

Building a Nonkilling Philippines: A Call To Action

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What is meant by “a nonkilling Philippines?”

It means an imagined or envisioned ideal Philippines marked by “the absence of killing, threats to kill, and conditions conducive to killing.”

The term ‘Nonkilling’ was introduced by Dr. Glenn D. Paige in *Nonkilling Global Political Science* (2002; 2009). He defined a “nonkilling society” as follows: “It is a human community, smallest to largest, local to global, characterized by no killing of humans and no threats to kill; no weapons designed to kill humans and no justifications for using them; and no conditions of society dependent upon threat or use of killing force for maintenance or change (Paige:1)

Applying the term “nonkilling society” in 2004, 16 Filipino scholars and leaders, and Dr. Paige, delivered lectures at U.P., Ateneo, Kalayaan College, and Ateneo de Davao. The lectures were published in a book: *Towards a Nonkilling Filipino Society: Developing an Agenda for Research, Policy and Action* (edited by Jose V. Abueva. 210 pp.)

The Filipino authors addressed the common question: “Is a nonkilling society possible in the Philippines?” If “Yes” under what conditions? If “No” why not? According to Dr. Paige, the Philippines is the first country to ask the question to itself and seek to answer it.

On October 6, 2009, on the day for the World March for Peace, we launched the Movement for a Nonkilling Philippines in the name of the co-authors of the book as co-founders and co-convenors. We joined the march with several peace groups in Ermita, Manila and the program afterward.

The Concept of “Nonkilling”

On the subject we quote the following paragraphs from the *Wikipedia*. “In the analysis of its causes, nonkilling encompasses the concepts of peace (absence of war and conditions conducive to war), nonviolence (psychological, physical, and structural), and *ahimsa* (non-injury in thought, word and deed).

“*Nonkilling* does not exclude concepts as *peace* (absence of war and conditions conducive to war) or *nonviolence* (psychological, physical, and structural), and *ahimsa* (noninjury in thought, word and deed) but rather provides a new approach. *This nonkilling approach is characterized by the measurability of its goals and the open-ended nature of its realization.*”

“In contrast to peace, nonviolence, “...killing and nonkilling can be quantified and related to specific causes, following a clinical perspective (prevention, intervention and post-traumatic transformation toward the progressive eradication of killing).

“But nonkilling does not set any predetermined road map for the achievement of a killing-free society. As an open-ended approach it appeals to infinite human creativity and variability, encouraging continuous explorations in the fields of education, research, social action and policy making, developing a broad range of scientific, institutional, educational, political, economic and spiritual alternatives.

“In a broad conception, nonkilling opposes aggression, assassination, autogenocide, contract killing, corporate killing, cultural genocide, death penalty, democide, domestic killings, ethnic cleansing, ethnocide, femicide, feticide, gendercide, genocide, honor killing, ritual killings, infanticide, killing, linguicide, mass murder, murder, suicide, omnicide, policide, politicide, regicide, school shootings, structural violence, suicide, terrorism, thrill killing, tyrannicide, violence, war, and other forms of killing, direct, indirect or structural. [All the quoted paragraphs come from “Nonkilling,” in Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.]

Aspiring to “a Nonkilling Philippines”

We cannot attain a nonkilling Philippines in perfection, but we can aim for and gradually achieve a much higher degree of peacefulness, nonviolence, and nonkilling than the levels of turbulence, violence and killings and threats that we have experienced as a nation.

To reiterate, Dr. Paige's concept, “a nonkilling society is a human community, smallest to largest, local to global.” So we can think of specific villages, *barangays*, municipalities, cities, provinces, regions, and the country as a whole, and assess their degrees of “killing potential and experience” and of “non-killing potential and experience.”

Nonkilling communities would become more possible and attainable when we know of their existence in certain places in the Philippines and deliberately aim to promote their development elsewhere in the country. We can help other communities to enhance their potential and capabilities for nonkilling peacefulness. We can help them to discourage and prevent killing for whatever purpose, and remove conditions that lead to killing.

Rationale and justification for building “a nonkilling Philippines”

1. Many of us, Filipino citizens and leaders, are concerned about the level of violence, killings, forced disappearances, displacements of people, and related violations of human rights.
2. In our Constitution we are committed to build “a just and humane society” and a democracy “under the rule of law and a regime of truth, justice, freedom, love, equality, and peace.”
3. We vow that “the Philippines adopts the generally accepted principles of international law as part of the law of the land and adheres to the policy of peace, equality, justice, freedom, cooperation and amity with all nations.”
4. Christianity and Islam are religions of love and peace that command us believers not to kill.
5. We know that violence, torture, cruel and unusual punishment, and the disappearances, killing and displacements of human beings cause incalculable human loss and suffering, and are thus prohibited and punishable by law.

