



World Council
of Churches

ASIA PACIFIC FORUM

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Prepared by:

National Council of Churches in the Philippines

The National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), founded in 1963, is a council of ten mainline protestant and non-Roman Catholic churches nine service-related organizations in the Philippines. Both as a council and through the work of our member churches, NCCP has conducted programs around human rights advocacy, training of human rights defenders, and the provision of direct support services to victims of human rights violations and their families.

Iglesia Filipina Independiente Ramento Project for Rights Defenders

The Ramento Project for Rights Defenders (RPRD) is a Church-based and faith-based program for human rights defenders (HRDs) under the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) that began operating in 2010 to honor IFI Obispo Maximo (archbishop) Alberto Ramento, a bishop-HRD who was killed extrajudicially in 2006. It offers small grants for programs in human rights training and education, action and advocacy as well as a sanctuary and other forms of assistance.

United Church of Christ in the Philippines

The United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) is an indigenous evangelical church formed by the union of Protestant Mission churches and institutions in 1948. This union includes the Presbyterian, Philippine Methodist, Brethren, Disciples, and Congregational Churches. UCCP is driven by faith in God to partake in the life and struggle of the Filipino people. It currently works in human rights, justice, peace, and the integrity of creation, among other advocacies.

in partnership with

The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of 352 churches from more than 120 countries, representing over 580 million Christians worldwide. Through ecumenical advocacy, the WCC encourages and supports engagement of member churches and their partners in the reporting mechanisms of the UN human rights system, speaking out against injustice and discrimination, being a voice for the voiceless, and amplifying unheard voices.

Asia Pacific Forum

The Asia Pacific Forum brings together primarily North American denominations and partner agencies for ecumenical collaboration and action in solidarity with partners in the region, including American Baptist Churches USA • Anglican Church of Canada • Evangelical Lutheran Church in America • Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the USA and Canada and United Church of Christ, USA • KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives • Presbyterian Church in Canada • Presbyterian Church (USA) • The Episcopal Church • The United Church of Canada • The United Methodist Church (General

1. The submitters of this report – the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), the Iglesia Filipina Independiente’s (IFI) human rights program Ramento Project for Rights Defenders (RPRD), and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) – have worked for the promotion and protection of human rights as expressions of their faith/religious beliefs through awareness, advocacy, and action. These church institutions have publicly called out violations of civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights in the country including the war on drugs. The NCCP has submitted reports for the Universal Period Review (UPR) since the first cycle, RPRD since the second cycle, and the UCCP for the third cycle.
2. The general theme of this report pertains to this recommendation: *“Take all necessary measures to promote the enjoyment of freedom of expression, religion and civil liberties”* (Botswana 133.70). While the recommendation was only noted by the government of the Philippines, such freedoms are at the core of the Bill of Rights of the Philippine Constitution.
3. The witness and service to the poor and the marginalized are expressions of the belief of the NCCP, IFI, and UCCP in the sacred task to defend the dignity of every person who is each a child of God and a bearer of God’s image. The NCCP, IFI, and UCCP, find themselves vilified as organizations for the exercise of ministries in furtherance thereof. Their workers and members — even their friends, partners and others with whom they are connected — are also enduring many difficulties and human rights violations.
4. A central factor to the increase of attacks on churches during the period under review is the collapse of the peace negotiations between the Philippine government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). This happened in late-2017 with President Rodrigo Duterte terminating the talks through Proclamation No. 360.
5. In 2018, an executive order created the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), an anti-insurgency task force that would help end the communist rebellion through a “whole of nation approach”. The founding of the agency has observably increased, diversified, and emboldened attacks on dissenters and anyone else seen as anti-government. With the passage of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020, the government of President Rodrigo Duterte intensified its anti-insurgency campaign that targets dissenters, activists, and critics. The co-authors of this report have been wrongfully and repeatedly portrayed as such – as enemies of the government who allegedly plan to destabilize and topple it.
6. Thus, the recommendation to *“Stop the implementation of counterinsurgency programs that target human rights defenders and civilians”* (Slovakia 133.74), is also an important reference point for this report as we present emblematic cases of human rights violations that transpired between 2017 and 2021 among our organizations and our members. In discussing these violations, the report also touches on the need to push for selected 3rd cycle recommendations that aim to:
 - *provide adequate protection to HR defenders (Hungary 133.176, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 133.182, Denmark 133.158, Norway 133.179, Ukraine*

