



HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES UNDER DUTERTE

ABOUT THE AKTIONSBÜNDNIS MENSCHENRECHTE – PHILIPPINEN

The Aktionsbündnis Menschenrechte – Philippinen (AMP – Action Network Human Rights – Philippines) is an initiative of seven major German church-based agencies and human rights organizations to promote advocacy and information work in Germany and the EU regarding the human rights situation in the Philippines. Member Organizations of the AMP are Amnesty International Germany, Bread for the World – International Peace Observers Network (IPON), MISEREOR, Missio Munich, philippinenbüro e.V. im Asienhaus, and the United Evangelical Mission (UEM). The main focus of the network lies on the core human rights issues of extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances, and fabricated charges against political activists.

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*Philippine National Police on September 21, 2018,
during the 46th Anniversary of Martial Law in Luneta, Manila*

FOREWORD

The Aktionsbündnis Menschenrechte – Philippinen (AMP – Action Network Human Rights – Philippines) was founded in 2007 by church groups and non-governmental organizations in Germany that had maintained longstanding partnerships with activists and networks in civil society in the Philippines. The AMP arose in response to reports by these Philippine partners of a significant rise since 2001 in the number of political killings and other serious human rights violations. Staff members and human rights activists from these partner networks numbered among the victims who were killed, criminalized by fabricated charges, or disappeared without trace.

On this basis, the AMP published human rights reports in 2014 and 2017. Their aim was twofold: to raise international awareness of human rights violations in the Philippines and to prompt the Philippine government to investigate past crimes, bring those responsible to justice, and protect human rights defenders.

It is increasingly clear, however, that the judicial system reforms instituted under President Benigno Aquino following international pressure failed to achieve a sustained improvement in the human rights situation – although one of the leading perpetrators, General Jovito Palparan, received a long prison sentence in 2017.

The AMP Human Rights Report published in 2017, shortly after Rodrigo Duterte took office as President, voiced additional fears about new types of human rights violations in connection with the “war on drugs” proclaimed by the government. Developments over the past few years seem to confirm this and justify other anxieties. In June 2019, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) passed a resolution expressing the Council’s concern about the serious allegations of human rights violations. Alongside thousands of killings in the war on drugs, these violations included enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, and intimidation and repression of civil society, human rights defenders, indigenous community members, journalists, and members of the political opposition as well as restrictions on free speech and freedom of opinion.¹

The present Human Rights Report – the third published by the AMP – offers a general overview with background information on the forms of human rights violations mentioned in the UNHRC resolution and concludes with recommendations for the Philippine government, the EU, and other international parties.

We are particularly grateful to the author of this report, Johannes Icking, for his important contribution to this publication as coordinator of the AMP through his own research, visits to network partners, and contacts with victims of human rights violations.

On behalf of the Aktionsbündnis Menschenrechte – Philippinen:

Jochen Motte
United Evangelical Mission

¹ UN Human Rights Council, “Promotion and protection of human rights in the Philippines”, June 6, 2019, *A/HRC/41/L.20*

SUMMARY



President Duterte interacts with supporters

Following the peaceful ousting of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1968, the Philippines was seen as a trailblazer of democratic development in Asia for many years. Now, however, the idea of universal human rights is under severe pressure there. In July 2016, Rodrigo Duterte took office as the President of the Philippines, vowing explicitly to kill many thousands of alleged drug criminals. Today, halfway through his six-year term of office, it is clear that this promise has become a terrible reality. What is more, even beyond the so-called war on drugs, Duterte has literally declared anybody who opposes him and his politics to be fair game. The present report shows that the rhetoric of violence propagated by the President has led to a human rights disaster even worse than the precarious situation under his predecessors.

The announcement of Duterte's election victory was immediately followed by increased reports of killings of alleged criminals during police operations. By now, it is clear that Duterte has fulfilled his electoral promise of utilizing extrajudicial killings to achieve the goal of eliminating drug-related crime in the country. The Philippine Human Rights Commission estimates that the death toll in the war on drugs could now have reached as many as 27,000 victims. It became also evident that the killings were systematically planned and carried out. The names of the victims, who are overwhelmingly from the poorest strata of the country's population, are assembled on surveillance lists compiled without any kind of constitutional procedure. In addition, evidence is deliberately fabricated to prevent criminal prosecution of the murderers, who come from the ranks of the police itself as well as police-controlled criminal gangs. These targeted campaigns of mass murder by the government could quite possibly be crimes against humanity under international criminal law.²

Defenders of human rights, oppositional politicians, and independent media are also seriously at risk under Duterte. At least 200 human rights defenders and 14 journalists were killed between July 2016 and August 2019. While it is true that the Philippines was one of the world's most dangerous countries for these particular groups even before Duterte, the number of murders has risen even more dramatically since he came to power. One reason for this is that the government systematically denounces oppositional forces as enemies of the state and frequently accuses them of supporting the communist insurgents of the New People's Army (NPA). People voicing criticism who are stigmatized in this manner are especially likely to fall victim to lethal violence or to be criminalized by fabricated accusations.

Moreover, most cases of serious violations of human rights in the Philippines remain unpunished. There has been only one single trial for a killing in the context of the war on drugs in which the police officers responsible were convicted of murder. This contrasts sharply with estimates of tens of thousands of extrajudicial killings of alleged criminals and over 200 murders of human rights defenders and journalists. The near-complete impunity for serious human rights violations, which was already a structural problem under previous governments, can no longer be blamed solely on a dysfunctional and poorly financed judicial system. The President himself promised the members of the security forces on several occasions that he would not allow charges against them.

This refusal to investigate and clarify systematic human rights violations is directed not only at the country's own judiciary but also against international human rights mechanisms. To this end, the Philippines not only resigned from the International Criminal Court (ICC) after the ICC announced it was opening a provisional investigation. The Philippine government also refused to cooperate with the UN Human Rights Council and actually issued direct threats against several representatives of the UN system.

Furthermore, members of Philippine indigenous communities, particularly the Lumads on the island of Mindanao in the southern Philippines, have been hit by serious human rights violations. Indigenous people are especially likely to be caught up in the front lines of the domestic conflict between the Philippine government and the communist insurgency of the NPA. The military and paramilitary organizations systematically suspect independent indigenous schools of serving as training camps for the NPA and consequently attack them. Mining projects and large-scale plantations in indigenous areas are also reasons for expulsions of the indigenous population.

All in all, these developments paint a grim picture for the Philippines. Within just three years, many thousands of people are estimated to have violently lost their lives. And not only that – Duterte's government systematically tries to silence anybody who criticizes it. In the process, important successes in democratization and the establishment of constitutionality that had been painstakingly achieved by the Philippines after the end of the Marcos dictatorship have been wiped out again at a rapid pace. All of this happened with the open, or at least tacit, support of the majority of the Philippine population.³ This makes it all the more important that the international community supports the democratic forces in civil society in the Philippines and demands clearly and unequivocally that the government adheres without delay to international human rights standards.



² According to Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Crimes against humanity include acts of murder "when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population."

³ According to polls conducted in early 2019, 79% of the adult population of the Philippines is satisfied with the performance of President Duterte. Social Weather Stations, "First Quarter 2019 Social Weather Survey", April 10, 2019, bit.ly/2jZ5UFD

The highly congested Quezon City Jail

WAR ON DRUGS

Duterte already made it clear during the presidential election campaign that ending drug-related crime would be the crucial political goal of his term in office and, moreover, that extrajudicial killings would be his chosen method to achieve this.⁴ Now, three years after he took office, the so-called war on drugs has claimed thousands of lives, mostly of people from the lowest ranks of society. As the government deliberately conceals the exact scale of the death toll, it is impossible to say how many people have already perished in this conflict. According to figures from the Philippine National Police (PNP), 6,600 suspects, an average of six per day, were killed in police operations between July 2016 and May 2019.⁵ This figure, however, does not include the thousands of cases in which the perpetrators remained unidentified, which explains why the Philippine Commission on Human Rights speaks of a possible figure of up to 27,000 deaths resulting from the war on drugs until the end of 2018.⁶ In other words, the killings have now reached a level that makes the Philippines one of the world's most dangerous countries for the civilian population.⁷

EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS

The killings take place in a systematic way reminiscent of ethnic cleansing. Surveillance lists, known as "drug watch lists", play a decisive role here. The names of suspected drug addicts and dealers are gathered in the barangays, the lowest level of government. The Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Councils (BADAC) are tasked with keeping these secret lists and handing them over to the police. There is no recognized constitutional procedure for these lists. Above all, it is practically impossible for the people targeted by the lists to have their name removed even if they can prove they have never been associated with drugs or have stopped using them. The police also misuse the lists to force people to work as informers and provide names of further suspects or simply use them as bargaining chips in personal quarrels. Moreover, local officials are under immense pressure to give suspects' names to the police or else to come under suspicion themselves, which increases the potential for abuse.⁸

In almost all cases of extrajudicial executions, the police claim that the victims violently resisted arrest during a fabricated deal, known as a "buy-bust operation". Yet not a single case so far has yielded convincing evidence that the police officers involved were really forced to use lethal violence for reasons of self-defense or justifiable homicide. Quite the opposite, eyewitnesses in nearly all documented cases have reported that the victims were actually executed and then later accused of carrying a weapon to justify the killings.

A significantly higher number of killings are those in which the murderers remain unidentified. In a series of cases, human rights organizations and media investigations have shown that the perpetrators were police officers in plain clothes.⁹ In other cases, the police seem to have worked with criminal gangs whom they hired for the killings.¹⁰

LACK OF ADEQUATE INVESTIGATION

The government and security forces are not only reluctant to investigate human rights violations in their own ranks but also cover up the extent of these violations. In the early months of the campaign, the police published almost daily statistics on the deaths of people in the context of the war on drugs, including not only deaths occurring during police operations but also those attributed to so-called vigilante groups. This changed in January 2017 when the campaign was temporarily halted. At that time, it emerged that police officers had kidnapped the Korean businessman Jee Ick-Joo, detained him in the police headquarters at Camp Crame, and then murdered him.¹¹ Since then, the police have only irregularly published statistics, and these are often retrospectively adjusted downwards without convincing reasons. This resulted in the government's progress report on the anti-drugs campaign at the end of 2017 stating that, on top of almost 4,000 fatalities from police operations, an additional 16,355 murder cases, so-called "homicides under investigation", were currently being investigated.¹² However, the police later denied that these killings actually occurred as part of the war on drugs.¹³



Although killings during the war on drugs occurred throughout the country, to begin with the slums of Metro Manila were the most heavily affected areas. A priest who cared for the surviving families of the murder victims in the diocese of Caloocan reported that at the height of the campaign there was an average of 30 killings a day in this area alone.¹⁴ After the police superintendent in charge of Caloocan, Chito Bersaluna, was appointed chief of police in Bulacan province to the north of Manila, the death toll rose there as well.¹⁵

Out of the thousands of cases of killings, only one single trial so far has resulted in a court conviction. In November 2018, three police officers received prison sentences for the murder of 17-year-old Kian delos Santos in Caloocan. The case had attracted considerable attention, both domestically and internationally, because surveillance camera pictures showed that the police officers had executed the young man. Today the government uses this case to argue that it is capable of conducting independent investigations of fatalities and of punishing illegitimate killings if necessary.¹⁶

There is much to indicate, however, that there were no adequate investigations in the remaining thousands of homicide cases. In cases of death during police operations, the police cite the presumption of regularity, obviating the need for any special investigation.¹⁷ This procedure contradicts both internal police protocols¹⁸ and international standards¹⁹, which prescribe mandatory investigations by prosecuting authorities in each case where lethal violence is used.

According to police statistics, between July 2016 and June 2019 a total of 2,400 police officers were dismissed from service, 4,161 were suspended, and 41 were taken into custody.²⁰ It remains unclear, however, how many of these cases relate to the war on drugs or to other circumstances. In any event, these internal police disciplinary processes in cases of extrajudicial executions are not an adequate substitute for criminal trials before regular courts.