“A nonkilling Philippines” is a desirable vision and a measureable goal

We should strive for a killing-free Philippines for the common good and in our national interest. Principle 13 of the “Charter for a World Without Violence” adopted by the Nobel Peace Laureates in 2007 calls for “the right of everyone not to be killed and the responsibility not to kill others.”

Contrary to what may be conventional wisdom, the killing of human beings is not inherent in human nature. In fact most peoples, including Filipinos, never kill a human being in their whole lifetime.

The killing of human beings, likened to a disease by the World Health Organization, can be prevented, mitigated, reduced, or even stopped under certain conditions.

Killings can spread and worsen under other conditions, such as when killers are often not apprehended, tried, and punished, and when they enjoy virtual impunity for their crime.

The Philippines is now one of an increasing number of countries around the world whose writers, artists, journalists, scholars, scientists, religious, and other citizens and leaders are now engaged in building nonkilling societies and thereby also a nonkilling world. See the website of the Center for Global Nonkilling at: <<http://www.nonkilling.org>>

Incidence and causes of violence and killings

To build a nonkilling Philippines we need to know much more about the incidence and causes of violence and killings.

We really don't know the incidence of different kinds of violence and killings in various parts of the country and the entire country from year to year;

The recording, monitoring, and mapping of the killing of human beings in the Philippines leave much to be desired. We also lack reliable information and knowledge about their probable causes and conditions.

So serious efforts to prevent, discourage and reduce violence and various kinds of killings, and to punish their perpetrators, are hampered.

We therefore propose to set up, maintain and publish the *Philippine Index of Killing and Nonkilling* as a periodic recording, monitoring, and mapping of the incidence of violence and killings, as well as of nonviolence and nonkilling, in various parts of the country and the entire archipelago.

Proposed legislation Declaring a Peaceful and Nonkilling Philippines as a National Goal, and Establishing a Department of Peace

In our proposed legislation we recommend that it shall be the policy of the Republic of the Philippines:

1. To aim for a peaceful and nonkilling Philippines as a national goal to be promoted by the whole nation, led by National Government, and with the active cooperation and support of the local governments and the citizens;
2. To promote human security, peace-building, peace-making, and the nonviolent resolution of conflicts in the Philippines and the world at large;
3. To develop and support suitable programs to encourage and assist research, education, training, advocacy, policy-making, and action to promote a life-sustaining, peaceful, and nonkilling Philippines;
4. To set up, maintain and publish the Philippine Index of Killing and Nonkilling;
5. To provide suitable incentives and rewards for those provinces and regions that excel in developing peaceful and nonkilling communities; and assist and encourage those communities that experience more violence and killings in order to alleviate and improve their condition; and
6. To encourage and support collaboration among like-minded writers, artists, journalists, scholars, scientists, religious, and other citizens and leaders, and local and international organizations and institutions that aim to build killing-free societies and a peaceful and nonkilling world.

I asked Senator Manuel B. Villar to introduce a bill which became S.B. 2569 in the 14th Congress. I drafted the bill along the lines of a bill drafted by peace scholars and activists in Canada, led by Balwant Bhaneja (National Co-Chair, Canadian Department of Peace Initiative).

The Bill is being reintroduced in the 15th Congress. I have also asked Representative Rene L. Relampagos (1st District, Bohol), the Chairman of the House Committee on Human Rights, to co-sponsor the Bill in the House, with the collaboration of Rep. Erico B. Aumentado (2nd District, Bohol) and Rep. Arthur Yap (3rd District, Bohol).

Initial Support for the Movement for a Nonkilling Philippines

In response to appeals for support of our initiative for building a Nonkilling Philippines, two Philippine Government agencies have responded positively, giving us much needed resources and encouragement. We are very grateful for this.

- **OPAPP.** The Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process approved a research grant for "A Pilot Project for Building a Nonkilling Philippines" to be carried out by Kalayaan College, that I submitted. The consultations and research are being carried out in two regions: Metro Manila and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. This project is: (1) Engaging some government officials, peace activists and scholars in discussions of violence and killing in relation to the concept and goal of a nonkilling Philippines; (2) Preparing a report on the quality of recording and reporting on violence and killings in Metro Manila or the National Capital Region (the National Government) and in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao [ARRM].; and (3) Preparing a draft education and training module on violence, killing and nonkilling. [The massacre of 57 persons, including 30 journalists, took place in Maguindanao Province in ARRM on November 23, 2009.]
- **PAGCOR.** The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation approved a grant to support the printing and reprinting of books and other learning materials for the continuing endeavor on Building a Nonkilling Philippines. These are to be used in various activities of the Institute for a Nonkilling Philippines at Kalayaan College, the Movement for a Nonkilling Philippines, and other institutions and organizations working for peace, nonviolence and nonkilling.