133.181, France 133.153);

- *administer justice and fair trial (Costa Rica 133.133, Timor Leste 133.131, Argentina 133.139, Slovenia 133.142, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 133.143, Liechtenstein 133.136, Zambia 133.151, Portugal 133.144, Sweden 133.145, United States of America 133.140);*
- *prohibit torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment (Slovakia 133.105, Canada 133.108, Austria 133.123, Georgia 133.121); end extra-judicial killings (Lithuania 133.107, Australia 133.43, Ghana 133.111, Germany 133.109, Costa Rica 133.100, Chile 133.110, Switzerland 133.149, France 133.102); and,*
- *address impunity (Luxembourg 133.141, Canada 133.157, Austria 133.148, Croatia 133.137, Iceland 133.153).*

These recommendations, while noted by the Government of Philippines, were not supported.

For this 4th cycle of the UPR, there is an urgent need to press these recommendations further.

7. With this submission, the participating organizations unequivocally register alarm over the disturbing number of human rights violations in the country. The document concludes with recommendations that, to our minds as people of faith and citizens of the Philippines, will address the attacks on churches as well as our motivations for speaking up. They will also have far-reaching, positive effects on other sectors that have endured similar offensives, as well as the people of our country at large.
8. In times of despair, such as during calamities and the recent COVID-19 lockdowns, churches, in furtherance of their religious beliefs, have provided humanitarian aid to underprivileged and underserved communities. NCCP, IFI, and UCCP have provided direct services to communities needing humanitarian assistance for decades now, seeing that such challenging times are an opportunity to affirm with Christian love the dignity of key affected populations. At many points, since the organizations and some church leaders including bishops had been labeled as “leftist” and compassionate initiatives were perceived as anti-government and were subjected by government actors and their supporters to needless difficulties such as online and offline threats, harassment and vilification. Reactions that affect humanitarian efforts could deny people life-saving services and, by extension, their non-derogable right to life.
9. Christian churches in the Philippines offer sanctuary to troubled populations. One facility known for this is the UCCP Haran Mission Center in Davao City, a refuge for internally displaced persons since the 1990s. In January 2020, a peace and order council demanded the closure of the center, accusing it of “violating the Indigenous People’s Rights Act, as well as of committing child abuse and serious illegal detention offenses while engaging in human trafficking.”ⁱ The resolution prompted suspected state agents and members of paramilitary group Alamara to attack and vandalize the site, then hosting at least 500 indigenous peoples displaced from militarized areas. To this day, the threat of closure looms while UCCP leaders involved in the operation of Haran face legal and other difficulties.
10. NCCP, IFI, and UCCP work together to spread out resources and minimize duplication, and usually direct their aid to areas unreached by other organisations, accompanying the recovery of hard-to-reach and historically ignored or disadvantaged communities. This includes places inhabited by indigenous peoples or affected by violent encounters between government forces and other armed groups. These activities have regrettably been considered by state agents as evidence that the institutions pool their resources to support belligerent forces.

