



UPDATES PHILIPPINES

RELEASED BY THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF THE PHILIPPINES

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EDITORIAL

Duterte rages against growing isolation

It is becoming ever clearer that the government of President Rodrigo Duterte is losing its support within and outside the Philippines. He only has himself to blame for this.

Duterte has miserably failed in his bombastic campaigns of ridding the country of illegal drugs and government corruption. He has instead exposed himself as a total phony, a bloodthirsty tyrant, a subservient imperialist puppet, and the supreme protector of the illegal drug trade.

Amidst the country's worsening economic, political and human rights crisis, an ever-growing democratic movement is clamoring for justice and the ouster of the hated regime. Various types of workers strikes, community barricades, and protest actions erupt weekly all over the country. Despite intensifying militarization, the armed revolution under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines is even expanding, covering ever-larger areas of the Philippine countryside.

Outside of the country, an increasing number of international multilateral institutions, national governments and international associations have been condemning the Duterte government's serious violations of human rights. Despite the support extended by the Trump, Putin and Xi Jinping governments, calls are now being made to stop the international travel of Duterte government officials and to prosecute the worst criminals among them.

Duterte's pack of sycophant officials and highly-paid surveys are keeping the illusion of popularity and righteousness alive. Failing these, military and police officials are mobilized to go after dissenters, even outside of the country. Dissenters are set up as terrorists or communists, as targets of political persecution, fake charges, illegal arrests, disappearances and assassination.

But a people who have withstood and triumphed against the US-Marcos fascist regime will not waver against this new tyrant. The Filipino people's movement will expand and intensify, it will continue to gather support from around the world, battling for the ouster of this murderous and crooked regime. **UP**



Lawyers for Lawyers' Catherine Morris (2nd from left) presents joint statement to the UNHRC. UNweb TV screenshot.

Legal experts' worldwide call: Protect Philippine lawyers!

In two joint statements presented to the 42nd Session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), international associations of lawyers and legal experts around the world called attention once again to the "extrajudicial killing of jurists as part of a pattern of widespread and systematic violations of human rights" in the Philippines.

"Today, 151 Bar Associations, lawyers' organizations, and lawyers around the world call on the Philippine government to adequately protect the safety and independence of lawyers and to end the culture of impunity in which these attacks

occur," [declared the Lawyers for Lawyers and the Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada](#) on 19 September at the UNHRC Assembly.

"Since the adoption of ([UNHRC Resolution 41/2](#)) on 11 July 2019, three more lawyers in the Philippines have been assassinated, and another survived a murderous attack," they reported.

The statement was co-signed by bar associations, lawyers' organizations and legal professionals from 49 countries in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America and South America. It expressed deep concern over the [increasing attacks against lawyers in the Philippines](#) and the oppressive working environment they face since the start of President Duterte's administration.

In a [separate joint presentation during the Assembly](#), the Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, Lawyers for Lawyers, International Association of Democratic Lawyers and the Asian Legal Resource Centre declared that the government under President Rodrigo Duterte "has engaged in a campaign of extrajudicial killings... The victims include 45 lawyers, prosecutors and jurists, and 134 human rights defenders."

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They revealed that human rights defenders are “publicly named, vilified as public enemies, and subjected to the probability of being assassinated” by President Duterte. The Manila government, they said, impedes investigations as a matter of policy.

“President Duterte stated he would not allow the Commission on Human Rights or Ombudsman to investigate alleged human rights violations committed by police or military... Few suspects have been identified by investigations or held accountable through prosecution and trial.”

The lawyers groups requested the UNHRC to insist that the GRP “immediately take measures to prevent and remedy extrajudicial killings, and conduct independent and impartial investigations.”

They also called for a stop to publicly vilifying or ‘red-tagging’ jurists, human rights defenders and others; and to fully cooperate in implementing Council Resolution 41/2 by facilitating country visits, providing unrestricted access to all areas and witnesses, and preventing interference, intimidation or reprisals against UN monitors and groups seeking to cooperate with the UN. **UP**



(L-R) Ms. Marissa Lazaro holding photo of her son Chris, Bp. Antonio Ablon and Iceland Foreign Minister Gudlaugur Thór Thórdarson. Photo: Minister Thórdarson's FB page.

Iceland foreign minister, church officials welcome Philippine human rights defenders

Iceland Foreign Minister Gudlaugur Thór Thórdarson warmly welcomed Filipino human rights defenders in Reykjavik on 20 September 2019. Karapatan Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights Secretary General Cristina Palabay and Karapatan Western Mindanao Chairperson Bishop Antonio Ablon led the delegation from the Philippines.

