

camp **Align**

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NEW

THIS ISSUE'S BURNING QUESTION
ANSWERED BY AMNESTY PH MEMBERS

“ ”

**ALMOST FIVE YEARS INTO HIS PRESIDENCY,
PRESIDENT DUTERTE CONTINUES TO INCITE A
WAVE OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND FUEL
A CLIMATE OF IMPUNITY FOR THE
PERPETRATORS, TURNING THE PHILIPPINES
INTO A COUNTRY WHERE POLICE AND STATE
FORCES ARE FREE TO KILL AS THEY PLEASE.**

Assurances to the international community that the government will investigate human rights violations cannot be taken seriously as long as incitement and killings continue.

The world can no longer stand idly by while the deadly campaign against people using or selling drugs continues. Human rights defenders, political activists, Indigenous peoples and other targeted groups continue to be arrested and attacked and sometimes killed; while independent media is silenced.

Amnesty International demands justice and accountability for the victims and countless families left behind.

DR. AGNÈS CALLAMARD

Secretary General
Amnesty International

10 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT AMNESTY'S NEWLY APPOINTED SECRETARY GENERAL

IN A WORLD OF LEADERS WHO TRADE IN DIVISION, HATE AND MISINFORMATION, DR. AGNÈS CALLAMARD BRINGS TO HER ROLE AS THE NEW SECRETARY GENERAL OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL A DEEP COMMITMENT TO TRUTH TELLING, AN UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE AND TO SOLIDARITY WITH HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS THE WORLD OVER.



- 1 The BBC describes her as one of the most “determined and effective human rights defenders in the world.”
- 2 She is a formidable investigator of human rights abuses, whose career and life has been shaped by a fundamental belief in speaking truth to power. She has a reputation for taking on the cases no one else would.
- 3 The granddaughter of Leon Savioux, a member of the French resistance extrajudicially killed by the Nazis on the last day of World War 2, Callamard has been deeply committed to the fight for justice from a young age. This ultimately led to her appointment, in 2016, as United Nations Special Rapporteur on extra-judicial, summary or arbitrary killings - the chief investigator into some of the world’s most high-profile murder cases.
- 4 Her human rights leadership has not been without risk. She has been subject to intimidation and personal threats from governments with a reputation for silencing human rights activists. President Duterte of the Philippines for example threatened to slap her if she investigated him for extrajudicial killings.
- 5 In 2018 her work made global headlines when she investigated the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. With so many governments willing to look the other way when Saudi Arabia perpetrates human rights abuses, Callamard has been unflinching in calling for accountability and justice.
- 6 She has been a prominent figure in the human rights world over decades: Along with her UN appointment, Callamard was also the Director of Global Freedom of Expression at Columbia University in New York. Previously she was Executive Director of the freedom of expression organization Article 19. She returns to Amnesty having previously held the role of Chef de Cabinet for then Secretary General Pierre Sané and having been the organization’s Research Policy Coordinator, leading Amnesty’s work on women’s human rights.
- 7 A leading advocate for freedom of expression, a feminist and an anti-racism activist, she pushes out the frontiers of rights through her scholarship and advocacy.
- 8 A French national, she is the second woman to lead Amnesty International in its 60-year history.
- 9 As its head strategist, campaigner-in-chief and top spokesperson, Callamard is set to lead Amnesty through some of the most turbulent years for human rights in modern history. She will build on AI’s unmatched legacy, not only to resist multiple attacks against human rights and civic space from multiple sources but to launch the human rights offensives that this rapidly changing world needs, from tackling the climate emergency to resetting the failing multi-lateral system to “fit-for-purpose”.
- 10 Hand in hand with Amnesty’s diverse and localised global movement, she will challenge the systemic inequalities that saw responses to Covid19 serve devastation rather than dignity. Demanding reset and reboot not merely recovery, Callamard will galvanize the Amnesty global movement into global partnership with human rights defenders around the world and with other social movements to support change at pace and on the scale that human rights demand.



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT 2020/21 STATE OF THE WORLD'S HUMAN RIGHTS

COVERS 149 COUNTRIES AND DELIVERS A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF HUMAN RIGHTS TRENDS GLOBALLY IN 2020

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL HAS DOCUMENTED GRAVE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN MANY PLACES IN 2020

AFRICA

Nigeria

The Nigerian government continued to crackdown on protests and attacks on freedom of expression. The #EndSARS protests and protesters came under brutal attack by the Nigerian government. Increasingly authorities are failing or willingly refusing to bring human rights violators to justice.

Mozambique

Hundreds of civilians have been unlawfully killed by the armed group known locally as 'Al-Shabaab'. Government security forces and a private military company hired by the government in Cabo Delgado were also implicated in the killings. The armed conflict between the so-called al-Shabaab and government forces created a humanitarian crisis. By the end of the year, over 500,000 people were internally displaced, and more than 700,000 needed humanitarian assistance.

Ethiopia

Eritrean troops fighting in the northern region of Tigray systematically killed hundreds of unarmed civilians in the northern city of Axum following a conflict which started in early November while hundreds of thousands of civilians were displaced. Opposition members and journalists were subjected to arbitrary arrests and detentions, leading to increased political polarization along ethnic lines, and largely preventing the realization of political and human rights reforms initiated in 2018.

