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

5 October 2022

Joint Oral Statement

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

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

We echo the report’s recommendations and urge the new administration to:

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

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

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

Thank you.

This statement was delivered by:

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


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


7 OHCHR. A/HRC/51/58, supra note 1.