

The Voice is a bi-annual publication of the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD). It is providing you with the latest on human rights with focus on involuntary disappearance issue within the Asian region. AFAD welcomes contributions but reserves editorial rights.

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The AFAD is a regional federation of organizations working directly on the issue of involuntary disappearances from Timor Leste, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines and Thailand. Founded in 1998 to promote solidarity, lobby, communications, networking and advocacy among its member-organizations and network, the AFAD links arms with international, regional and national formations from other continents. For more information, you may write, visit or call us.

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Emptiness *

Victor Guerrero Fernandez

Where are you, my brother? Why can't you come home?

We have been waiting for you from the dead of night

The street is now restricted, off-limits for idlers,

Anybody can be accosted for just joining the protesters.

You didn't leave us, father, but you are not by our side.

Mother is praying, repeatedly asking

That you may come home

So we can kiss your hand once again.

Where are you, my son? Where did you go that night?

We are worried about the pervasive mass arrests.

Bothered by the news and rumors

That your body was found in a mass grave.

My Beloved, we waited for you to join us for dinner.

But not even your shadow can we find.

Your physical strength is our source of life.

Now, we, your children ask: how will our future be?

You are all forced to disappear

Husband, son, brother, sister and father.

Your families who are left behind will continue the struggle

To get justice is to fill in the emptiness.

*Translated from the original winning piece in Filipino titled, "Patlang."