Cameroon

The authorities continued to crack down on peaceful dissent, banning demonstrations and arbitrarily arresting those who exercised their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. At least 500 demonstrators were arrested in September, the majority of whom were members or supporters of the opposition. 160 of them remained in detention, 13 had been given prison sentences by civilian courts, and 14 had appeared before a military court

AMERICAS

USA

The Trump administration's inadequate and uneven response to COVID-19 had a disproportionate and discriminatory impact on people based on their race, socio-economic standing, and immigration status. Police shot dead at least 1,000 people in 2020, while law enforcement authorities used excessive force against Black Lives Matter demonstrators and failed to constrain violent counter-protests.

Brazil

President Bolsonaro's government continued to escalate its anti-human rights rhetoric, thus exacerbating the dangers facing human rights defenders, environmentalists, journalists, women, Black people, and Indigenous Peoples. The president's ongoing denial of the gravity of COVID-19 worsened the situation, while his government failed to stem rising levels of environmental destruction, gender-based violence and killings by police.

Venezuela

There were further reports of security forces committing excessive use of force, torture, and extrajudicial executions, while UN investigators found that Nicolás Maduro's government has likely committed crimes against humanity. COVID-19 further exacerbated the growing humanitarian crisis, while the state response to the pandemic was characterized by opacity and repression of critical journalists, activists and health workers.

ASIA PACIFIC

China

Mounting evidence of grave human rights violations, including torture and enforced disappearances, as part of a ruthless mass detention campaign targeting Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang. COVID-19 intensified a crackdown on freedom of expression with a number of citizen journalists who reported on the outbreak going missing, and in some cases being imprisoned.

Hong Kong

The China-imposed national security law enacted on 30 June 2020 triggered an unprecedented crackdown on freedom of expression, association and assembly. Since the law was passed, more than 100 people have been arrested and scores charged, with many potentially facing up to life in prison. Those targeted have included government critics, opposition leaders, student activists and prominent supporters of the city's 2019 protests.

India

Recent years have seen an increasing clampdown by the Modi administration on the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, using repressive legislation to silence civil society. Amnesty International India was forced to halt its work in September 2020 when its bank accounts were frozen by the Enforcement Directorate without notice. Human rights activists face harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention, often without charge or trial.

Myanmar

In Myanmar, the military committed serious human rights violations amid armed conflicts in several parts of the country. The Rohingya in Myanmar remain under apartheid conditions, and humanitarian access was severely restricted.

The authorities continued their crackdown on human rights defenders and imposed curbs on access to information and freedom of expression, including an internet blackout in parts of Rakhine and Chin State.



PHILIPPINES

Extrajudicial executions and other human rights violations continued under the government's "war on drugs". Human rights defenders and political activists were killed, harassed, detained and unjustly charged. Media freedom was unduly curtailed and dangerous anti-terror legislation was passed. Various groups condemned the government's heavy-handed approach to the COVID-19 pandemic. President Duterte renewed his call on Congress to reinstate the death penalty.

HEAD OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT: RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE

Measures taken by the government to curb the spread of COVID-19 led to numerous abuses of human rights. President Duterte ordered security forces and local government officials to "shoot dead" those causing "trouble" during a general community quarantine. The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) adopted a resolution to provide technical assistance and capacity-building to the government. The resolution fell short of calls for stronger action to address ongoing violations in the country.

EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS AND IMPUNITY

Killings and other human rights violations continued under the government's "war on drugs". On several occasions, President Duterte incited violence against people suspected of using or selling drugs, while promising to protect those who kill them. Reports of killings increased in cities where police chiefs who had previously overseen abusive operations were appointed. Based on government data, police killed at least 155 people from April to July, compared to 103 people from December 2019 to March. Killings by unknown individuals, many with suspected links to the police, continued. Victims were overwhelmingly poor.

Vice President Leni Robredo released a report countering Philippine National Police information on the "war on drugs". She stated that government efforts targeted people who use or sell small amounts of illicit drugs and called on the government to end its deadly approach known as Oplan Tokhang ("Operation Knock and Plead"), prosecute those involved in drug trafficking, and improve its collection and interpretation of drug-related data.

In June, the UN Human Rights Office released a report detailing extrajudicial executions and attacks against human rights defenders, political activists and the media, among other violations.

In July, the government announced the establishment of an inter-agency panel to “review” cases of drug-related killings by the police. Human rights groups said the panel was formed to shield the government from international scrutiny.

Despite repeated calls for an international investigation, the UNHRC adopted in October a resolution providing technical assistance and capacity-building to the government. The resolution required the UN Human Rights Office to continue to provide the UNHRC with updates over the next two years.

In December, the International Criminal Court stated crimes were committed in the “war on drugs”, adding it expects to decide in 2021 whether or not to open an investigation.

REPRESSION OF DISSENT

In February 2020, prisoner of conscience Senator Leila de Lima marked her third year in detention on politically-motivated charges after she sought to investigate drug-related killings. Also in February, a court issued arrest warrants against former Senator and critic of the “war on drugs” Antonio Trillanes IV, activist priest Fr. Flaviano “Flavie” Villanueva and nine others on charges of conspiracy to commit sedition. Five activists were arrested in raids by security forces in Tacloban City.

In March, a court issued arrest warrants for perjury against activists seeking court protection after the Philippine military tagged them as “terrorists.”

