

# camp **Align**

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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



## YEARS TOGETHER

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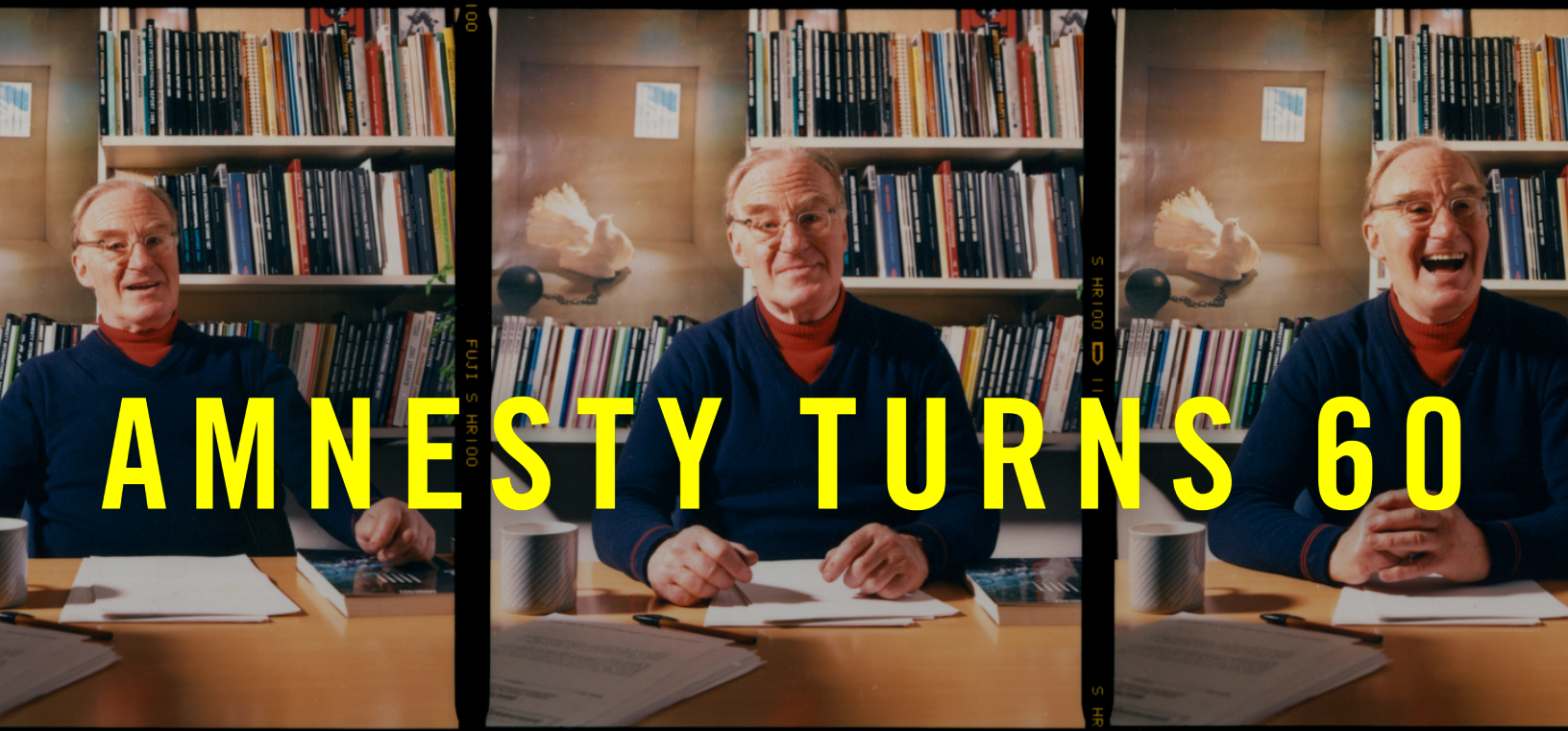
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“Open your newspaper – any day of the week – and you will find a report from somewhere in the world of someone being imprisoned, tortured or executed because his opinions or religion are unacceptable to his government. The newspaper reader feels a sickening sense of impotence. Yet if these feelings of disgust all over the world could be united into common action, something effective could be done.”

”

**PETER BENENSON**

Human Rights lawyer,  
Amnesty International  
Founder



PETE BENENSON - Human Rights lawyer, Amnesty International Founder

## FOUNDED UNDER THE BELIEF THAT HUMAN RIGHTS IS FOR ALL

Amnesty International was founded in 1961 on the idea that together ordinary people can change the world. Today Amnesty is a worldwide movement for human rights, calling on the collective power of 10 million people, each one committed to fighting for justice, equality and freedom everywhere. From London to Santiago, Sydney to Kampala, people have come together to insist that the rights of each and every human are respected and protected.

Change has not happened overnight. It's taken persistence and a belief in the power of humanity to make a difference. And the result? The release of tens of thousands of people imprisoned for their beliefs or their way of life. The end of the death penalty in dozens of countries. Previously untouchable leaders brought to account. Amended laws and changed lives.

How do we measure 60 years of collective action? It's there in the accused who is given a fair trial; the prisoner saved from execution; or the detainee who is no longer tortured. It's there in the activists freed to continue their defense of human rights; the school children learning about their rights in the classroom; or the families escorted safely home from refugee camps. And it's there in the marginalized communities marching to demand an end to discrimination, the marginalized communities who defended their homes from destruction and the woman whose government finally outlaws the abuse she faces every day.

## SIXTY YEARS OF TAKING ACTION

Since it was founded in 1961, Amnesty International has been empowering people like you to take action for a better world. This is a snapshot of what you have made possible.

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- After learning of two Portuguese students who were imprisoned for raising a toast to freedom in 1961, British lawyer Peter Benenson launches a worldwide campaign 'Appeal for Amnesty 1961'. His appeal to free prisoners of conscience is reprinted in papers across the world and turns out to be the genesis of Amnesty International. By 1966, 1,000 prisoners have been released thanks to the tireless efforts of people, like you, who want to see a better world.
- In 1962, Amnesty sends a lawyer to observe Nelson Mandela's trial in South Africa. Nelson Mandela wrote that "his mere presence, as well as the assistance he gave, were a source of tremendous inspiration and encouragement to us".
- In 1979, Amnesty International publishes a list of 2,665 cases of people known to have "disappeared" in Argentina after the military coup by Jorge Rafael Videla, in an effort to help their friends and families hold those responsible to account. In the same decade, Amnesty International wins the Nobel Peace Prize for "having contributed to securing the ground for freedom, for justice, and thereby also for peace in the world" – a remarkable tribute to the hard work and determination of Amnesty supporters across the world.
- In 1984, following tireless campaigning from Amnesty supporters, the UN General Assembly adopts the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or-

-punishment. As a result, countries are now required to take effective measures to prevent torture in territories they control

- In the 1990s, Amnesty International reports on human rights abuses in Kuwait following the Iraqi invasion, making headlines across the world.
- In 2002, longstanding pressure from Amnesty supporters finally paves the way for the creation of an International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate and prosecute those, including political and leaders, leaders of armed groups and other high-ranking figures reasonably suspected of committing crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes and the crime of aggression.
- After 20 years of pressure from Amnesty supporters and others, the global Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) comes into force in 2014, in a significant victory for humanity. This huge win would not have been possible without the amazing support of our donors, members and activists.
- In 2015, the UN adopts stronger rules for the humane treatment of prisoners, following pressure from a coalition of NGOs including Amnesty International. In 2018, Teodora del Carmen Vasquez is released from prison after spending a decade behind bars in El Salvador after suffering a stillbirth, which led to her being accused and convicted of abortion, an illegal act in the country. She was released when a court reduced her outrageous 30-year prison sentence. From petitions to protests, Amnesty supporters had been campaigning for Teodora's freedom since 2015.
- In 2019, Sierra Leone lifts the ban on pregnant girls accessing education after it is found to be discriminatory. Amnesty had intervened in the case, drawing on its own research on the issue as well as relevant international law.

Now, sixty years on, we're still battling for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all. And we won't stop until it's achieved.



The International Executive Committee of Amnesty International receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo 10th December 1977.



# LABOR RIGHTS ABUSES IN THE DINAGAT ISLANDS

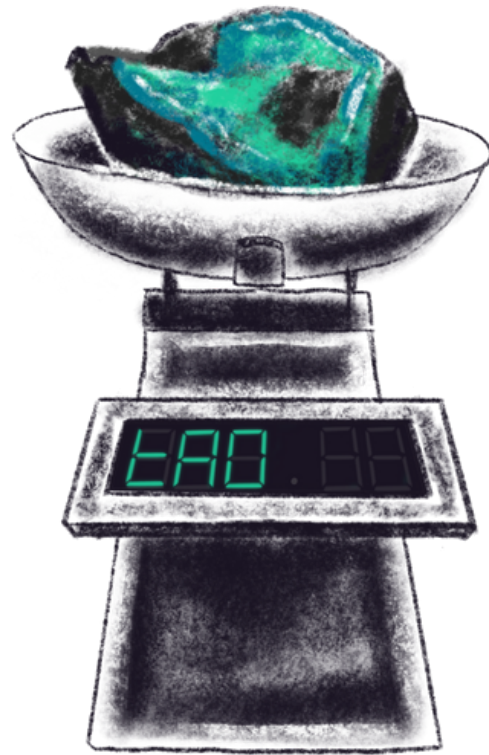
WITH ACCOUNTS FROM MINING  
LABORERS IN THE NICKEL MINING  
INDUSTRY IN DINAGAT

Amnesty International Philippines released the report “Undermining Workers Rights: Labor Rights Abuses in Nickel Supply Chains” on 27 August 2021. It examines labor practices in the nickel mining sector on Dinagat Islands and outlines numerous examples of workers being employed without contracts, receiving delayed payment of wages and non-payment of compulsory employee benefits such as Social Security System (SSS), PagIBIG, and PhilHealth contributions.

## NICKEL MINING IN DINAGAT

The Philippines is one of the world’s largest producers of nickel ore and is the leading supplier of nickel ore to China. Many of the operating nickel mines in the Philippines are located in the Caraga region, including on Dinagat Islands. There is considerable Chinese investment in some of the nickel mines on Dinagat Islands which has the potential to have a positive influence on human rights, including the rights of workers. Chinese companies engaged in overseas mining investment and cooperation are expected to follow guidelines for social responsibility developed by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Metals Minerals & Chemicals Importers and Exporters. This body has recognized the importance of due diligence, including in relation to supply chains and human rights.

However, based on Amnesty’s research, there is cause to be concerned about the rights of workers in nickel mines on Dinagat Islands. To conduct this research, Amnesty International visited the island three times in 2019 and 2021 and conducted 50 interviews and 3 focus group discussions with about 100 respondents. Most of the participants were nickel mine workers but Amnesty also interviewed expert stakeholders such as local government officials and officials from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). The research was conducted in 15 baranggays spread over 5 municipalities on Dinagat Islands.



## DIRE WORKING CONDITIONS

The research resulted in strong evidence to suggest there are labour-hire companies on Dinagat Islands abusing workers’ rights in the nickel mining sector. The research has revealed numerous examples of workers being hired without contracts, delayed payment of wages and non-payment of compulsory employee benefits (e.g. SSS, PhilHealth, PagIBIG) - all of which constitute violations of Philippines labor laws and international human rights standards.

When wages are at a minimum only or not paid in a timely manner, it can undermine the ability of workers and their families to enjoy social security, health care, education and an adequate standard of living, including food, water and sanitation and housing. One in five workers Amnesty interviewed also alleged that their SSS and PhilHealth were not properly paid, or not paid at all.

## COMPLAINTS REACH NO RESOLUTION

Many workers are afraid to speak up against their dire working conditions and many do not file complaints “to avoid trouble,” fearing a loss of livelihood if the companies were to act against them. Those who did file complaints faced several practical barriers such as the relative isolation of Dinagat Islands and the need to travel several hours in order to reach the nearest DOLE regional office. Another concern were the financial obligations of filing a complaint such as travel and legal expenses. Some workers reported giving up on their complaints due to not hearing of any progress towards a resolution, feeling disheartened and embittered. Compounding issues is Amnesty’s discovery that some of the violations are perpetrated by politicians who are businessmen and wield a lot of capital in the community.

## COMPLY AND HOLD ACCOUNTABILITY

The report offered several recommendations. The primary being to the labour hire companies to urgently modify their working policies and practices to comply with the Philippine Labor Code as well as international human rights standards. It also goes on to recommend to all mining companies in Dinagat Islands to establish and implement an ongoing human rights due diligence process. There is also a call to the Philippine national government to strengthen government institutions with responsibility for enforcing labour standards in the mining sector.

Ensuring decent work that respects fundamental human rights, including right to fair conditions at work, safety and remuneration also means strengthening government institutions mandated to enforce labor standards in the mining sector. It is the low paid, those in precarious employment and working in dire conditions that are exploited and deceived. It is the marginalized, those in minority communities, who often face the greatest threats of discrimination.

### WANT TO HELP AMPLIFY THE VOICES OF DINAGAT MINERS?

If you wish to take action, you can sign the petition on the Amnesty Philippines website addressed to DOLE Region 13 calling for a review and investigation into the alleged labour malpractices of mining and labour-hire companies in Dinagat Islands.

[bit.ly/dinagat-mining-abuses](https://bit.ly/dinagat-mining-abuses)



Stand with mining workers of Dinagat Islands and demand investigation and resolution to their allegations of labour rights violations!

# DINAGAT MINING



## BEGINNING THE INVESTIGATION

On 14 June 2021, The Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) of the International Criminal Court (ICC), under the leadership of then Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, concluded the Preliminary Examination on the Philippine Situation— three years after the Office announced its decision to look into crimes allegedly committed in the Philippines since at least 1 July 2016, in the context of the ‘war on drugs’ campaign launched by the Duterte Administration.

## MOVING FORWARD

With the conclusion of the Preliminary Examination phase, Prosecutor Bensouda submitted to the Pre-trial Chamber her request to authorize full investigation in the Situation of the Philippines. As per the ICC’s framework, victims of the crimes committed under the War on Drugs campaign have the right to submit “representations” to the ICC judges who are considering the OTP’s request. The Victims Representation process allows victims to provide their views regarding the pending investigation, and their concerns and expectations on the Court. To help facilitate this process, the Victims Participation and Reparations Section (VPRS) of the ICC registry prepared a template representation form that was translated in Filipino and Cebuano and made available on the ICC website. On 13 August, the process has formally ended following the deadline set by the ICC judges for victims to submit representations.



## A CHANCE TO BE HEARD

On 27 August, the Registry transmitted to the Pre-trial Chamber 1 204 victim representations. This consists of four individual representations and 200 collective representations on behalf of 1,530 individual victims and 1,050 families. In the public redacted report published by the Registry, an overwhelming 94% of submissions fully supported the Prosecutor’s request to investigate. Victims who supported the request believe that the investigation stage will open a genuine investigation by an impartial international court, and that this will allow the victims’ and their families’ voices to be heard. Of the few who voted against the request to investigate, the Registry believe that fear of reprisal and re-traumatization motivated their refusal.



## ALLEGATIONS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The report also covered the views of the victims on the scope of investigation, such as the crimes and perpetrators that should be investigated by the Court. Of the crimes that were reported, murder was the most dominant case, but other inhumane acts including torture, illegal detention, enforced disappearance, and attempted murder were also identified to be prevalent. These crimes were allegedly committed by Philippine state forces, and unidentified men usually wearing civilian clothes, bonnets, masks and who, in a number of cases, rode in tandem when committing the alleged crimes. Victims reported that they have received physical, psychological, material, and social harm due to the committed crimes. Substantial impairment of fundamental rights such as right to due process, reparations, and access to education for the kids were also reported by victims to the Registry.

After receiving the representations submitted to the Registry, the VPRS conducted an initial legal assessment to analyze which of the submissions they have received falls within the definition of “victim” in the rules set by the Court. All 204 submissions were transmitted to the court, and only eight did not meet the conditions set by the Court. The registry also noted that despite the challenges and obstacles faced by the victims due to security and the COVID-19 pandemic, the victims still expressed their support for an investigation by the ICC prosecutor into all crimes against humanity allegedly committed in the context of the so called War on Drugs Campaign in the Philippines between 1 November 2011 and 17 March 2019.

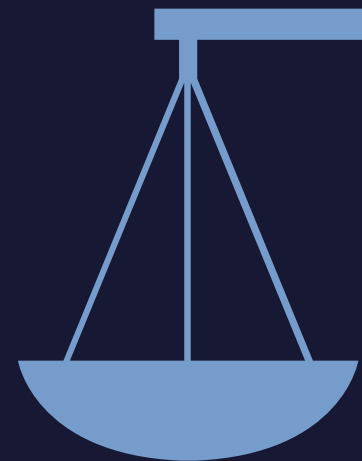
On 15 September 2021, the Pre-trial Chamber I has formally authorized the commencement of the investigation into the Situation in the Philippines, in relation to crimes allegedly committed in the Philippines between 1 November 2011 and 16 March 2019, in the context of the so-called ‘war on drugs’ campaign.

