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## Statement

### The philippinebureau Germany calls for an End to the Repression on the Island of Negros

**Cologne, Germany 01.11.2019** - In the evening hours of 31 October, joint forces of the Philippine army and police raided the offices of Gabriela Negros, the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW) and of the Partylist Bayan Muna. Search warrants were issued by the Regional Trial Court 89 in Quezon City. The women's organization Gabriela, Bayan Muna and the NFSW are accused to illegally possess various weapons and ammunition and to train and recruit members of the New People's Army (NPA) in the compounds of their offices.

The **philippinebureau** is shocked by the actions of the Philippine security forces against civilian non-governmental organizations. The raids and arrests are the latest example of the ruthless oppression on the island of Negros, which is particularly targeting civilians and civil organizations by falsely accusing activists and human rights defenders as members of the communist insurgency.

In its most recent human rights report, the Action Network Human Rights Philippines (AMP), of which the **philippinebureau** is a member, explicitly points to the disturbing human rights situation on the island of Negros. Following the failure of the peace negotiations between the Philippine government and the communist insurgency of the NPA and a subsequent increase of security forces, numerous activists have been killed and detained on fabricated charges. Witnesses had repeatedly reported that security personnel deliberately planted firearms and ammunition for which activists and human rights defenders were later imprisoned and charged.

For years, fabricated charges against activists and human rights defenders have been used to spread fear and to silence activists and human rights defenders. Under president Rodrigo Duterte's administration, the repression gravely intensified. Since he took office in 2016, 87 activists and human rights defenders have been killed and 79 activists have been imprisoned on Negros alone.

According to initial reports, the raids on the evening of October 31 produced again numerous firearms. 57 people were taken into custody, among them seven minors who had practiced for a cultural program when the security forces arrived. The Secretary General of the umbrella organization Bayan Negros, Mark de la Concepcion, condemned the raid and accused the Philippine security forces of using erroneous search warrants and deliberately planting weapons during the said raids.

The **philippinebureau** condemns this crack down and calls on President Duterte and the Philippine security forces to immediately end the repression against civilian organizations, activists and human rights defenders!



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