

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT CARD

LEGEND

P - PROGRESS **S** - STAGNATION **R** - REGRESSION



NAME

PRESIDENT BBM

GRADING PERIOD

SONA 2024



ACCOUNTABILITY ON THE WAR ON DRUGS

S



PREVENTION OF FURTHER HR ABUSES

R



ACCESS TO PUBLIC HEALTHCARE

R



LABOR AND SECURITY

R



EDUCATION FOR ALL

S



PRESS FREEDOM

S



FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

R



CRACKDOWN ON CORRUPTION

R

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



FINAL GRADE:

FAIL

SONA REPORT CARD

ISSUE / CONCERN	2023	2024
<p><u>ACCOUNTABILITY ON THE WAR ON DRUGS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICC: In November 2023, Marcos Jr. revealed that his administration is studying its options of returning to the International Criminal Court which strained the Marcos-Duterte alliance. This was followed by the DOJ announcement in May 2024 that it is preparing a legal brief for the President to lay out his options over possible arrest warrants to be issued by the ICC over Filipino nationals. Even with these pronouncements, President Marcos remains steadfast in its position of non-cooperation and non-engagement with the ICC. The ICC recently ruled to continue the investigation on the extrajudicial executions under Duterte's administration – numbering at 6,000 by government count while human rights groups believe the numbers to be much higher estimated at more than 24,000. UNJP: Even during the planning and subsequent implementation of the UNJP, there were continued reports of harassment, threats, arrests, attacks, torture, disappearances and red tagging against civil society actors. The continued drug related killings (593 killings by the March 2024) by police have also raised serious ongoing concerns and undermine the objectives set for and by the technical cooperation and capacity building by all parties involved. Civil society organizations, the OHCHR and the CHR of the Philippines have all asked the Philippine Government to take steps towards the protection of civic space to enable domestic discussions to address challenges to human rights. <p>The program, in the strictest sense, did not advance accountability for the gravest abuses by the Duterte administration well onto the Marcos Administration The UNJP has also failed to address other key issues central to its engagement and this includes the continued implementation of repressive policies such as the Anti-Terrorism Law, the “Double Barrel and Oplan Tokhang” campaign and the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC).</p>	R	S
<p><u>PREVENTION OF FURTHER HR ABUSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Philippines continue to “enjoy” its status as one of the worst countries for journalists, legal professionals, trade unionists and environmentalists to operate in. HRD Protection: There is currently minimal legislation that recognizes the legitimacy of human rights defenders' identity and work, that protects them from harm against state and non-state actors and provides remedy when their rights are violated. <p>Instead, the state legitimized its attacks towards human rights defenders using the Anti-Terror Law, and the exploitative application of the Anti-Money Laundering Act and the Cybercrime Prevention Act. Several international agencies already pointed the detrimental effects of the attacks of the state towards rights defenders. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights noted that it “dilutes human rights safeguards” and creates a “chilling effect on human rights and humanitarian work.”¹⁷ The UN special rapporteur on freedom of expression and opinion recently stated that the Philippines must repeal the Anti-Terror Law, defund the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict, and create policies that safeguard the rights and welfare of human rights defenders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NTF-ELCAC continues to operate despite repeated calls for its abolition. The tactics used by the NTF-ELCAC such as partnering with schools through the NSTP and engaging barangays enhances the propagation of harmful narratives against activists and activism through flaunting lists of student organizations tagged as “terrorists” or “communists”, encouraging students to identify “communists” among their peers, and implementing projects to gather information and put human rights defenders, church workers, development workers among others under surveillance. 	R	R