Underlying Causes of Violence and Killing

Our preliminary inquiry into violence and killing in the Philippines has disclosed various underlying causes or conditions. We are collecting Philippine statements on reported causes or underlying conditions of violence and killings.

We also avail ourselves of a comprehensive listing of the various underlying causes of killing. We gratefully acknowledge the following condensation of the "Anatomy of Killing" by Greg Bourne, co-director of the Center for Global Nonkilling.

"To better develop strategies for reducing and eliminating killing, it is essential to be clear about the numerous underlying causes of killing. This analysis is intended to be considered in the context of both Glenn Paige's "Funnel of Killing" construct and John Burton's thesis that killing results from the deprivation or violation of basic human needs. Some are played out at the individual level while others at the group, state and national levels. Many of these underlying causes can conceivably be understood in the context of structural economic conditions, the overarching importance of which requires further attention.

"Building on these basic understandings of the genesis of violence and killing, the following array attempts to identify the primary underlying rationales or causes of killing, including:

- **Ritual** – potentially resulting in gang killings, honor killings.
- **Justice** – potentially resulting in capital punishment, "just war," terrorist acts.
- **Retribution/Revenge** – potentially resulting in domestic violence killings, terrorism, capital punishment, genocide.
- **Mental Illness** – potentially resulting in suicide, homicide, infanticide, terrorism. Serial killings.
- **Despair** (identify distinctions from mental illness) – potentially resulting in suicide, infanticide, euthanasia (mercy killing), homicide and terrorism.
- **Lust for Power** – potentially resulting in war and military-based killings, terrorism, genocide, killing that stems from hoarding food, water or natural resources. Examples: Killing by "war lords" who want the benefits of power; genocide against another people group to control people, territory or resources.
- **Greed** (economics-based killing) – potentially resulting in corporate allowances for killing, killing that stems from hoarding food, water or natural resources. Example: Corporations which willingly allow deaths for economic reasons; corporations which allow dangerous work conditions; individuals or groups which use water or food for extortion resulting in killing.
- **Self-Defense** – potentially resulting in killing associated with domestic violence, "protection" from perpetrators, "just war," protecting needed natural resources and protecting basic human rights. Examples: Killing an intruder; killing to provide for loved ones or people group (country) from withholding of basic human needs.
- **Cultural traditions** – potentially resulting in war, genocide, honor killings, infanticide. Examples: Honor killings for adultery or rape, often where women rather than the male perpetrator are accused and killed; sexual violence based on cultural views about women which lead to killing.
- **Religious extremism** – potentially resulting in honor killings, terrorism, war, genocide. Examples: Religious-based "promises" (not found in mainstream teachings of any major religion) which lead to suicide, terrorism or killing others; so-called "Holy Wars" (founded on grounds which ultimately are not consistent with foundational teachings of the faith involved); killing from calls for jihad (noting differing views about what is meant by jihad).
- **Undervaluing life/absence of valuing life** – potentially resulting in any type of killing, stemming from lack of valuing one's own life, thereby seeing little value in life generally thus little regret or concern about killing someone else. Example: Killing by a person or group which has been "desensitized" by various means (e.g., daily exposure to violence and killing) to the value of life and impacts of killing; killing by a person who has been "taught" to not value their own life or the lives of others.

- **Patriotism/Nationalism** – potentially resulting in war, terrorism, genocide. Examples: Killing others for the sake of one's country or cause; committing acts of terrorism against another people group to presumable "defend" national interests.
- **Imperialism** – potentially resulting in war, terrorism, genocide. Examples: Engaging in killing based solely on national self-interest and desire to expand control over other peoples and areas.
- **Deterrence** – potentially resulting in capital punishment, military actions. Examples: Sometimes used as the basis for capital punishment; sometimes used as the basis for a "preemptive" military action to discourage broader scale killing.
- **Others?** [Clash of cultures, ethnicities, identities; Huntington's "clash of civilizations."]

Enlisting Other Organizations for a Nonkilling Philippines

- Peace and Human Rights Scholars and Activists, Institutes and NGOs.
- Governors, City Mayors, Municipal Mayors for a Nonkilling Philippines?
- Youth for a Nonkilling Philippines?
- Religious for a Nonkilling Philippines?
- Women for a Nonkilling Philippines?
- Teachers for a Nonkilling Philippines?
- The Military and the Police for a Nonkilling Philippines?