

**NGO Oral Statement made by
the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

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This statement is made with the support of GABRIELA, an alliance of more than 200 women's organizations in the Philippines.

Barely five months since our government presented its report, yet parts of our country have become a virtual inferno, with incessant bombings by the military in Marawi and brutal killings by the police every day. Martial law in Mindanao was extended, and we fear a nationwide coverage.

Threats of rape and other forms of violence against women have become tools of war to silence or drive women into submission. GABRIELA became the subject of implicit threats by the military when we reported on rape threats by soldiers against women victims of the Marawi bombings. Our Partylist representative, Congresswoman Arlene Brosas, herself experienced threats of sexual assault by an army of online trolls.

Unchecked powers of the military combine with the misogyny of top government officials to create a very unfavourable climate for women's human rights. Women are among the victims of politically-motivated arrests, state-sanctioned killings and sexist remarks by top officials in government.

While the Philippines has legislated pro-women laws, these have virtually no meaning as the basic economic, political, social and cultural rights of women are largely either unmet or violated with impunity.

Young women toil as modern-day slaves under a system of labour contractualization. The new two-tier wage system strips the income of new entrants into the workforce, many of whom are women, down to its barest minimum. Any additional pay, called the second tier, is

now subject to worker “productivity”. Women workers are thus condemned to a life of poverty, and highly precarious job situations.

Only 2.7% of the 2017 national budget went to health, far from the WHO recommended 5% of GDP. This translates to only US 0.5 cents per day per capita and has serious implications for women’s health. Home-birthing, resorted to by poor women, was banned. Privatization of public services further threatens women’s access to adequate maternal and reproductive health care.

We call on the Philippine government to:

- Stop using rape as an instrument of war
- End Martial Law in Mindanao
- End contractualization
- Guarantee the rights of women to a fair wage
- Guarantee women’s access to adequate maternal and basic healthcare