11. In a joint statement in April 2021, a consortium of faith-based organizations in the Philippines released a statementⁱⁱ identifying multiple assaults on “humanitarian missions and prophetic ministries” amid the pandemic, further proving the partiality of state actors. Some incidents that relate to the submitting organizations are:
- “...an ‘unwanted series of visits and inappropriate questioning’ by the military to ... Rev. Glofie Baluntong, district superintendent of the United Methodist Church (UMC) in Mindoro.” She has been leading relief and development ministries among the Mangyan, the island’s indigenous people. In 2019, she was also questioned by police for hosting a fact-finding team of human rights watchdog Karapatan.ⁱⁱⁱ The UMC in the Philippines is a member of the NCCP.
 - “...the harassment incidents during and after conducting COVID-19 humanitarian activities in the Aeta communities in Central Luzon led by Ptr. Conrado Mangalindan of the [UCCP] and Bishop Dindo Ranojo of the [IFI]” that included surveillance, threats and red-tagging. In one effort spearheaded by Bishop Ranojo in 2020, police suddenly joined the relief effort and then claimed they “cosponsored” it in a later Facebook post.^{iv}
 - the military sharing pictures and videos of an NCCP humanitarian mission in Pinili, Ilocos Norte, during an effort to red-tag IFI priests^v
12. During the hard lockdowns in mid-2021, the submitters of this report distributed aid to people economically paralyzed by the restrictions. One delivery method was the then-popular community pantry: a makeshift pantry established in a publicly accessible place where individuals can give and take food and other items at no charge to them. The whole movement, running under the slogan “Give according to your means, take according to your need”, was red-tagged.^{vi}
13. Red-tagging or red-baiting is defined in House Bill No. 9309 as “the practice of publicly and detractively labeling, branding, naming, and accusing individuals and/or organizations in order to classify them as government-critical individuals and/or organizations who are state enemies, left-leaning, subversives, communist terrorists, and/or members of communist front organizations, with the purpose of overthrowing the democratically legitimized state authority.”^{vii} Even the European Parliament noted a troubling trend relating to red-tagging: This effort often result in killings, threats, warrantless arrests, and harassment.^{viii}
14. Red-tagging has been a common tactic of the government when discrediting people and institutions. Church workers and people of faith seeking to express their faith in social causes have not been immune to this. When they have called for peace talks, for justice for victims of the drug war, and for the respect and promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples, these calls have been linked to communism.
15. Whilst this report lists some specific instances of harassment, the reality on the ground is that many church workers and people of faith are intimidated repeatedly in the Philippines - both online and offline. Tactics have also been reemployed across cases and contexts.
16. In September 2018, IFI faithful in Mindanao’s Zamboanga Peninsula reported vandalism on church property and structures along highways linking IFI, UCCP and even the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines (RMP) to the rebel New People’s Army (NPA).^{ix} A similar incident happened in Cagayan De Oro City, a major city in Mindanao, in January 2019.^x
17. On November 5, 2019, the NCCP was included on the list of “front organizations of local communist terrorist groups” by the Department of National Defense (DND). The NCCP was one among a number of humanitarian and civil society organizations in the list that was presented by Major General Reuben Basiao, Armed Forces of the Philippines Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence during a

committee meeting at the House of Representatives for the modernization of the armed forces.^{xi}

18. In October 2020, the anti-insurgency agency NTF-ELCAC revealed a “star witness” in its case against the rebellion, supposed NPA ex-cadre Jeffrey Celiz, a.k.a. Ka Eric Almendras. In a press conference on Oct. 30, he identified the IFI, UCCP, UMC, and the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches – all members of the NCCP – as streams of recruitment into the NPA. Among others, he also mentioned RMP and the Student Christian Movement of the Philippines, an NCCP associate member.^{xii} After appearing in a Senate hearing on red-tagging, Celiz has become a regular resource person of NTF-ELCAC, even routinely appearing at the agency’s show, “Laban Kasama Ang Bayan.”
19. Even IFI’s top leader was not spared the intimidation. On Nov. 20, 2020, in Mindanao’s Caraga Region, a “Movement Against Terrorism (MAT) – Surigao chapter” mounted tarpaulins containing the pictures, names, and organizations of 17 individuals, which they called NPA terrorists, among them, was Obispo Maximo Rhee M. Timbang (the title of Obispo Maximo is used to address the head of the IFI). The same poster has been widely circulated online.^{xiii}
20. The following persons also reported intimidation in IFI: Bishop Joselito Cruz (death threat via letter, December 2018);^{xiv} Rev. Randy Manicap (death threat via text, June 2018);^{xv} Rev. Rolando Abejo, Rev. Khen Apus, Rev. Chris Ablon, Bishop Antonio Ablon and Bishop Felixberto Calang (red-tagging via flyers, February 2019);^{xvi} and Rev. Marco Sulayao (checkpoint, September 2020).^{xvii}
21. Jenny Beth Mariano, a youth leader of the UCCP in La Union province, has suffered red-tagging and other forms of intimidation over the past two years.^{xviii} Her face and name were published in informational materials that identified her as a “youth recruiter” of the NPA in the Ilocos region in Luzon. The NTF-ELCAC also directly accused her of the same role. Her parents, Pastor Marcelino Mariano and Diaconal Minister Daisy Mariano, have also shared her experience of vilification.^{xix} They, too, are involved with groups advocating social justice.
22. The members of the Mariano family are three examples of the estimated 194 victims across the nationwide membership of UCCP, who have suffered “red-tagging or similar harassments including image-shaming, intimidations, death threats, dissemination of black propaganda materials, social media attacks, posters, pictures, tarpaulins, and similar cases.”^{xx} Many on their list are bishops, pastors and lay leaders involved with civic organizations or championing sociopolitical causes.
23. NCCP experienced surveillance on its compound on Feb. 12^{xxi} and 19^{xxii}, 2021. Nationwide, churches have reported intrusions, surveillance efforts, and questionings by state forces and suspected state agents. Some of these occur through unannounced and uncoordinated church visitations under initiatives like the police’s “Oplan Bathala” or the military’s “Joint Campaign Plan Contentment.”^{xxiii} ^{xxiv} These incidents sometimes cause trouble among church leaders and members of congregations, especially when the officers conduct their visits with firearms in full display.
24. NTF-ELCAC began publicly tagging people and groups on the online public space with greater frequency and a higher level of sophistication when, on Nov. 4, 2019, it launched its official Facebook page. Among others, in a May 2020 post,^{xxv} the agency called NCCP, IFI and UCCP, as well as SCMP and the Promotion of Church Peoples’ Response (PCPR) “open sectoral organizations” of the communist rebellion. It also uses an amplification network, which includes government pages PCOO and RTVM,^{xxvi} as well as official military and police pages.
25. Rev. Irma Balaba, a UCCP pastor and NCCP staff member, was seen in a photo accompanying a story on NPA soldiers who had reportedly surrendered to the government. The content was posted on the

Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) Southern Luzon Command Facebook Page (only an erratum remains^{xxvii}). On June 2021, Kalumaran Mindanao noted that UCCP Bishops Hamuel Tequis, Emergencio Padillo and Reuel Norman Marigza (also the current NCCP General-Secretary) were “fake bishops” who supported the NPA.^{xxviii}

26. Bishop Marigza was also labeled by Timek Ti Cagayan (Voice of Cagayan) on Facebook, but the page was taken down with many others in Facebook's effort to purge coordinated inauthentic behavior (CIB).^{xxix} Despite steps by tech companies to address CIB, pages bearing the same disinformation continue to crop up on social media.
27. There is no law in the Philippines criminalizing the act of red-tagging, although proposed bills like the one cited above exist. It is also a form of “trial by publicity.” The claims may be distributed on various channels by the perpetrators without proof because, in the first place, the intention is not for the content to stand up in court but to undermine the subject of the attack among media consumers.
28. The reprisals against UCCP Haran continued beyond the attempts to close the church and the violent 2020 incident (reported in paragraph #9). Six people, including Bishop Tequis, were charged with child abuse in September 2020.^{xxx} In March 2021, the Anti-Money Laundering Council issued a freeze order on bank accounts used by UCCP Haran and facilitators, which the Council alleged were being used to support terrorist activities.^{xxxi} Many faith-based groups now fear that the government will also make allegations against them that they fund terrorists, effectively disallowing them from providing services to communities in distress.
29. RPRD staff member, Rev. Wilfredo Ruazol, faces a legal challenge lodged against him and several others by National Security Adviser and NTF-ELCAC vice chair Hermogenes Esperon Jr.^{xxxii} In 2020, a court revived a case that had once been dismissed, and he and leaders of human rights group Karapatan (to which Rev. Ruazol is a board member), women's group Gabriela and religious group RMP are now being tried for perjury in connection to a failed petition for writs of amparo and habeas corpus, through which they sought their members' protections against red-tagging, military harassment and human rights violations. From the church sector, RMP's elderly Sr. Elenita Belardo also is among the defendants.
30. An earlier case in Mindanao involves Bishop Carlo Morales of the IFI Diocese of Ozamiz. In May 2017, a joint operation of AFP and the Philippine National Police arrested him, his wife and driver alongside NDFP consultant Rommel Salinas at a checkpoint. While the wife and driver were freed days later, the bishop and Salinas remained in jail. Bishop Morales was finally released on bail in March 2018.^{xxxiii} Together with Salinas, he still faces trial for illegal possession of firearms or explosives.
31. In July 2018, police operatives arrested 13 people, including at least two voluntary staff members of the Visayas-Mindanao Regional Office for Development (VIMROD) in the middle of a meeting in General Santos City.^{xxxiv} VIMROD is a longtime development project of the IFI. Among those unjustly rounded up based on an arrest warrant meant for three people^{xxxv} — the 13 had maintained not being familiar to the names — was VIMROD's Aldeem Yañez, who also served as IFI national youth president and NCCP vice chairperson. He had been previously arrested and charged, along with another 554 people, of involvement in an NPA attack on an Army patrol base in 2018. He and 16 others were acquitted in late 2021.^{xxxvi} He has reportedly been closely watched by intelligence operatives.
32. In November 2018, 18 people — called the “Talaingod 18” — were arrested in Mindanao for violating provisions of the child abuse law. They were part of a bigger solidarity mission that authorities flagged