In July, President Duterte signed into law Republic Act 11479 (Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020). Human rights groups criticized the new law for contravening international standards and granting the government unchecked powers to detain perceived enemies of the state. Over 30 petitions challenging its constitutionality were pending before the Supreme Court at year’s end.

On 10 August, activist and peace advocate Randall Echanis and his neighbour were killed in Metro Manila. A week later, human rights defender Zara Alvarez was shot



dead in Bacolod City. Echanis and Alvarez were branded as “terrorists” in a 2018 government list. Other human rights defenders and political activists were arbitrarily detained and faced increased threats and harassment after the government “red-tagged” or linked them to communist armed groups.

In October, police treatment of detained activist Reina Mae Nasino attending the funeral of her three-month-old baby sparked public outrage.

On 10 December, police arrested journalist Lady Ann Salem and six activists in raids in Metro Manila on charges of illegal possession of firearms and explosives. Human rights groups claimed the charges were fabricated.

On 30 December, police killed nine people and arrested 17 in Capiz and Iloilo provinces. Groups said they were from an Indigenous community while police claimed they were members of a communist group killed after resisting arrest.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In May, unidentified assailants shot dead radio broadcaster and anti-corruption critic Cornelio Pepino in Dumaguete City. His murder was the first in a string of killings in Negros Oriental over nine days that left six others dead.

In June, Maria Ressa, Chief Executive Officer

of news website Rappler, and former Rappler researcher Reynaldo Santos Jr. were convicted of cyber libel. A month later, Congress denied the franchise renewal of broadcast media network ABS-CBN. Both Rappler and ABS-CBN produced reports highlighting killings and other violations under the “war on drugs”. In December, Ressa was charged for a second time for cyber libel after sharing a tweet.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

Violations of the right to freedom of assembly occurred amid the COVID-19 pandemic. In April, police violently dispersed residents of an urban poor community in Quezon City peacefully demanding government aid. In June, police arrested eight people protesting draft anti-terror legislation in Cebu City, detaining them for three days. Police also arrested at least 20 people, including three minors, during a Pride march in the capital, Manila. Police accused the protesters of breaching restrictions on mass gatherings during the pandemic, among other alleged violations. They were released pending investigation four days later.

RIGHT TO HEALTH

There were repeated calls for the release of certain groups of prisoners, including people detained for political reasons, to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 in prisons after hundreds of prisoners and staff tested positive for the virus. As of October, the Supreme Court said over 80,000 prisoners were released.

There were concerns over the protection of health workers during the pandemic and a ban on their deployment for overseas work, which was partially lifted in November.

ABUSES BY ARMED GROUPS

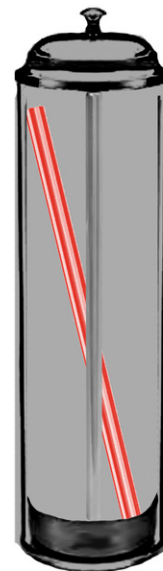
Clashes between government forces and the communist New People’s Army continued. In August, two young members of the Manobo tribe died amid escalating violence in Surigao del Sur.

DEATH PENALTY

In his State of the Nation Address in July, President Duterte renewed his call on Congress to reinstate the death penalty, including for drug-related crimes. At least 24 bills reintroducing the death penalty were pending at year’s end.

STRAWS
YOU THINK
YOU NEED THEM
BUT YOU DON'T.

PARANG
DEATH PENALTY
THE LAST STRAW



LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND INTERSEX PEOPLE

In February 2020, Makati City police sparked an outcry after “profiling” 67 individuals as part of its “Oplan X-Men” targeting transgender women.

In April 2020, a local government official subjected three lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) individuals to degrading treatment by forcing them to perform sexually-suggestive acts as punishment for alleged COVID-19 curfew violations. In December, a Senate panel approved a bill that aims to prohibit discrimination and violence on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

**FIND OUT ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION
ON THE PHILIPPINE MAP, GO TO
[HTTPS://WWW.AMNESTY.ORG.PH/
ANNUAL-REPORT-2020-21-PHILIPPINES/](https://www.amnesty.org.ph/annual-report-2020-21-philippines/)**

HUMAN RIGHTS GAINS 2020



AFP via Getty Images

VICTORIES IN OUR RIGHTS TO HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

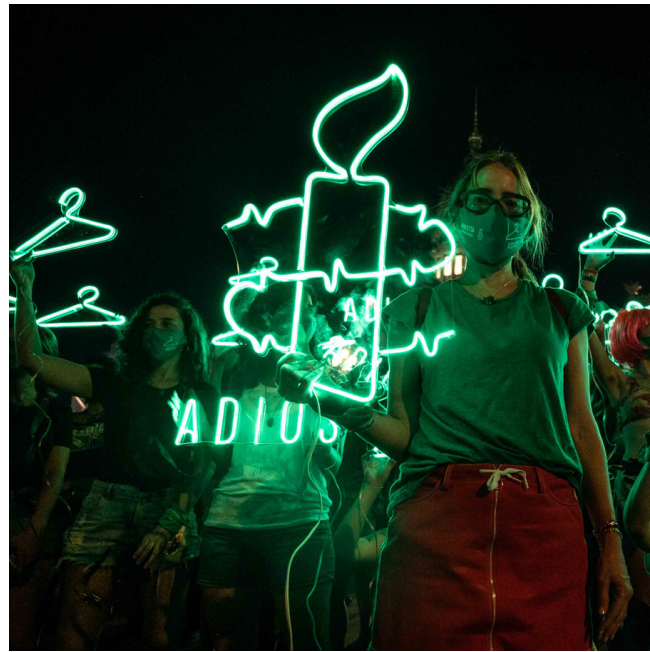
During the pandemic, our health and social protection has been more important than ever. Despite many challenges, there were notable successes:

