



**46th regular session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 10: General Debate on technical cooperation and capacity building**

Oral statement delivered by Cecile Gaa

On behalf of Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), Amnesty International, International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), Human Rights Watch, Philippines Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA) and International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

22 March 2021

Madam President,

Nearly six months since its adoption, Human Rights Council resolution 45/33 offering technical assistance to the Philippines has proven to be utterly insufficient to address the systematic human rights violations and persistent impunity documented in the High Commissioner's report. The Philippine Government's policies and actions since the Resolution's adoption have been completely at odds with the commitments outlined in it.

Extrajudicial killings in the so-called 'war on drugs' have continued. To date, the Government has made no tangible progress towards accountability against those most responsible for such killings. In December 2020, the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC found that there is "reasonable basis to believe that the crimes against humanity" of murder, torture, the infliction of serious physical injury and mental harm, and other inhumane acts were committed between at least 1 July 2016 and 16 March 2019.

Human rights defenders pursuing legitimate work, especially those who advocate for international accountability, including lawyers, continue to be attacked and accused of belonging to terrorist groups. Rights defenders continue to be arrested and jailed. The draconian Anti-terrorism Act, passed last year, exacerbates risks to defenders. The killing of nine human rights defenders and activists on 7 March, two days after President Duterte ordered the police and military to "finish off" and "kill" those purported to be "communist rebels", illustrates clearly the persistent killings and attacks faced by activists and defenders. It is very clear that no amount of technical assistance or capacity building will end the killings as the President and top government officials continue to incite murder and violence as official policy.

In this context, it is imperative that the Council set up an international accountability mechanism to end the cycle of violence and impunity in the Philippines.

Thank you.

Endorsed by:

Amnesty International
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
Human Rights Watch
International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
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