at a checkpoint. With them at the time were minors, who according to the authorities were taken without parental consent.^{xxxvii} The group included Reverends Edgar Ugal, Ryan Magpayo and Jurie Jaime of UCCP, and another pastor from UMC. Records maintained by UCCP reveal that the case was initially dismissed in 2019, but another legal suit with the same charges and complainants was filed in 2020.

33. On June 2019, seven people were arrested by the police and military in Himamaylan, Negros Occidental.^{xxxviii} The group included UCCP Pastor Jimmy Teves and six other UCCP members, namely, Jodito Montesino, Jaypee Romano, Jasper Aguyong, Rogen Sabanal, Junnifer Hermino and Rogelio Suetas. All were accused of membership to the NPA and six, including Pastor Teves, now face murder and frustrated murder charges. They are currently in detention.
34. In Bicol, Pastor Dan San Andres of UCCP was arrested on July 9, 2020, for alleged murder. The church worker, also the spokesperson of the regional chapter of Karapatan, was charged in connection to a 2018 ambush by NPA rebels that resulted in the death of two soldiers. The case was dismissed for lack of probable cause in April 2021.^{xxxix}
35. On June 6, 2021, police arrested Pastor Benjie Gomez in Zamboanga del Norte on murder charges.^{xl} Rev. Nathaniel Vallente, another church worker of UCCP, was subjected to a raid and then apprehended for illegal possession of firearms in Bohol a few days later.^{xli} The Bohol-based pastor, also working with peasants in the province, was dubbed by authorities as a supporter of the communist movement and a member of a crime group. He is currently detained. Meanwhile, Pastor Gomez was released from detention in January 2022 after the cases against him were dismissed.^{xlii} Pastor Benjie Gomez was initially arrested nine years ago as he was allegedly implicated in a murder case, but was dismissed due to lack of evidence. His case was included by the UCCP shadow report in 2017 for 3rd UPR Cycle in the Philippines.
36. There are allegations of state forces coopting judges to act as “warrant factories.”^{xliii} Warrant factories refer to courts or judges that issue search warrants to state agents which are reportedly used to target red-tagged critics and activists^{xliv}. Some of the search warrants have resulted in violent encounters where the lives of activists have been lost. A number of warrants were ultimately quashed for being defective.^{xlv} Among such cases was that of UCCP’s Pastor Dan Balucio, also a coordinator of Bicol-based humanitarian response group Andurog Mayon and the spokesperson of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Bicol. He was arrested in May 2021 after the police raided his home in Albay. In August 2021, a judge cleared him of the charge of illegal possession of firearms and explosives after voiding the search warrant against him for the inconsistencies it bore.^{xlvi}
37. Many cases against church workers and people of faith have been dismissed, but NCCP, IFI, and UCCP note that a lot of those named in the cases have had to suffer poor conditions under detention — some amid the pandemic — while court proceedings moved slowly. Although those acquitted were released, several of them continue to fear for their own and their loved ones’ lives. Those whose cases are being heard, meanwhile, need constant support in various forms.
38. Many cases question the effectiveness of Philippine courts to operate independently and efficiently and they may constitute violations of people’s right to due process. Some of the cases also feature illegal arrests and detentions, the protection against which should be upheld by the government. Finally, where expressions of faith are misinterpreted as terrorism and communism, among others, there should also be an inquiry into whether people and institutions are actually discriminated against based on belief.

