No More Delays, Free Mary Jane Now!

25 April 2025

April 25th 2025 marks 15 years since Mary Jane Veloso's arrest in Yogyakarta, Indonesia where she was sentenced to death for unwittingly smuggling drugs to Indonesia. Last December 2024, she was transferred back to the Philippines after a practical agreement signed between the Indonesian and the Philippine governments for a transfer of prisoners based on diplomacy, international cooperation and legal sovereignty. Upon transfer to the Philippines, according to the Agreement, she will continue serving her sentence in alignment with Philippine law and procedures. However, Indonesia would respect any decision made by the Philippines after Veloso returned to her country, including the possibility of clemency. Now, four months have passed since her repatriation and Mary Jane still continues to serve in the Philippines' prison without any certainty if she will ever receive any justice.

Mary Jane Veloso, a Filipino woman migrant worker who was trafficked from the Philippines, promised work as a domestic worker and then tricked into carrying drugs. She suffered from imprisonment and uncertainty for more than 14 years, but no investigation was conducted by Indonesian law enforcement into her trafficking case despite Mary Jane's continued claims of innocence.

Mary Jane received a last-minute reprieve from execution in 2015 after a global migrants-led mass movement campaign clamored for the Indonesian President to save her life. Mary Jane's traffickers were apprehended and then subsequently convicted in 2020 for large-scale illegal recruitment involving three Filipino women, with a corresponding penalty of a lifetime sentence in the Philippines. At present, Mary Jane serves as a key witness in an ongoing 10-year long legal battle to hold her traffickers accountable in the Philippines.

Mary Jane's case highlights the vulnerabilities faced by thousands of migrant women, especially those who come from impoverished backgrounds who, in desperate search for better opportunities for their families, become victims of exploitation and human trafficking.

We, the Network for the Protection of Women Migrant Rights (NPWMR) are committed to stand in solidarity with Mary Jane and her family in their pursuit of justice. We specifically urge the Government of the Philippines to grant Mary Jane clemency, immediate and unconditional freedom for humanitarian grounds and as a matter of justice. Furthermore, it must swiftly act on the human trafficking case against Mary Jane's recruiters to ensure her traffickers are held fully accountable. As a victim of human trafficking, we assert her right to access to justice, comprehensive protection and support.

We also urge the Government of Indonesia to acknowledge Mary Jane Veloso as a victim of trafficking, ensuring her access to justice and remedies for the harm caused to her identity, dignity and life.

We call on all women migrant leaders, women's rights leaders and human rights defenders to join us in solidarity in the struggle for Mary Jane's freedom and ensure that truth and justice prevail.

Network for the Protection of Women Migrant Rights (NPWMR):

- Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)
- Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM)
- Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility (CARAM) Asia
- GABRIELA - Alliance of Filipino Women's Organizations
- Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW)
- International Women Alliance (IWA) Asia Pacific
- Migrante International

Endorsed by: