

OFFICIAL NEWS MAGAZINE OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES

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ISSN # 1908-9856

2024 | VOLUME 24, ISSUE 1

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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SOUNDS ALARM

ON A WATERSHED MOMENT FOR  
INTERNATIONAL LAW **AMID FLAGRANT  
RULE-BREAKING** BY GOVERNMENTS AND  
CORPORATE ACTORS

STATE OF THE WORLD'S

HUMAN RIGHTS 2023/24

ANNUAL REPORT

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S REPORT PAINTS  
A DISMAL PICTURE OF ALARMING HUMAN  
RIGHTS REPRESSION AND PROLIFIC  
INTERNATIONAL RULE-BREAKING, ALL IN THE  
MIDST OF DEEPENING GLOBAL INEQUALITY,  
SUPERPOWERS VYING FOR SUPREMACY  
AND AN ESCALATING CLIMATE CRISIS.

THE WORLD IS REAPING A HARVEST OF TERRIFYING CONSEQUENCES FROM ESCALATING  
CONFLICT AND THE NEAR BREAKDOWN OF INTERNATIONAL LAW.

Amnesty International also warned that the breakdown of the rule of law is likely to accelerate with rapid advancement in artificial intelligence (AI) which, coupled with the dominance of Big Tech, risks a “supercharging” of human rights violations if regulation continues to lag behind advances.

Amnesty International's report paints a dismal picture of alarming human rights repression and prolific international rule-breaking, all in the midst of deepening global inequality, superpowers vying for supremacy and an escalating climate crisis.

Amnesty International's Secretary General, Agnès Callamard said that Israel's flagrant disregard for international law is compounded by the failures of its allies to stop the indescribable civilian bloodshed meted out in Gaza. Many of those allies were the very architects of that post-World War Two system of law. Alongside Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine, the growing number of armed conflicts, and massive human rights violations witnessed, for example, in Sudan, Ethiopia and Myanmar – the global rule-based order is at risk of decimation.

Lawlessness, discrimination and impunity in conflicts and elsewhere have been enabled by unchecked use of new and familiar technologies which are now routinely weaponized by military, political and corporate actors. Big Tech's platforms have stoked conflict. Spyware and mass surveillance tools are used to encroach on fundamental rights and freedoms, while governments are deploying automated tools targeting the most marginalized groups in society.

In an increasingly precarious world, unregulated proliferation and deployment of technologies such as generative AI, facial recognition and spyware are poised to be a pernicious foe – scaling up and supercharging violations of international law and human rights to exceptional levels. During a landmark year of elections and in the face of the increasingly powerful anti-regulation lobby driven and financed by Big Tech actors, these rogue and unregulated technological advances pose an enormous threat to us all. They can be weaponized to discriminate, disinform and divide.

## CIVILIANS IN CONFLICT PAY ULTIMATE PRICE AS STATES FLOUT INTERNATIONAL LAW

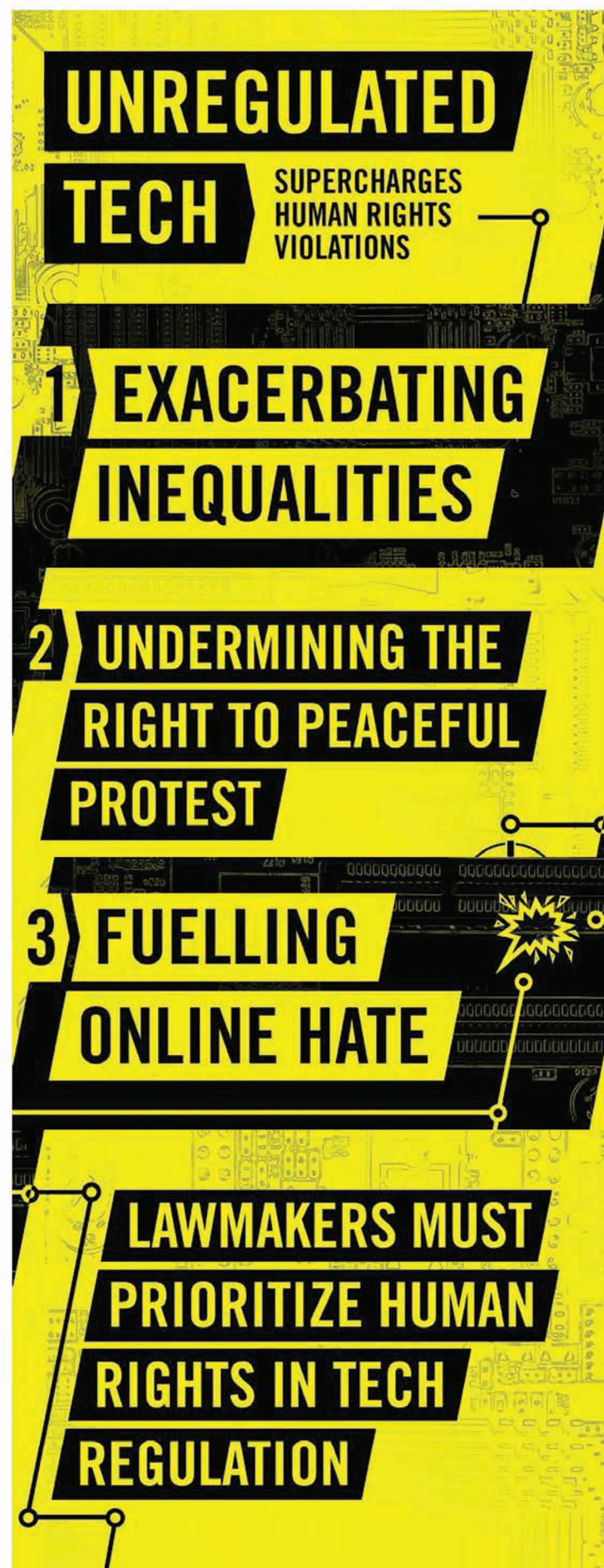
Amnesty International's report presents a stark assessment of the betrayal of human rights principles by today's leaders and institutions. In the face of multiplying conflicts, the actions of many powerful states have further damaged the credibility of multilateralism and undermined the global rules-based order first established in 1945.

