



# United Filipinos in Hong Kong (UNIFIL-HK)

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## Press Statement

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## Filipinos in HK mourn for the victims of the Leyte landslide "Tragic luck" that Arroyo brings must stop

Filipino migrant workers in Hong Kong mourn the tragedy that befell our compatriots in Brgy. Guinsaugon, in the town of St. Bernard in Southern Leyte. We are saddened by the loss of lives and livelihood that the residents suffered due to the mudslide that buried almost the whole village.

Filipino migrants in Hong Kong pledge to conduct relief operations to alleviate the situation of the victims of the mudslide.

What happened in Leyte was a tragedy waiting to happen. Illegal logging and mining have made the area practically a death trap. Even Southern Leyte Rep. Roger Mercado said that before, flash floods have been common especially during heavy rains because of irresponsible and illegal logging operations in the past.

Like what happened in Leyte, the wanton environmental destruction in the country has magnified the vulnerability of the people against calamities such as typhoons, earthquakes and the likes.

This situation is set to get worse as the government continues to make lipservice its concern for the environment and the people's wellbeing. Such is proven by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's mining policies expressed in the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 that the Supreme Court has recently announced legal to the delight of Arroyo, giant foreign mining corporations and their partner local mining companies in the Philippines.

With the implementation of the Mining Act of 1995, we, Filipino workers abroad fear for the safety of our families back home.

Within the past two months, twin tragedies happened in the country – the stampede in a noon time show that killed 79, and now, the mudslide that buried thousands.

The first was due to the people's desperation against the extreme poverty that the Arroyo government has not addressed. The second was due to the government's failure to curb illegal logging operations as well as its implementation of environmentally destructive policies.

Arroyo and her government do not only bring bad luck but tragic luck to the Filipino people.

The Leyte tragedy must not be repeated. The Arroyo government must take responsibility for the tragedies that has happened to the Filipino people.