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ORAL STATEMENT
Item 6:
Consideration of UPR reports: The Philippines

UN Human Rights Council
52nd session
27 February – 4 April 2023

Mr. President,

Amnesty International welcomes the government's affirmation that it has no plans to reintroduce the death penalty and supported¹ recommendations which restated a commitment to its abolition.²

The Philippines' support for recommendations on the so-called "war on drugs", including ensuring a health- and human rights-based approach and prioritizing accountability for extrajudicial executions, is contradicted by the reality on the ground. Drug-related killings continue, and there is still no justice or reparations for thousands of victims and their families.

We urge the government to end killings of people suspected of using or selling drugs and bring all those responsible for unlawful killings to justice, including those in command. This would demonstrate real progress for the UN Joint Programme on Human Rights in the Philippines, which has yet to result in concrete and significant changes on the ground.

We also call on the government to re-join the Rome Statute and cooperate with the International Criminal Court, to show real commitment to accountability as recommended by several States.³

¹ Supporting a recommendation means the state commits to implement it in period up to next review

² UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Philippines, UN Doc. A/HRC/52/13, 28 December 2022, Recommendations 145.32-42 (Uruguay, Armenia, Costa Rica, Iceland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Sierra Leone, Spain, Switzerland, Timor Leste)

³ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Philippines, UN Doc. A/HRC/52/13, 28 December 2022, Recommendations 146.13-19 (Austria, Estonia, Latvia, Costa Rica, Liechtenstein, France, Luxembourg, Portugal).

Mr President,

Government pledges to protect human rights defenders, activists and journalists are undermined by its noting of recommendations to enact the Human Rights Defenders Protection bill;⁴ to end the practice of “red-tagging”;⁵ and to prevent and respond to violations and abuses against human rights defenders.⁶

Regrettably, the government noted recommendations to enact comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation to protect LGBTI people and others;⁷ to amend or repeal repressive laws such as the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020⁸; and to decriminalize libel and cyber libel.⁹ We urge the government to reconsider its position on these recommendations.

Finally, we encourage the Philippines to implement supported recommendations as soon as possible. We also urge the government to submit a mid-term report on progress towards implementation of such recommendations and to use an Item 6 General Debate to bring this to the attention of UN Member States.

Thank you.

⁴ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Philippines, UN Doc. A/HRC/52/13, 28 December 2022, Recommendations 146.31 (Austria), 146.33 (Canada), 146.35 (Finland), 146.40 (Romania), 146.43 (Switzerland), 146.60 (United States of America), 146.64 (Mexico), 146.76 (Netherlands).

⁵ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Philippines, UN Doc. A/HRC/52/13, 28 December 2022, Recommendations 146.60-62 (United States of America, Sierra Leone, Sweden), 146.75 (Liechtenstein).

⁶ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Philippines, UN Doc. A/HRC/52/13, 28 December 2022, Recommendations 146.35 (Finland), 146.60 (United States of America), 146.68 (Uruguay), 146.74-44 (Ghana, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, Spain).

⁷ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Philippines, UN Doc. A/HRC/52/13, 28 December 2022, Recommendations 146.32 (Belgium), 146.34 (Czechia), 146.36-39 (Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Mexico), 146.41-42 (Argentina, Sweden), 146.59 (Iceland).

⁸ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Philippines, UN Doc. A/HRC/52/13, 28 December 2022, Recommendations 146.63-64 (Austria, Mexico), 146.69 (United States of America).

⁹ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Philippines, UN Doc. A/HRC/52/13, 28 December 2022, Recommendations 146.71 (Canada), 146.76 (Netherlands).