In a conflict that defined 2023 and shows no sign of abating, evidence of war crimes continues to mount as the Israeli government makes a mockery of international law in Gaza. Following the horrific attacks by Hamas and other armed groups on 7 October, Israeli authorities responded with unrelenting air strikes on populated civilian areas often wiping out entire families, forcibly displacing nearly 1.9 million Palestinians and restricting the access of desperately needed humanitarian aid despite growing famine in Gaza.



The report points to the USA's brazen use of its veto to paralyse the UN Security Council for months on a much-needed resolution for a ceasefire, as it continues to arm Israel with munitions that have been used to commit what likely amounts to war crimes. It also highlights the grotesque double standards of European countries such as the UK and Germany, given their well-founded protestations about war crimes by Russia and Hamas, while they simultaneously bolster the actions of Israeli and US authorities in this conflict.

The confounding failure of the international community to protect thousands of civilians – a horrifically high percentage



of them children – from being killed in the occupied Gaza Strip makes patently clear that the very institutions set up to protect civilians and uphold human rights are no longer fit for purpose. What we saw in 2023 confirms that many powerful states are abandoning the founding values of humanity and universality enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The report also documents flagrant rule-breaking by Russian forces during their continued full-scale invasion of Ukraine. It highlights indiscriminate attacks on densely populated civilian areas, as well as energy and grain export infrastructure; and the use of torture or other ill-treatment against prisoners of war. This is in addition to vast environmental contamination through acts including the apparently deliberate destruction of the Kakhovka dam which is widely believed to have been committed by Russian forces.

Myanmar's military and associated militias also conducted attacks against civilians resulting in over 1,000 civilian deaths in 2023 alone. Neither the Myanmar military nor the Russian authorities have committed to investigating reports of glaring violations. Both have received financial and military support from China.

In Sudan, both warring parties, the Sudan Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, have demonstrated little concern for international humanitarian law as they carried out targeted and indiscriminate attacks that have killed and injured civilians, and launched explosive weapons from densely populated neighbourhoods killing 12,000 people in 2023. This has triggered the largest displacement crisis in the world with more than 8 million people forced to flee. With no end to the conflict in sight, the hunger crisis that has gripped Sudan for months is now dangerously close to turning into famine.

#### **TECH WIELDED TO STOKES HATE, DIVISION AND DISCRIMINATION POSES THREAT IN LANDMARK YEAR OF ELECTIONS**

Amnesty International found that political actors in many parts of the world are ramping up their attacks on women, LGBTI people and marginalized communities who have historically been scapegoated for political or electoral gains. New and existing technologies have increasingly been weaponized to aid and abet these repressive political forces to spread disinformation, pit communities against each other and attack minorities.

The report also points to the expansive use of existing technologies to entrench discriminatory policies. States including Argentina, Brazil, India and the UK have increasingly turned to facial recognition technologies to police public protests and sporting events and discriminate against marginalized communities – particularly migrants and refugees. For example, in response to legal action by Amnesty International, the New York Police Department revealed in 2023 how it used the technology to subject Black Lives Matter protests in the city to surveillance.

The nefarious use of facial recognition was no more pervasive than in the West Bank of the Occupied Palestinian Territories where it was used by Israel to reinforce restrictions on freedom of movement and help maintain the system of apartheid.

In Serbia, the introduction of a semi-automated social welfare system resulted in thousands of people losing access to vital social assistance. This particularly affected Roma communities and people with disabilities, demonstrating how unchecked automation can exacerbate inequality.

With millions fleeing conflicts around the world, the report notes how abusive technologies were relied upon for migration

governance and border enforcement, including through use of digital alternatives to detention, border externalization technologies, data software, biometrics and algorithmic decision-making systems. The proliferation of these technologies perpetuates and reinforces discrimination, racism, and disproportionate and unlawful surveillance against racialized people.