The delegation included Marissa Lazaro, whose 20-year-old son Chris was a victim of President Rodrigo Duterte's so-called war on drugs.

Minister Thórdarson declared, “It was effective to meet this good group of human rights activists from the Philippines. Particularly, I found it shocking to listen to Marissa Lazaro who lost her son in 2017 in what the government has called a war on drugs... I have long been concerned with human rights

and Iceland's participation in the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has been particularly rewarding. The meeting today convinced me even more that our work there is very important.”

The Philippine delegation thanked the Iceland Government for initiating the [UNHRC Resolution](#) to investigate the human rights situation under the Duterte administration. The Resolution was approved by the UNHRC on 11 July by a majority vote of 18 member-countries. Moreover, 23 countries, although not currently UNHRC members, declared their approval of the resolution in a UN meeting on 5 July. [\[Read: UNHRC to investigate rights violations in the Philippines\]](#)

President Duterte refused to accept the UN resolution. His foreign affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin, Jr, declared, “Any probe resulting from the resolution will not be allowed into the Philippines.”

On 27 August, Duterte issued an order suspending all negotiations on grants, loans, and aid from the countries which voted for the Resolution.

Aside from Ms. Palabay, Bishop Ablon and Ms. Lazaro, also joining the Philippine delegation were representatives of Rise Up for Life and Rights, Migrante Europe, International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines-Europe, Nagkakaisang Pilipino sa Pransya (United Filipinos in France), and the Europe Network for Justice and Peace (ENJP).

The delegation was also warmly received by Bishop of Iceland Agnes M. Sigurðardóttir of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and heads of the Icelandic Church Aid. Bp. Sigurðardóttir expressed deep sympathy and solidarity with relatives and victims of the extrajudicial killings in the Philippines. She gave a warm embrace to Ms. Lazaro. **UP**



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Protesters in Baguio City, in northern Philippines: Filipino People Fight! End injustice & dictatorship! Photo: nordis.net

Worldwide actions commemorate, condemn Martial Law

Several tens of thousands marched on the streets in the Philippines and around the world on 20 and 21 September to commemorate the 47th anniversary of the declaration of Martial Law by former dictator Ferdinand Marcos and to condemn the fascistic rule of President Rodrigo Duterte.

In a symbolic rally at the Rizal Park in the capital city of Manila on 20 September, “the torch of struggle against tyranny, carried by activists since the 1970s” was passed on

to the youth activists of today. Carol Araullo, Chairperson of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan, New Patriotic Alliance) announced, “We are passing on the torch of leadership in the current people’s struggle to the new generation. We are confident that with the leadership of today’s youth, a better future awaits us.”

Thousands of youth from various schools, universities and communities responded with loud applause and chanted slogans, comparing Duterte to the dictator Marcos.

Raoul Manuel, Secretary General of the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) thanked the thousands who fought the Marcos dictatorship. In the name of the youth, he accepted the challenge of fighting the Duterte government and the threat of another Martial Law.

The protest actions were launched amid the intensifying human rights violations in the country, including extra-judicial killings, disappearances, illegal arrests and detention. From the Cordilleras in the north, to Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, the Bicol region, and down to the Visayas islands and Mindanao, the cry was: “Fight! Filipino People Fight! End Injustice, End Dictatorship!”

Various groups representing the youth, women, Church leaders and the clergy, professionals, peace advocates, opposition politicians and other groups marched together to demand an end to what they called the Duterte government’s tyrannical rule.

In other parts of the world, Filipinos and solidarity groups held protest actions in Auckland, Melbourne, Seoul, Hongkong, Rome, Vienna, The Hague, Belgium and London. They marched and held meetings with victims and survivors of the horrors during the Marcos dictatorship and the current Duterte government.

Mobilizations were also held in the USA, in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington DC; and in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal, in Canada. In Toronto, local TV featured interviews with Prof. Jose Maria Sison, Chief Political Consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and Patricia Lisson, Chairperson of the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines - Canada. **UP**



(Clockwise from top left) Young women’s contingent in Manila; Activists from the Marcos Martial Law era; Indigenous youth demanding their right to education; Filipinos in Toronto demand: Never Again to Martial Law! Photos: bulatlat.com. Toronto photo: balitangamerica.tv screenshot.