- Defending the rights of health workers – Amnesty’s campaigning contributed to better protections for health workers at the frontline of the pandemic. As well as highlighting the human impact of unsafe working conditions in dozens of countries, Amnesty successfully campaigned for the release of three health workers imprisoned in Egypt for criticising the government’s response to the crisis, the dropping of criminal charges against five union activists in Malaysia who were arrested for protesting about the lack of protective equipment and adequate working conditions for hospital cleaners, and the dropping of administrative charges against Dr Yulia Volkova in Russia.
- Protecting our rights to privacy - In 2020, Amnesty International’s investigation into COVID-19 contact tracing apps in Bahrain, Kuwait and Norway, found serious privacy weaknesses and tracking capabilities tantamount to mass surveillance. As a result of our research, Qatar fixed a serious security flaw that would have left the sensitive health data of millions of people exposed, within 24 hours of us notifying them, and Norway halted the use of their app hours before we were due to publish our findings.
- Supporting migrant workers – In 2020, Qatar abolished requirements for migrant workers to get permission from their employer to change jobs and announced the introduction of a new non-discriminatory minimum wage in a bid to help protect migrant workers from labour exploitation. Amnesty has been campaigning to improve migrant workers’ rights for years in Qatar, which is due to host the 2022 World Cup, and will continue to do so to ensure these reforms are retained and implemented.
- Protecting care home residents -The UK's Care Quality Commission announced an urgent investigation into the blanket use of "Do not attempt resuscitation" orders in care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. In October, Amnesty International had revealed that the UK government abandoned older people to die in care homes in the early stages of the pandemic.

PROGRESS ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Several countries took important steps to extend their protection of women's and girl's rights:

- **Reforming rape laws** - In 2020, there were hard fought victories to change the legal definition of rape in a number of countries. For example, Denmark finally recognized in law that sex without consent is rape, marking a significant victory for women's rights in a country where rape is hugely under-reported and the chances of prosecutions or conviction very slim, even if victims do go to the police. Amnesty has been campaigning in several European countries to reform legal definitions of rape from forced-based to consent-based, including through the Let's Talk About Yes campaign. Spain announced a bill to define rape as sex without consent, in line with international human rights standards. This followed some high-profile gang rape cases in which the justice system failed victims, including the so-called 'La Manada' (wolf pack) case in which a lower court found that five men were only guilty of the lesser offence of sexual abuse.
- **Fighting back against gender-based violence** – In 2020, a number of legal reforms saw the fight against gender-based violence head in the right direction. South Korea's National Assembly passed laws which increased punishment for digital sex crimes, the Sudanese government introduced legislation criminalizing female genital mutilation, and Kuwait's Parliament approved a bill criminalizing domestic violence and offering victims of domestic violence legal, medical care and rehabilitation services.
- **Decriminalizing abortion** - Argentina legalized abortion in December 2020 after President Alberto Fernández fulfilled his campaign promise to send a historic bill to Congress, following years of campaigning by women's rights advocates including Amnesty International. Argentina joined other countries which took steps to liberalize access to abortion, such as Northern Ireland and South Korea.



- **Protecting pregnant pupils** - In Sierra Leone, the government overturned a ban preventing pregnant girls from attending school and sitting exams, following five years of work by Amnesty and other partners, which included research, campaigns and successful strategic litigation at the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice.

PROMISING STEPS TAKEN TOWARDS ACCOUNTABILITY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS CRISES

After a long struggle, progress was made towards accountability for human rights crises at an international level:

- **UN fact finding**

In June, the UN Human Rights Council established a fact-finding mission to investigate violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law committed by all parties to the conflict in Libya since 2016. In addition, according to the UN Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) on Venezuela, there were reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed in the country since 2014 and that President Maduro and senior military and ministerial figures ordered or contributed to the crimes. In September, the Mission called for those suspected of criminal responsibility

for crimes against humanity to be held accountable.



- **Progress at the ICC**

In March, the International Criminal Court (ICC) decided to open an investigation into crimes under international law by all parties to the conflict in Afghanistan. This reversed an earlier decision not to proceed with the investigation, which Amnesty International had strongly criticized. ICC investigations into Myanmar also continued last year, and preliminary examinations were concluded on Nigeria and Ukraine, with the Prosecutor announcing her intention, in the future, to seek investigations into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Prosecutor also sought a ruling on the scope of the ICC's territorial jurisdiction in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, with a view to opening an investigation. Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman (also known as Ali Kushayb), a former Sudanese senior militia commander, surrendered to the ICC after 13 years spent evading justice for crimes against humanity and war crimes allegedly committed in Darfur.

- **New reporting from AFRICOM**

For the first time, the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) began publishing quarterly reports addressing allegations of civilian casualties from US air strikes in Somalia, including three incidents covered in Amnesty International investigations. Following the release of the first report in April, several members of the US Congress began hearings to hold the Pentagon/AFRICOM accountable. AFRICOM has thus far admitted 13 civilian casualties in Somalia.