Meanwhile, spyware has remained largely unregulated, despite the long-term evidence of the human rights violations it drives, with activists-in-exile, journalists and human rights defenders usually among those targeted. In 2023, Amnesty International uncovered the use of Pegasus spyware against journalists and civil society activists in countries including Armenia, the Dominican Republic, India and Serbia, while EU-based and regulated spyware was freely sold to states the world over.

Over the past year the rapid trajectory of generative AI, has transformed the scale of the threat posed by the gamut of technologies already in existence – from spyware to state automation and social media's run-away algorithms.

In the face of rapacious advancements, regulation has largely remained stagnant. However, in a sign that European policymakers are beginning to act, a landmark EU-wide Digital Services Act came into force in February 2024. While imperfect and incomplete, it has nevertheless triggered a much-needed global debate on AI regulation.

"There is a vast chasm between the risks posed by the unchecked advancement of technologies, and where we need to be in terms of regulation and protection. It's our future foretold and will only worsen unless the rampant proliferation of unregulated technology is curtailed," said Agnès Callamard.

Amnesty International exposed how Facebook's algorithms contributed to ethnic violence in Ethiopia in the context of armed conflict. This is a prime example of how technology is weaponized to pit communities against each other, particularly in times of instability.

Amnesty also forecasts that these problems will escalate in a landmark election year, with the surveillance-based business model underpinning major social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube acting as a catalyst for human rights violations in the context of elections.

Hate, discrimination and disinformation are amplified and spread by social media algorithms optimized to maximize 'engagement' above all else. They create an endless and dangerous feedback loop, particularly at times of heightened political sensitivity. Tools can generate synthetic images, audio and video in seconds, as well as target specific audience groups at scale, but electoral regulation has yet to catch up with this threat. To date there has been too much talk with too little action.

In November, the US presidential election will take place in the face of increasing discrimination, harassment and abuse on social media platforms towards marginalized communities including LGBTI people. Threatening and intimidating anti-abortion content has also become rife.

About a billion people are voting in India's election this year against a backdrop of attacks on peaceful protesters and systematic discrimination against religious minorities. In 2023 Amnesty International revealed that invasive spyware had been used to target prominent Indian journalists, and more broadly tech platforms have become political battlefields.

Politicians have long used manipulation of 'us vs. them' narratives to win votes and outmanoeuvre legitimate questions about economic and security fears. Amnesty reports how unregulated technologies, such as facial recognition, have been used to entrench discrimination.

#### **BIG TECH'S SURVEILLANCE BUSINESS MODEL IS POURING FUEL ON THIS FIRE OF HATE, ENABLING THOSE WITH MALINTENT TO HOUND, DEHUMANIZE AND AMPLIFY DANGEROUS NARRATIVES TO CONSOLIDATE POWER OR POLLING.**

It's a chilling spectre of what's to come as technological advances rapaciously outpace accountability.

#### **UNPRECEDENTED GLOBAL MOBILIZATION**

The actions of powerful state and non-state actors cast the world deeper into the chaos of not having effective rules, where ruthless profit-making from revolutionary technologies without effective governance has become the norm. But where many governments have failed to abide by international law, Amnesty has also seen others calling on international institutions to implement the rule of law. And where leaders the world over have failed to stand up for human rights, people galvanized to march, protest and petition for a more hopeful future.

The Israel-Hamas conflict sparked hundreds of protests worldwide. People demanded a ceasefire to end the staggering suffering of Palestinians in Gaza, as well as the release of all hostages taken by Hamas and other armed groups, long before many governments did. Elsewhere, people took to the streets of the USA, El Salvador and Poland to demand the right to abortion as the backlash against gender justice took hold. Across the globe thousands joined youth-led movement Fridays For Future to call for the fair and fast phase-out of fossil fuels.

Tireless campaigning also led to a number of significant human rights wins in 2023. Following advocacy by Taiwan's #MeToo movement and other civil society organizations to end online sexual violence, the government passed an amendment to Taiwan's "Sexual Assault Crime Prevention Act".

Despite falling short of what was needed, COP28 agreed to "transition away" from fossil fuels marking the first time that fossil fuels had been mentioned in a COP decision. In the wake of years of campaigning, four human rights defenders in the Buyukada case – Taner Kılıç, İdil Eser, Özlem Dalkıran and Günel Kurşun, who were convicted in July 2020 on baseless charges – were finally acquitted in Turkey.

In one of many examples, Afghan education activist Matiullah Wesa was released last October after months of campaigning. He spent nearly seven months in prison for promoting girls' right to education and criticizing the Taliban's policy banning girls from seeking secondary education.

The right to protest is critical to shining a light on abuses and on leaders' responsibilities. People have made it abundantly clear that they want human rights; the onus is on governments to show that they are listening. Given the grim global state-of-play, urgent measures are required to revitalize and renew the international institutions intended to safeguard humanity.