THE DEATH PENALTY AND LOWERING OF AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY

As part of the anti-drugs campaign, the government announced it would reintroduce the death penalty and lower the age of criminal responsibility. Both plans initially failed to gain the required majority in the Senate. After the government camp won a significant majority in both parliamentary chambers in the interim elections of May 2019, the relevant draft laws were introduced once again.²¹ If they are

Funeral of brothers Jatty and Duane Bongga, who were killed by the police

4 Philippine Daily Inquirer, "Duterte confirms 'ties' with Davao Death Squad", May 25, 2015, bit.ly/2mojlGd

5 The Philippine Star, "Drug war death toll now 6,600 – PNP", June 19, 2019, bit.ly/2Lc51Vp

6 ABS-CBN News, "CHR chief: Drug war deaths could be as high as 27,000", December 5, 2018, bit.ly/2YpZpY

7 The Guardian, "'War on drugs' makes Philippines fourth most dangerous country – report", June 9, 2019, bit.ly/2ZvIHS

8 Amnesty International, "'They just kill' – Ongoing extrajudicial executions and other violations in the Philippines", London 2019, bit.ly/2Ylqkqr, pp. 27-28

9 Amnesty International, "'They just kill'", pp. 17-18

10 Rappler, "'Some people need killing' – How a Manila gang finds the license to kill", June 3, 2019, bit.ly/2NoGFbZ

11 Philippine Daily Inquirer, "Korean businessman killed inside PNP headquarters", January 19, 2017, bit.ly/2J9J05p

12 ABS-CBN News, "OPINION: PCOO's 2017 drug war figures", June 22, 2019, bit.ly/33YtTHk

13 Reuters, "War on numbers: Philippines targets drug killing data", June 18, 2019, reut.rs/2XRePM7

14 Interview with the AMP, May 18, 2019

15 Rappler, "Central Luzon: New killing fields in Duterte's drug war", February 24, 2019, bit.ly/3owMhoM

16 ABS-CBN News, "3 cops found guilty of murder over Kian Delos Santos slay", November 29, 2019, bit.ly/2DQohnG

17 Rappler, "Serenio casts doubt on PNP's 'presumption of regularity' defense", November 21, 2017, bit.ly/2WdiNcc

18 Philippine National Police, "Revised Philippine National Police Operational Procedures", December 2013, bit.ly/2MsHBg7, Rule 15

19 Human Rights Committee, "General comment No. 36 (2018) on article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on the right to life", October 30, 2018, [CCPR/C/GC/36](https://ccpr/c/cg/36), paras 13 & 27

20 Philippine News Agency, "No need for int'l rights groups to probe drug campaign: PNP", July 9, 2019, bit.ly/31VBgoh

21 The Philippine Star, "Pacquiao, Go file bills to revive death penalty", July 3, 2019, bit.ly/2ZfxHOR

passed, the Philippines would be the first country to reintroduce the death penalty after pledging to abolish it by ratifying the second optional protocol to the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Lowering the age of criminal responsibility from 15 to 12 would expose children and young people to the disastrous conditions prevailing in Philippine prisons, which are among the worst in Asia.²²

CASE: JOHN JEZREEL DAVID



John Jezreel "JJ" David, a cleaner at a hotel in Pasay City, Metro Manila, disappeared with a colleague on the way home from work on January 19, 2017. After his father had searched for him for two days, barangay officials hinted to him that two men, one of them matching John's description, were being held at Manila police district's Station 11. John could not be found either at Station 11 or in any other district, and finally his family received information that he had

been delivered to a funeral parlor. There they found not only John's corpse but the corpses of two other men, George Yap and Kim Alyson Ocenar. The police report stated that the three men had been shot dead by police on January 21 at around 11 pm in Binondo, Manila, after resisting arrest. They were found with three firearms, five pouches containing the drug methamphetamine and 500 pesos in cash. The police claimed they had not been able to identify the three men until January 23. But this contradicts neighbors' statements that police officers had come looking for John and his colleagues, along with the fact that a "pre-operation report" dated January 20 had identified John, Kim, and Jorge as targeted persons. According to the autopsy report, John not only received several gunshot wounds but was probably also tortured before he was killed.

John's family insists that he was not a drug user and was not mentioned on the local suspects list. His case is one of the few in which the family or friends of the deceased dared to bring charges against the police officers responsible. In September 2017, they lodged a complaint at the Ombudsman's Office, but to date there has been no decision.²³

²³ Rappler, "Murder complaints filed vs Manila cops over EJKs", September 28, 2017, bit.ly/2lqLTIY

²² UNICEF, "Lowering the age of criminal responsibility is against child rights: UNICEF", January 18, 2019, uni.cf/2Nmffnm

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS



The Philippines has been one of the world's most dangerous countries for human rights defenders for decades now. Anyone campaigning for their rights and the rights of others who comes into conflict with the dominant power structures runs the risk of becoming a target of threats, defamation, criminalization, and violence. The farmers from the agrarian reform movement, members of leftist party lists, progressive local politicians, environmental activists, and indigenous people advocating the preservation of their ancestral territories are likely targets of repression, as are investigative journalists who expose illegal activities by politicians and public officials.

Under Duterte's government, however, systematic threats and attacks against these people have taken

on a new quality. Indeed, at least 200 human rights defenders and fourteen journalists were killed between July 2016 and August 2019.²⁴ There has also been a marked rise in cases of criminalization of human rights defenders since he took office. This is the outcome of a new kind of rhetoric employed by the government that casts general suspicion on anybody who stands up for human rights, accusing them of hostility to the state, obstructing the country's economic progress, and prioritizing the rights of criminals above those of the general population. This creates a social climate in which campaigning for human rights is increasingly stigmatized.

The Canlaon City Jail houses several political prisoners

²⁴ See Annex: List of Killed Human Rights Defenders and Journalists

THREATS AND FABRICATED CHARGES

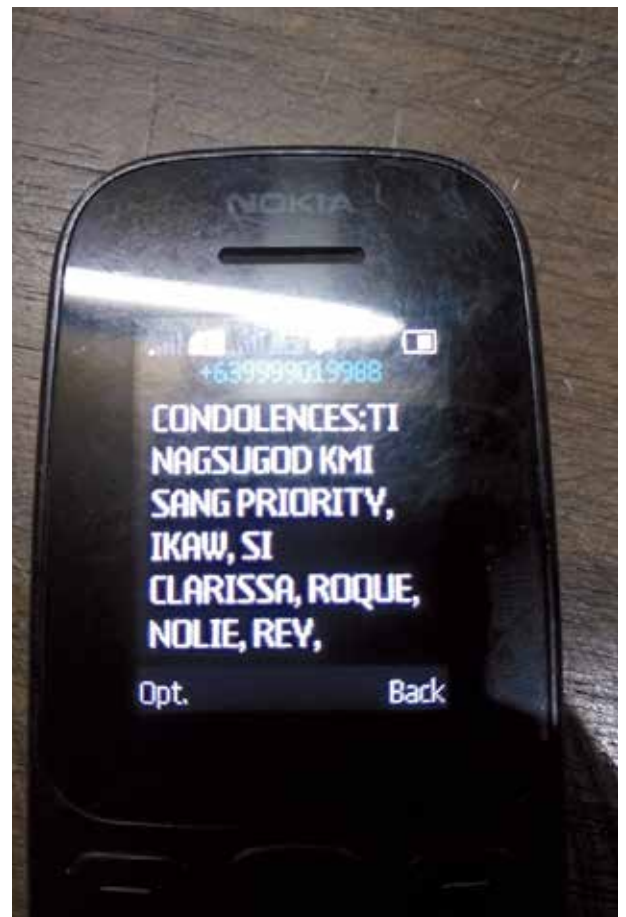
Threats and false accusations against human rights defenders have a long tradition in the Philippines. Those targeted are usually falsely accused of supporting the communist insurgency of the New People's Army (NPA) or even of being NPA members themselves. This type of denunciation of groups and individuals active in civil society, known in the Philippines as "red-tagging," already spiked under the government of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo with her declaration of "total war" on the insurgents in 2006. At that time, the military systematically compiled lists called the "order of battle" containing the names of staffers and members of non-governmental organizations (NGO) accused of being NPA front organizations.²⁵ The result was that hundreds of human rights activists thus classified as enemies of the state were murdered, became victims of enforced disappearance, or were besieged with fabricated charges.

In addition, the victims are often put under surveillance and received anonymous threats, in phone text messages or social media, for example, sometimes targeting their family members as well. Public denunciations aim at increasing the pressure on the human rights defenders and encourage society in general to accept repressions against the victims.

Under Duterte, a new aspect is that these false accusations emanate not only from within the military but also from the topmost government levels and not least from the President himself. On several occasions, Duterte publicly issued death threats against workers from human rights organizations, alleging that they were obstructing the judiciary with their persistent criticism of the massive human rights violations during the war on drugs and were even involved in drug dealing themselves.²⁶ He called directly on the police to form death squads for the deliberate killing of leftist political activists.²⁷

Death threats against human rights defenders via text message

The breakdown of peace talks between the government and the communist leadership in November 2017 led to an immediate rise in accusations that NGOs were front organizations of the NPA. On February 21, 2018, the ministry of justice formally requested the Regional Trial Court in Quezon City to declare the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the NPA to be terrorist organizations under the Human Security Act, the anti-terrorist legislation in force since 2007. The petition contained the names of 649 individuals accused of being members of either or both of these organizations. Aside from some publicly known NPA leaders and a large number of pseudonyms, the list included the names of several dozen leftist politicians and human rights defenders. The inclusion of the name of the incumbent UN Special Rapporteur for the rights of indigenous peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, a Philippine citizen, evoked international criticism.²⁸ Although court cases brought by the human rights defenders mentioned on the list succeeded in removing their names, leading members of the military continued asserting publicly that the people concerned were terrorists.²⁹



Aside from NGOs, some members of churches also face massive hostility from Duterte and his government. The Catholic Church, and particularly individual bishops who have strongly criticized the war on drugs and the plans to reintroduce the death penalty, have been exposed to constant personal attacks from Duterte, culminating in his call to kill "useless bishops".³⁰ Bishop Pablo Virgilio David, who criticized the multiple murders of alleged drug addicts in his diocese of Caloocan, received death threats, as did three priests, Albert Alejo, Flavie Villanueva, and Robert Reyes, who gave support to the surviving family members of murder victims.³¹ In July 2019, the police brought sedition charges against Bishop David and the three priests as well as three other bishops and 35 oppositional politicians.³² In particular, members of the independent Catholic church Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) and the Protestant United Church of Christ (UCCP), both of which campaign for the rights of indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups, are accused of supporting the NPA.³³

Another new development is the government's efforts to cut off international funding for critical NGOs. In February 2019, a government delegation toured a number of European countries and spoke to donors such as the EU and the Belgian government accusing several human rights organizations of passing on subsidy funds to the NPA. The inculcated organizations include Karapatan, a leading human rights organization, the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines (RMP), an interdenominational initiative of committed church members who advocate for the impoverished rural population, the independent think tank the IBON Foundation, and ALCADDEV, which runs independent indigenous schools in Mindanao.³⁴

In November 2018, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the authority in charge of registering NGOs, issued a memorandum obliging NGOs to supply detailed information on the amount and origin of the funds and the beneficiaries of their work.³⁵ Based on this, a non-public points system will be used to scrutinize organizations to determine whether they pose a risk of money laundering or financing terrorism. NGOs categorized in this way will undergo increased checks and surveillance. Human

rights organizations fear that the government already has an internal list of NGOs that are to be deregistered. In May 2019, the official Philippine News Agency (PNA) issued a press statement alleging that the country's two leading human rights organizations, Karapatan and the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA), were operating without valid SEC registration. Both organizations rejected the allegation.³⁶

Unlike other countries, the Philippines has never had a specific law on NGOs to regulate and consequently obstruct their work. Philippine NGOs see the attempts to restrict their financing as dangerous signs that the government is now using administrative procedures against them.

