



Plenary sitting

B9-0114/2022

15.2.2022

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on recent human rights developments in the Philippines
(2022/2540(RSP))

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on behalf of the ECR Group

**European Parliament resolution on recent human rights developments in the Philippines
(2022/2540(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Philippines,
 - having regard to the Framework Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of the Philippines, of the other part,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966,
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas there has been an upsurge of human rights violations in the Philippines, including waves of killings, threats, arbitrary arrests and detention of activists and human rights defenders;
- B. whereas since the beginning of the Duterte administration in June 2016, thousands of people mostly from poor and marginalized communities have been killed – either by the police or by armed vigilantes – as part of the government’s so-called “war on drugs”; whereas the government allegedly continues to support and arm civilian militias; whereas there also exist reports of abuses by the ‘New People’s Army’ of the Communist Party of the Philippines, including the killing of civilians, recruitment of children and extortion;
- C. whereas in the Philippines, human rights defenders face attacks, killings, judicial harassment, arbitrary detention and stigmatisation campaigns led by both state and non-state actors; whereas the killings are rarely investigated, which increases the vulnerability of those who remain active, while undermining the confidence in the justice system; whereas slow judicial processes remained an obstacle to bringing alleged perpetrators of human rights abuses to justice;
- D. whereas the government investigated only a limited number of reported human rights abuses, including abuses by its own forces, paramilitaries, and insurgent and terrorist groups; whereas significant concerns persist about impunity for other security forces,

civilian national and local government officials, and powerful business and commercial figures;

- E. whereas on 15 September 2021 the International Criminal Court (ICC) pre-trial chamber announced that it has authorized the Office of the Prosecutor to open an investigation into crimes against humanity including murders committed in the context of the “war on drugs” under the administration of President Duterte and also those in Davao City by the alleged Davao Death Squad from 2011 to 2016;
- F. whereas on 9 December 2021 the Supreme Court of the Philippines declared two portions of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 as unconstitutional; whereas the law continues to pose a threat to human rights defenders, activists as well as members of marginalised groups and others wrongly accused of terrorism by granting the government excessive and unchecked powers and being susceptible to arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement;
- G. whereas on 17 January 2022, the Philippines House of Representatives adopted House Bill No. 10576, also known as the Human Rights Defenders Act; whereas the act proposes, among others, the recognition of human rights defenders, organisations, and their work, obligations of state actors towards them, and the creation of a Human Rights Defenders Protection Committee;
- H. whereas general elections, including presidential elections, in the Philippines are scheduled for 9 May 2022;
- I. whereas Senator Leila de Lima, one of the main opponents of President Duterte’s anti-drugs campaign, was removed from her position as chairperson of the Senate Committee on Justice and Human Rights on 19 September 2016, and has remained in detention awaiting trial since her arrest on 24 February 2017; whereas there are serious concerns that the offences Senator de Lima has been charged with are fabricated and politically motivated;
- J. whereas through ratification of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, the European Union and the Philippines have reaffirmed their joint commitment to the principles of good governance, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, the promotion of social and economic development, and to peace and security in the region;

1. Expresses its grave concern at the worrying human rights situation in the Philippines;

2. Strongly condemns the thousands of extrajudicial killings and other serious human rights violations related to the so-called ‘war on drugs’; calls on the Government of the Philippines to put an immediate end to all violence targeting suspected drug offenders, and to disband private and state-backed paramilitary groups; insists that the fight against illicit drugs must be pursued in full compliance with due process of law, in accordance with national and international law, and with emphasis on public health;
3. Condemns all threats, harassment, intimidation, rape and violence against those who seek to expose allegations of extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations in the country, including human rights activists and journalists; denounces the misuse of the law and judiciary systems as a means of silencing critical voices;
4. Urges the Philippine authorities to make the necessary investigations into the killings in a timely, thorough and transparent manner and to bring those responsible to justice;
5. Is concerned that the climate of impunity has a corrosive impact on public confidence in the rule of law and that the killings are creating a climate in which people in the Philippines do not feel free to exercise their rights of political expression and association;
6. Welcomes the decision of the Supreme Court of the Philippines to declare some parts of the Anti-Terrorism Act 2020 unconstitutional, but is concerned that the law will still spur human rights violations as most of its provisions are upheld; encourages the government to further amend the law to ensure it is consistent with international human rights law and standards;
7. Calls on the government to take determined action to ensure free civic space and protection for those who engage in peaceful civic action and debate; urges the Philippine authorities to recognise that human rights defenders play a legitimate role in guaranteeing peace, justice and democracy;
8. Welcomes the imminent investigation by the ICC into committed crimes against humanity as this would offer victims a chance to obtain justice;
9. Welcomes the recent adoption of the Human Rights Defenders Act by the House of Representatives; calls on the Senate to expedite the adoption of the law in order to advance in the enactment of a comprehensive Human Rights Defenders law, in accordance with international human rights standards;
10. Welcomes UN Joint Programme Programme on Human Human Rights in the Philippines and the positive results achieved so far;

11. Reiterates its call on the authorities of the Philippines to drop all politically motivated charges against Senator Leila de Lima, to release her while she awaits trial, to allow her to freely exercise her rights and duties as an elected representative, and to provide her with adequate security and sanitary conditions while in detention; calls on the EU to continue closely monitoring her case;
12. Calls on the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to closely monitor the situation in the Philippines, and to regularly report to the European Parliament;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the European External Action Service, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the accession and candidate countries and the Government and Parliament of the Republic of the Philippines.