



**42<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council**  
**Item 2: General Debate on the Oral Update by the High Commissioner**

**10 September 2019**  
**Delivered by Fr Angelito Cortez, OFM**

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Thank you, Mr President,

Franciscans International welcomes the oral update of the High Commissioner and the work of her Office. We welcome the Council's adoption of Resolution 41/2 on the Philippines. We call on the OHCHR to meaningfully consult with civil society in the preparation of the report mandated by the resolution.

We regret the Philippine government's increased attacks against critical voices. Despite the adoption of the Human Rights Defenders Act in June 2019, human rights defenders continue to face extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, judicial harassment, and other forms of political persecution. Religious groups are also intimidated and face trumped-up charges.

We regret that the government's so-called 'war on drugs', essentially a war on the poor, continues without signs to end the killings or to carry out independent and impartial investigations on the deaths of thousands of victims.

Mr President,

As a member of the Human Rights Council, the Philippines is expected to uphold human rights standards and to cooperate with the Council and its mechanisms. We call on the government of the Philippines to cooperate with the OHCHR, and to ensure no reprisals against human rights defenders engaging with the UN. We call on the Council to continue to closely monitor the situation in the Philippines, and to consider more concrete action toward justice and accountability.

Thank you.