



# United Filipinos in Hong Kong (UNIFIL-HK)

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## Press Release

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## **The Migrant's Agenda is the voice of Filipino workers in HK** *Filipino domestic helpers lay down demands for Philippine and HK government*

*Consistently, the Philippine and Hong Kong governments have implemented policies that gravely impinge on our rights as foreign workers and as Filipinos. This time, we want change.*

This was declared by Eman Villanueva, secretary-general of the United Filipinos in Hong Kong (UNIFIL-MIGRANTE-HK), as hundreds of Filipino migrant workers held a rally today on the occasion of the State of the Nation Address (SONA) of Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Protesters submitted the Filipino Migrant's Agenda, which was the result of the first Filipino Migrant Workers Summit held last July 2, to the Hong Kong and Philippine authorities.

*"For the first time, around 400 Filipino migrant workers from 98 organizations gathered and discussed the major issues facing us. This agenda is the most representative list of demands of Filipino migrants in Hong Kong. This is our voice,"* Villanueva added.

The marchers went to the Central Government Office and submitted a petition to the Hong Kong government that includes demands for the abolition of the New Conditions of Stay or Two-Week Rule, the increase of the minimum wage and the scrapping of the levy.

*"The Hong Kong government has exploited us enough. We've been unjustly taxed through the levy, our wage has been drastically cut and major social services are inaccessible to migrant workers.*

*We are the epitome of modern day slaves,"* he said.

The protesters then proceeded to the Philippine Consulate General to present their agenda to the Philippine government.

*"Tomorrow, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will deliver her report and policy framework for the next year. We're sure that she'll brag about her so-called achievements for the Filipino people. But these demands that we have prove that our situation have not changed and in fact, even worsened,"* Villanueva stated.

Included in the demand list submitted were the abolition of the OWWA Omnibus Policies that protesters said *"killed the miniscule services OWWA has for OFWs and allow the intensified plunder of the government of the OFW fund,"* prosecution of recruitment agencies who overcharge migrants, and the increase of government funding for services to overseas Filipinos, and swift and sufficient assistance for migrant workers in need.

The protesters also called for a stop to the spate of human rights violations and extrajudicial killings in the country, decisive moves to stop the increase of prices of basic commodities and the provision of basic social services such as health and education to majority of the Filipinos.

*"The government owes these and much more to migrant workers. If GMA is not up to this job, then it is really high time for her to go,"* Villanueva pronounced.

The group said that they will continue to push the two governments to take action on their demands.

*"Change is what we want and change is what we will get,"* Villanueva concluded.#