## OVERVIEW

UNLAWFUL KILLINGS UNDER THE “WAR ON DRUGS” CONTINUED AND IMPUNITY FOR THOUSANDS OF PAST KILLINGS REMAINED ENTRENCHED. REPRESSION OF DISSENT INTENSIFIED AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION WAS FURTHER RESTRICTED AS HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS, POLITICAL ACTIVISTS, JOURNALISTS AND OTHERS WERE SUBJECTED EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS INCLUDING UNDER THE “WAR ON DRUGS” CONTINUED. THE ICC REJECTED THE GOVERNMENT’S APPEAL TO STOP THE RESUMPTION OF ITS INVESTIGATION INTO VIOLATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE “WAR ON DRUGS”. THE PRACTICE OF “RED-TAGGING” HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND OTHERS PERSISTED, AND COUNTERTERRORISM LEGISLATION WAS INCREASINGLY USED AGAINST HUMANITARIAN WORKERS. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION CONTINUED TO BE RESTRICTED. ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS AND INDIGENOUS PERSONS WERE REPORTED. TO UNLAWFUL KILLINGS, ARBITRARY ARREST AND DETENTION. AUTHORITIES BLOCKED THE WEBSITES AND ORDERED THE CLOSURE OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA.

### EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS

Extrajudicial executions in the context of the “war on drugs” that started in 2016 continued into the second year of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s administration, despite his public pronouncements that the campaign against illicit drugs would focus on treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration. According to media monitoring by the university-based research group Dahas, at least 329 people were killed in 2023 by state agents during police-led anti-drug operations or by unknown individuals.

Other unlawful killings took place including the killing by police of two teenage boys, John Francis Ompad and Jemboy Baltazar, in separate incidents in August in Rodriguez town, Rizal province, and Navotas City. Eight suspects, including seven police officers, were charged with their killings. In September in Bangued City, unknown assailants shot dead Saniata Liwliwa Gonzales Alzate, a lawyer who provided free legal services to low-income litigants. Investigations into the killing of Alzate were ongoing at year’s end.

### IMPUNITY

Impunity prevailed in most of the many thousands of documented cases of unlawful killings.

In August, government prosecutors affirmed the Department of Justice’s dismissal of a complaint against 17 police officers brought by the wife of labour activist Emmanuel Asuncion. He and eight other activists were killed during police operations in Luzon on 7 March 2021. A petition to review the dismissal remained pending at year’s end. In June, a court sentenced three men to between two and eight years’ imprisonment as accessories in the killing of high-profile radio broadcaster Percival Mabasa (known as Percy Lapid) in October 2022.



The murder followed his on-air criticism of government officials, including the former director of the Bureau of Corrections, Gerald Bantag, who, despite being charged with Percy Lapid’s death, had not been arrested by year’s end. In a rare break from the trend and in only the second known conviction of a police officer for drug-related killings, former police officer Jefrey Perez was sentenced to up to 40 years’ imprisonment in March for killing teenagers Carl Arnaiz and Reynaldo de Guzman in 2017.

In July, the ICC Appeals Chamber rejected the government’s appeal against the resumption of the ICC prosecutor’s investigations into crimes against humanity, including in the context of the “war on drugs”.

### REPRESSION OF DISSENT

Despite pressure from the UN Human Rights Council to end the practice, “red-tagging” (whereby organizations and individuals are publicly linked to banned communist groups) continued through the year. “Red-tagging” made individuals vulnerable to unlawful killing and other serious human rights violations.

On 13 March, the government’s National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict “red-tagged” human rights groups including Karapatan and the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights advocates, as well as other legal assistance groups supporting a proposed Human Rights Defenders Protection Law.

In September, the Department of Education publicly stated that 16 public high schools in Metro Manila were involved in recruitment activities for the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People’s Army (NPA).

The authorities increasingly used counterterrorism legislation against “red-tagged” groups, including humanitarian organizations. In March, in the first conviction under the Terrorism Financing Prevention and Suppression Act since it was enacted in 2012, a court found a former cashier of Catholic group Rural Missionaries of the Philippines guilty of being an accessory to terrorist financing. Four nuns and 11 other members of the group, whom prosecutors accused of being a conduit for the NPA, faced similar charges. In May, the military filed a complaint against humanitarian group Community Empowerment Resource Network for “financing terrorism” under the same law. In May, a court in Muntinlupa City acquitted prisoner of conscience and former senator Leila de Lima for conspiring to trade in illicit drugs. In November, she was released on bail while the last of the politically-motivated drug-related cases against her continued.

### FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In January and September, the Court of Tax Appeals acquitted prominent journalist and Nobel laureate Maria Ressa and the holding company of her news website Rappler of all five tax evasion charges against them. In December, the Department of Justice dropped a charge alleging that she had violated the law against foreign ownership of media organizations. Appeals against the verdict in a separate cyber-libel case, in which Maria Ressa was sentenced to seven years’ imprisonment, and an order to close Rappler remained pending.