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Marcos Administration created the Special Committee on Human Rights Coordination. While the move seemingly signals the Administration's commitment to human rights, the Committee further convolutes the human rights and justice system as the Commission on Human Rights and the Presidential Human Rights Committee already exist, with the prior lacking significant support and resources from the administration <p>Regression because policies are still being used against HRDs / HRAs / the marginalized and vulnerable. The NTF-ELCAC continue to operate as well</p>		
<p><u>ACCESS TO PUBLIC HEALTHCARE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2024 General Appropriations Act (GAA) has earmarked approximately P241. 1 billion for the DOH, significantly rising from the initially proposed P199. 1 billion in the National Expenditure Program (NEP), highlighting an increase of P42 billion. Despite this, the Philippines continue to suffer critical gaps in its healthcare system. It suffers from inequities in the healthcare system - only 21 percent of its provinces with adequate primary care facilities that can service the poorest of the poor. There is inadequacy in health financing where over 50 percent of the hospitals are privately run. Also, the country continues to lose healthcare workers to better job offers abroad effectively worsening the medical practitioner to patient ratio Unpaid COVID Allowances for Health Workers: The DOH said the allocated budget for payment of these allowances in 2024 is over 50 per cent short of what is needed to pay off all the filed claims over the years. At least US\$480 million more is needed to pay pending allowance claims 	S	R
<p><u>LABOR AND SECURITY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labor groups currently called the recent minimum wage as "starvation wages", describing their income cannot help up to the poverty threshold and the effects of the inflation. <p>Only a 40-peso <u>increase</u> was granted to workers in private establishments in the National Capital Region (NCR) last June 2023, despite the inflation rate rising up to <u>8.7%</u> in January. The last legislated national wage hike took place over 30 years ago. Several bills in Congress propose to raise the minimum wage of private sector workers nationwide with proposed amounts varying between Php100 and Php750. Labor Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma has expressed concern that employers—particularly micro, small, and medium enterprises—would not be able to afford the wage increase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An estimated 38,000 jeepney drivers and their families are threatened by the Philippine Public Utility Vehicle (PUV) Modernization Program. The administration set 20 April 2024 as the deadline for PUV franchise consolidation and the traditional jeepney phaseout. An 81% consolidation rate was achieved by this deadline, but the hefty consolidation requirement threatens these drivers as they struggle to pay for modern jeepney units costing millions of pesos on measly earnings. <p>Regression due to the government's slow response to the demands and needs of workers/ laborers / minimum wage earners. Also, the current PUV Modernization program has put both jeepney drivers / operators and commuters at risk of losing their livelihood.</p>	S	R
<p><u>EDUCATION FOR ALL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Philippine Business for Education (PBE) considers the Philippine educational system to be in crisis raising concerns over declining mental health of students and teachers, lack of support for teachers, culture of mass promotion of learners and lack of assessment of key issues. UNICEF has also raised the issue of poverty as a factor for the dwindling numbers of students in public and state funded learning institutions. The Philippine Statistics Authority has reported 	R	S

<p>that approximately 16.7 million Filipinos live below the poverty line, with many of them struggling to make ends meet daily. Consequently, education becomes an unaffordable luxury for many families, especially those living in the most impoverished communities. The inability to send their children to school forces them to work instead, perpetuating the cycle of poverty for generations.</p> <p>The ongoing armed conflict in some parts of the Philippines has created many challenges in the education sector. In particular, the situation has greatly impacted the lives of many children, making it difficult for them to continue their studies. With schools being forced to close and students being displaced, the government has recognized the need for alternative education systems that can provide access to education to those who have been affected by the conflict.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Another important issue facing the education system in the Philippines is the lack of resources and infrastructure in many schools, especially in rural areas. This challenge is widespread and affects a significant number of schools in the country. <p>According to a report by the Department of Education, around 5,000 schools in the Philippines have no access to electricity, while 10,000 have no access to potable water. This lack of basic amenities puts students and teachers at a significant disadvantage, affecting the quality of education they receive. In addition, many schools lack adequate classrooms, textbooks, and teaching materials, making it challenging for students to learn effectively. This challenge is not only limited to rural areas but is also present in urban areas.</p>		
<p>PRESS FREEDOM</p> <p>There is no progress due to the fact that we still have laws that curtail press freedom, no accountability for those who have abused their powers in the closure of ABS CBN and those who have harassed / killed and violated the rights of journalists and other media practitioners.</p>	S	S
<p><u>FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION</u></p> <p>Regression due to the repercussions of having a status quo on “no action” policy of the government.</p>	R	R
<p><u>CRACKDOWN ON CORRUPTION</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In its 2024 Corruption Perception Index, Transparency International maintained that the Philippines remain at the lower end of the spectrum amongst its Asia Pacific counterparts. The Philippines was ranked 115th out of the 180 countries and territories on the list, up from 116th in 2023. <p>The Philippines is considered amongst the ‘significant decliners’ in the region, having been in steady decline since it placed 85th in 2014. Key concerns seen in the country include anti-corruption policies versus practice and accountability, normalization of bribery in government practice, diversion of public funds, rampant use of public position for private gain without consequence, nepotism in public appointments, non-disclosure of finances and conflicts of interest, lack of protection for people who report or witness against graft and corruption and lack of transparency on information regarding governance, expenditure and policy creation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The controversial Maharlika Fund, a priority of the president that was signed into law in 2023, continue to build on its operations having had its first board meeting in January 2024. Despite government assurances, critics from the business and financial experts and the academe continue to raise concerns on the investment fund as being akin to a plunder fund. The law that created the Maharlika Fund lacks safeguards to protect public funds from abuses, graft and corruption, money laundering or tax evasion. It is also open to possible abuses or gross incompetence or negligence of the presidential appointees who will manage the funds. <p>Regression because of the full implementation of the Maharlika Fund and the ongoing controversies in compensation for the Board and their incoming staff with no action from the admin</p>	S	R