



OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

J. HERBERT NELSON, II  
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Dear Friends in Christ,

As members of the largest Reformed body in the United States, whose global family includes the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), I call your attention to the plight of overseas Filipino workers (OFW) and their struggles to seek safety and justice while working overseas. We learned about Jennifer Dalquez through the prophetic witness of migrant ministries and organizations that advocate for overseas Filipino workers. Our recent General Assembly human trafficking policy focuses on the protection of workers and workers' rights, including freedom from abuse and exploitation, in response to globalization and migration.

Jennifer Dalquez is an OFW imprisoned in the United Arab Emirates and awaiting appeal from her death sentence at the Al Ain Judicial Court on March 27, 2017. She is claiming self-defense when her former employer attempted to rape her in December 2014. Dalquez fatally wounded her employer during the ensuing struggle to protect her life from harm.

Jennifer is not alone in her search for justice. At the end of February of this year, another OFW named Jakatia Pawa was hanged to death in Kuwait for allegedly killing her employer's daughter. On March 17, 1995, another OFW named Flor Contemplacion was sentenced to death in Singapore, for allegedly drowning a young boy under her friend's care.

While the case is still open in the UAE judicial system whether it will uphold the death penalty, there is little information available to immediate family members or the Philippine government—except for Jennifer's words to her family members. Unlike other OFWs who faced untimely deaths with incomplete information for their families and the Philippine government, the time is now to call for OFWs like Jennifer to benefit from safe working environments and improved legal processes before further trials and death penalty convictions in other countries.

Together let us join in prayer that Jennifer Dalquez be spared from execution. Let us show our support through the online signature campaign that appeals to the United Arab Emirates government to respect Jennifer's plea for self-defense and to overturn her death penalty conviction (<https://www.change.org/p/his-highness-sheikh-khalifa-bin-zayed-al-nahyan-save-jennifer-dalquez-domestic-worker-sentenced-to-death-by-u-a-e-court>).

Guided by our General Assembly policy, let us further our resolve to protect workers and workers' rights, including their safety and justice in the Philippines and for OFWs throughout the world.

In the faith we share,

The Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)