In December, a government prosecutor dismissed a complaint alleging violations of environmental laws filed by the police against artist Max Santiago and three others involved in burning an effigy of the president during a protest in July. Charges against 14 other individuals for organizing the protest without a permit remained pending.

### ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

On 5 September, two environmental protection workers, Jhed Tamano and Jonila Castro, disappeared near the capital, Manila. Before releasing them, the military presented the women at a press conference on 19 September, saying that they were being held in a “safe house” after they had sought help from the authorities. However, the women publicly accused the military of abducting them and filed a petition with the Supreme Court requesting protection from the police and other government agencies. The military subsequently filed perjury charges against them, which remained pending at the end of the year.

### INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ RIGHTS

On 28 April, “red-tagged” Indigenous Peoples’ rights defenders Dexter Capuyan and Gene Roz Jamil de Jesus disappeared in Taytay, Rizal province, after reportedly being forcibly taken by individuals who said they worked for a police agency. In September, the Court of Appeals dismissed a petition filed by their families to compel the authorities to produce Capuyan and de Jesus in court. The Philippine National Police denied any involvement in the case.

In July, the state Anti-Terrorism Council designated four leaders of an Indigenous Peoples’ rights group, the Cordillera Peoples Alliance, as terrorists, enabling the government to investigate their activities and freeze their financial assets.

### LGBTI PEOPLE’S RIGHTS

In May, the House of Representatives’ Committee on Women and Gender Equality approved a bill to protect people from discrimination based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics. The bill would still need to be approved by both the House of Representatives and the Senate, but in September the senate majority leader said this was not a priority.

On 7 October, drag performer Pura Luka Vega was released on bail from police custody after being arrested for breaching a law against “indecent or immoral acts” that “offend any race or religion”. Pura Luka Vega had been arrested three days earlier for reciting the Lord’s Prayer dressed in a costume resembling Jesus. If convicted, they face a substantial fine and/or up to 12 years’ imprisonment.

# PHILIPPINES





**TIBAK** IS A SLANG TERM FOR “AKTIBISTA”, KNOWN AND USED BY ACTIVISTS ACROSS DIFFERENT ISSUES AND STRUGGLES, AND SLANDERED AND DEMONIZED BY THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT ACROSS ADMINISTRATIONS.

BUT TO BE AN ACTIVIST, IS SIMPLY TO TAKE ACTION - TO SPEAK OUT, EDUCATE, PROTEST - TOWARDS CHANGE. AND TO BE A HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST, A.K.A HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER, IS TO TAKE ACTION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS CHANGE.

AND THROUGHOUT OUR HISTORY, IT IS ACTIVISTS THAT ARE AT THE FRONTLINE OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE - WORKERS UNIONS MARCHING ON THE STREETS TO DEMAND FOR 8-HOUR WORKDAYS, STUDENTS WRITING ARTICLES AND BARRICADING CLASSROOMS TO EXPOSE THE CRUELITIES AND STAND AGAINST THE DICTATORSHIP, INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES BLOCKING CARS TO PREVENT THE CONSTRUCTION OF DAMS IN THEIR ANCESTRAL LANDS, LGBTQIA+ ORGANIZATIONS RAISED THEIR PLACARDS TOGETHER IN THE FIRST-EVER PRIDE MARCH IN THE COUNTRY, ORDINARY PEOPLE TEXTING THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILIES TO JOIN IN BRINGING CORRUPT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO JUSTICE, AND ARTISTS PERFORMING IN CONCERTS AND CREATING EFFIGIES TO CALL FOR JUSTICE FOR THE VICTIMS OF MARTIAL LAW.

“THERE IS NO SPECIFIC DEFINITION OF WHO IS OR CAN BE A HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER. THE DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS REFERS TO INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS AND ASSOCIATIONS ... CONTRIBUTING TO ... THE EFFECTIVE ELIMINATION OF ALL VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS OF PEOPLES AND INDIVIDUALS”.

Activism and protest has never served the status quo. They are a product of our dissatisfaction in the actions and inactions of those in power, a response to injustice and oppression, and the courage to imagine and want a better quality of life. This is why as more and more protests take place, the more the Philippine government restricts and represses our freedoms.