- **Success in curbing the arms trade**

The arms embargo on South Sudan was unanimously renewed by the UN Security Council in May 2020, following intense advocacy and a month-long campaign by Amnesty International.

Amnesty's exhaustive and stand-alone research on arms embargo violations was credited by Security Council delegations as decisive for the positive vote.

UNJUSTLY DETAINED INDIVIDUALS RELEASED IN VICTORY FOR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

A number of unjustly detained individuals were released after sustained campaigning by Amnesty International's supporters.

- For example, in South Sudan, activist Kanybil Noon was released after 117 days in detention without charge. In April, Chinese human rights lawyer Wang Quanzhang was reunited with his family after spending four and a half years in prison. He was targeted for his work exposing corruption and human rights violations. Amnesty had campaigned for his release since he was first detained in 2015. In Bahrain, human rights activist Nabeel Rajab was released from prison in May on a non-custodial sentence, following years of campaigning from Amnesty International and other human rights organizations.



TACKLING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Global mobilization around the COVID-19 pandemic drew comparisons with the need for urgent action to address the climate emergency.

- Climate litigation - There was a significant increase in climate litigation targeting governments and corporations, with major new cases being filed in France, Germany, Poland, Spain and the UK, among others, as well as a case by six Portuguese children and young adults to the European

HOW DO YOU TAKE YOUR TEA?
WITH MILK AND A HEAVY HELPING OF DEMOCRACY



#MILKTEAALLIANCE

TAKEN HOT IN HONG KONG, WITH PEARLS IN TAIWAN, ICED AND SWEETENED IN THAILAND

SHARING TIPS ABOUT SAFETY DURING STREET PROTESTS, ON HOW TO AVOID CYBER THREATS FOR ONLINE ACTIVISTS IN THE REGION, FIRST AID CARE DURING VIOLENT DISPERSALS AND ENSURING THAT VIOLATIONS ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ASSOCIATION DO NOT REMAIN A SECRET WITHIN THEIR COUNTRIES, THE MILK TEA ALLIANCE IS LEADERLESS - AND GOVERNMENTS SEE THIS A THREAT TO THEIR AUTHORITY.

Images of thousands of people peacefully rallying in main cities have travelled around the world, in the latest illustration of how youth-led protests are defying growing repression.

Thailand's protesters previously made headlines for their use of the Hunger Games salute, Harry Potter memes and the Japanese anime hamster, Hamtaro.

But behind the light-hearted fun, the movement keeps growing, based on calls for political reforms and denouncing the harassment of people who criticize the government.

Authorities have responded by intensifying their crackdown and harassing peaceful protesters even more. The rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – but these rights are increasingly under attack in East Asia and Southeast Asia.

LEADERLESS YOUTH-LED MOVEMENT

School children are also speaking up. Activists have been holding peaceful protests and the rallies have gathered momentum. Authorities continue to intimidate, harass and discourage





the youth from taking part in further protests.

Such scare tactics were denounced by the UN children's agency, UNICEF, who reminded the authorities that the youth "can constructively voice their opinions."

People of all ages have taken to the streets to show their support.

There are various similarities between Thailand's protests and the mass demonstrations which erupted in Hong Kong in 2019. As well as being led by young people, both movements mostly define themselves as "leaderless".

Marches have been organized organically by individual protesters – often using apps such as Telegram.

This is an intentional tactic that makes it more difficult for the authorities to curb activism by targeting figureheads.

THE SHADOW OF PAST CRACKDOWNS HANGS OVER THESE PROTESTS

The region has witnessed mass youth protests in the past.

In Thailand, many youth protesters were repeatedly detained and faced years-long criminal proceedings for conducting symbolic actions like gathering in public spaces to eat sandwiches, holding one-person readings of the novel '1984', or raising the three-finger salute from the Hunger Games films, some even received prison sentences for various criminal charges.

Since 2019, Hong Kongers have taken to the streets to demand accountability in the face of abusive policing tactics that have included the wanton use of tear gas, arbitrary arrests, physical assaults and abuses in detention. This struggle against the established order has been repeated all over the continent.

NOWHERE IS SAFE FROM INTIMIDATION – ESPECIALLY NOT FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

People who express their views on the streets aren't the only ones being harassed, even actions expressing support on social media are used to charge individuals using very vague laws – a tactic that has a chilling effect on millions more social media

users across the region.

In 2020, Amnesty International released "They are always watching", a research report showing how the Thai authorities are prosecuting social media users who criticize the government and monarchy, including human rights defenders, activists, politicians, lawyers and academics. Increasingly, Facebook and Twitter are becoming the targets of government disinformation and censorship.

Authorities have tried to prevent the use of Telegram, a favorite tool for protest organizers. They have also tried to shut down the social media channels of prominent activist groups.

In 2019, Myanmar authorities ordered telecommunications providers to block mobile internet access in nine townships in Rakhine and Chin States. The shutdown was lifted in five townships in late August 2019, but reinstated in February 2020. Authorities arrested several individuals for criticizing the internet shutdown.