39. As the cases stack up together with other attacks, church people express worries about further attacks against them and other activists, development workers, and human rights defenders. They fear for their lives and for those of their family and friends.
40. The reported killings of church workers and people of faith cut across the different denomination groupings. These cases violate the right to life.
41. A report detailing killings of church people from January 2017 to October 2020 noted 16 murders— 5 ministers including 3 Roman Catholic priests, Fr. Marcelito “Tito” Paez, Fr. Mark Ventura and Fr. Richmond Nilo, and 11 lay leaders.^{xlvii} All of them were killed using firearms, with one also being stabbed. The majority were involved in social justice.
42. The UCCP has recorded four extrajudicial killings amongst its workers and leaders since the Duterte presidency began in 2016. At least three of them happened within the period under review in this cycle of the UPR. They are as follows:
- Rev. Perfecto Hoyle was gunned down in November 2017 in Agusan del Norte in Mindanao.^{xlviii} He was a known peasant leader, aside from being a lay pastor.
 - Rev. Ernesto Estrella was assassinated in North Cotabato, also in Mindanao, in August 2019.^{xlix} He was driving his motorcycle when unidentified assailants shot at him. He was a provincial spokesperson of PCPR.
 - UCCP member Rico Antanoy perished after being shot in Negros Occidental in Visayas October 2020.
43. IFI also recorded some extrajudicial killings, among which:
- Killed in Surigao del Norte in July 2017 was Meliton Catampongan. He was a peasant leader and a member of the council of an IFI parish in his town. Before being shot, right in front of a public school, he had received death threats in the past.ⁱ
 - On September 15, 2017, an IFI lay minister and respected community leader among the Mangyan in Bulalacao, Oriental Mindoro, was shot dead near a military detachment with a companion. Erning Aykid had been interrogated by the military in the past. He had also received threats to his life.ⁱⁱ
44. Outside the two denominations above, NCCP recorded another attack that killed an ecumenical leader, Neptali Morada. The victim, a part of NCCP member church Iglesia Unida Ekyumenikal, was gunned down on his way to work in June 2019,ⁱⁱⁱ after living through vilification and harassment for his activism. He was part of progressive groups Bayan and Bayan Muna before joining the staff of former Camarines Sur Vice Gov. Ato Peña. In a dispatch, Sen. Leila De Lima, herself illegally detained, dubbed Morada’s death evidence of “a clear pattern of targeted killings of activists, and of human rights violations.”ⁱⁱⁱⁱ De Lima then singled out Memorandum Order No. 32, enforced in November 2018, as an Order which enabled the killers to take the life of Morada and other activists.
45. Memorandum Order No. 32 has allowed for the deployment of more soldiers in Bicol and Eastern Visayas regions, as well as Negros island. Numerous attacks on church workers and people of faith, as well as activists from a breadth of sectors, occurred in places covered by the policy, which is still in effect to this day. Other attacks have been attributed to (1) Executive Order No. 70, which not only lay the groundwork for the NTF-ELCAC but also set the country on an equivocal “whole of nation” approach to peacebuilding; and (2) martial law in Mindanao (Proclamation No. 216) that lasted from May 2017 to December 2019.