25 Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Philip Alston, Mission to Philippines, April 16, 2008, *A/HRC/8/3/Add.2*, para 17

26 Human Rights Watch, "Philippines: Duterte Threatens Human Rights Community", August 17, 2017, *bit.ly/2fMMj9h*

27 Reuter, "Philippine leader slammed over threat to create 'Duterte death squad'", November 28, 2019, *reut.rs/2Nor78o*

28 OHCHR, "Accusations against UN expert a retaliation by Philippines, say fellow rapporteurs", March 8, 2018, *bit.ly/31PJ7MK*

29 The Philippine Star, "UN experts denounce 'renewed' attack vs Filipina special rapporteur", May 2, 2019, *bit.ly/2V7xy4F*

30 Al Jazeera, "Philippines' Duterte: 'Kill those useless bishops'", December 5, 2018, *bit.ly/2zN8tzj*

31 Rappler, "Bishop critical of Duterte drug war gets death threats", February 26, 2019, *bit.ly/2MtGxbH*; The Philippine Star, "More priests reveal receiving death threats", March 11, 2019, *bit.ly/2HjCvhW*

32 The Philippine Star, "PNP files sedition raps vs Leni, opposition, bishops", June 19, 2019, *bit.ly/2L512lw*

33 Philippine Daily Inquirer, "Groups denounce 'red-tagging,' harassment of churches", October 9, 2018, *bit.ly/2MxEjYJ*

34 Rappler, "PH asks EU, Belgium to stop funding alleged CPP-NPA 'fronts'", March 13, 2019, *bit.ly/2Z6N56N*

35 Securities and Exchange Commission, "Guidelines for the Protection of SEC Registered Non-profit Organizations From Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Abuse ("NPO Guidelines")", SEC Memorandum Circular 15, November 2018, *bit.ly/2TG3EmK*

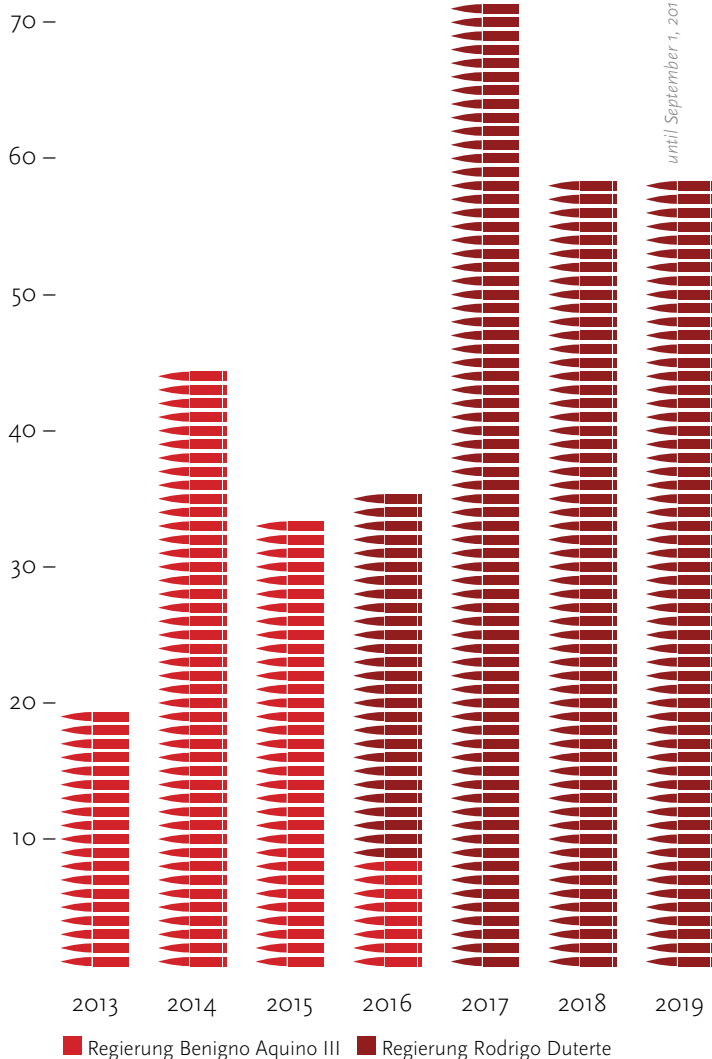
36 Philippine News Agency, "Karapatan, 4 other NGOs have revoked SEC registration", May 8, 2019, *bit.ly/2P528JF*

KILLINGS OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

As early as 2008, in his report to the Human Rights Council, the then UN Special Rapporteur for extralegal executions, Philip Alston, complained of a wave of killings of human rights defenders, labor unionists, and land rights activists.³⁷ Whereas extralegal executions of human rights defenders rose to a peak during Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo’s presidency (2001 – 2010), the numbers diminished considerably under

The statistics are based on the list of killed human rights defenders and journalists from the AMP reports 2017 and 2019 (see Annex).

KILLED HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN THE PHILIPPINES 2013 – 2019



Aquino’s government (2010 – 2016). Yet even under Aquino the Philippines repeatedly achieved the sorry distinction of top position in the rankings for murdered environmental and land rights activists.³⁸

At least 200 human rights defenders were killed in the three years since Duterte took office. This is a significant increase over the last three years of Aquino’s presidency, when 125 cases were documented.³⁹

By far the largest group of murdered human rights defenders is those involved in conflicts over land. Under Duterte’s government, a total of 117 land rights activists have been killed. A heritage of the Spanish colonial era is that land, particularly agricultural land, is extremely unequally distributed. Although the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) began the redistribution of agricultural areas back in 1988, most of the land is still owned by big landowners. Farmers who assert their claim to the land due to them under CARP often have to face threats, repression, and violence.

Indigenous land rights activists who want to protect their ancestral homeland from land theft by mining companies or agricultural corporations also frequently fall victim to killings. In fact, 30 of the murdered activists mentioned above were members of indigenous peoples (see the chapter Indigenous Rights).

Particularly large numbers of killings of human rights defenders occur in regions where military anti-insurgency campaigns are centered. This is especially true for Mindanao, which has by far the largest incidence of such murders. After the occupation of the city of Marawi by Islamist forces in May 2017, Duterte imposed martial law on the whole island.⁴⁰ The most important effect was to suspend the rights of habeas corpus. All in all, during Duterte’s presidency so far 90 human rights defenders have been killed in Mindanao alone. There is evidence, for example, of a deliberate killing campaign by the military in the province of Compostella Valley in the southeast of the island. Under Duterte at least 25 activists have lost their lives there. Most of the victims belonged to local farmers’ organizations and had earlier been accused of membership of the NPA.



The majority of such killings were only superficially investigated by the authorities, and the perpetrators were hardly ever indicted. The masterminds behind these murders usually remained unknown. In many cases, however, eyewitness accounts and statements from survivors allow for speculation about the probable perpetrators. The military was inculpated in over one-third of the cases (79). There has recently been an increase in extralegal executions of human rights defenders by the police, especially on Negros Island (see Focus: Negros). Of the remaining cases, 17 killings are known to be associated with private security firms and watchmen.

CRIMINALIZATION

Human rights defenders in the Philippines are at risk not only from physical violence but also from criminalization. Fabricated charges are an especially perfidious form of criminalization in which faked evidence is used to accuse the victims of a crime they have not committed. This kind of charge is brought especially often by members of the military. Their goal is to defame human rights defenders and hold them in custody for the duration of the trial. Construed charges are often preceded by a campaign of abuse and intimidation against victims during which they are publicly accused of membership of the NPA.

Statistics from the human rights organization Karapatan show that the criminalization of human rights defenders under Duterte's government has drastically increased. In his first three years in office, a total of 2,370 human rights activists were indicted, of which 1,831 remain in custody. This is a significant rise compared with the 1,817 activists who were affected by criminalization under the preceding Aquino regime.⁴¹

The victims are usually accused of having participated in armed conflicts as NPA members. They are then indicted for murder, arson, or illegal possession of explosives, crimes for which Philippine law allows bail to be granted only in exceptional cases. The result is that many defendants remain in pretrial custody until they are acquitted. In other words, the masterminds do not have to obtain a legal judgment to send the victim to prison. This is because, in many cases, trials drag on for several years due to overtaxed courts and the dysfunctional judicial system. Moreover, trials are deliberately sabotaged with tactics such as supposedly incriminatory witnesses failing to appear in court.

Fabricated indictments are usually based solely on witness statements by alleged former rebels who claim to identify the accused as an NPA member. Sometimes, however, these witnesses become so entangled in contradictions in court that they are forced to admit that the military instructed them to make false statements. Philippine human rights organizations assume that the military pays these witnesses for their false testimony.

Poster branding about 60 personalities as NPA members, among them known human rights defenders.

37 Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Philip Alston, Mission to Philippines, April 16, 2008, A/HRC/8/3/Add.2

38 Global Witness, "On Dangerous Grounds – 2015's Deadly Environment: The Killing and Criminalization of Land and Environmental Defenders Worldwide", June 20, 2016, bit.ly/2ldHLas

39 Aktionsbündnis Menschenrechte – Philippinen, "Human Rights Report Philippines", Cologne 2017, bit.ly/2ky73EB, pp. 34-39

40 Official Gazette, "Proclamation No. 216, s. 2017 Declaring a state of martial law and suspending the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus in the whole of Mindanao", May 23, 2017, bit.ly/2ZuCQJ7

41 Rappler, "Duterte's war on dissent", June 29, 2019, bit.ly/2Hh6Mhg

FOCUS: NEGROS

Negros Island has been the focus of the Philippine security forces' anti-insurgency campaign against the New People's Army for decades. At the same time Negros, which is economically and politically dominated by the owners of huge sugar cane plantations, is one of the main locations of conflicts about land. In this situation, destitute agricultural workers and farmers who organize politically to assert their land rights become targets of the security forces.

At the same time, a large number of human rights activists have been murdered or criminalized. In 2010, for example, the anti-mining activist and member of the Philippine Independent Church Benjamin Bayles was killed.⁴² Later, a well-known human rights activist on the island, Zara Alvarez, was held in custody for nearly two years until July 2014 on account of two fabricated charges the military had instigated against her.⁴³ The human rights situation on Negros has palpably worsened since the breakdown of peace talks with the leaders of the communist insurgency at the end of 2017.

On November 28, 2017, Elisa Badayos, coordinator of the human rights organization Karapatan, and Eleuterio Moises, member of a local farmers' organization, were shot in Bayawan City by unidentified armed motorbike riders. The murdered activists were part of a mission investigating human rights violations in the context of a local land rights conflict.⁴⁴

On October 20, 2018, nine plantation workers on a sugar plantation outside the city of Sagay were murdered. They were all members of the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW). After the end of the sugar harvest the workers had occupied part of the now-unutilized Hacienda Nene to grow food there.⁴⁴ Members of human rights organizations suspect a paramilitary group working with the military, the so-called Special Civilian Active Auxiliary (SCAA), of orchestrating the murders. The police and military, however, accuse the NPA and have brought murder charges against two NFSW members.⁴⁶

On November 6, 2018, the renowned human rights lawyer Benjamin Ramos was killed in Kabankalan City. Shortly before, Ramos had taken on the case of the plantation workers murdered in Sagay. He had

already survived an assassination attempt in 2006 after false rumors were spread that he supported the NPA.⁴⁷ In April 2018, a picture of Ramos, alongside photos of Zara Alvarez, Bernardino Patigas, a member of Escalante City council who was murdered in April 2019, and 60 other human rights activists were displayed on a poster showing alleged NPA members. The poster was disseminated in the small town of Moises Padilla.⁴⁸

On November 22, 2018, President Duterte issued Memorandum Order 32 instructing the defense and interior ministry to send further reinforcements to Negros immediately to escalate the campaign against terrorist forces.⁴⁹ The authorities were also told to step up their secret service operations against individuals and organizations suspected of terrorism. An additional decree on December 7, Executive Order 70, mobilized all the national authorities to combat insurgency.⁵⁰

This was followed on December 27, 2018, by the first large-scale coordinated police operation, codenamed Oplan Sauron, in which 1,600 police officers were transferred to Negros from the neighboring island, Cebu. Prior to this, a judge at the Regional Trial Court in Cebu had issued 119 search warrants accusing the defendants of illegal possession of weapons and explosives. While the majority of those accused were members of local farmers' organizations, they also included barangay chair persons, former mayors and members of church congregations. Six people were killed in the operation and were later accused of having violently resisted arrest.

However, eyewitnesses report that the victims were executed. In addition, 31 people were arrested. The police claimed to have found them in possession of firearms and grenades. Once again, eyewitnesses contradict this, saying that the police placed the objects in the houses that were searched.⁵¹

In the night of March 29/30, 2019, one day after the 50th anniversary of the founding of the NPA, the police and military staged another large-scale coordinated operation in the communities of Santa Catalina, Canlaon, and Manjuyod in the province of Negros Oriental. Special police units, again transferred from Cebu to Negros, implemented

over 100 search warrants for suspected possession of weapons and explosives. During that night 14 people were killed and twelve arrested.⁵² In the same night, at around four o'clock in the morning, several masked police officers stormed Steve Arapoc's house in Pansiao, Manjuyod. He was thrown to the ground, his face was covered with a sack, and he was dragged out in front of the house. The other family members were ordered to wait in the kitchen, where they were tied up. A short time later they heard four gunshots. Arapoc's corpse was taken to the local hospital. At first the family members present were not told whether he was still alive or where to find him. After the police had left, the family realized that 26,000 pesos and three mobile phones were missing. Arapoc was a member of the local farmers' organization Kaugmaon. The family only discovered from media reports that he was accused of having been an NPA member and of having been found with an assault rifle.