Students in Sittwe in Rakhine State, Chin States and Yangon organized a

Cont'd on p.18

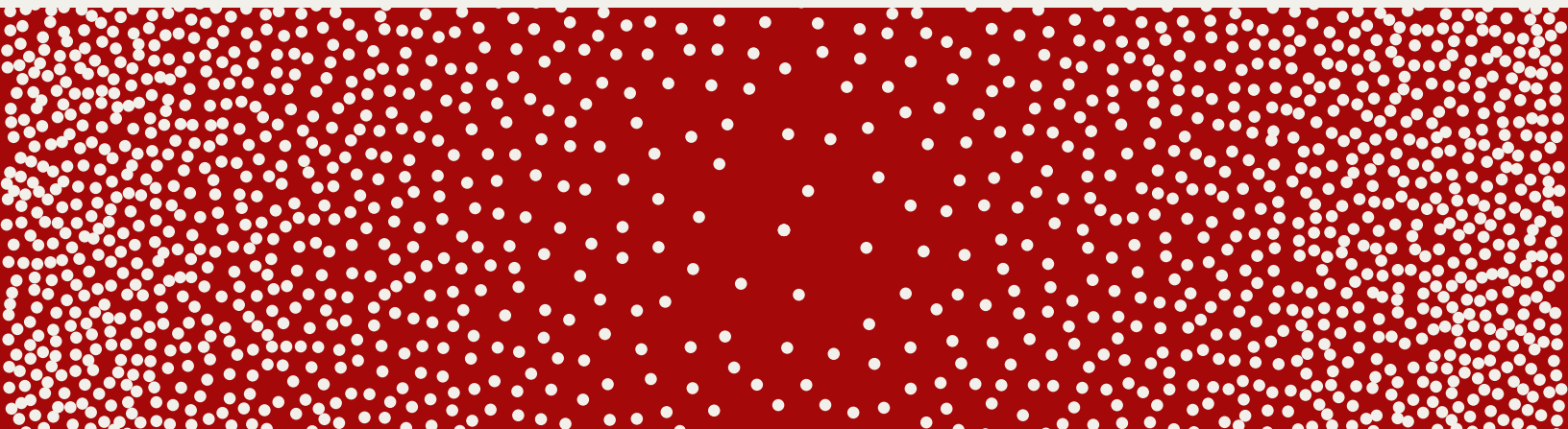




THIS ISSUE'S BURNING QUESTION ~

**"SA TINGIN MO BA AY NAGAGAMPANAN NG LOKAL
AT NASYUNAL NA PAMAHALAN ANG TRABAHO
NILANG MAGBIGAY NG NARARAPAT NA
SERBISYO SA GITNA NG PANDEMYA?"** 

**THE VIEWS AND OPINIONS EXPRESSED HERE ARE THOSE OF THE QUOTED INDIVIDUALS,
AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE OFFICIAL POLICY OR POSITION OF
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES. ANY CONTENT PROVIDED BY OUR MEMBERS ARE
OF THEIR OPINION, GIVEN TO US ON THEIR OWN ACCORD WITH CONSENT TO PUBLISH, AND
ARE NOT INTENDED TO MALIGN ANY ORGANIZATION, COMPANY, OR INDIVIDUAL.**





TRISHA CLAIRE FALCASANTOS

Yes and No. Why? Because for instance, some of the city here in the Philippines are so grateful that they are receiving relief goods and others don't, and it's because some Barangay Official are being corrupt or they are bias for their family to get in the list without knowing they are skipping those poor people that has nothing to eat, also some of them just took the money and use it for personal interests. Many government members are taking advantages to this pandemic and i thought this is the real problem. Corruption. If the presidents or higher officials is keeping an eye to this kind of bogus maybe we are able to survive this pandemic without people who are trying to risk their life to find a job in the middle of pandemic just to provide to their family. We all know we can help each other, it's just that some people don't see the way we see things.



IAN BLANCO

It is difficult to answer with a straight yes or no, however I would like to emphasize that our government, whether the LGUs or the national government, should be considerate to the needs of the people. This is in the context with the community pantries being subjected to some police intimidation, and red tagging by a government agency. I call the LGUs to fully support community pantries, and prevent intimidating police presence, except to implement basic health protocols such as social distancing and wearing of masks. Why are we stopping Bayanihan that has been imbedded in every Filipino spirit since time immemorial?



JEFFREY MENDOZA

Hindi pa rin sapat, angkop at siyentipiko ang pagtugon sa problema. Hindi ako nagnanais ng perpektong tugon, pero sa umpisa pa lamang, pinahigpit na agad ang travel ban at pinagaralang mabuti ang pagkakaroon ng mass testing at contact tracing. Ang bigwas ng lockdown sa nasyunal na pananalapi at pagtustos sa ayuda ay dapat nababalanse. Ang maikalwanag malawakang pagiingay ng medikal frontliners ay indikasyon ng kahinaan ng komposisyon ng IATF bilang troubleshooter at mapagkukunan ng solusyon. Ang control at order ay dapat may kaakibat na paggalang sa karapatan at dignidad lalo na sa pagtanggap ng mga mungkahi. Ang lokal na pamahalaan bilang mas malapit na salamin sa nangailangan ay dapat ring maging bokal sa mga pagkukulang ng nasyunal.



ANGEL FRANCES BORRES

Sa tingin ko po ay ang mabilis na paglalaganap ng Community Pantries sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa natin ay sapat na katibayan na kulang pa rin ang serbisyo na binibigay ng ocal at nasyunal na pamahalaan. Marami naman po sanang budget ngunit nakakapagtaka kung bakit mga sari-sarili na lang natin ang ating inaasahan upang maka ahon sa pandemiyang ito.



