

# HAMBURG FOUNDATION

for politically persecuted persons

Chairman: Dr. Peter Tschentscher Executive director: Ole v. Beust  
Chairman H.C. Dr. Klaus von Dohnanyi

## **Bishop Antonio Ablon from Mindanao/Philippines: New guest of the Hamburg Foundation for Politically Persecuted Persons**

**Hamburg, November 6, 2019**

Ten years ago Antonio Ablon (43) was enthroned as bishop of the "Iglesia Filipino Independiente" on the island of Mindanao. Faithful to the socially critical approach of the Independent Philippine Church, the dignitary has since then constantly stood up for the interests of the indigenous population of his diocese Pagadian.

More recently, Bishop Ablon has been most active against the government of President Rodrigo Duterte's plan to expel the indigenous people of Mindanao from their traditional habitats. For many years Mindanao has been regarded as a social hotspot and a dangerous unrest province.

Officially, the resettlement of the indigenous people is intended to give the military control over potential retreat areas of Islamist and other guerrilla groups. But it is also about the lucrative allocation of mining rights in the resource-rich region to Philippine and international mining companies. Bishop Ablon has repeatedly publicly committed himself against such plans. That is why he has been slandered in public for a long time. At the beginning of this year, however, his name appeared on the murder lists of local death squads who are attributed to the regime of President Rodrigo Duterte.

For this reason, the Hamburg Foundation for Politically Persecuted Persons has decided to invite Antonio Ablon to Hamburg for a year. The bishop wants to use this time to inform the German public about the conditions in his homeland as well as the members of the Philippine community living here.

Since taking office in summer 2016, Rodrigo Duterte has led a bloody struggle against alleged drug traffickers and members of criminal syndicates. Tens of thousands have fallen victim to his death squads. The fact that Christian churches and their representatives are now also being targeted by the president has also triggered an alarm in Germany: in a protest note from the North Church on Tuesday, 5 November 2019, it was said that "it is not tolerable" to defame the National Council of Philippine Churches as a 'communist terrorist group".

Bishop Antonio Ablon has many friends and supporters in Germany: Above all Bishop Kristina Kühnbaum-Schmidt and Isabel Friemann (East Asia Department) of the Nordkirche weltweit - Zentrum für Mission und Ökumene in Hamburg, who proposed him for our program; Bärbel Kofler, Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid; Prof. em. for Catholic Church in Germany. Theology and Ethics, Dr. Franz Segbers; Dean Ulf-Martin Schmidt MdB Martin Patzelt; Brot für die Welt, Cologne; Vereinigte Evangelische Mission Wuppertal, Department of Foreign Affairs of the EKD; European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, Philippinenbüro in Köln, Seemannspastor Matthias Ristau in Hamburg and many other supporters of human rights and Philippine work:

**We thank everyone!**

**Contact person: Martina Baeurle Mobile: 0049-151-56-311-316  
Fon: 0049/ 40/ 428635757 email: Kontakt@Hamburger-Stiftung.de**