## DOES THE ICC HAVE POWER?

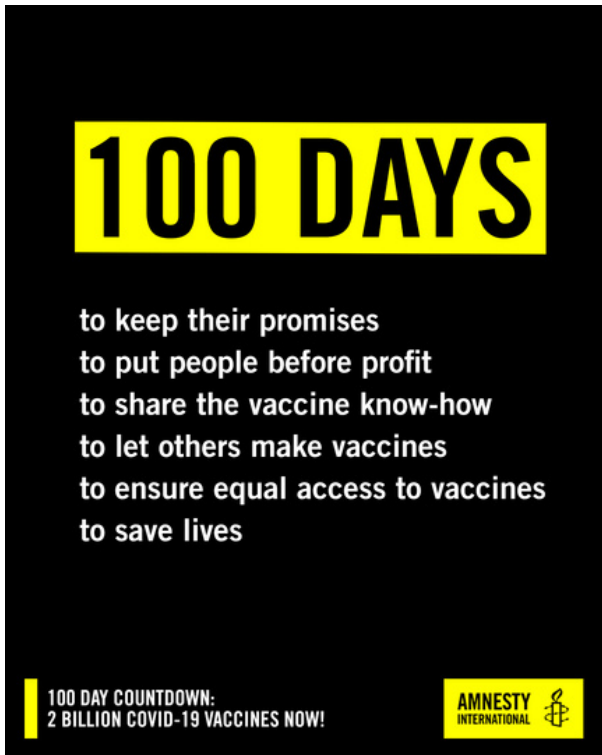
In accordance with the Rome Statute, the ICC has the power or authority to investigate cases with regard to the Philippines.

Due to the fact that Philippines has remained a signatory to the statute until 2019, the ICC has jurisdictions over said crimes from 1 November 2011 to 16 March 2019.

A withdrawal from the Rome statute does not mean that the ICC loses power to try crimes committed within the membership period.



Read more on the ICC here:  
[bit.ly/ICC-OTP-Mandate](https://bit.ly/ICC-OTP-Mandate)



As of 19 September 2021, according to the Department of Health (DOH), the Philippines had a total of 178,196 active cases of COVID-19. Of these, 92.3% exhibit mild symptoms meaning they exhibit some symptoms but have stable vital signs. These patients, unless they belong to one of the high-risk categories, are not usually admitted to a treatment facility. Based on this data, there are 1,090 people who are exhibiting critical symptoms meaning they have impending or ongoing respiratory failure or are in need of mechanical ventilation. Meanwhile, over 5 thousand people who tested positive are asymptomatic, meaning they display no symptoms of COVID-19 at all.

The top regions for active cases are the National Capital Region, Region IV-A: CALABARZON, and Region III: Central Luzon. Based on DOH data, 70% of COVID-19 beds are occupied, with intensive care unit (ICU) occupancy at 77%. They also reported 24,999 health care workers who tested positive for the virus, with 465 of these being active cases. Most of the active cases were mild or asymptomatic, however 50 cases were in moderate to critical condition.

**GRIM NUMBERS**

On 12 September, the Philippines reached the grim milestone of having over 35,000 people dead because of COVID-19. The World Health Organization (WHO) places the global death toll around 4.6 million people with 9,400 deaths towards the end of September 2021s. Globally, we passed the devastating landmark number of 4 million lives lost to COVID-19 around early July 2021.

Amnesty International's Secretary General Agn s Callamard called on richer countries and private companies to make COVID-19 vaccines more accessible to lower-income countries. Amnesty pointed out that countries who had given at least the first shot to over half the population saw their death toll reduced by over 90%. However, because there continues to be limited or no access to vaccines, one person still dies of COVID-19 every 11 seconds – mostly in lower-income countries.

**BARRIERS TO GOOD HEALTH**

Amnesty appealed to world leaders to resolve vaccine shortages by sharing doses and removing barriers preventing the scale up of global production. Included in this was the call to further support moves to lift intellectual property restrictions on life-saving products and to push pharmaceutical companies to share their knowledge and technology.

According to DOH and Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), only 16.84% of the population has received both doses (or received a vaccine requiring only one dose) as of 19 September; another 20.74% have received their first dose. The government's announced goal is to have vaccinated 70% of the Philippine population by the end of 2021. To achieve this, it is estimated that we need to be vaccinating 350,000 to 500,000 people a day. As of 18 September, an average of 374,612 doses was administered over the previous seven days.



