

The members of the 18th Congress should push for the revocation of Executive Order 546, which directs the Philippine National Police to support the military in its counterinsurgency work, including through the use of militias and paramilitary groups.

Exercise the Congress' oversight powers to strictly oversee the military's full control over all state-sponsored militias and paramilitary groups.

Make the maintenance of private armies illegal.

Ensure, through the congress' oversight capacity, that the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines strictly incorporate international human rights and humanitarian law standards as integral and permanent components of training for police, military and their auxiliaries, militias and paramilitary groups. This includes ensuring that the police and the armed forces should continue to develop and implement human rights-based policies in their rules of engagement and operating procedures, including practical information such as rights-based procedures for arrest and detention, appropriate use of force, interrogation of criminal suspects without using torture or other ill-treatment under any circumstances, and appropriate sanctions for those who are found to have committed human rights violations;

Provide sufficient resources and mandate to the human rights offices of both the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police in order for them to strengthen further the investigations of credible allegations of human rights violations that have been previously conducted.

3. Ensuring the safe and voluntary return of the displaced and embed human rights protection in the peace process

Members of the 18th congress should push relevant government agencies to take stock of the current situation those considered to be long-term displaced populations in Mindanao due to conflict and disasters, and to ensure the full compliance with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

Ensure that the executive bodies integrate human rights principles in any peace process with armed opposition groups. Specifically, include provisions, through legislation, on mutual cooperation on human rights protection and joint investigations on credible allegations of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed in the context of armed conflicts;

Ensure the implementation of agreements such as the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law and the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees;

4. Making human rights a priority integrated across government bodies

Demand the Chief Executive to declare as a presidential priority bill the charter of the Commission on Human Rights in the Philippines to help facilitate its quick approval in both legislative branches;

Through its oversight powers, ensure the integration of all human rights principles into government policies and practices.

Commit congress to ensuring a realistic and practicable timeline in resolving the most serious cases of human rights violations by independent and efficient investigations and, where warranted, prosecutions that lead to convictions of the perpetrators, sustained protection for witnesses and reparations for the victims and their families.

5. Ratify key treaties on human rights and international humanitarian law

Push for the Philippines to be a state party to the Optional Protocol of the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Arms Trade Treaty and the Convention on the Protection of persons Against Enforced Disappearances.

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Amnesty International Philippines
section@amnesty.org.ph
FB: amnestyp
Twitter: @amnestyp

www.amnesty.org.ph
YouTube Channel: aiphilippines
Instagram: @amnesty_ph

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S 5-POINT HUMAN RIGHTS AGENDA FOR THE 18TH CONGRESS RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

We recognize and urge all instrumentalities of the state through its government, as 'duty-bearer' to **respect, protect** and **fulfil** all human rights of the people. It is incumbent upon all elected government officials, in their respective offices and capacities to consider the 5-Point Human Rights Agenda in fulfilling their sworn obligations. For the national legislators both in the House of Representatives and the Senate, the 18th Congress is an opportunity to work closely to protect the rights of the citizens by:

- 1. Ending extrajudicial executions, unlawful arrests, secret detention, enforced disappearances, torture and other ill-treatment by ensuring that perpetrators of these acts are made accountable. Members of congress should ensure that counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism and war against crimes will not be used to justify human rights violations**

Members of the 18th Congress should push for an impartial and independent commission that will review and investigate all cases of extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances during the last decade. This should be done in cooperation with impartial and independent bodies such as inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, with the aim of enabling speedy prosecutions for cases with enough evidence, or re-opening investigations for cases whose progress is stalled due to lack of effective investigation. And with urgency, investigate immediately the recent brought about by the government's war against drugs.

To prevent further cases of enforced disappearances and torture, the members of the legislature should ensure that protective measures for the families of victims of arbitrary or warrantless arrests and enforced disappearances must immediately be implemented.

Adopt immediately the national Preventive Mechanism Against Torture.

- 2. Establishing control and accountability over the military, police and other state-sponsored forces.**