There are indications that Arapoc, as well as others killed that night, was deliberately targeted. In each case, the victim was called out by name and he or she was separated from the other people present. Family members report that the killing was preceded by surveillance activities involving unfamiliar people who inquired about the subsequent victim and checked out the local situation. As with the killings in the war on drugs, the lethal violence by the police was justified after the event by alleging that the victim had violently resisted arrest. All the eyewitness accounts by family members contradict this.

Cases of arrested human rights defenders also follow a clearly definable pattern. In the night of March 29/30, Azucena Garubat and her husband were woken at around three o'clock in the morning by officers of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG). They were shown a search warrant accusing Garubat of illegally possessing a firearm. The couple was ordered to leave its house. It took until 6 a.m. before the official search was carried out in the presence of the village chair, who had arrived in the meantime. A rocket-propelled grenade was found and Garubat was arrested and charged with illegal possession of explosives. Garubat had been active since 1998 as the local contact for the human rights organization Karapatan and ran the election campaign for the leftist women's party, Gabriela, in the last elections. In the

same night her two brothers, Edgardo Avelino, chair of the local chapter of the farmers' organization KMP, and Esmael Avelino, a member of the drivers' union Piston, were murdered.

Rocket-propelled grenades were found in all these cases, usually together with firearms, although the suspects denied possessing them. The significant point here is that suspects charged with illegal possession of explosives cannot be granted bail, which means they can be held in prison for years without being sentenced (see the chapter Criminalization). In all these cases, several hours elapsed between the arrival of the police and the house searches in the presence of officials, time in which the police were alone on the premises and had the opportunity to plant evidence. In April 2019, the national police chief, Oscar Albayalde, announced further operations against the NPA.⁵³

42 FIDH, "Assassination of Mr. Benjamin E. Bayles", June 30, 2010, bit.ly/2Z7731f

43 Aktionsbündnis Menschenrechte – Philippinen, "Zara Reboton Alvarez", bit.ly/2mj6Cz

44 Philippine Daily Inquirer, "2 human rights activists killed in Negros Oriental", November 30, 2017, bit.ly/2MxjBYW

45 Rappler, "9 farmers killed at Negros Occidental hacienda", October 21, 2018, bit.ly/2P5HoCV

46 The Philippine Star, "NFSW decries charges vs members over 'Sagay 9' killings", October 29, 2018, bit.ly/2OYKp6j

47 ABS-CBN News, "Lawyer of slain Negros farmers shot dead", November 7, 2018, bit.ly/2OqTmjC

48 Sun Star, "Police, Army deny circulation of 'CNN personalities' poster", April 18, 2018, bit.ly/2L8knsC

49 Official Gazette, "Memorandum Order No. 32. Reinforcing the Guidelines for the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police in the Implementation of Measures to Suppress and Prevent Lawless Violence", November 22, 2018, bit.ly/3or8mVx

50 Official Gazette, "Executive Order No. 70. Institutionalizing the Whole-of-Nation Approach in Attaining Inclusive and Sustainable Peace, Creating a National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict, and Directing the Adoption of a National Peace Framework", December 7, 2018, bit.ly/2KVtg8s

51 Rappler, "Death comes unprovoked upon Negros Island", June 30, 2019, bit.ly/2LNgtTj

52 Between May 8-10, 2019, AMP staff interviewed relatives of four murder victims of that night as well as four activists currently imprisoned

53 Philippine Daily Inquirer, "PNP to launch more attacks against NPA", April 4, 2019, bit.ly/2P7uL97

POLITICAL OPPOSITION



President Duterte holds a speech at the House of Representatives

Aside from human rights defenders and civic organizations, Duterte's government also systematically attacks oppositional politicians. In particular, the imprisonment of Senator Leila de Lima, one of Duterte's most vociferous domestic political critics, drew widespread attention internationally. While de Lima is presently the only imprisoned member of congress (see Case: Leila de Lima), the government and its supporters have tried to silence a considerable number of other politicians from both parliamentary chambers by besieging them with legal charges.

Following Lima's arrest, Senator Antonia Trillanes, a former naval officer, became Duterte's most prominent critic. Attacking Duterte for the extrajudicial killings in the war on drugs, he also accused the President and his family of corruption and involvement in drug trafficking. In September 2018, Duterte's government responded by revoking the amnesty Trillanes had been granted under the previous government for his participation in two military coup attempts in 2003 and 2007. Trillanes was briefly detained under suspicion of rebellion but released soon afterward because the court rejected the revoking of the amnesty. The government opposed this judgment at the Court of Appeals. Altogether six further indictments have been filed against Trillanes since 2017, of which four, for

libel, were brought by Duterte family members.⁵⁴ Risa Hontiveros is another senator who has been indicted for political reasons. The charges against her include kidnapping and obstructing justice because she briefly protected three witnesses in the case of the killing of the teenager Kian delos Santos. The witnesses feared for their lives because of their testimonies.⁵⁵

The representatives of the leftist Makabayan bloc are the main group of members of the House of Representatives affected by legal prosecutions. They include Antonio Tinio and Ariel Casilao, who were prosecuted for maltreating children after they joined in a demonstration with young indigenous people against the imposition of martial law on Mindanao Island.⁵⁶

These prosecutions act as gags on the political opposition. A series of Philippine deputies informed the network ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights that they had received information that their government is deliberately looking for material to put pressure on them.⁵⁷

Aside from Congress members, the government also operates against local politicians. Lists of alleged "narco-politicians" have been published on several occasions with unsubstantiated accusations of their involvement in the drug business.⁵⁸ Several of the accused politicians were subsequently murdered, including the mayor of Tanauan, Batangas, Antonio Halili, who was shot dead by a sharpshooter during a flag ceremony on July 2, 2018.⁵⁹

54 ABS-CBN News, "Davao court orders Trillanes arrest for libel", December 7, 2018, bit.ly/2G1WZxC

55 Philippine Daily Inquirer, "Hontiveros charged with kidnapping, wiretapping", September 25, 2017, bit.ly/2jVsf7o

56 Rappler, "Davao City police files child abuse complaint vs Makabayan congressmen", December 5, 2018, bit.ly/2lVlmTX

57 ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights, "In the Crosshairs of the Presidency. Attacks on Opposition Lawmakers in the Philippines", June 2019, bit.ly/2ZQoPlv, p.12

58 Rappler, "Duterte releases drug list ahead of 2019 elections", March 14, 2019, bit.ly/2ViykqQ

59 Al Jazeera, "Philippine Mayor Antonio Halili assassinated during ceremony", June 2, 2018, bit.ly/2MCAE8b

CASE: LEILA DE LIMA



Prior to her election as senator for the Liberal Party in 2016, Leila de Lima was chair of the Philippine Commission on Human Rights (CHR) since 2008. It was in this capacity that she first came into conflict with the then mayor of Davao City, Rodrigo Duterte, when she organized an initial investigation into the extrajudicial executions of alleged drug users by the group known as the Davao Death Squad. On de Lima's watch as minister of justice under President Aquino from 2010, the widespread drug dealing in the prison New Bilibid was exposed.

Duterte already began threatening de Lima during his presidential campaign. "I'll prosecute you. Don't mess with me, you'll lose," he warned. In August 2016 de Lima, as chair of the Senate Committee for Justice and Human Rights, initiated an investigation of the war on drugs. The government responded with a smear campaign including the attempt to screen a sex video in the House of Representatives purportedly of de Lima with her bodyguard. Before long, it was exposed as a fabrication. This was followed by the first accusations by de Lima's successor at the ministry of justice, Vicente Aguirre, that de Lima herself had been involved in drug trafficking in New Bilibid during her term as justice minister. Aguirre

made these allegations during a Senate hearing. In the same hearing the address of de Lima's private residence and her telephone number were broadcast live on television, triggering a flood of threats.

In February 2017, the ministry of justice filed drug trafficking charges against de Lima, initially in three different cases. She was arrested and has been held in custody since then. The charges against her are extremely nebulous and are based largely on eyewitness statements by prisoners who, according to some reports, will be rewarded with charges against them being dropped. Considerable delays have arisen in all the trials against de Lima. All in all, six judges have withdrawn from the trials at their own request due to conflict of interest.

In November 2018, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention declared de Lima's imprisonment to be arbitrary and a violation of international human rights standards and demanded her immediate release.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, "Opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at its eighty-second session, 20–24 August 2018", November 30, 2018, *A/HRC/WGAD/2018/61*

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

The Philippines has a dynamic media and press scene that has been able to operate largely without direct government censorship since the end of the Marcos dictatorship. Similarly to the attacks on human rights defenders, however, under President Duterte repression against the free press has taken on a new dimension. High-level government members and the President himself are now attacking the free media. Immediately after his election, in fact, Duterte threatened, "Just because you're a journalist you are not exempted from assassination."⁶¹

Although freedom of reporting is not restricted by censorship, journalists in the Philippines have to fear massive repression if they express criticism. As a result, for years the Philippines has been one of the world's leading countries for killings of journalists. This trend has not diminished under the Duterte government, during which 14 members of the media have been killed so far.⁶²

A particular target of the government is the independent media portal Rappler and its chief editor, Maria Ressa (see Case: Rappler and Maria Ressa). In fact, the critical media as a whole is increasingly under pressure. Professional journalists' organizations in the Philippines report that the incidence of threats and attempted intimidation against journalists has risen significantly under Duterte. In April 2019, for example, Salvador Panelo, the President's official spokesperson, distributed a chart showing people and organizations that were allegedly conspiring to remove Duterte from office. This included the names of well-known journalists such as Ellen Tordesillas from the media collective Vera Files, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), and the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ). Aside from the fact that the implicated media had reported critically on the government, no evidence for the purported plot was presented.⁶³

Journalists often have to face libel actions for criticizing government officials, business enterprises, and other persons from public life. In the Philippines, libel is a crime punishable by up to four years in prison. Especially problematic is that a priori under the definition in the Philippine code of law, "any

defamatory accusation, even if true, must be treated as insulting".⁶⁴ This not only reverses the burden of proof, forcing the defendant to demonstrate that the statement was not insulting, but also means that true assertions of fact can actually constitute a libel. In other words, journalists can be punished for reporting on legal violations that have really occurred. In one particular case, the UN Human Rights Committee has already determined that the criminalization of libel in the Philippines is incompatible with the right to freedom of opinion under Article 9 (1) ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).⁶⁵

Despite this decision, in 2012 the Philippine Congress passed the Cybercrime Prevention Act which allows for prison sentences of up to 12 years for posting libelous statements online. The fact that most media publish their articles online makes journalists particularly liable to prosecution under this law.⁶⁶

In March 2019, for instance, two radio moderators, Eric Rodina's and Larry Sublegal, were sentenced to eight years' imprisonment and a fine of one million pesos for libeling the governor of North Cohabit, Emmylou Talion-Mendoza. The two men had accused Mendoza of corruption in Facebook posts.⁶⁷

61 Reuters, "Philippines' Duterte denounced for defending killing of some journalists", June 1, 2016, reut.rs/2lSrlc1

62 See Annex: List of Killed Human Rights Defenders and Journalists

63 Philippine Daily Inquirer, "Palace confirms existence of 'Oust-Duterte plot'", April 22, 2019, bit.ly/2lW9YqX

64 Republic Act No. 3815, "An Act Revising the Penal Code and Other Penal Laws", December 8, 1930, Article 354

65 Human Rights Committee, "Communication No. 1815/2008, 'Adonis vs. The Philippines'", January 27, 2011, CCPR/C/103/D/1815/2008

66 Republic Act No. 10175, "An Act Defining Cybercrime, Providing for the Prevention, Investigation, Suppression and the Imposition of Penalties Therefor and for Other Purposes," September 12, 2012

67 The Philippine Star, "2 radio blocktimers get 8 years for cyberlibel", March 25, 2019, bit.ly/2WeMLNw

CASE: RAPPLER AND MARIA RESSA



Maria Ressa is one of the Philippines' most respected journalists. After a long career in investigative journalism, as a foreign correspondent and as director of the news department of the Philippine TV channel ABS-CBN, in 2012 she founded the online news platform Rappler with two other female colleagues. Over the years, Rappler grew to be the Philippines' fourth-largest news website, employing over 100 journalists.