MATT GONZAGA

Bilang isang mamamayang Pilipino na apektado rin ng krisis na dulot ng pandemya, hindi ko ramdam o nakikita ang pagbigay solusyon ng pamahalaang lokal at nasyunal sa mga suliraning nagaganap sa bansa, kagaya ng gutom, kawalan ng hanapbuhay at ang pagkalat ng virus sa bansa. Patuloy itong lumalala araw-araw at tila ba hindi nagagawa ng pamahalaan ang kanilang trabaho na tugonan ang krisis at magbigay serbisyo sa bayan.



RICKY MOLINA

Sa tingin ko ay kulang na kulang ang binibigay na serbisyo ng ating nasyunal na pamahalaan kumpara sa mga progresibong aksyon ng mga opisyal sa pamahalaang lokal. Dapat ang pagbangon ay mas manggaling sa mas nakatataas upang mas magaan ang pagsunod ng mga taong umaasa sa kanila.





MAC BELENZO

Hindi. Napatunayan ito nung isa-isang nagsulputan ang mga community pantries sa buong Pilipinas. Kung totoo ngang sapat ang serbisyonag naipapahatid ng gobyerno sa mga Pilipino, bakit marami pa rin ang pumipila sa community pantry? Nagtitiis silang pumila, niri-risk ang kanilang mga buhay para lamang meron silang pangkain.

Walang community pantry. Walang pipila sa mga community pantries kung totoo ngang sapat ang kanilang serbisyo publiko. Ngunit hindi. Sila ay palpak, pabaya, at pahirap sa masang Pilipino.



RAFAEL ENCARNACION



KIAN BALMADRES

Mas pipiliin pa nang Gobyerno unahin ang kanilang imahe kesa sa taong bayan. ngayong nasa isang milyong taong apektado na ng Covid-19 nagkakagulo na ang Gobyerno para sa tamang suporta ibibigay nito sa taong bayan, na dumating na sa punto na tayong mga mamayanan lamang ang nagtutulungan, katulad nang Community Pantry sa Maginhawa, kung saan nagbibigayan nang sapat na pagkain para sa nangangailangan, na umano sinisita pa nang lokal na armadong ahensya para pabagsakin ang mga taong nasa likod nito na ika nila "mga Komunistang namumulituka". Kesa bigyan nang tamang ayuda ang taong bayan at suporta sa mga Front liners. Inuuna nila ang kanilang interest kesa ang mga kalusugan nang kapwa nating Pilipino



Sa tingin ko hindi nila nagagampanan ang kanilang tungkulin na magbigay ng nararapat na serbisyo sa gitna ng pandemya. Hindi sila naghanda ng sapat na pasilidad sa mga magkakasakit ng Covid habang hindi pa ito laganap nuong nakaraang taon. Hindi nila nabibigyan ng sapat na ayuda ang mga mahihirap kung kayat patuloy ang mga itong nakikipagsapalaran na lumabas ng tahanan ng madalas at magkaroon ng Covid para lamang kumita at mabuhay. At higit sa lahat, hindi sila makakuha ng mga bakuna dahil wala silang plano kung paano makakuha ng hagaran at sapat na bilang ng bakuna.



HARRY PINEDA

Kung titingnan natin sa nasyunal, napakalaki ng inutang ng pamahalaan para sa covid 19 response pero patuloy na tumaas ang nahahawa nito. Lockdown ang laging sagot nito sa pagtaas ng kaso kung saan mas apektado ang mga mahihirap dahil nawawalan ng hanapbuhay! Kung may ibinibigay na ayuda ay hindi sapat at maraming hindi nabibigyan kahit alam nang kailangan ito ng karamihan. Ang local na level ng pamahalaan ay hindi indipendenteng makapag desisyon sa kanilang mga hakbang dahil kailangan pang humingi ng pahintulot sa nasyunal na IATF. Ang problema sa gobyerno ay ipinapasa nila ang kanilang responsibilidad sa mga tao at pag hindi nagawa ay isinisasi nila ito sa mga tao mismo! Hindi mabibilang sa daliri ang kapalpakan ng pamahalaan sa pamamahala sa covid 19 sa simulat-simula pa bago pa man ito naging pandemya, ganon din sa ekonomiya at sa isyu ng WPS, at ayaw nilang tanggapin na sablay nila ang mga ito! Sa kasalukuyan ang kakulangan sa ayuda sa kabikabila ng daang milyong utang nito ay tinutugunan ng mga community pantries sa iba't-ibang panig ng ng bansa subalit pinaratangan pang inisyatiba o kasapi ng makakaliwang grupo ang organizer nito! Minsan sa kalagayang ito naiisip ko na lang, kailangan pa ba natin ang gobyerno kung ganito din lang ang kaya niyang gawin?



MARC JULIAN MANONGDO

For LGUs: As much as we want to say that they're trying their best, we also just have to admit that the effort is lacking. This is made apparent by the rise of community pantries and the public's huge appreciation for them. It shows that the people are hungry and that the aid coming from the LGUs isn't enough.

For the national government: Obviously they are NOT doing well. There have been calls for mass testing from the start. They have loaned billions of dollars to give as aid but they have only released a small fraction of it thus far. It's not difficult to enumerate the various human rights that the government has sworn to protect but is currently not upholding. To say the least, Article 25: right to an adequate standard of living.

