

Women, fight for jobs, land, social services and rights! Fight the oppressive, imperialist puppet, corrupt & fascist government!

GABRIELA | A NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

GABRIELA Statement on the International Women's Day 2016

GABRIELA Alliance of Filipino Women sends our militant greetings to women all over the world as we commemorate the International Women's Day this year.

We celebrate and honor the lives of women who fought more than a hundred years ago for the recognition of women's key role in the economic, political and cultural spheres. They laid the foundation upon which the militant women's movement was built and sparked the struggle to end women's oppression and abuse.

We send our solidarity to our sisters in Vietnam, Cambodia and Bangladesh who are organizing in unions to fight multi-national companies that squeeze super-profit from workers' sweat and blood. We salute our sisters in India and Pakistan, in Africa and Latin America, who are passionately and tirelessly defending their lands and ancestral domain against the destruction of big foreign agricultural and mining companies despite political repression and criminalization by fascist governments.

We celebrate with our sisters in Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq who are calling for peace and justice and an end to US and NATO led occupation of their lands. We stand in solidarity with our sisters in Palestine who never ceased fighting against Zionist occupation of Palestinian lands. We salute our sisters in Kurdistan who are leading the fight to resist war and occupation by fundamentalists and in asserting their people's right to recognition and autonomy. We stand with our sisters in Haiti, who are relentlessly fighting for their sovereign right against foreign intervention and repression.

In the US, we recognize and honor our black sisters and all women of color who are fighting against systemic discrimination and human rights violations perpetrated by the state. We stand in solidarity with our indigenous sisters in Canada, the US, Switzerland and Australia who are fighting against discrimination and are struggling to uphold and defend their culture and ancestral domain.

We salute our sisters and grandmothers in Japan, Korea, China and here in the Philippines who despite their advanced age continue to call for justice for the systematic sexual atrocities committed to them by the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II and who are still fighting against state powers that want to obliterate them from history. We are one with them in their call "Never again to another generation of comfort women!"

We honor, we celebrate, we continue the fight!

We continue to fight neo-liberal policies that favor big foreign and local corporations and deprive Filipino women farmers and indigenous women of their right to own and control land and resources. The same policies are killing farmers in India and Pakistan and indigenous people in Latin America. Women farmers who choose to defend their lands from private and state land grabbing are being criminalized or killed by state military or state sponsored para-militaries.

The same neo-liberal policies are killing women workers who are deprived of their right to job security and living wage and are putting many in dangerous working conditions. In Vietnam, India, Cambodia, Indonesia, and the US, women workers are at the forefront of strikes to demand higher wages, better working conditions, and job security. These are the same rights that women workers more than 100 years ago fought for.

We continue to fight governments that abandon their responsibility to provide much needed social services to the people. The United States for example is spending billions of taxpayers' money while closing down community clinics for women. Governments of poor countries are selling hospitals and schools under Public-Private Partnership programs that make quality social services even more inaccessible to poor women. Mass housing has become profit-oriented under the control of banks and private companies instead of providing decent shelter for poor families.

We continue to fight conditional loans peddled by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to fund poverty alleviation programs such as the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) for poor women and their children in an attempt to help governments cover up their inadequacy in creating jobs and providing social services to the people. Despite being hailed in Latin America and in the Philippines as a success in alleviating poverty among women and temporarily provided relief to families, the CCT still did not answer the demand of women for permanent jobs and livelihood with decent wages. Poverty rate among women in the Philippines, for example, is still at its highest at 25%.

We continue to fight labor export policy that serves to keep sinking economies temporarily afloat. India, China, the Philippines, and Indonesia are selling women migrants to receiving countries that exploit their cheap and flexible labor. Women often end up in exploitative work, with very low wages and with no social protection both from sending and host countries. Many of them become easy victims of human trafficking, white slavery and drug syndicates. With ongoing conflict and war, as well as economic and political crises, in host countries such as the Middle East, Europe and North America, many migrant workers suddenly end up jobless and even more vulnerable.

Imperialist countries have exhausted every means to try and save itself from decay. Wars of aggression launched and led by the imperialist United States have resulted to loss of lives of many women all over the world. Rape, abduction, and murder of women and children have become part of the system to conquer countries, defeat the resolve of sovereign governments and drive them into submission. Destruction of economies forced millions of people from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and other countries to flee and seek refuge in Europe and other parts of the world. The deluge of refugees from war-torn countries and the seething economic crisis have triggered ultra-right and racist sentiments among the local population to the advantage of the ruling class and system that seek to pit the world's exploited people against one another.

It is against this global economic and political context, that Filipino women are marching side by side with our sisters abroad and marking this year's International Women's Day with a stronger resolve to expand and strengthen the militant women's movement in the country. GABRIELA is leading Filipino women workers, peasants, urban poor, indigenous women, youth and students in the struggle for their economic and political demands.

This year we are in the midst of the Philippine national election, a pseudo-democratic exercise in which only the richest political clans decide who can run and eventually occupy office. As in previous

elections, women cannot rely on the promises of politicians to change their situation. By giving emphasis on the primary demand of majority of Filipino women for decent work, higher wages, distribution and control of lands and resources and an end to abuse and oppression, we will maximize the opportunity of the electoral struggle to educate, organize and mobilize the biggest number of women to engage those running for office into taking up women's issues and demands.

We affirm that it is only through the militant struggle of working class women, together with the rest of the people and under the aegis of a national democratic struggle, can the worsening crisis of the semi-colonial and semi-feudal Philippine society meet its decisive end.

The militant action of tens of thousands of Filipino women is our contribution to the struggle of the working women of the world against discrimination, oppression and the attacks of neoliberalism on women. And as we march on in resistance, we step further ahead towards our collective victory!

Makibaka! Huwag Matakot! (Onward with the struggle! Never fear!)

Long live the militant women's movement!

Long live international solidarity!