- **RED-TAGGING:** While the government denies that red-tagging is an official policy, it has been practiced and implemented since the 1960s to counter dissent and progressive thought. Red-tagging delegitimizes the work that activists, journalists, lawyers, trade unionists, and other human rights defenders do. It legally and socially perpetuates the narrative that any criticism against the government is ill-intentioned, and any desire for systemic change is an attack against the state. It enables the police and military to justify criminalizing human rights defenders and the extreme actions they take under the guise of national security, putting a target on the back of activists and instills fear against exercising our right to freedom of expression, association, and assembly.
- **NTF-ELCAC:** The NTF-ELCAC has been the harbinger of a renewed and intensified crackdown against activists since President Duterte's administration. They have consistently targeted, surveilled, and harassed students, youth organizations, community leaders, and well-established peoples and human rights organizations; and utilized intrusive propaganda to perpetuate demonizing narratives against activists in schools and barangays, and implemented projects to gather information and put human rights defenders.
- **ANTI-TERROR LAW:** The Anti-Terror remains a threat to peoples' right to protest and dissent. The application of its broad definition of terrorism, provisions suspending procedures safeguarding citizens against arbitrary arrest and detention, and discriminatory application of the law have endangered and penalized activists and progressive organizations.
- **CYBERCRIME ACT:** The Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012 was passed during for President Aquino's administration, and its provision on libel has been consistently weaponized against human rights defenders since its adoption.
- **SUPPRESSION OF PROTESTS:** Excessive presence of police diminish the realization of the people's right to assemble as such state forces bear excessive 'non-lethal' weapons, dress in full combat gear, and utilize trucks to block or disperse people. There are numerous instances of the police failing to apply the principle of maximum tolerance leading to violent dispersals of protests (e.g. use of water cannons or shields) which have resulted in arbitrary arrests and physical injuries.

**THERE IS CURRENTLY NO LEGISLATION THAT RECOGNIZES THE LEGITIMACY OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' IDENTITY AND WORK, PROTECTS THEM FROM HARM AGAINST STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS, AND PROVIDES REMEDY WHEN THEIR RIGHTS ARE VIOLATED.**

## BINIBILANG ANG TIBAK



## BILANGAN MO NA SILA, TIBAK

ISA... DALAWA... TATLO...

It is amidst these persisting challenges that Amnesty International Philippines launched the Philippine Protect the Protest campaign in April. Following a global vision of a world where everyone is able to take peaceful action and make their voice heard safely and without repercussions, the Philippine campaign seeks to reshape narratives about protest and activism, empower more people to take peaceful action towards the promotion and fulfillment of their human rights, and safeguard the security and welfare of every individual and community defending their rights and the rights of others.

### WHAT IS AMNESTY PHILIPPINES CALLING FOR?

1. The state, state authorities, and government officials must end the practice of red-tagging immediately and cease any form of intimidation, harassment, threats or attacks against activists.
2. Abolish the NTF-ELCAC, investigate the practices of the task force throughout the duration of its operations, and address impunity within its ranks.
3. Repeal the Anti-Terror Act and review provisions of the Cybercrime Act especially on libel. Thoroughly investigate the abuses in the application of these laws, especially against activists.
4. Pass the Human Rights Defenders Protection Act as a first step towards recognizing the work of human rights defenders, and include among its provisions the definition and penalization of red-tagging.

## BUMILANG KA NA, TIBAK

### TARA NA'T SUMAMA SA PAGKILOS PARA SA KARAPATANG MAGSALITA, MAGPAHAYAG, AT MAKILAHOK!

Learn about the Human Rights Defenders Bill!  
And advocate for a local human rights defenders ordinance in your city or municipality.

Help us reach your school and community to talk about Human Rights, Activism, and the Right to Protest.  
Defend the right to protest in other parts of the world.

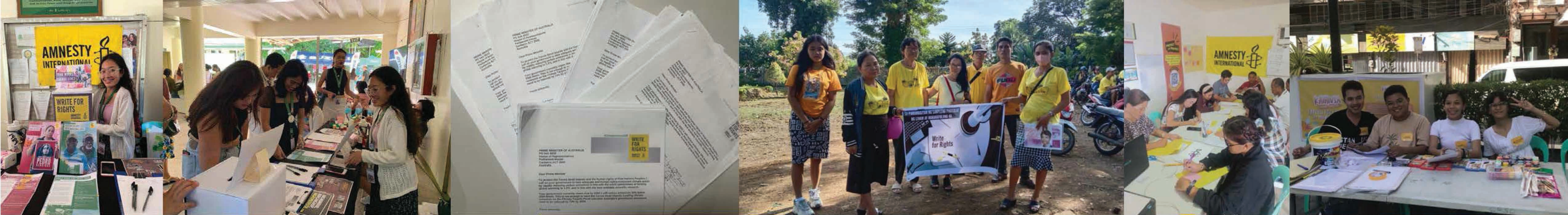


HRDP BILL SALIENT POINTS



BILANG TIBAK WEBPAGE

**BILANG TIBAK, TAYO AY...  
NANGANGARAP PARA SA KATARUNGAN, KALAYAAN, AT BUHAY,  
NAGMAMAHAL NG SARILI, KAPWA, AT KOMUNIDAD,  
NAGPOPROTESTA PARA MAISAKATUPARAN ANG KINABUKASAN NA  
GUSTO NATING MATAMO.**



PAKIKIPAGKAPWA



## PAKIPAGKAPWA COLLECTIVE EMPATHY

Amnesty members and activists participated in the Write for Rights 2023, gathering more than 10,000 letters and signatures for Uncle Paul and Uncle Pabai, indigenous lands rights defenders from Australia; Thapelo and the AbM movement fighting for the right to housing in South Africa; Maung, a Rohingya refugee standing up against Facebook; and Ana Maria, demanding justice for her son in Brazil.

