

**41<sup>st</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council  
Item 3: Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteurs on  
summary execution and on the right to education**

*Joint Oral Statement delivered by Fr. Christian Buenafe O.Carm*

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Mr President,

Franciscans International and Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund (Fastenopfer), together with Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) and the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP) welcome the report and the work of the Special Rapporteur on Summary Executions. We share her concerns on extraordinarily high number of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines, as mentioned in the joint statement by eleven Special Procedures mandate holders and the High Commissioner's update. We echo her call for an independent probe into these violations.

The government's ongoing "war against illegal drugs" has killed an estimate of over 27,000. Most of the victims are poor and have been brutally murdered on mere suspicion of being drug users or peddlers<sup>1</sup>. Big-time smugglers and drug lords, and perpetrators of the killings, enjoy impunity. Criticism against this policy by human rights defenders, journalists, religious leaders and clergy have been met with irresponsible red tagging and death threats, including from the President.<sup>2</sup>

In this month of June alone, we received reports on the killings of political activist Neptali Morada, peasant leader Nonoy Palma, labor leader Dennis Sequena, and human rights volunteers Ryan Hubilla and Nelly Bagasala<sup>3</sup>. The killings of human rights defenders, journalists, peasant and labor activists, and community leaders continue to take place without independent investigations to provide justice for victims and their families.

We deeply regret the failure of the Philippine government to meaningfully cooperate with UN Human Rights mechanisms, with Special Procedures mandate holders being met with reprisals. We call on the Council to adopt a resolution this session to mandate the OHCHR to monitor and report on the human rights situation in the Philippines. This is an important first step to bring justice for the victims.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> See the statement of Catholic Bishop Conference of the Philippines issued on 28 January 2019 at <http://cbcpnews.net/cbcpnews/conquering-evil-with-good/>

<sup>2</sup> President Duterte made a statement on the death threat against clergymen <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/224537-duterte-word-became-flesh-kill-bishops>; see also in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zf5mPr1um3g>

<sup>3</sup> See the statement by Forum Asia and Front Line Defenders at <https://www.forum-asia.org/?p=29021>