, PEACE and HUMAN RIGHTS are indeed possible.

PEACE means tranquility, stillness and freedom from contention. It describes a society or a relationship that is operating harmoniously and without violent contention. It is commonly understood as the absence of hostility or the existence of healthy or newly healed interpersonal or international relationships, safety in matters of social or economic welfare, the acknowledgement of equality and political relationships.

Reflecting on the definition above, do you think harmonious living is what we are witnessing right now? Of course not! Why? Simply because diversities exist. What I'm stressing here is not the differences in races, sexes, religion, culture and other divisions since it is dissimilar in nature. I am referring the diversified political, economical, social and cultural differences which definitely influenced and widen the gap in the society, differences which are not respected and understood by many. Peace is not simply the absence of war but it is explicitly a matter of understanding the differences that is why peace advocates are trying to establish dialogue for peace for every human being.

Looking in our political arena presently, it is an obvious fact that there exists a gap between the government and the citizens which encourages rebellions and protest. Let us correlate this fact primarily on the election process. Peace and Human Rights in the future of the Philippines are in the hands of the voters and the candidate voters are urged to think carefully about the candidate, and choose not only on popularity but based on the commitment and vision of the candidate, building peace, ending armed conflict and rebellion while addressing the root cause of such conflict, and for promoting, protecting and fulfilling human rights. Candidates are enjoined to seriously build into their platforms and programs of action, concrete plans to bring peace throughout the Philippines and to ensure that every Filipino is secure in his/her human rights. But what happened in our politics today, many blames the administration of Pres. Noynoy Aquino, a habit that continually practiced by many Filipinos "blaming whoever the president" .

We sometimes blamed the government and our political leaders. We oftentimes focus only to the mistakes made by our sovereign leaders without thinking that we too, as a responsible citizens have the responsibility to cooperate with the government by abiding the law in order to maintain peace and order and of course to give due importance to human rights. In attaining

peace there should be unity not only with the government but of course with all the diversified culture. Respect for Human Rights and dignity are inseparable.

All persons are born free and equal in dignity and rights without any distinction as to race, color, sex, religion and social status. Human Rights are generally one of the basic foundations of man which, we cannot live without. Human Rights and fundamental freedoms allow us to develop and use our human qualities, intelligence, talents and conscience, and to satisfy our spiritual and other needs. The dignity of man and human life is in violable.

Human rights are privilege given to all individuals to freely do their wills and to have their own protection not in terms of external indicators but through the name of the law that was established by the people itself. Anyone who violated this law of human rights, any contradiction has its corresponding punishment and the most common one is long time imprisonment, electrical chair and mercy killing. We the people itself should work hand and hand in maintaining and developing this law. By a very simple but meaningful way and that is to give respect to the people, their rights as a human, and the law that make their rights true.

The denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms not only is an individual and personal tragedy, but also creates social and political unrest, sowing the seeds of violence and conflict within and between societies and nations. Cite an example the previous Hongkong bus tragedy wherein the Hongkong nationals were hostage and killed by a Filipino police officer because accordingly he was deprived of his right for restatement of duty in which the government fails to resolve before the incident became seriously unstoppable. We are confounded that this tragedy creates a major problem not only in our country but definitely with our relationship to the other nations. The political repression that is done with such savage brutality insults the sense of justice of people of goodwill. Every time we hear the dull thud of a body that falls to the ground or the painful wail from the lips of a dying victim, a righteous indignation is fanned in our hearts, compelling us to fight for the vindication of the innocent and the punishment of the perpetrator. From the nooks and corners of the beleaguered land, people are expressing their rage against the dying of light of freedom in our society. And the voices of our overseas partners and friends blend with ours in a rising crescendo of concern and protest.

Developments in all fields in the society continually evolve but this development is not sustained when peace is not maintained. However, experience shows that Development is at time hampered due to discordant events. Cases of social unrest arise from violations of human rights and commission of crimes where in most instances, women are helpless victims. In this light, gender statistic on peace and human right is gathered to help law enforcer and peacekeepers improve their efforts by aligning priorities in favor of women protection and encouraging women participation.

First, Government officials and public servants are obligated by law to request human right and to promote and fulfill them or they go about their work, with human right comes responsibility. All of us have the responsibility to respect the human right of anyone else. We also have the human right to build or society where all can enjoy our human right.

Second, Peace and human rights can also be institutionalized in the school system and they contribute to the building of a human rights culture. Philippine Rights is providing modules and training workshops among public high school teachers. These education activities will

ensure effective training methodologies and raise the capability of teachers in integrating Human Rights and Peace in the various subject areas in the secondary school curriculum. To ensure that teacher-trainees are constantly updated on Human Rights and Peace in the concept, Philippine rights periodically provides them with education and information materials. Teachers exert lasting influence in the shaping of childhood consciousness. In the communities, teachers are respected opinion leaders. When they themselves become advocates of peace and human rights, a multiplier effect will be felt in the schools and communities.

Lastly and the most important, peace and human rights begins within ourselves. Filipinos, it is not too late to begin and be advocates of peace for our goals of harmonious living to be possible. All of us are obliged to maintain peace and respect for human rights. Prayer is the most important element towards peace. Remember it is still the best weapon against downfall, thus in order to have a peaceful and happy living, let us make prayer a habit. And finally, let us build acceptance, respect and of course forgiveness to our fellow beings for a better and harmonious relationship. Respect for human rights and human dignity is still the best foundation of freedom and justice.