Since the 7th of October, Israeli forces waged thousands of heavy airstrikes on Gaza, including indiscriminate attacks on civilians, killing thousands. These attacks have persisted until today and have led to depletion of food, clean water, and fuel that keep hospitals in operation. At least 35,000 casualties have been recorded, most being women and children. The Philippine section joined the global calls for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, joining multi-sectoral organizations and international coalitions in protests, and working hand-in-hand with artists on art and cultural actions.

## SAMA-SAMANG PAGKILOS COLLECTIVE ACTION

All over the Philippines, Amnesty members and activists took to the streets, classrooms, barangay halls, and concert venues to celebrate the wins of our collective struggle, while demanding for more meaningful and sustained human rights change. In Iloilo, activists gathered to re-learn the basics of human rights and discuss their own city's human rights issues. In Baguio, students joined a bigger community of young people calling for the protection of activists in their city. In NCR and Tacloban, artists and activists co-created street art reflecting their calls to #SaveCancabato, #FreeTacloban5, and #ActivismIsAHumanRights. In Zamboanga, the youth unpacked peace and human rights, and created their own art as an expression of their hopes. In Misamis Occidental and CARAGA, they marched on the streets, lit candles and knocked on doors bringing more and more people into our shared vision for a world where human rights is enjoyed by all.

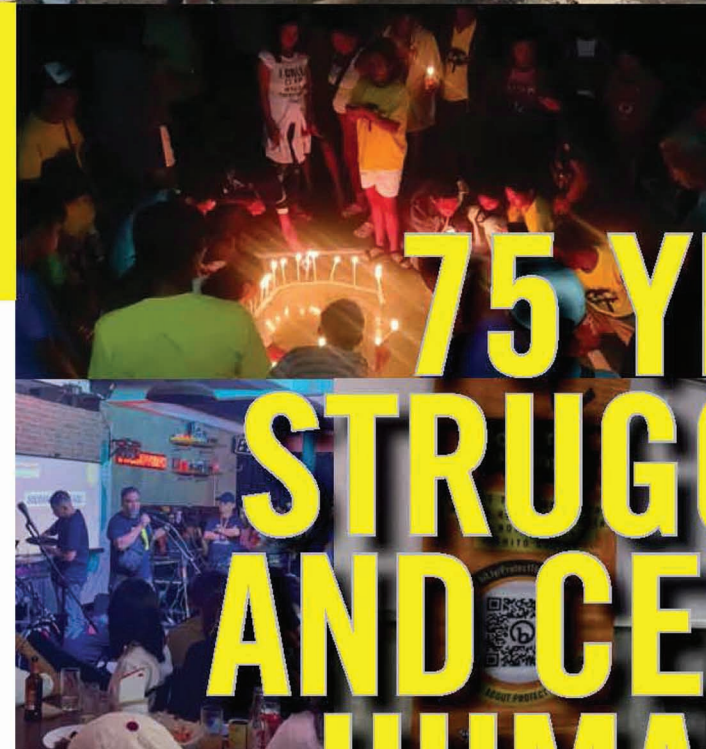
## PAKIPAGKAPAWA-TAO SHARED HUMANITY

Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights goes: "Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible."

The full realization of a person's human rights is only possible when we recognize the humanity in everyone else, when we fulfill our duty to protect the rights of freedoms of our fellow human beings, be it within our communities or across oceans.

At the core of every human rights struggle, 75 years and before—be it racial justice, gender equality, climate justice, and end to wars, and liberation—is this: human rights is a shared responsibility, for our shared humanity.

# 75 YEARS OF STRUGGLING FOR AND CELEBRATING HUMAN RIGHTS



## REGIONAL COORDINATORS' MEETING 2024

In 2019, the Members General Assembly (MeGA) initiated the establishment of a mechanism aimed at facilitating discussions among Amnesty's officers and other pertinent representatives regarding operational matters. The result of which is what we now call the Regional Coordinators Meeting (RCM) which is held alternately with the MeGA. Compared to the latter, the RCM is not a decision-making platform. It focuses on capacity development, planning of activities, discussion of relevant human rights issues, and other necessary alignment on formations' priorities and as a result, provides insights to the National Secretariat on how to better assist its constituency.

On its third year, 16 AI Philippines Regional and Local Coordinators across our ten active regional formations participated: CAR, NCR, Regions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10A, 10B, 12 and 13. Two community organizers and a Board member representing the Youth Core Group were also present. The 3-day meeting held on March at the Commission of Human Rights consisted of a series of learning and planning workshops targeted to enhance the officers' skills in movement participation and leadership, guided by Amnesty's protocols, values, and strategies. One-on-one consultations with the Regions were conducted prior to ensure program fitness to the participants' roles.