In October 2016, Rappler revealed that the Duterte camp had built up a regular online army of paid trolls who spread fake news in social media and attacked political opponents. From then on, Rappler itself and its journalists became targets.⁶⁸ Ressa reported that following the revelations she had received 90 hate messages per hour.⁶⁹ Moreover, Rappler had begun reporting early on about the new government's war on drugs. It was one of the few national media outlets offering reports that investigated and questioned the government's narrative about the killings.

In his address to the nation in July 2017, Duterte indicated his government's intention to target Rappler by claiming that the website was wholly foreign-owned, implying that it contravened Philippine laws.⁷⁰ In January of the same year, the

Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) had already withdrawn Rappler's license because of this allegation. Meanwhile, however, the Court of Appeals rejected this decision as factually unfounded and referred the matter back to the SEC.⁷¹

The government reacted by opening proceedings against Rappler for alleged tax offences. The website also faces a charge brought by the businessman Wilfredo King for online libel relating to an article published in 2012.⁷² Ressa and Rappler argue, however, that the article in question was published four months before the Cybercrime Prevention Act came into force. All in all, there are presently eleven indictments against Rappler, Ressa, and other colleagues. Ressa herself was briefly taken into custody several times but released on bail. Moreover, the political correspondent Pia Ranada's accreditation for reporting from the presidential palace was withdrawn.⁷³

Several UN Special Rapporteurs have described the proceedings against Rappler as politically motivated and have demanded that all charges be dropped.⁷⁴

68 Rappler, "Propaganda war: Weaponizing the internet", October 3, 2016, bit.ly/2xY1nrX

69 Rappler, "Facebook let my government target me. Here's why I still work with them", January 21, 2019, bit.ly/2OiSgJ

70 Rappler, "Duterte claims Rappler 'fully owned by Americans'", June 24, 2017, bit.ly/2ls4lR6

71 Rappler, "Court of Appeals denies Rappler appeal in SEC case", March 11, 2019, bit.ly/2lrqter

72 The Philippine Star, "A look at the cyber libel charge vs Rappler, Maria Ressa", February 13, 2019, bit.ly/2SBjLIS

73 ABS-CBN News, "Rappler reporter now banned from entire Malacañang complex", October 4, 2018, bit.ly/2lVowqN

74 OHCHR, "UN experts express serious alarm at effort to shut down independent media outlet in the Philippines", January 25, 2018, bit.ly/2kqvMDr; OHCHR, "UN expert calls on the Philippines to drop charges against Rappler", December 6, 2018, bit.ly/2jQBzqK

IMPUNITY AND COOPERATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM

President Duterte has explicitly called on the security forces to kill drug addicts and dealers, as well as human rights defenders. At the same time, he has promised the perpetrators complete immunity from prosecution. Duterte once declared that he would never allow police officers to go to prison for a "failure of judgment".⁷⁵ He was referring to video recordings showing the execution of three alleged drug dealers by police squads in the slums of Tondo on October 11, 2017. None of the police officers involved was ever prosecuted for these killings.⁷⁶ This policy of Duterte's reinforces the culture of impunity for the gravest human rights violations that already prevailed in the Philippines for decades. This is confirmed by the 2017 Global Impunity Index, which listed the Philippines as the country with the highest impunity rate worldwide.⁷⁷ The thousands of cases of extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances of alleged suspects stand in stark contrast to the mere handful of sentences for the perpetrators. Under Duterte's government, this trend has not only been confirmed but has rocketed, particularly with the estimated 27,000 killings in the war on drugs, for which there has been only one conviction to date.

Under the previous governments, partly in response to sustained international criticism of this culture of impunity, the Philippines created a variety of special human rights mechanisms and institutions. This has resulted in a number of organizations now operating in parallel to the criminal prosecution authorities, such as the Task Force USIG, a special unit of the police specializing in extralegal executions, human rights desks in the police force and army, the national Commission on Human Rights (CHR), and the cross-

departmental Inter-Agency Committee on Extra-Legal Killings, known as AO35. But so far none of these institutions has been able to score substantial successes in the battle against impunity.

Duterte's government has established yet another decisive mechanism, the Presidential Task Force on Media Security (PTFoMS), which is intended to solve the murders of journalists and bring the perpetrators to justice. However, this committee not only duplicates the existing investigative mechanisms but has also failed to register any success in clarifying extralegal executions. On the contrary, the Task Force has distinguished itself primarily by rejecting criticism of the systematic attacks against the journalist Maria Ressa and Rappler as unfounded (see Case: Rappler and Maria Ressa).⁷⁸

Instead of strengthening national human rights mechanisms, the government has contributed to attacking and weakening them. The main target of these attacks is the national Commission on Human Rights (CHR). Duterte and members of the government camp claim that the CHR only sides with criminals and obstructs justice. The President even called on police officers to shoot CHR staff members.⁷⁹ The attacks on the CHR culminated in the attempt in August 2017 to reduce its budget to 1,000 pesos (20 euros). While a large majority of the House of Representatives initially accepted this, the Congress later voted for a budget of 695.5 million pesos (11.8 million euros). In any case, this represented a reduction of four percent compared with the previous year.⁸⁰

COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

The withdrawal of the Philippines from the International Criminal Court (ICC) on March 17, 2019, is yet another sign of the government's denial of any responsibility for serious human rights violations.⁸¹ In February 2018, the ICC's chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, announced the opening of a preliminary investigation of the killings by police in the context of





Philippine human rights activists protest at the UN in Geneva

the war on drugs.⁸² Despite the withdrawal, the Court remains mandated to prosecute all crimes committed before the withdrawal date.⁸³ Although the Philippines was elected to the UN Human Rights Council for a further two-year period in 2018, the government has staunchly refused to cooperate with the council's mechanisms. In 2017, for example, the Philippines rejected all the country-related recommendations concerning the war on drugs, extrajudicial executions, the death penalty, or protection of human rights defenders.⁸⁴ In reaction to a Human Rights Council resolution in July 2019 instructing the UN High Commissioner's Office to compile a report on the human rights situation in the Philippines,⁸⁵ several senior government representatives declared that they regarded such an investigation as illegitimate external interference and refused to cooperate with it.⁸⁶

Instead of the government collaborating with the mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, several UN Special Rapporteurs were threatened. The Special Rapporteur for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, a Filipina, was included on a list of terrorist suspects (see the chapter Human Rights Defenders), and Duterte threatened the Rapporteur for extrajudicial killings, Agnès Callamard, with physical violence if she investigated his role in the war on drugs.⁸⁷

75 The Philippine Star, "Duterte: I won't allow cops, soldiers to be jailed", November 28, 2017, bit.ly/2jYr1bh

76 Reuter, "Police tell one story of what happened in Barangay 19. Security cameras tell another", November 27, 2017, reut.rs/2BfKyXr

77 Fundación Universidad de las Américas, "Global Impunity Index 2017", August 2017, bit.ly/2koxY5y

78 Philippine News Agency, "Ressa's libel case not isolated, PTFoMS asserts", February 18, 2019, bit.ly/2lVCicZ

79 The Philippine Star, "Duterte: Shoot CHR personnel if they obstruct justice", August 17, 2017, bit.ly/2lvny4f

80 Rappler, "Duterte signs P3.8-trillion 2018 national budget into law", December 19, 2017, bit.ly/2jSZ7xa

81 Al Jazeera, "Philippines officially out of the International Criminal Court", March 17, 2019, bit.ly/2HowMct

82 International Criminal Court, "Statement of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, on opening Preliminary Examinations into the situations in the Philippines and in Venezuela", February 8, 2018, bit.ly/2EbgZfL

83 Reuters, "ICC prosecutor: examination of Philippines continues despite withdrawal", March 18, 2019, reut.rs/2koyKiY

84 UPR Info, "Philippines: Responses to Recommendations, Third Review Session 27", December 15, 2017, bit.ly/2kqfPnM

85 Human Rights Council, "Promotion and protection of human rights in the Philippines", June 5, 2019, [A/HRC/41/L.20](https://www.unhcr.org/refugees/41/L.20)

86 Rappler, "Malacañang says UNHRC resolution an insult to Filipinos", June 12, 2019, bit.ly/2JDGbeL

87 Rappler, "Duterte threatens to slap UN rapporteur if she probes drug war", November 9, 2017, bit.ly/2kbnwD

CASE: JOVITO PALPARAN



One of the few successful events in the battle against the culture of impunity was the conviction of the former general of the Philippine Army, Jovito Palparan Jr., in September 2017. The Regional Court in Bulacan sentenced him to 40 years in prison for the kidnapping and unlawful detention of two women students. Palparan was notorious for his brutal persecution of leftist activists and human rights defenders in the "total war" against the NPA declared by President Arroyo. The Melo Commission, set up in 2006 and tasked with investigating extrajudicial executions, named Palparan as one of the key people inside the military responsible for these killings.⁸⁸ Wherever Palparan took command there was an immediate and striking increase in that type of murder, earning him the nickname "Berdugo," the butcher.

In 2003, the human rights activist Eden Marcellana was abducted by men under Palparan's command. A day after her abduction, her corpse, bound and covered with multiple stab wounds, was found in a bamboo forest in Mindoro. Marcellana had been due to appear before the national Commission on Appointments to testify against Palparan's promotion.

Palparan was sentenced for organizing the enforced disappearance of the students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño. The two women were kidnapped by armed men in the night of June 26, 2006, during a field research trip on the situation of female farmers in Hagonoy on Luzon Island. The farmer Manuel Merino, who tried to stop the abductors, ended up being kidnapped himself. The human rights group Alyansa ng mga Mamamayan para Pantaong Karapatan –

Bulacan (Human Rights League – Bulacan) reacted swiftly, identifying the truck used in the kidnapping as a military vehicle of the Philippine Army's 56th infantry battalion. The first significant clues to the fate of the two young women, however, came from the courageous testimony of Raymond Manalo. He and his brother were abducted together in 2006, and after his escape from military detention he reported on the brutal torture methods used on him and his fellow prisoners, among them the two missing women students.

More than two years elapsed until the Court of Appeals ordered the immediate release of Empeño and Cadapan in September 2008, but without naming the kidnapers although they had been identified by several witnesses. After another month passed without the release of the two women, their mothers applied for permission to visit military camps. They also demanded that the Supreme Court calls to account senior military representatives and the then President, Gloria Magapagal-Arroyo. When the Court of Appeals refused to act upon its own decision to release the two young women, their relatives appealed to the Supreme Court. This body, in turn, took more than two years to confirm the original order for their release. The military, however, ignored this decision as well. The two women remain missing up to this day.

In December 2011, over five years after the kidnapping, arrest warrants were finally issued against Palparan and other suspects. They went into hiding. Finally, in August 2014, after nearly three years on the run, Palparan was arrested by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in Manila and brought to trial.

To date, he is still the most senior military officer and one of only a few soldiers altogether to have been legally sentenced for the gravest human rights violations.

