



**54th Session of the Human Rights Council
Item 10: General Debate**

11 October 2023

***Delivered by Fr Jose Victor Lobjigo.
Check against delivery***

Thank you Mr President,

Franciscans International calls the Council's attention to the ongoing UN Joint Program on Human Rights (UNJP) in the Philippines, which will conclude in 2024. We urge the Philippines and the United Nations to not only renew this program but to reconfigure its mandate towards improving human rights accountability mechanisms.

The UN Joint Program aimed to address the serious human rights situation in the Philippines. However, the current government continues to implement the violent war on drugs of its predecessor. Despite its claim of a more human approach, since the start of the new administration, there have been 400 individuals killed. This is in addition to the six thousand killed under the previous government. Since the launch of the violent anti-drug campaign in 2016, only two cases resulted in the conviction of the perpetrators.

An extension and reconfiguration of the UN Joint Program should include a monitoring and reporting mandate for the OHCHR, a counterpart role for the Interior and Local Government Department which administers the national police, and meaningful participation by survivors and victims' families. The UN Joint Program should also encourage the government to cooperate with the International Criminal Court.

Finally, a public independent assessment must be done to evaluate the effectiveness of the UN Joint Program in addressing impunity and preventing future violations of human rights.

Thank you