



# GABRIELA

National Alliance of Women's Organizations in the Philippines

## **GABRIELA Greetings on the occasion of International Women's Day**

GABRIELA, the militant women's alliance in the Philippines, joins women friends and comrades across the globe in the commemoration of the International Women's Day on March 8, 2004. We hold out our hand in solidarity to peace-loving women all over the world in opposing the unjust occupation of imperialist United States of the countries Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine and the blatant military intervention in Colombia, Cuba, Haiti, North Korea, Philippines and other sovereign nations. 2,600 American troops are currently taking part in the *Balikatan Military Exercise* in Palawan, Philippines where the Malampaya field with *oil reserves* is located. While we import oil foreign monopolies like Royal/Dutch Shell at Chevron Texaco plunders our natural resources.

This is in the midst of an ever worsening economic crisis: rising prices of commodities, increasing power and water rates and the higher cost of sending our children to school. Aside from the P30 cost of living allowance that was given to workers in 2001, there was never a wage increase under Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's rule. Meanwhile regular jobs are nearing extinction, as contractual hiring becomes the prevalent form of employment. The value of peso against the dollar is continually diminishing - 56.20 when it was only 55.90 days ago. Thus, prices of imported commodities, like oil, continue to rise.

Add to this, violence against women is exacerbated by the tremendous crisis. According to Center for Women's Resources, there are 3,913 rape cases from January to September 2003. Due attention should also give to the fact that 1 Filipina is raped every 1 hour and 16 minute, one Filipinas is battered every 1 hour and 24 minutes and one child is beaten every 3 hours. These only reflect the reported cases, the real picture of violence against women and children are much worst.

But the worst violator of women is the state. Around 18,000 Filipino families were victims of human rights violation under Gloria Macapagal- Arroyo regime. Of the total 308 political detainees, 13 are women and 18 are children. Among them Zenaida Llesis and her one-year-old daughter named Gabriela and Irene Plagtiosa and her child, both have been detained for three years now.

In the Philippines, the call of our time is for our militant action. If we do not struggle, our children will face the bleakest future.

As the world pays homage to women on this day for our significant roles in nation building, Gabriela takes this occasion to challenge all women's groups and individuals to work harder for genuine social and political change. We call on everyone to commemorate this special day to reinvigorate ourselves in our continuing struggle for women's rights, welfare and genuine liberation along with the democratic people's movement of the world.

This March 8, Gabriela has taken on the challenge to take our struggle further into the political front through the party list elections and raises the banner of GABRIELA Women's Partylist. It is time that women benefit from a more genuine representation in government institutions like the House of Representatives and elsewhere. On the strength of our unity as women, this is an opportune time for Gabriela to push forward the politics of change to benefit all women and oppressed democratic sectors of our society.

This March 8, Gabriela shall ceaselessly call for food for all families, jobs with just wages for all workers, and social.

**Down with U.S. Imperialism!**

**Advance the Struggle for Women's Rights, Welfare and Genuine Liberation!**

**Long live Militant Women's Movements worldwide!**

**Long Live International Solidarity!**

\*GABRIELA will hold a nationwide women's protest action on March 8, 2004 where thousands of women from the three main islands of the Philippines, Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao are expected to participate.