⁸⁸ Melo Commission, "Independent Commission to Address Media and Activist Killings, Created under Administrative Order No. 157 (s. 2006)", January 22, 2007, bit.ly/2knte01

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS



Lumads is the collective name for members of the different indigenous non-Muslim communities in Mindanao. Displaced into the remote, uneconomical mountainous region of Mindanao mainly by the migration of Christian settlers, today the Lumads are among the poorest population group in the Philippines. The Lumads are at risk even in the few remaining areas they still own. They are caught between the front lines of the domestic conflict between the government and the communist New Peoples' Army (NPA). Both factions deliberately recruit members of indigenous groups, which brings the conflict into their communities. In particular, the Philippine Army has been accused of controlling paramilitary groups that have been blamed for multiple civilian deaths in recent years. Paramilitary groups in Mindanao are suspected of orchestrating eight killings of human rights defenders in the period since July 2016 alone.⁸⁹

Despite Duterte's announcement at the beginning of his presidency that he wanted to protect indigenous communities and abolish paramilitary groups,⁹⁰ serious human rights violations are still known to occur in Mindanao. In particular independent indigenous schools are affected by repression. In response to government failure to provide adequate educational facilities in the remote regions of Mindanao, these schools were set up by civic or religious organizations. However, the military and government representatives accuse the schools of being training institutions for the NPA. One organization

Pupils of an independent indigenous school

⁸⁹ See Annex: List of Killed Human Rights Defenders and Journalists

⁹⁰ Official Gazette, "President Duterte orders military to stop paramilitary groups amid ongoing peace talks", September 23, 2016, bit.ly/2ksjK3C

affected by this is ALCADDEV, whose director, Emerico Samarca, was murdered by paramilitary members in September 2015.⁹¹ Duterte himself threatened to order the bombing of Lumad schools.⁹² According to the Philippine network Save Our Schools, 85 of these schools were temporarily closed between July 2016 and March 2019 because they had been attacked by military or paramilitary forces.⁹³ In July 2019, the Ministry of Education ordered the shutdown of 55 schools accused of spreading an anti-government ideology.⁹⁴

Other human rights violations against indigenous peoples occur in relation to economic interests in their home territories. Agricultural companies that grow coffee, fruits, or palm oil are repeatedly accused of land grabbing. Mining projects are particularly important in this regard. Around sixty percent of the presumed mineral resources in the Philippines, with an estimated value of 800 billion to one trillion dollars, is found on indigenous land. The indigenous peoples themselves, however, barely profit from this immense wealth. Their basic living conditions are at risk from environmental disorders such as the scarcely regulated use of highly poisonous chemicals like mercury and cyanide, as well as soil erosion and large-scale deforestation. The 1995 Mining Act guarantees mining enterprises water use free of charge – depriving farmers of the water – and the right to deforest as they wish.⁹⁵

The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 theoretically allows indigenous inhabitants complete rights over their territorial heritage, known as ancestral domains.⁹⁶ Under this law, every construction project in their territory requires the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) of the indigenous peoples. All the same, hardly any consultative procedures are properly conducted, and the affected parties are deliberately deceived as to the possible impact and consequences of the projects.⁹⁷ Instead of implementing prevailing law that would protect indigenous communities from loss of their land, Duterte announced his intention of personally seeking out investors who would be allowed to invest in those areas.⁹⁸

91 Frontline Defenders, "Killing of Emerito Samarca", bit.ly/2kztL7u

92 CNN Philippines, "Duterte threatens to bomb Lumad schools", June 25, 2017, bit.ly/2lw4wul

93 ABS-CBN News, "One, two... flee: Lumad teens find refuge in Manila, pursue studies", March 30, 2019, bit.ly/2k3lBdY

94 The Philippine Star, "Lumad schools suspended over 'recycled lies, unverified reports', Karapatan says", June 16, 2019, bit.ly/2Lm6dgN

95 Republic Act No. 7942, "An Act Instituting a New System of Mineral Resources Exploration, Development, Utilization, and Conservation", March 3, 1995, Sections 72 & 73

96 Republic Act No. 8371, "An Act to Recognize, Protect and Promote the Rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities/ Indigenous Peoples, Creating a National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, Establishing Implementing Mechanisms, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes", October 29, 1997, Sections 7b & 7c

97 Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), "Assessing Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) Implementation in the Philippines", April 2013, bit.ly/2ktZoaz

98 Minda News, "Duterte to 'choose investors' to develop Lumad lands for oil palm, mining", February 3, 2018, bit.ly/2lWvxHL

CASE: THE LAKE SEBU MASSACRE



On December 3, 2017, T'boli chief Datu Victor Danyan, his two sons, his son-in-law, and four other members of the indigenous community of the T'boli in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, on Mindanao Island were shot dead. Members of the 27th and 33rd infantry battalions of the Philippine Armed Forces were accused of the killings. According to army statements, the victims died in the crossfire during a skirmish with the NPA. However, eyewitnesses report that the soldiers had gone into Datu Danyan's farm and opened fire without warning. On the day before the incident, members of the military had issued a warning in local media for the Lumads and notably their "commander" Victor to surrender. Datu

Danyan was the chair of the indigenous organization TAMASCO, which campaigned for the rights of the indigenous T'boli, especially their claim to their ancestral land. In 1991, the T'boli were driven off their land when the government granted the firm Silvicultural Industries a 25-year license to grow coffee on over 11,000 hectares (nearly 27,182 acres). When the license expired in 2016, the firm applied for an extension. Under the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, this should have required the free, prior, and informed consent of the T'boli. Despite resolute and unanimous rejection by the community involved, the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) granted a license extension.

The T'boli, led by Datu Danyan, responded by occupying 150 hectares (nearly 370 acres) of their land. They cleared the coffee plants and planted cereal crops instead. This led to arrest warrants for Datu Danyan and several other community members. Several indigenous members received death threats and were accused of NPA membership. With the mediation of the Catholic Church, a meeting was arranged between TAMASCO members and government representatives for December 4, 2016. Before this could take place, the TAMASCO members were brutally massacred.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ ABS-CBN News, "Lake Sebu Lumad massacre followed visit of barangay captain", December 16, 2017, bit.ly/2n6hfVz

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT

THE WAR ON DRUGS

- ▶ Any response by the state to the problem of drug abuse must put the protection of people's health and rights at the center.
- ▶ All police operations carried out as part of the so-called "war on drugs" that involve the use of unnecessary or disproportionate violence must end immediately.
- ▶ All cases of killings of alleged drug dealers and addicts without delay. To this end, an independent investigatory commission should be brought in. This commission should operate independently of the Philippine National Police, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, and the President's Office and should cooperate with the relevant international investigatory mechanisms.
- ▶ The death penalty should not be reintroduced and the minimum age of legal responsibility should not be lowered.

PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND JOURNALISTS

- ▶ All cases of killings of human rights defenders and journalists without delay and bring all perpetrators to justice.
- ▶ Take all necessary steps to protect human rights defenders and journalists from harassment, violence, and killings.
- ▶ Order the Philippine military to refrain from making statements that stigmatize human rights defenders, especially statements implicating defenders as members of the New People's Army.
- ▶ Order the Philippine Armed Forces to desist from filing fabricated charges against human rights defenders.
- ▶ Ensure that public prosecutors and judges do not open trial proceedings in cases of manifestly fabricated charges against human rights defenders.

FREEDOM OF PRESS

- ▶ Repeal all laws that define libel as constituting a criminal offense, in particular Articles 353 to 355 and 358 to 362 of the Revised Penal Code as well as Section 4(c)(4) of the Cybercrime Prevention Act. Amend the law so that civil liability proceedings are the sole form of redress for complaints of damage to reputation.
- ▶ Drop all charges against Maria Ressa, Rappler, and its journalists without delay.

IMPUNITY

- ▶ Initiate a fundamental reform of the judicial system so that court proceedings for serious cases of human rights violations are speeded up and the perpetrators can be brought to justice quickly and reliably.
- ▶ End impunity for extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and torture, in particular when the perpetrators belong to the security forces, by undertaking thorough investigations of all such cases.
- ▶ The Philippines should ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances (ICPPED).
- ▶ Execute all outstanding arrest warrants in cases of extrajudicial killings without delay.
- ▶ Instruct the Inter-Agency Committee on Extrajudicial Killings, established under Administrative Order 35, to publish a list of the cases it handles and to give regular updates on the progress of their prosecution.
- ▶ Reform and expand the witness protection program to ensure reliable protection of witnesses before, during, and after investigations and trials.
- ▶ Immediately stop all attempts to obstruct and discredit the work of the Philippine Commission on Human Rights. Ensure adequate funding for the work of the Commission.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EU

COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

- Guarantee unrestricted access to the country for all international human rights mechanisms for investigation and monitoring, including representatives of the UN High Commission on Human Rights and the International Criminal Court.
- Issue a standing invitation to all Special Rapporteurs with thematic mandates and Working Groups of the UN Human Rights Council, in particular to the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders.

- Initiate the suspension of trade benefits for the Philippines granted under the Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP+) by applying Article 19.5 of the EU statutes. Following the six-month review period, reversal of the suspension should be tied to concrete steps for improving the human rights situation.

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

- Launch thorough and impartial investigations of all killings of indigenous people in which the military, paramilitary organizations, or mining companies are implicated. Take all necessary steps to protect indigenous protestors against mining projects from violence.
- Ensure that the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) of indigenous peoples' communities be obtained before issuing licenses for mining projects on their ancestral land.
- Investigate all incidences of attacks on indigenous schools, their teachers, and students, and bring the perpetrators to justice.
- Ratify the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Convention (ILO Convention no. 169).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OTHER INTERNATIONAL PARTIES

- Insist that the Philippine government cooperates with all international human rights mechanisms, in particular the UN Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court.
- Rigorously utilize bilateral and multilateral human rights dialogues to urge the Philippine government to comply with international human rights standards.
- Monitor trials in cases that criminalize human rights defenders to determine whether minimum standards of due process are being observed or to demand that they be observed if observance of due process is lacking.

LIST OF KILLED HUMAN RIGHT DEFENDERS AND JOURNALISTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

JULY 1, 2016 TO AUGUST 30, 2019

Name	Date	Place	Conflict Background	Affiliation	Alleged Perpetrators
Gloria Capitan	01.07.16	Mariveles, Bataan	Environment	Coal Free Bataan Movement, United Citizens of Lucanin Association	Unknown
Remar Mayantao, Rogen Suminao, Senon Nacaytuna	12.07.16	Sumilao, Bukidnon	Indigenous rights, land rights	Inalsahan Indigenous Peoples Organisation	Private security guards of RamCar Inc., a cattle ranching company
Apolinario Suan Jr.	14.07.16	Bislig, Surigao del Sur	Journalism	Real FM Bislig	Unknown
Herme Alegre	15.07.16	Tugbok District, Davao City, Davao del Sur	Indigenous rights, land rights, education	Parent-Teacher-Community Association of Salugpungan Ta' Tanu Igkanugon (Unity in Defence of Ancestral Land) School	84th Infantry Battalion Philippine Army (IBPA)
Emerenciana Mercado Dela Rosa, Violeta Mercado De Leon, Eligio Barbado, Gaudencio Bagalay	03.09.16	Palayan, Nueva Ecija	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Alyansa ng mga Magbubukid na Nagkakaisang 3100	Unknown
Jessybel Sanchez	14.08.16	Talaingod, Davao del Norte	Indigenous rights	Lumadnong Panaghiusa-Salugpungan Ta Tanu Igkanugon (LuPa-STTI)	68th IBPA
Jerry 'Dandan' Layola, Jimmy Mapinsahan Barosa	12.08.16	San Luis, Agusan del Sur	Indigenous rights, Land rights	Tagdumahan indigenous peoples' organization	Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU)
Elmer Del Rosario	19.08.16	Tangub City, Misamis Occidental	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP)	55th IB
Ariel Diaz	07.09.16	Delfin Albano, Isabela	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Danggayan Dagiti Mannalon ti Isabela (DAGA-MI), Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP)	Unknown
Orlando Abangan	17.09.16	Talisay City, Cebu	Labor rights	Partido Manggagawa	Unknown
Arnel Figueroa	20.09.16	Yulo King Ranch, Coron, Palawan	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Pesante	"Blue Guards" of the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI)
Edilberto Miralles	23.09.16	Quezon City, Metro Manila	Labor rights	R&E Taxi Transport union	Hitmen hired by R&E Taxi Transport
Jimmy Saypan	10.10.16	Montevista, Compostela Valley	Mining, land rights	Compostela Farmers Association (CFA)	66th IBPA
Joselito "Anoy" Pasaporte	13.10.16	Mabini, Compostela Valley	Environment, Land rights	Panalipdan Youth	Unknown
Larry Que	19.12.16	Virac, Catanduanes	Journalism	Catanduanes News Now	Unidentified gunmen hired by local government officials
Jimmy Sotto	24.12.16	Floridablanca, Pampanga	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Aguman Dareng Maglalautang Capampangan (AMC)	Unknown
Copertino Banugan, Ramon Banugan, Benny Banugan	30.12.16	Caraga, Davao Oriental	Indigenous rights	Leader of the Mandaya tribe	New People's Army
Venie Diamante	05.01.17	Norala, South Cotabato	Indigenous rights, Land rights	T'boli chieftain	Unidentified gunmen hired by local Barangay Captain
Mario Contaui	07.01.16	Magsingal, Ilocos Sur	Environment, Journalism	University of Northern Philippines, formerly dzNS radio	Unknown
Alexander Ceballos	20.01.17	Murcia, Negros Occidental	Peasants' rights, Land rights	National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW)	Unidentified gunmen hired by local political dynasty
Veronico Delamente	20.01.17	Claver, Surigao del Norte	Indigenous rights, Land rights, leftist politics	Kahugpungan sa Lumadnong Organisasyon (KASALO), KATRIBU partylist	Gunmen hired by Claver Mineral Development Corp. (CDMC)
Wencislao Pacquiao	25.01.17	Calatrava, Negros Occidental	Peasants' rights, Land rights	San Benito Farmers Association- Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP)	Gunmen hired by local landlord
Marlon Muyco	01.02.17	Mlang, Cotabato	Journalism	dxND Radyo Bida	Gunmen hired by local politician
Renato Anglao	03.02.17	Quezon, Bukidnon	Indigenous rights	TINDOGA (Tribal Indigenous Oppressed Group Association)	Unknown
Matanem Lorendo Pocuan	04.02.17	Cabanglasan, Bukidnon	Indigenous rights	Leader of the Omayam tribe in Cabanglasan	Alamara paramilitary group
Glenn Ramos	06.02.17	Maa, Davao City	Leftist politics, red-tagging	Former coordinator of Bayan Muna partylist	Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG)
Emelito Rotimas	06.02.17	Maco, Compostela Valley	Indigenous rights	Indigenous leader	Unknown
Orlando Eslana	11.02.17	President Roxas, Capiz	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Kahublagan sang Mangunguma sa Capiz (KAMACA)	Gunmen of local landlord
Mia Manuelita Mascari as-Green	15.02.17	Tagbilaran City, Bohol	Environment	Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC)	Unknown
Edweno Catog	16.02.17	Pantukan, Compostela Valley	Indigenous rights, Land rights, red-tagging	Hugpong sa mga Mag-uuma sa Walog Compostela (HUMAWAC)	46th IBPA

