



His Excellency Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III

President

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Dear Mr. President,

**Justice for Antonio “Dodong” Petalcorin,
murdered trade unionist in Davao City**

I write to you on behalf of Public Services International, representing 20 million women and men, to express our outrage over the ruthless killing of Antonio “Dodong” Petalcorin.

We also wish to express our utmost concern regarding the virtual reign of impunity in your country and are concerned that Dodong may become just another statistic to the long and bloody list of victims of extrajudicial murders, especially among trade unionists and human rights defenders.

Antonio “Dodong” Petalcorin was the president of the Network of Transport Organizations, a grouping of organized transport workers in Davao City in Mindanao. NETO is an affiliate of the National Confederation of Transport Workers’ Unions (NCTU); the latter, in turn, is a full-fledged member of both the national labor center Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL) and the global union International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF).

We were informed that Dodong was brutally shot three times in the chest by an assassin at about 8:00 am on July 2, as he was leaving his home to go to the local office of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), a national government agency. This cowardly act was captured by a CCTV camera nearby, and showed the gunman calmly escaping on a motorcycle.

Dodong’s colleagues believe that his murder is inextricably connected to him leading a spirited campaign starting October 2012 to expose alleged corruption at the LTFRB in Davao and to oust its director, identified as Mr. Benjamin Go. They also revealed that his murder might be a part of a series of attempts to silence those unmasking corruption in the LTFRB office, which primarily victimizes small-time public transport drivers and operators.

They cited what happened to Emilio Rivera, former chair of an independent transport workers’ group, the Matina Aplaya Transport Cooperative (MATRANSCO), who was shot dead only last month; as well as that of Carlos Cirilo, who, last May 21, narrowly survived when a grenade was lobbed inside his home but

fortunately failed to explode. Dodong, Emilio and Cirilo have one thing in common – they were co-complainants in a corruption case filed against Mr. Go.

We respectfully call on your office and other concerned government agencies to do all that is necessary to stop this series of murders against labour, trade union and human rights activists, and to bring to justice the perpetrators of these heinous crimes. This will certainly go a long way to ease the grief of the victims' families.

We also call on you to address the issues of corruption at the LTRFRB office in Davao City that Mr. Petalcorin and his colleagues have raised and which most likely the motives of the murders and attempted murders. This will ensure that they did not die in vain.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rosa Pavanelli'.

Rosa PAVANELLI
PSI General Secretary

Cc.: Department of Justice (communications@doj.gov.ph or dojinfodiv@yahoo.com)
Department of Labour and Employment (secrdb@dole.gov.ph)
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