**TO JOIN IN THE CALL FOR PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES TO LIVE UP TO THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS BY INCREASING ACCESS TO VACCINES AND POOLING THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY BY JOINING THE WHO'S COVID-19 TECHNOLOGY ACCESS POOL, YOU CAN SIGN THE PETITION ON THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES WEBSITE: [BIT.LY/VAXXEQUITY](https://bit.ly/vaxxequity)**

# PRIDE

## MORE THAN A MONTH

Last June was the annual month of Pride—a celebration of different genders, sexualities, and identities. The first Pride Parade coincides with the anniversary of the Stonewall riots, when police raided Stonewall Inn, a popular bar in the gay community in the late '60s. As much as pride is a month of celebration, it is also the month of remembrance for the history of struggle the LGBTQI+ community has endured in fighting and advocating for their rights. The violence and prejudice the LGBTQI+ community experience are still present and prevalent until today.

**Everywhere in the world, people face discrimination because of who they love, who they are attracted to and who they are. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) people risk being unfairly treated in all areas of their lives, whether it's in education, employment, housing or access to health care, and they may face harassment and violence.**

## IDENTITY BEGETS VIOLENCE: THE STORY OF LGBTQI+ PERSONS AROUND THE WORLD

Some countries punish people for their sexual orientation or their gender identity with jail or even death. For example, in October 2019, Uganda’s Ethics and Integrity Minister announced that the government was planning to introduce the death penalty for consensual same-sex sexual acts.

In 2019, Amnesty International documented how gay and trans soldiers in South Korea face violence, harassment and pervasive discrimination due to the criminalization of consensual sex between men in the military; and examined the barriers to accessing gender-affirming treatments for transgender individuals in China. Amnesty also

campaigned to allow Pride events to take place in countries such as Turkey, Lebanon and Ukraine.

### BARRED FROM JUSTICE

It is extremely difficult, and in most cases, impossible for LGBTQI+ people to live their lives freely and seek justice for abuses when the laws are not on their side. Even when they are, there is strong stigma and stereotyping of LGBTI identities that prevents them from living their lives as equal members of society or accessing rights and freedoms that are available to others. That’s why LGBTQI+ activists campaign relentlessly for their rights: whether it’s to be free from discrimination to love who they want, have their gender legally recognized or to just be protected from the risk of assault and harassment.



### THE STRUGGLE MADE WORSE BY THE PANDEMIC

According to Amnesty’s International Report 2020-2021, the Pandemic has only amplified the decades of inequalities and erosion of public services especially for the members of LGBTQI+ community. Existing inequalities as a result of decades of toxic leadership have left ethnic minorities, refugees, older persons, and women disproportionately negatively affected by the pandemic.

The report highlights a marked increase in gender-based and domestic violence with many women and LGBTQI+ persons facing increased barriers to protection and support-

-due to restrictions on freedom of movement; lack of confidential mechanisms for victims to report violence while isolated with their abusers, and reduced capacity or suspension of services.

Women, girls and members of the LGBTQI+ communities were subjected to harassment at checkpoints; and their families have been purposely excluded from the Social Amelioration Program in some cities, and in others, they, along with many families living in poverty have had to go through social and legal hurdles thrown at them just to be able to avail of any existing government assistance.



## PRIDE IS A PROTEST PRIDE IS A CONVERSATION PRIDE IS AN ACTION

Amnesty Philippines has made a committed effort to ensure that the fight for the rights and equality of the LGBTQI+ community does stop at the end of June—but is continuing and prevailing conversation that must be made beyond Pride month.

Amnesty Philippines believes that many of these problems can be addressed by the passage of the Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Bill (CADB). For decades, many Filipinos have had to endure prejudice and discrimination as the Philippine Congress fails to pass a legislation that provides proper safeguard and protection against these acts. If adopted, this proposed measure will make any form of discrimination illegal, especially when accessing basic services and seeking protection. This law will also ensure that those considered to be most vulnerable to acts of discrimination in extraordinary situations are protected at all times.

Amnesty Philippines further assert that the Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Bill must exemplify the principle of inclusivity and equality by ensuring that all sectors and identities, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, enjoy the protection this legislation provides.

## TAKE ACTION

Sign the ongoing petition  
urging lawmakers to pass

CADB:

[bit.ly/AI-CADB](https://bit.ly/AI-CADB)



# OPEN LINE:

**FIND OUT HOW AMNESTY PH ENSURES INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION ONLINE AND OFFLINE**

## IstoryaHEY!

'IstoryaHEY!' is a DIY zine created for Amnesty Philippines members and supporters who have limited or no access to online resources. Derivative of the word 'istoryahe', a Bisayan slang meaning 'What! Really?'