Day 1: To set the backdrop of our work as AI Philippines, we kick-started the event with the 2024 Human Rights National Situation. This provided some understanding on the regional and global civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental contexts which will inform our whys and the circumstances within which we will operate our initiatives moving forward. It was followed by sharing the Standard Action Report Highlights which piqued the regional representatives' interest on understanding Amnesty's impact at the local levels. It aimed to inspire the formations in seeing that progress is still possible despite crisis. Review of Organizational Roles and Key Processes were conducted next to validate their familiarity on operational requirements and leadership succession necessary to drive our advocacy and mobilization work efficiently. We later moved to discussing the Constituency Engagement Framework and Human Rights Education (HRE) perspectives in Organizing to provide insight on how we can maximize our exposure and engagement strategies for membership and activism development. Lastly, Protect the Protest Campaign Orientation was held setting the entire Section in alignment with our flagship campaign calls and strategies. Overall, Day 1 was designed to prepare the participants for the day 2 planning session.

Day 2: After covering the whys and hows, safeguarding principles were impressed upon the participants to support their security and well-being as we anticipate continuous vilification against human rights work. The next day started with a training on Holistic Security and Well-being of Human Rights Defenders increasing their capacity on security management. Red-tagging was a common security concern across regions. Through the workshop, a working Red-tagging Incident Response was drafted and enhanced ready for circulation. The other half of the day was dedicated to operational planning guided by shared learning and impact monitoring in alignment with the National Strategic Plan (NSP). This has allowed the representatives to have focused consultation with relevant Program Officers so that by the end of Day 2, the regions had initially drafted their plans!

Day 3: As a result of learning and planning sessions, regional plans are now ready for presentation. With the goal to better integrate Amnesty's Membership Mobilization, Campaign, Human Rights Education, Media, Communications, and Publication, and Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning programs into the overall growth of its constituency, the Section's Program Officers, Managers, and Section Director were all in to provide feedback

to the regions. Selected major campaigns are on Protect the Protest, Climate Justice, Equality, and Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. They will be returning to their local groups to consult, align, and enhance it for implementation, driving the membership mobilization and development efforts across the country for the year. Lastly, the participants demonstrated continued commitment to the global Amnesty movement as they participated in an art action led by AI Mongolia where campaign calls are printed on t-shirts to be worn by activists in the march for human rights.

Forward-looking, the implementation of the plans will be monitored with sustained guidance from the National Secretariat to deliver impact in our communities and remain relevant in the country's human rights landscape. The RCM was formally closed with the message to ground our human rights advocacy and mobilization within the realities of our political conditions, consistent to our organizational processes and values, along the messaging relatable to our target demographics, and guided by safeguarding principles. Up next: Regional Assemblies!

## YOUTH ACTIVISTS JOIN THE GLOBAL YOUTH SUMMIT ON DIGITAL RIGHTS IN BUENOS AIRES!

The Amnesty International Philippines delegation joined 150 young activists in the 2024 Global Youth Summit on Digital Rights at Buenos Aires, Argentina on 13-15 April. Themed around "Uplifting Power Online," "Affirming Wellbeing Online," and "Protecting Protests Online," the summit facilitated dynamic discussions and workshops aimed at empowering youth to connect and form a global community for digital rights. Digital Rights Champion and RightUP researcher Isaiah Emmanuel Suguitan, and Digital Disruptors alumnus Paul John-Domalaon actively participated in the three-day summit, facilitating breakout sessions, delivering plenary talks, and connecting with the global digital rights community. Isaiah, along with AIPh Project Officer Ayel Del Valle and Global Youth Campaigner Hashas Rage, co-led a session on Amnesty's first children and youth-led research project entitled RightUP. They shared the initial work done by the nine (9) young researchers which is aimed at exploring the impact of online harassment towards the human rights advocacy engagement of young people in the Philippines. In another session, Isaiah also co-facilitated a session with Children and Youth Digital Rights Researcher Lisa Dittmer and AIPh Campaigns Officer Tiffany Suniga on digital threats to youth activism.

"The summit was crucial in sharing local issues on digital rights within the Philippines to a global space. And in the process, we were able to acquire solidarity from other activists around the world who share the fight towards an inclusive and digital rights-respective society," Isaiah shares. Paul, on the other hand, teamed-up with his Kenyan counterpart Christopher Arunga to introduce the Digital Disruptors project. Entitled "Be a Glitch: Youth-Led Disruption for a Better Digital Future," the session delved into the already launched campaigns: "Ayaw sa Yawa" in the Philippines and "Linda Data" in Kenya. They highlighted the unique disruptiveness that a child or young person can bring when sharing their experiences and ideating solutions to create a better and safer digital future. "It was important for me to share the accomplishments of our campaign, and I'm still in awe to hear what our global fellow activities, now friends, had to say about it."

The Global Youth Summit fostered solidarity among child and youth activists around the world, providing them a space to connect and learn with their peers who share common experiences as online users. Together, they collaborated in creating a global resolution that advocates for online safety and demands accountability from governments and tech companies.



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.

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**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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