Name	Date	Place	Conflict Background	Affiliation	Alleged Perpetrators
Wilerme Agorde	19.02.17	President Roxas, North Cotabato	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Social Action Center of the Diocese of Kidapawan	BAGANI paramilitary group
Gilbert Rosima Bancat	25.02.17	San Andres, Quezon	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Pinagkaisang Lakas Ng Mga Magbubukid Sa Quezon (PIGLAS-Quezon)	59th IBPA
Ramon Dagaas Pesadilla, Leonela Tapdasan Pesadilla	02.03.17	Compostela, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Compostela Valley Farmers Association	66th IBPA
Hadji Billamin Hassan, Nuruddin Musaddul Muhlis, Misha (1-year old), Dani (11-year old)	08.03.17	Tabuan Lasa, Basilan	Peace, leftist politics	Bayan Muna	CIDG, Philippine National Police (PNP)
Joaquin Briones	13.03.17	Milagros, Masbate	Journalism	Tabloid newspaper Remate	Unknown
Pedro Pandagay	23.03.17	Mabini, Compostela Valley	Land rights, Anti-Mining	Golden Valley Banana Planters Association	71st IBPA
Arman Tampus Almonicar, Arlene Tampus Almonicar, Cora Molave Lina	27.03.17	Laak, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Nagkahiusang Mag-uuma sa Laak, Compostela Valley Farmers Association	60th IBPA
Danilo Ruiz Nadal	02.04.17	Pantukan, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Hugpong sa Mag-uuma sa Pantukan (HUMAPAN)	46th IBPA
Elias Pureza	06.04.17	San Isidro, Davao del Norte	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Farmers' Association of San Isidro (FASI)	60th IBPA
Bernardo Calan Ripdos	08.04.17	Maco, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Hugpong sa Mag-uuma sa Walog Compostela (HUMAWAC)	46th and 71st IBPA
Federico Sanchez Plaza	03.05.17	Maragusan, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Hugpong sa Mag-Uuma sa Walog Compostela (HUMAWAC)	66th IBPA
Rodolfo Jr. Dagahuya	09.05.17	Davao City, Davao del Sur	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Dominga Farmers' Association	3rd IB Task Force Harribon
Fernando Alejo	22.05.17	Narra, Palawan	Environment	Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO)	Unknown
Daniel Lasid	26.05.17	Matanao, Davao del Sur	Indigenous rights, land rights, Anti-mining	B' Laan council member of Akma Aksasatu Matanao (Unity of Matanao)	73rd IBPA
Ana-Marie Didgaynon Aumada	27.05.17	Banganga, Davao Oriental	Indigenous rights, land rights, leftist politics	Alyansa sa mga Mag-uuma sa Sidlakang Davao (Almasid)	67th IBPA
Jessie Cabeza	31.05.17	Mabini, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Hugpong sa mga Mag-uuma sa Mabini (HUMABIN)	46th IBPA
Lito Casalla	03.06.17	Balayan, Batangas	Land rights, Anti-Mining	Samahan ng Magbubukid sa Batangas (SAMBAT)	Unknown
Joseph Baning	01.07.17	Labo, Camarines Norte	Peasants' rights	Camarines Norte Peoples' Organization (CNPO)	Unknown
Ande Latuan	06.07.17	Cabanglasan, Bukidnon	Indigenous rights, red-tagging	Pigayayugaan indigenous tribal association	Alamara paramilitary group
Meliton Catampungan	10.07.17	Alegria, Surigao del Norte	Peasants' rights	Nagkahiusang Mag-uuma sa Surigao del Norte (NAaVLASUN), Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI)	Unknown
Carolina Arado	13.07.17	Mabini, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Hugpong sa mga Mag-uuma sa Mabini (HuMaBin)	67th IBPA
Silvestre Maratas	16.07.17	San Miguel, Surigao del Sur	Peasants' rights, red-tagging	Kapunongan sa mag Mag-uuma sa Surigao del Sur (KAMASS-KMP)	2nd Special Forces Battalion
Mario Castro, Catalina Castro	20.07.17	Rizal, Nueva Ecija	Peasants' rights	Liga ng Manggagawang Bukid	Unknown
Glenn Absin	23.07.17	Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental	Red-tagging	Student Government of Saint Francis School	Unknown
Alberto "Leboy" Tecson	24.07.17	Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental	Peasants' rights	Nagkaliusang Mag-uumaug Mangingisda sa Bulado (NaMaBu)	79th IBPA
Michael D. Marasigan, Christopher Marasigan	03.08.17	San Juan, Metro Manila	Journalism	Business World	Unknown
Rudy Alicaway	06.08.17	Molave, Zamboanga del Sur	Journalism	DXPB radio station	Unknown
Leo Diaz	07.08.17	President Quirino, Sultan Kudarat	Journalism	Sapol Newspaper, Radio Mindanao Network	Unknown
Eddie Alyawan	12.08.17	Mabini, Compostela Valley	Environment, Land rights	Panalipdan Youth	46th IBPA
Roger "Titing" Timboco	23.08.17	Mawab, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Kahugpongan sa mga Mag-uuma sa Maco, ComVal	71st IBPA

Name	Date	Place	Conflict Background	Affiliation	Alleged Perpetrators
Lomer Gerodias	27.08.17	Maragusan, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights, Land rights, red-tagging	Hugpong sa mga Mag-uuma sa Walog, Compostela (HUMAWAC)	66th IBPA
Oscar Asildo Jr.	30.08.17	Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental	Leftist politics, red-tagging	Bayan Muna	Unknown
Jezreel Arrabis, Dalia Arrabis	02.09.17	Davao City, Davao del Sur	Peasants' rights, Land rights, red-tagging	Farmers' Association in Davao City (FADC)	84th and 3rd IBPA
Obello Bay-ao	05.09.17	Talaingod, Davao del Norte	Indigenous rights	Liga ng mga Iskolar ng Bayan	Almara paramilitary group
Luardo Yac	07.09.17	Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental	Peasants' rights	Kapunungan Alang sa Ugma sa Gagmayng Maguuma sa Oriental Negros (Karigmaon)	Unknown
Erning Aykid, Aylan Lantoy	15.09.17	Bulalaca, Oriental Mindoro	Indigenous rights	Hagibat Mangyan, Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI)	4th IBPA
Reneboy Magayano	28.09.17	Maragusan, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights, Land rights, red-tagging	Hugpong sa mga Mag-uuma sa Walog Compostela	66th IBPA
Christopher Iban Lozada	24.10.17	Bislig City, Surigao del Sur	Journalism	DXBF Prime Broadcasting Network	Local politician
Edwin "Kiko" Pura	25.10.17	Gubat, Sorsogon	Labor rights	Bayan	Unknown
Arnel Otacan	28.10.17	Boston, Davao Oriental	Peasants' rights	Nigkasinabot Koy Mag-umma Tu Boston	67th IBPA
Webby Argabio Sr.	08.11.17	Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental	Peasants' rights	Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Kabankalan City (MP)	Unknown
Perfecto "Boy" Hoyle	16.11.17	Kitcharao, Agusan del Norte	Peasants' rights	United Church of Christ of the Philippines (UCCP)	29th IBPA
Vivencio Sahay	23.11.17	Cabadbaran, Agusan del Norte	Peasants' rights	Unyon sa Mag-uuma sa Agusan del Norte	Unknown
Apolonio Maranan	25.11.17	Davao City, Davao del Sur	Leftist politics, red-tagging	Anakpawis Partylist	Unknown
Elisa Badayos, Elioterio Moises	28.11.17	Bayawan, Negros Oriental	Civil-political rights	Karapatan, Mantapi Ebwan Farmers Association	Private security guards
Rodrigo Timoteo	28.11.17	Compostela, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights, Land rights, red-tagging	Compostela Farmers Association (CFA)	66th IBPA
Rolando Moreno	29.11.17	Rosario, Agusan del Sur	Land rights	Agrarian Reform Beneficiary (ARB)	Private guards of Filipinas Palm Oil Plantation Inc. (FPPI)
Datu Victor Danyan Sr., Victor Danyan Jr., Artemio Danyan, Rhudy Danyan, Pato Celarbo, Samuel Angkoy, To Diamante, Mateng Bantal	03.12.17	Lake Sebu, South Cotabato	Indigenous rights, Land rights, red-tagging	T'boli-Manobo S'daf Claimants Organization (Tamasco)	27th and 33rd IBPA
Fr. Marcelito "Tito" Paez	04.12.17	Jaen, Nueva Ecija	Civil-political rights	Catholic Church	Unknown
Bernardo Clarion	08.12.17	Davao City, Davao del Sur	Cultural rights	Sulong Kultura (SuKul)	16th IBPA
Jeannie Rose Porras	14.12.17	Nabunturan, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights, Land rights, red-tagging	Compostela Farmers Association (CFA)	66th IBPA
Flora Gemola	21.12.17	Sagay City, Negros Occidental	Peasants' rights, Land rights	National Federation of Sugar Workers (NSFW)	Unknown
Edwin Mencioner Magallanes	21.12.17	Banaybanay, Davao Oriental	Land rights	Abanterong Nakigbisog (ABANTE NA)	28th IBPA
Aaron Notarte	15.01.18	Bunawan, Agusan del Sur	Peasants' rights, Land rights, red-tagging	Nagkahiusang Mag-uuma sa Agusan del Sur (Namasur)	75th IBPA
James Flores	20.01.18	Tagum City, Davao del Norte	Peasants' rights	Pederasyon sa tanang Asosasyon sa mga Mag-uuma ug Lumad sa Agusan ug Davao	Unknown
Aniceto Lopez Jr	22.01.18	Quezon, Bukidnon	Peasants' rights	Kahugpungan sa mga Mag-uuma (KASAMA)	Ernesto "Oto" Balopenios, member of Philippine Marines
Ricky Baguio Olado	28.01.18	Arakan, North Cotabato	Indigenous rights, Land rights, environment	Tinananon, Culanganon Lumadong Panaghuisa (TICULPA)	84th IBPA
Ronald Manlapat	22.02.18	Sagay City, Negros Occidental	Peasants' rights, Land rights, red-tagging	National Federation of Sugar Workers (NSFW)	Unknown
Ricardo Pugong Mayumi	02.03.18	Kiangan, Ifugao	Environment, Indigenous rights	Ifugao Peasant Movement, Cordillera People's Alliance	Unknown
Agudo Quillio	20.03.18	Pantukan, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights, Environment, Anti-Mining, Red-baiting	Hugpong sa mga Mag-uuma sa Pantukan (Humapan)	46th IBPA