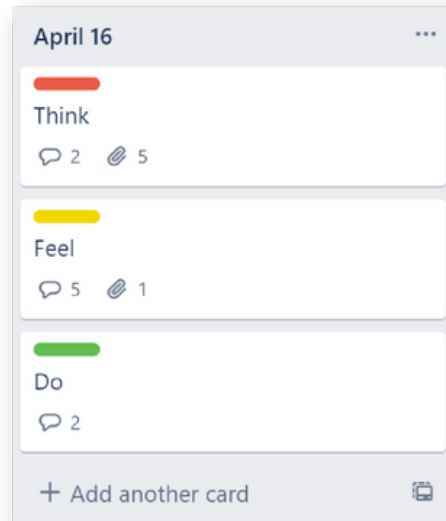
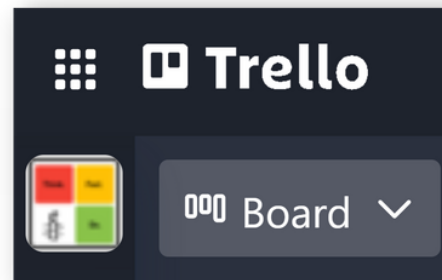
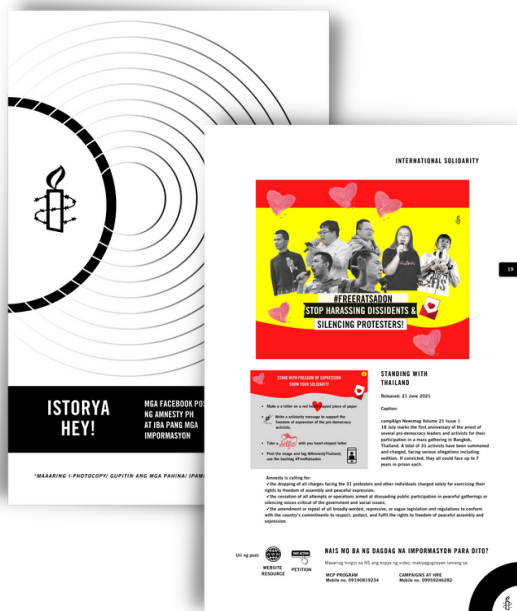
This resource collates and features Amnesty Phippines' presence on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. It also comes in Filipino, and Cebuano translations. Fomatted for easy DIY printing-- 'IstoryaHEY!' contains all the information necessary for AI members and supporters to share and collaborate on for their human rights work.

Download and print your own copy of 'IstoryaHEY!' here:

[bit.ly/IstoryaHEY](http://bit.ly/IstoryaHEY)

## THINK. FEEL. DO.

'Think. Feel. Do.' is a content collaboration space in Amnesty Philippines for individuals from different regions and formations. Weekly, the team holds a Sprint where they provide insights, messaging proposals and analysis about current events, pressing issues, and interesting topics to ensure that Amnesty's content remains relevant to its audience, inclusive and diverse.



# THIS ISSUE'S BURNING QUESTION:

**“Kung ikaw ay magiging Senador o  
Kongresista, anong mga panukalang  
batas ang isusulong mo?”**



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.



**JUDE NELSON APOLONIO**

"Kung ako ay magiging isang Senador isusulong ko ang batas na ang lahat ng guro ay matuto ng sign language, braille at maghandle sa mga batang may kapansanan sa loob ng paaralan. Dapat maiwasan ang pagkakaroon ng segregation sa mga learners.

Para maiwasan ang barriers, isama sa curriculum ang sign language para maiwasan ang pagkakahon sa mga taong may kapansanan.

#EndLanguageBarrier  
#LahatKasali"



"Mohimo ako ug usa ka balaod nga makakaon kami tulo ka beses sa usa ka adlaw, ug dili ta sayon-sayonan sa ubang bansa. Maayong kahimsog sa tananga panglawas ang tanang Pilipino."

**-JENILYN ARAZA**



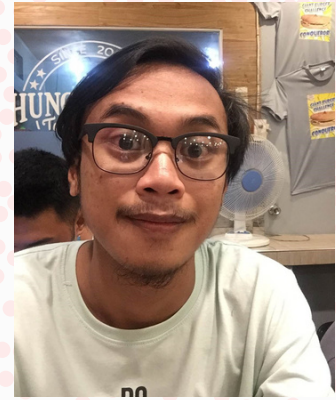
"Gawing pantay, makatao at parehas na karapatang pantao ng bawat isa, lalo na sa mga taong nasa posisyun at ordinaryo."

