



51st Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

Item 10: Technical assistance and capacity building

Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner's Report on the Philippines

5 October 2022

Joint Oral Statement

The International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, Karapatan Alliance Philippines, the Law Society of England and Wales, Lawyers for Lawyers, and Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada welcome the High Commissioner's report.ⁱ We are alarmed by the continued attacks against lawyers under the new Philippines administration, including the attempted assassination of Karen Quinanola-Gonzales on 1 September.ⁱⁱ

We condemn the lack of accountability for extrajudicial killings in the Philippines, including during the government's so-called "war on drugs",ⁱⁱⁱ and continued impunity for gross human rights violations. We regret the new administration's announcement that it will not rejoin the Rome Statute of the ICC.^{iv}

We echo the report's recommendations^v and urge the new administration to:

1. Immediately and unequivocally cease the practice of "red tagging" of legal professionals, human rights defenders, and political activists.
2. Uphold the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, ensuring that lawyers can carry out their professional duties safely and independently.
3. Undertake independent, prompt, thorough and effective investigations into alleged human rights violations, holding those responsible to account and ensuring justice and redress for victims.

We urge this Council to adopt a strong resolution on the situation in the Philippines, which calls on the new administration to prioritise accountability, creates expanded human rights monitoring mechanisms^{vi} and ensures continued reporting by the OHCHR.^{vii}

Pending this, we call on Council members to continue to monitor the situation and, without concrete progress in addressing the report's concerns, stand ready to take further action on the Philippines.

Thank you.

This statement was delivered by:

Francesca Restifo
Senior Human Rights Adviser and UN Representative
International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute
francesca.restifo@int-bar.org

ⁱ OHCHR. A/HRC/51/58: Implementation of Human Rights Council Resolution 45/33 and on the progress and results of technical cooperation and capacity building for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Philippines (13 September 2022) accessed at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc5158-implementation-human-rights-council-resolution-4533-and-progress>

ⁱⁱ New York City Bar. Statement Condemning Attempted Assassination of Philippine Lawyer Karen Quinanola-Gonzales (23 September 2022) accessed at: <https://www.nycbar.org/media-listing/media/detail/attempted-assassination-of-philippine-lawyer-karen-quinanola-gonzales>

ⁱⁱⁱ Human Rights Watch. Briefing Paper Addressed to Member-states of the UN Human Rights Council Ahead of the Council's 51st Session (8 September 2022) accessed at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/09/12/human-rights-watch-briefing-paper-addressed-member-states-un-human-rights-council>; Real Numbers PH. Towards a Drug-Cleared Philippines (21 June 2022) accessed at: https://www.facebook.com/realmnumbersph/photos/2215676505280542?_rdc=1&_rdr

^{iv} Philippine News Agency. PH has no intention of rejoining ICC: Marcos (1 August 2022) accessed at: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1180284>

^v OHCHR. The Philippines: UN human rights report looks to new administration for progress on accountability and reforms (13 September 2022) accessed at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/09/philippines-un-human-rights-report-looks-new-administration-progress>

^{vi} Human Rights Watch. Philippines: Strong UN Human Rights Council Action Needed (12 September 2022) accessed at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/09/12/philippines-strong-un-human-rights-council-action-needed>

^{vii} OHCHR. A/HRC/51/58, *supra* note 1.