Name	Date	Place	Conflict Background	Affiliation	Alleged Perpetrators
Garito Malibato	23.03.18	Kapalong, Davao del Norte	Indigenous rights	KARADYAWAN	Alamara paramilitary group
Gene de Loyola, Gregorio Alarde	18.04.18	Rodriguez, Rizal	Land rights	Painter	Unknown
Jerry Turga	28.04.18	Moises Padilla, Negros Occidental	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Guinpanaan Farmers Association, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP)	Unknown
Fr. Mark Ventura	29.04.18	Gattaran, Cagayan	Anti-Mining	Catholic Church	Unknown
Carlos Matas	12.05.18	Labangan, Zamboanga del Sur	Journalism	dxCA Radio	Unknown
Edmund Sestoso	01.05.18	Edmund Sestoso, Negros Oriental	Journalism	dyGB Power 91	Unknown
Ariel Manquiran	17.05.18	Panabo City, Davao del Norte	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Bayan Muna	16th IBPA
Carlito Sawad	23.05.18	Laak, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights, Land rights, Indigenous rights, red-tagging	Nagkahiusang Mag-uuma ug Lumad sa Veruela (NAMALUVER)	60th IBPA
Beverly Geronimo	26.05.18	Trento, Agusan del Sur	Indigenous rights, Land rights	Tabing Guangan Farmers Association (TAGU-AFA), Parents-Teachers' Community Association (PTCA)	25th IBPA
Lando Perdicos	06.06.18	Mabini, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights, Land rights, red-tagging	Hugpong sa mga Mag-uuma sa Mabini (HUMABIN)	46th IBPA
Jose Unahan	06.06.18	Nasipit, Agusan del Norte	Indigenous rights, Land rights, Anti-mining	Unyon sa Mag-uuma sa Agusan del Norte (UMAN)	Unknown
Dennis Denora	07.06.18	Panabo City, Davao del Norte	Journalism	Trends and Times	Unknown
Nestor Dagatan Sacote	10.06.18	Baganga, Davao Oriental	Peasants' rights, civil-political rights	Alyansa sa mga Mag-uuma sa Sidlakang Davao (ALMASID)	67th IBPA
Arnel Pensao	21.06.18	Compostela, Compostela Valley	Right to housing	San Antonio Maparat Farmers Association (SAMFA)	25th IBPA
Julius Barelano	27.06.18	San Carlos City, Negros Occidental	Peasants' rights, Land rights, Journalism	Hda. Medina Farmworkers Association, formerly Radyo Bandera Sweet-FM Bacolod	Unknown
Joey Llana	20.07.18	Darga, Albay	Journalism	Home Radio Legazpi	Unknown
Butch Rosales	08.08.18	Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu	Urban poor, labor rights	Rise Up for Life and for Rights	Unknown
Yangong Menyo	10.08.18	Impasugong, Bukidnon	Indigenous rights, Land rights, Anti-mining	Pigayonggaan	8th IBPA
Rolly Panebio	18.08.18	Compostela, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights, anti-mining, red-tagging	Compostela Farmers Association (CFA)	66th IBPA
Gilbert Labial, Jean Labial	19.08.18	Compostela, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights, anti-mining, red-tagging	Compostela Farmers Association (CFA)	66th IBPA
Annaliza Dinopol Gallardo	22.08.18	Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Agrarian Reform Council for Mindanao Pioneers	Unknown
Mariam Uy Acob	23.09.18	Mamasapano, Maguindanao	Civil-political rights	Kawagib Moro Human Rights Alliance	Unknown
Jaime Delos Santos	06.10.18	Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental	Land rights, Labor rights	National Federation of Small Fisherfolk (Pamalakaya)	Unknown
Victor Villafranca	15.10.18	Lian, Batangas	Land rights, Labor rights	National Federation of Small Fisherfolk (Pamalakaya)	Unknown
Cesar Carreon	17.10.18	Mexico, Pampanga	Peasants' rights, labor rights, leftist politics	Anakpawis	Unknown
Eglicerio Villegas, Angelife Arsenal, Rene Laurencio, Morena Mendoza, Marcelina Dumaguit, Rannel Bantigue, Paterno Baron, Joemarie Ughayon, Marchtel Sumicad	20.10.18	Sagay City, Negros Occidental	Peasants' rights, land rights	National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW)	Special CAFGU Active Auxiliaries (SCAA)
Dannyboy Bautista	31.10.18	Compostela, Compostela Valley	Peasants' rights	Nagkahiusang Mamumuo sa Suyafa Farms (NAMASUFA)	Unknown
Benjamin Ramos	06.11.18	Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental	Civil-political rights	National Union of People's Lawyer (NUPL)	Unknown
Esteban Empong Sr.	18.11.18	Kitaotao, Bukidnon	Indigenous rights, right to education	Tinananon Kulamanon Lumadnong Panaghiusa (Tikulpa)	19th IBPA and CAFGU
Rommel Romon	23.11.18	San Francisco, Agusan del Sur	Indigenous rights, Peasants' rights, land rights	Nagkahiusang Mag-uuma sa Agusan del Sur (NAMASUR)	Gunmen hired by Davao San Francisco Agricultural Ventures Inc. (DSFAVI)

Name	Date	Place	Conflict Background	Affiliation	Alleged Perpetrators
Linus Cubol	27.11.18	Santiago, Agusan del Norte	Labor rights, leftist politics	Anakpawis, formerly Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMP)	29th IBPA
Jesus "Dondon" Isugan, Reneboy Fat, Jaime Revilla, Demetrio Fat, Constancio Languita, Jun Cubul	27.12.18	Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental	Peasants' rights, labor rights	Guihulngan United Operators and Drivers Association (GHUODA-PISTON), Kahugpungan Alang sa Ugma sa Gagmay nga Mag-uuma sa Oriental Negros (KAUGMAON-KMP)	PnP Regional Mobile Safety Battalion, 94th IBPA, 62nd IBPA, und 303rd IBPA
Gabriel Alburo	28.12.18	La Libertad, Negros Oriental	Journalism	94.5 dyJL Like Radio	Unknown
Nicasio Ebio	11.01.19	Bacon, Sorsogon	Peasants' rights, labor rights, leftist politics	Anakpawis	Unknown
Remegio Marco Arquillos	11.01.19	Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental	Labor rights	Guihulngan United Operators and Drivers Association (GHUODA-PISTON)	Unknown
Emel Tejero, Randedell Gallego	24.01.19	San Agustin, Surigao del Sur	Indigenous rights, Peasants' rights, labor rights	Maluhutayong Pakigbisog Alang Sumusunod (MAPASU)	401st IBPA
Sergio Atay Jr.	29.01.19	Rizal, Zamboanga del Norte	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Magbabaul	Regional Public Safety Battalion (RPSB)
Randy Felix Malayao	30.01.19	Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya	Peace	Peace consultant for the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP)	Unknown
Imelda Torralba	12.02.19	Butuan, Agusan del Norte	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Unyon sa Mag-uuma sa Agusan del Norte (UMAN-Anticala Chapter)	Unknown
Roberto Mejia	18.02.19	Bayambang, Pangasinan	Peasants' rights, Land rights, leftist politics	Ulopan na Umbaley ed Camp Gregg Military Reservation-KMP and Anakpawis	Unknown
Sanito "Tating" Delubio	01.03.19	Don Salvador Benedicto, Negros Occidental	Indigenous rights, Peasants' rights	Balatakan	Pramilitary group Revolutionary Proletarian Army (RPA)
James Vinas	12.03.19	Borongan City, Eastern Samar	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Bayan Muna Borongan	Unknown
Larry Suganob	18.03.19	San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan	Peasants' rights, Land rights, leftist politics	Pinagbuklod -Samahan ng Magsasaka sa Bulacan - KMP, Anakpawis	Gunmen hired by Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas & Ayala Corporation
Edgardo Avelino, Ismael Avelino, Rogelio Reomono, Melchor Pañares, Genes Palmares, Mario Pañares, Ricky Reomono, Gonzalo Rosales	30.03.19	Kanlaon City, Negros Oriental	Peasants' rights, Land rights, red-tagging	Hugpong Kusog Manguguma (HUKOM), Nagahiusang Mag-uuma sa Panubigan	Special Action Force (SAF), Regional Mobile Force (RMF), 94th IBPA
Anoj Enojo Rapada, Franklin Lariosa	30.03.19	Sta. Catalina, Negros Oriental	Labor rights, Peasant's rights, Land rights, red-tagging	Piston	SAF, RMF, 94th IBPA
Valentin Arcabal, Sonny Palagtiw, Steve Arapoc, Manolo Martin	30.03.19	Manjuyod, Negros Oriental	Labor rights, Peasant's rights, Land rights, red-tagging	Kapunongan Alang sa Ugma sa Gagmay'ng Mag-uuma sa Oriental Negros (KAUGMAON)	SAF, RMF, 94th IBPA
Datu Kaylo Bontolan	07.04.19	Kitaotao, Bukidnon	Indigenous rights, Land rights	Pasaka	3rd IBPA
Walter Balayo	20.04.19	Sagay City, Negros Occidental	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Task Force Mapalad	Unknown
Bernardino Patigas	22.04.19	Escalante, Negros Occidental	Civil-political rights	North Negros Alliance for Human Rights Advocates (NNAHRA)	Unknown
Archad Ayao	01.05.19	Cotabato City, Maguindanao	Civil-political rights	Regional Human Rights Commission (RHRC)	Unknown
Leonides "Dennis" Sequeña	02.06.19	Tanza, Cavite	Labor rights	Partido Manggagawa	Unknown
Felipe Dacal-Dacal	08.06.19	Escalante, Negros Occidental	Peasants' rights, Land rights	National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW)	Unknown
Arnie Espenilla	09.06.19	San Fernando, Masbate	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Masbate People's Organization	2nd IBPA
Zando Alcovendas	10.06.19	San Fernando, Masbate	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Masbate People's Organization	2nd IBPA
Pizo Cabug	14.06.19	San Fernando, Masbate	Peasants' rights, Land rights	Masbate People's Organization	2nd IBPA
Nelly Bagasala, Ryan Hubilla	15.06.19	Sorsogon City, Sorsogon	Civil-political rights	Karapatan Sorsogon	Unknown
Nonoy Palma	16.06.19	San Fernando, Bukidnon	Peasants' rights	KASAMA Bukidnon	Almara paramilitary group

Name	Date	Place	Conflict Background	Affiliation	Alleged Perpetrators
Neptali Morada	17.06.19	San Isidro, Naga City, Camarines Sur	Leftist politics	Former Bayan Muna member	Unknown
Lito Itao	27.06.19	Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental	Labor rights	Guihulngan City Habal-habal United Operators and Drivers Association (GHOUDA-PISTON)	Unknown
Joel Anino	06.07.19	San Fernando, Bukidnon	Peasants' rights	KASAMA-Bukidnon	Unknown
Salvador Romano	07.07.19	Majuyod, Negros Oriental	Human rights	Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), Karapatan	Unknown
Datu Mario Agsab	08.07.19	Cabanglasan, Bukidnon	Indigenous rights	PIGYAYUNGA-AN	Almara paramilitary group
Eduared Dizon	11.07.19	Kidapawan, Cotabato	Journalism	Brigada News FM-Kidapawan	Unknown
Anthony Trinidad	23.07.19	Guihulngan, Negros Oriental	Civil-political rights	Lawyer	Paramilitary group Kawasa Guihulnganon Batok Komunista (KAGUBAK)
Felimino Janayan	24.07.19	Zamboanguita, Negros Oriental	Peasants' rights, Land rights	United Calango Farmer Association (UCFA)	Unknown
Guillermo Casas	02.08.19	San Fernando, Bukidnon	Peasants' rights	Kahugpungan sa mga Mag-uuma (KASAMA)	Unknown
Pastor Ernesto Javier Estrella	02.08.19	Antipas, Cotabato	Red-tagging	United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP)	Unknown
Alex Lacay	09.08.19	Quezon, Bukidnon	Indigenous rights, Land rights	Kaugalingaong Sistema Igpasindog to Lumadnong Ogpaan (KASILO)	88th IBPA
Jeffrey Bayot	11.08.19	Quezon, Bukidnon	Indigenous rights, Land rights	Kaugalingaong Sistema Igpasindog to Lumadnong Ogpaan (KASILO)	88th IBPA

DISCLAIMER

This list comprises 214 journalists and human rights defenders who were killed in the Philippines between July 1, 2016 and August 30, 2019. Occasionally, we have also indicated relatives or bystanders who died during the assaults. Our classification of "human rights defender" follows the definition of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) which defines them as people who, individually or with others, act to promote or protect human rights while employing peaceful action.¹⁰⁰ We have only included cases in which the victim's death is confirmed, excluding all cases of enforced disappearances. Our research is based on publicly available online sources, mostly local human rights organizations and credible media sources. Where possible, we have cross-checked the data with our local partners and networks. We have only included killings in which a connection to the victim's activity as human rights defender or journalist is to be assumed. The column "Conflict Background" indicates the issue to which the respective killing is most likely related. In some cases, several possible backgrounds have been indicated. However, since there was no reported conviction in any of these cases, the real motives of the perpetrators cannot be verified. Finally, we have also indicated the alleged perpetrators of the killings based on the allegations made in our sources. A verification of these allegations is again not possible due to the lack of convictions.

100 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Fact Sheet No. 29: Human Rights Defenders, 2004, bit.ly/2mBRRqu

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