**-ZEUS "NOKIE" CALUNSAG**



**RAFAEL POPS ENCARNACION**

"Kung ako ay maging kongresista ang isusulong kong panukalang batas ay ang pagbabawal ng mga warrantless arrest para sa kahit anong kasong kriminal o sibil at ang pagbabasura ng lahat o ano mang batas na lumalabag sa karapatang pantao at ang paggamit ng body camera habang nasa tungkulin ang mga alagad ng batas."



**MEARCK AMIEL JAN LOPEZ**

"Kung ako ay magkakaroon ng pagkakataong maging isang senador upang pagsilbihan ang mamamayang Pilipino, isa sa mga panukalang batas na pagtutuunan ko ng pansin ay ang Republic Act 7610 or Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act.

Pinili ko ito dahil alam naman natin na marami pa ring mga bata na nagdurusa dahil sa mga pang-aabuso, hindi lang sa physical o mental na pang-aabuso, pati na rin sa kanilang karapatang tratuhin ng tama, pag-aralin, at bigyan ng buhay na maayos. "



**MATTEO GONZAGA**

"Kung ako ay magiging Senador o Kongresista, magpapatupad ako ng mga batas na magpapahalaga at mangangalaga sa karapatang pantao ng lahat na mamamayang Pilipino. Sisiguraduhin ko na maipapatupad ang batas na magtatanggal ng "inequality" sa bansa, mula sa mga batas, sa ekonomiya, sa edukasyon at lalo na sa sektor ng pangkalusugan."



**HARRY PINEDA**

"Ang mas mataas na parusa sa mga nagkakasalang tao ng gobyerno lalo na sa mga halal na opisyal, political appointee at sa lahat ng level ng security sector."





# YES to accountable and visible leadership

BY MANU GASPAR

Published in *Philippine Star*, 27 July 2021

Find it here [bit.ly/ManuGaspar-PhilStar](https://bit.ly/ManuGaspar-PhilStar)



What should we look for in a leader? Unfortunately, this question may focus too much on individual traits that we identify with or are interested in. We need to reframe the question because it is less about who we like best, but more about what is actually required. Let's take a step back and ask: what kind of country do we want as a result of the political leadership?

I want a country where people can freely express and associate without fear of violence or harassment. This is a country where our government and corporations protect each of us in online and offline spaces.

When we have a culture that respects our freedom to engage with issues closest to us, we are protected against threats of arrest, torture, or unlawful detention. It also means our online privacy is protected within the digital platforms we use while ensuring they are free from abuse and misinformation.

I want a country that strives towards equity and celebrates our diversity. When we address the root causes of inequality and discrimination, each one of us can enjoy the highest quality of health care, housing, and social security possible.

In fact, providing these are some of the best investments our leaders can make that provide the highest returns on our well-being and future generations.

Corporations should go beyond simply reporting on sustainable practices; they should end unsustainable practices that are hurting indigenous communities and the

environment. When our government takes care of us, as evidenced by living wages and livable cities, we can better contribute the best of our abilities to society

I want a country that is accountable for its past sins. This requires genuine acknowledgment of and reparation for the violations it has made in years past. It is the best response to the justice and reconciliation that victims have long been asking for. This requires recommitting our justice system and law enforcement practices to align with international human rights standards.

Only after we undo our moral failures can we effectively call out other countries to hold them accountable—especially on modern issues like vaccine equity or climate justice, where actions of richer countries disproportionately affect our lives and opportunities.

The truth is that we are not asking for too much. We do not require grand infrastructure projects nor lofty ambitions. We just want to get by. We want to live each day without fear of sliding into debt because a family member has been hospitalized; without fear of being stigmatized when we speak our personal truths and beliefs; without fear of falling behind in school because we cannot fully participate remotely. We want a country where it is actually enjoyable to live in, and not simply to live through.

If this is the type of Philippines we want in the next few years, then this is what is required: accountable and visible leadership that recognizes our dignity and fulfills our human rights. Whether it is another pandemic, another financial crisis, or worsening climate change, this is the type of leadership that will build the empathy, unity, and resilience necessary to take on any challenge of the future. Another world is possible. A better world is achievable.



## THE AUTHOR

Manu Gaspar works to improve healthcare access and systems through technology. He is a Youth Board Member of Amnesty International Philippines.



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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