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FREE BISHOP CARLO MORALES MOVEMENT

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**'FREE
OUR
PROPHET'**

**A primer on the case
of Iglesia Filipina Independiente's
Bishop Carlo Morales**

WHO IS BISHOP CARLO MORALES?

BISHOP Carlo Morales hails from Tubod, Surigao del Norte. His parents are known community and church leaders in Timamana. His involvement with the Iglesia Filipina Independiente thus came naturally.

He became a leader of the youth sector, reason for his early exposure to the advocacies of the Church for the last, least and lost. One of the longtime calls he found dear is the call for peace based on justice in the nation, a commitment of the IFI since the government engaged in dialogue with belligerent forces.

His passion brought him to the Aglipay Central Theological Seminary as the first ever from his home diocese. He graduated in 1999. After ordination into the priesthood, he was immediately assigned to major parishes in the diocese, and did not fail to develop them.

When the Diocese of Surigao gave birth to the Diocese of Siargao in 2012, he was one of 10 priests who were deployed to shepherd the flock.

He only recently became the bishop of Ozamiz diocese. His installation happened on Jan. 3, 2017, at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Ozamiz City. He is among the youngest bishops of the IFI and the ecumenical circle in the Philippines.

His heart for change is the reason he and wife Maria Teofilina Losaria Morales, or Darling to friends, share a strong marital bond. His wife was also an active youth leader, with the same devotion to genuine transformation in the country. They have two daughters: Mithi (Filipino term for “wish”) and Kappia (Ilocano term for “peace”), 13 and 7, respectively.

The message of his life only makes our case stronger: This is state persecution. Free Bishop Carlo Morales!

THAT NIGHT



ON MAY 11, 2017, at 6:27 p.m., a joint operation of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police took into custody four persons, including the bishop.

They were detained at the city police office, two were freed the next day and, on May 17, the bishop and the other were moved to Ozamiz City Jail.

They now face an illegal possession of explosives case.

Church leaders and supporters have called the persecution an affront to the crusade of the bishop and the IFI for just and lasting peace.

To IFI, the case is a ridiculous move to instill fear among peacemakers in the nation.

Let us examine that night.

OUR CHURCH LEADER and Salinas allegedly violated Section 1 of RA 9516. The named prosecution witnesses include officers from Ozamiz and Oroquieta cities, all PO1.

Per their sworn statements, Salinas “stealthily slipped his hand reaching on a bag” which contained a grenade “placed at the top of [the bag].” They went on to say that Bishop Morales pushed an arresting officer “and murmured of indistinct imputation” — the whole base of the claim that the two shared

knowledge of the explosive among Salinas’ belongings.

The basis of the collusion is shallow. The bishop was concerned for the wanted person’s life. He, to be clear, learned Salinas’ role in the Peace Talks only at the checkpoint. He and his party escorted the consultant to jail only to make sure he was not harmed, except that everyone was detained later on.

Finally, the evidence is planted, a usual tactic to pin down peace builders.

The diocesan van was flagged down at a checkpoint in Gango, Ozamiz City. Taken into custody were:

Rommel Salinas

National Democratic Front consultant to the Peace Talks

Right Rev. Carlo Morales

bishop of the Diocese of Ozamiz

Maria Teofilina Losaria Morales

wife of the bishop

Isadome Dalid

diocesan driver

Salinas was wanted for:

**destructive arson
murder
frustrated murder
attempted murder
robbery**

Authorities allegedly confiscated:

• Mk 2 grenade

- communication devices
- battery packs
- knife
- map of Misamis Occidental
- cash

• National Democratic Front ID

The Bishop, his wife and driver should not have been detained in the first place. Aside from the warrant of arrest being only for Salinas, the latter was only in the van because the bishop picked him up on the road as a stranger drenched in rain, an act of charity.

These are trumped-up charges usually filed against political prisoners, individuals incarcerated for their work and political beliefs.

The centerpiece of the illegal possession of explosives case is planted evidence — in a plastic bag. The accused were distanced from the van as soon as they were taken into custody; and the bishop’s lawyer was barred from seeing the inventory at 9 p.m.

The NDF ID or, more specifically, the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees card should have exempted Salinas from arrest, by virtue of his participation in the Peace Talks.

WHAT AUTHORITIES REPORT

WHAT THE CHURCH BELIEVES