Conclusion

46. The realities above by no means represent the whole experience of Christians in the Philippines; they are but a few. They do not cover other denominations under the Christian faith. They do not even completely enumerate what has happened within NCCP, IFI, and UCCP. Victims and survivors from other faiths wait to be heard as well. On a larger scale, such attacks occur in parallel with those tormenting other sectors.
47. It is hoped that the serious cases outlined in this report represent the many other cases which have not been documented or enumerated due to varied reasons, among which a refusal among people to be named because of fear of retribution and a strong hesitation by victims to have their cases written down in the first place.

Recommendations

48. Considering the realities noted above and everything the co-authors have experienced from years of work, the following are recommendations to the Philippine government that will help bring justice to the victims of human rights violations, and prevent any more violations from occurring in the Philippines:

The Government of the Philippines must:

- i. Abandon “whole of nation” approach in counterinsurgency programs, abolish the NTF-ELCAC, terminate policies that militarize many parts of the country, and resume the peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines and with rebel groups in Mindanao.
- ii. Stop efforts to liberally and maliciously label individuals and institutions as communists or terrorists, and other state-sponsored disinformation campaigns that demonize calls and advocates for social justice, activism, and the concept of human rights, among others.
- iii. End extrajudicial killings and measures that allow state security forces to violate human rights with impunity.
- iv. Allow human rights victims to access the justice system through commitments by state security forces to investigate their cases and by the courts to prosecute alleged perpetrators judiciously. In particular, the government must address the killings under the drug war and
- v. Enforce the Anti-Torture Law of 2009 (Republic Act No. 9745) and the Anti-Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10353). State security forces, in their conduct, have skirted these laws of the land.
- vi. Repeal the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 (Republic Act No. 11479) and enact the Human Rights Defenders’ Bill
- vii. Issue invitations to UN special procedures and mandate holders, especially those with pending requests.

ⁱ <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1091122>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.facebook.com/PhilippineFaithBasedOrganizations/posts/3880564038691185>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/police-question-united-methodists-about-sanctuary-guests>

^{iv} Ramento Project for Rights Defenders. (2021). *Human rights Report 2020*. Mandaluyong.

- v <https://www.facebook.com/rhee.timbang/posts/2759551470749135>
- vi <https://www.rappler.com/nation/community-pantries-face-red-tagging-april-2021/>
- vii https://hrep-website.s3.ap-southeast-1.amazonaws.com/legisdocs/basic_18/HB09309.pdf
- viii <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/iv/press-room/20220210IPR23022/human-rights-breaches-in-the-philippines-iran-and-burkina-faso>
- ix <https://manilastandard.net/lgu/mindanao/276889/iglesia-filipina-gets-red-tagged.html>
- x <https://www.facebook.com/rprdph/posts/292048784820052>
- xi <https://mb.com.ph/2019/11/08/church-leaders-express-fear-over-alleged-red-tagging-of-nccp/>
- xii <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=413456016478631>
- xiii <https://www.facebook.com/KA-Thribu-116903290220052/photos/122122889698092>
- xiv <http://rprd.ph/stop-harassment-of-church-people-allow-the-church-peaceful-observance-of-advent/>
- xv http://rprd.ph/ifi-priest-gets-death-threat/?fbclid=IwAR2-qOkvijGucsGAp_rroJDtrUr2dU2F8mNxspUNqMWy64-zSC0owdqiDCM
- xvi <https://www.panaynews.net/red-tagging-of-iglesia-filipina-independiente-and-partners/>
- xvii <https://www.facebook.com/anakbayanphils/posts/3904632682885466>
- xviii <https://pcij.org/article/6213/photo-essay-mark-saludes>
- xix <https://philippines.licas.news/2020/06/24/pastors-family-in-northern-philippines-fear-for-life-after-red-tagging/>
- xx <https://www.uccpchurch.com/put-on-the-armor-of-faith-resist-evil/?fbclid=IwAR1VFfACBrmZlbeqkOUeaTZaNcy7-dW0eCMTII2P3euVT-OZ98W6H1dmO5Q>
- xxi <https://www.facebook.com/nationalcouncilofchurchesinthephilippines/photos/2460595120915926>
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