

HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

UPR Info Pre-Sessions

ISSUE 1: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

PHILIPPINES

IMPLEMENTATION OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATION MADE BY

- Ten countries - Estonia, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Germany, Poland, Botswana, Lebanon, Norway, Ukraine, and Latvia - gave specific recommendations on freedom of expression, which remains a significant issue in the Philippines, considering the numerous challenges facing journalists and human rights defenders.

ISSUE 1: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

PHILIPPINES

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

- According to Reporters Without Borders' (RSF), the Philippines is one of the world's deadliest countries for journalists, with 22 killed during the past administration;
- Government critics face judicial harassment and imprisonment;
- Attacks on and blocking of websites;
- online and offline attacks, including use of misogynist threats, red-tagging;
- Those critical of government actions during the pandemic were criminalized.

RECOMMENDATIONS: ISSUE 1 (FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION)

PHILIPPINES

- In our view, there have been no significant measures to address the concerns in the recommendations in 2017, and worse, the landscape of the exercise of freedom of expression has become more dangerous for journalists, defenders and citizens in general.
- We recommend the following:
 1. **ENSURE PROTECTION** and a safe and enabling environment for those advocating for freedom of expression;
 2. **HOLD ACCOUNTABLE** all perpetrators of violations against journalists, human rights defenders and citizens exercising their freedom of expression;
 3. **DECRIMINALIZE** libel and repeal anti-terror legislations that infringe on freedom of expression.

ISSUE 2: FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION AND ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

PHILIPPINES

IMPLEMENTATION OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY

- Nine countries - Ireland, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway, Ukraine and France - provided specific recommendations on freedom of peaceful assembly and association and human rights defenders.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

- At least 222 human rights defenders were killed from July 2016 to June 2022;
- Online and offline red-tagging, defamation, and disinformation inciting violence on human rights defenders, their organizations and families, and their communities have become more pervasive;
- Most of the 802 political prisoners are defenders facing criminal charges inside overcrowded prison cells and have experienced inhumane treatment and prolonged incarceration, while many defenders face judicial harassment. This includes Karapatan human rights workers.

ISSUE 2: FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION AND ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

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- No meaningful prosecution nor penalties imposed against government officials involved in various forms of rights violations
- Judicial forms of redress have been inadequate in addressing threats to lives, security and liberties of defenders.
- Proposed legislation for the protection of defenders has been opposed by government officials, while an anti-terror legislation is seen as one that will have deep impact into the freedom of association.
- Numerous protest or civic actions especially during the pandemic have been violently dispersed or have resulted into violent arrests and detention of defenders.

RECOMMENDATIONS: ISSUE 2

PHILIPPINES

FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND
ASSOCIATION AND ON HUMAN RIGHTS
DEFENDERS

- In our view, the recommendations in 2017 in relation to these issues remain unheeded by the State under Review. We therefore state the following recommendations:
 1. **STOP** extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, arbitrary/illegal arrest and detention, red-tagging, and other attacks against human rights defenders and civil society actors;
 2. **ENSURE** prosecution and conviction of perpetrators of these violations;
 3. **ENACT** legislation and other necessary legal domestic remedies for the protection of human rights defenders and repeal/rescind anti-terror legislations or counterinsurgency programs which target defenders; and
 4. **RELEASE** all detained human rights defenders.

THANK YOU!

- KARAPATAN ALLIANCE PHILIPPINES (KARAPATAN)
- TANGGOL BAYI (DEFEND WOMEN) PHILIPPINES
- SAMAHAN NG EX-DETAINEES LABAN SA DETENSYON AT ARESTO (SELDA)
- DESAPARECIDOS
- HUSTISYA