



PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE **ALLIANCE PROGRESSISTE**

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Progressive Alliance condemns continuing massive violence and deaths in Philippines

The Progressive Alliance, an association of social democratic, socialist and labour parties, political organisations and networks all over the world, reiterates its concern over the escalating situation in the Philippines which threatens to erode its decades-long struggle for democracy and human rights.

First, the extra judicial killings resulting from a government campaign targeting people for their supposed links to drugs, is shredding the country's adherence to the presumption of innocence and equal protection of the law. The government's current anti-drugs campaign manifests as a violent witch hunt that primarily victimizes poor people unable to afford legal defense. More than 8,000 bodies, often wrapped in packaging tape, have littered Manila's streets in vigilante-style killings which remain unresolved to this day.

We also view with concern the Duterte administration's latest response to opposition against these killings such as incarcerating Senator Leila de Lima and announcing its openness to restore Martial Law. Women leaders of the opposition like Leila de Lima, Leni Robredo and Risa Hontiveros have been subjected to well-orchestrated online campaigns of harassment, bullying, and misogynistic attacks.

The Philippine government has been intent on going down a path of death and violence with its priority legislative measures. The House of Representatives recently passed the bill to reinstate the death penalty through lethal injection, hanging and firing squad. It also seeks to pass the proposal to lower the minimum age of criminal responsibility from the current 15 to a scandalous 9 years old. Both measures are backward, barbaric, cruel and violent -- they should not be accepted in societies today.



The Progressive Alliance therefore once again calls on Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and his administration, to:

- 1) Abandon the legislative measures reinstating the death penalty and lowering the minimum age of criminal responsibility, in the spirit of its commitments to various human rights instruments such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention against Torture and Others Forms of Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Punishment, Convention on the Rights of the Child, among others; and join the rest of civilized society in advancing humane reforms that strengthen the criminal justice system, nurture and protect mothers and children, and do not equate vengeance with justice.
- 2) Desist from inflammatory language and pronouncements that explicitly condone the killing of suspected drug users and pushers and other perpetrators of petty crimes, and branding those who oppose his campaign as protectors of drug trade lords and coddlers; as well as desist from baiting the public with dictatorship and Martial Law as solutions to the country's political, economic and societal problems;
- 3) Craft and implement humane and preventive public health and harm reduction policies based on actual evidence, and work with various stakeholders as a strategic solution as a means to combat the problem of drugs in the Philippines;
- 4) Act swiftly and conduct a thorough, fair and transparent investigation into the cases of extra judicial killings and bring the perpetrators of these killings to justice; including reparations and indemnification to the victims of these extra judicial killings towards justice for a campaign that has only claimed the lives of the poor, and not necessarily the guilty.

The Progressive Alliance also calls on the global community to pay closer attention to the developments in the fragile and contested democracy that is the Philippines. We believe the United Nations, in the absence of tangible, decisive action on the part of its national authorities to desist from these anti-democratic practices, should investigate the situation in the Philippines and forward



recommendations how the international community can help its citizens.

The Progressive Alliance, in solidarity with the Filipino people, and in particular its member, Akbayan (Citizens' Action Party), remain steadfast that the dark days of fear, intimidation, violence and death will be defeated by the vigilance and commitment of active citizens.