We have to demand accountability from officials such as Duque, Roque, Sinas, Pimentel, Parlade, Badoy, and so much more and we definitely have to understand command responsibility that all of this has Duterte's stamp of approval unless he says otherwise and obviously he hasn't. We are all tired of incompetent governance and lackluster government officials. We deserve better services. We deserve better leaders.

RAUL CIPRIANO

Hindi nila naga-gampanan ng sapat na serbisyo ang mga taong bayan lalong lalo na sa panahon ng ating nararanasan sa ngayon.

MEHA DAMIYAY

Hindi, repleksyon dito ang pagtayo ng mga community pantries at ang pagdumog ng mga tao rito. Kung tunay na nagagawa nila ng maayos ang kanilang tungkulin, hindi patuloy ang pagbuhos ng donasyon sa mga pantries dahil nakikita ng mga tao na maayos ang supply para sa lahat. Gayundin sa publiko, hindi nila nanaisin na magbilad sa araw at pumila ng mahaba dahil delekado ito sapagkat maari silang makakuha ng Covid ngunit dahil sa kakapusan at kawalan ng trabaho, sila ay pumupunta sa pantries upang may makain at maihahain sa hapag. Ito sana'y maaring matugunan kung maayos ang mga plano at aksyon ng mga nakaupo sa pwesto.

EDWARD STA. ANA

May ginawa naman pero kulang. Hindi ko ramdam na tinupad nila ang "social contract." Tandaan natin, hindi natin sila pinilit na mapunta sa poder. Kaya dapat naman na gawin nila ang kanilang tungkulin na maglingkod ng tunay.

AIDMON ROY OMBROG

Kung ano lang ang kaya nila. Its really hard to perform their task knowing that they have also family and themselves to take care. Mahirap but with full hopes and with prayers to at least lessen the burden. But I believe magagampanan nila.

Human Rights Gains, cont'd. from p.11

Court of Human Rights targeting 33 member states. The Irish Supreme Court required the government to adopt more ambitious emissions reductions targets, whereas the Swiss Federal Court rejected a similar claim.

- Environmental awareness - Mexico became the 11th country to ratify the Escazú Agreement, an unprecedented regional treaty on access to information, public participation and justice in environmental matters and the protection of environmental defenders in Latin America and the Caribbean, meaning it will finally come into effect on 22 April 2021.

PEOPLE POWER

- Human rights activists joined forces to support many movements around the world in 2020, including the Black Lives Matter protests in the United States and the #EndSars protests in Nigeria, among many others. The pandemic also gave rise to new and creative forms of protest such as virtual climate strikes.

#MilkTeaAlliance, cont'd. from p.12

protest against government directives restricting internet access.

Yangon students even organized a 'sticker campaign' to call attention to ongoing human rights abuses. The protest included the posting of stickers in various public places with messages such as: 'Restore 4G Internet Access', 'No Bloody Government', 'No Murder Army', 'No Trust in Rakhine State Government', 'Oppose Fascism', and 'Stand With People in Rakhine'. As a result of these campaigns, dozens of students and others faced charges.

From students in Hong Kong leading a mass movement against growing Chinese encroachment, to Thailand's young voters are pushing back against ongoing state repression, online and offline, youth-led popular protests are challenging the established order.

**STAND WITH FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
SHOW YOUR SOLIDARITY**

#FREERATSADON
**STOP HARASSING DISSIDENTS &
SILENCING PROTESTERS!**

- Make a letter on a red heart shaped piece of paper
- Write a solidarity message to support the freedom of expression of the pro-democracy activists.
- Take a selfie with you heart-shaped letter
- Post the image and tag @AmnestyThailand, use the hashtag #FreeRatsadon

TAKE ACTION

Thai authorities issued arrest warrants for 15 pro-democracy leaders and activists for their role in a mass gathering in Bangkok, Thailand's capital, on 18 July 2020. Sixteen other protestors have been summoned and charged and all 31 face serious allegations including sedition. If convicted, each activist could face up to seven years in prison.

Amnesty is calling for:

- Immediately drop all charges against the 31 protestors and other individuals charged solely for exercising their rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression;
- Cease all attempts or operations aimed at dissuading public participation in peaceful gatherings or silencing voices critical of the government and social issues;
- Amend or repeal all broadly-worded, repressive, or vague legislation and regulations to conform with the country's commitments to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression.



AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



10 million
strong

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IS A GLOBAL MOVEMENT OF MORE THAN 10 MILLION PEOPLE WHO TAKE INJUSTICE PERSONALLY. WE ARE CAMPAIGNING FOR A WORLD WHERE HUMAN RIGHTS ARE ENJOYED BY ALL.

In 1961, British lawyer Peter Benenson was outraged when two Portuguese students were jailed just for raising a toast to freedom. He wrote an article in The Observer newspaper and launched a campaign that provoked an incredible response. Reprinted in newspapers across the world, his call to action sparked the idea that people everywhere can unite in solidarity for justice and freedom.

This inspiring moment didn't just give birth to an extraordinary movement, it was the start of extraordinary social change.

"Only when the last prisoner of conscience has been freed, when the last torture chamber has been closed, when the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a reality for the world's people, will our work be done."

PETER BENENSON, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FOUNDER



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