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**Press Statement**  
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## **UN RAPPORTEUR Alston STANDS BY HIS FINDINGS ON PHILIPPINE KILLINGS**

*Philippine NGO delegation aghast at the open-faced arrogance of the Philippine government at the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council*

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, 03 June 2008 - "I am simply being faithful in playing my role as an honest broker," this was the response of Prof. Philip Alston, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, to the statement of Ambassador Erlinda F. Basilio of the Philippine Mission to the UN calling Alston's report "inaccurate, highly selective and biased."

Alston was one of the first UN special rapporteurs who gave their reports to the 8<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council which runs on June 2-20, 2008. He stood by his findings that so many of the cases remained unexplained, that only a few cases have been prosecuted and that there has been no conviction of military personnel involved so far. Mr. Alston reiterated that on the issue of the number and characterization of the killings, the methodology used by the Philippine government was defective.

After Alston's report, the Philippine Mission in Geneva submitted a 6-page statement lambasting and vilifying the report as well as Prof. Philip Alston himself. Practically ignoring the extraordinarily harsh Philippine reply, Alston was happy to note that the general response of Philippine society to his report was favorable and that human rights defenders have continued to commend and make reference to his report and recommendations.

The Philippine UPR Watch delegation here was astonished at the continuing denials, twisting of facts, unabashed namecalling and even *ad hominem* arguments of the Philippine Mission to the conclusions and observations of Prof. Alston. The delegation, composed of Fr. Rex Reyes of the NCCP, Marie Hilao Enriquez of Karapatan, Atty. Edre Olalia of NUPL, Dr. Edith Burgos of Desaparecidos, Donnie Mapanao of Migrante-Switzerland, Trisha Garvida of Karapatan and union leader Ed Cubelo, expressed disbelief at the rehash of worn out and discredited explanations as well as the highly exaggerated claims on the effectivity of the Philippine government's efforts to address the killings.

At a side event entitled, "Confronting Extrajudicial Killings: Promoting Life and Human Rights: The Situation in the Philippines," Prof. Alston said he was honored to participate in some small way to the efforts to stop extrajudicial killings in the Philippines. He went on to happily note the drop in the number of extrajudicial killings since he began his mission in the Philippines. Alston said that, "The decrease in number while a cause to congratulate, is likewise a cause to condemn because it merely shows clearly who are behind the extrajudicial killings." #