

campAlign



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 4 "I TURNED MY FEAR INTO COURAGE"
- 8 IGNITE CONVO: HUMAN RIGHTS WEEK EP
- 10 ASSEMBLY OF YOUNG LEADERS 2024
- 12 HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVERS: MP 1490 ACTION
- 14 SUBMIT AND SURRENDER: HARMS IN DETENTION



Watch the video version of the message.



Message from the Board

WE ARE PROUD OF THE COLLECTIVE ACHIEVEMENTS WE'VE MADE TOGETHER. WE REMAIN STRONG IN OUR COMMITMENT TO AMPLIFY THE VOICES OF THOSE WHOSE RIGHTS CONTINUE TO BE THREATENED BY GREED OF POWER, IMPUNITY AND INJUSTICE.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SOLIDARITY AND RELENTLESS DEDICATION TO HUMAN RIGHTS – PEACE, JUSTICE AND EQUALITY.

Mga Ka-Amnesty,

As we step in the New Year, I would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all Amnesty International Philippines members and supporters, on behalf of the Board of Trustees and National Secretariat. Thank you for your solidarity and relentless dedication to human rights – peace, justice and equality. This year we are proud of the collective achievements we've made together. We remain strong in our commitment to amplify the voices of those whose rights continue to be threatened by greed of power, impunity and injustice.

In 2024, we've had our ups and downs, but these served as our pivotal moments in strengthening our initiatives on research and continuing our reliable work on campaigning and advocacy. We ventured into new ways of collaborating with both global and local human rights experts to unravel critical issues in the Philippines. We proved, through our joint efforts, together with international human rights law experts, that genocide is being committed against Palestinians. Adding Amnesty's voice to the global call for accountability and an immediate ceasefire was a brave step into tackling challenging conversations within our organization.

We pioneered youth-led research in collaboration with the International Secretariat, exposing the Philippine government's red-tagging campaign that targets young human rights defenders. And in partnership with the East, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Regional Office (ESEAPRO), we highlighted the ongoing human rights violations in the Philippine government's "war on drugs," revealing how the punitive approach continues to harm marginalized communities especially the youth.

We also remained unwavering in our mission to amplify the voices of the marginalized communities, and continue to support the 1,490 Manobo-Pulangiyan (MP1490) families. As part of our efforts, we pioneered the Human Rights Observers (HRO) Project aimed at advocating for the right to protest and peaceably assemble, and ensuring that expressions of dissent are protected and respected by duty bearers.

We raised awareness about Manat's case and the struggles of the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARB) in claiming their rights in Agusan del Sul. We have also reached out to the Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in the region, including the Manobo Mamanwa Indigenous Peoples regarding their struggles amid red tagging and other grave threats to life and security.

Finally in Carmen, we stood in solidarity with farmers fighting



for their land and livelihoods and recognition by providing support in community-led mobilizations.

Throughout the year, we sustained our presence and activism with over 7,000 individual members and supporters in ten regions across the Philippines making powerful impact. Our successes in the Regional Assemblies (RAs), the Asia Pacific Regional Forum (APRF), the Assembly of Youth Leaders (AYL), and the meeting of the minds of all programmatic and thematic teams are testament to the power of our collective action.

In 2025, we look ahead with renewed determination for our Climate Justice work which kicked off with the release of our report on Nickel Mining in the Philippines in January, and our advocacy for Just Energy Transition. We are excited to roll out the Section's Climate Justice Strategy to be piloted in Regions 3 and 8.

Our "Sagot Mo Ba Ako" Electoral Project will amplify the voices of the most vulnerable communities, pushing for authentic people's participation and representation ahead of the mid-year elections.

This year, we will convene in our RAs again in preparation for the Members' General Assembly (MeGA), where we will elect the new Board of Trustees and Finance Audit Committee, towards future-proofing Amnesty International through movement building.

Let's move forward in solidarity, with the strength of our shared commitment to human rights. Together, we will continue the fight for justice, accountability, and the protection of the most vulnerable members of our society.

Padayon pa din sa 2025!

Derek Cabe

CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2023 - 2025

On 14 October 2024, Amnesty International Philippines and Amnesty International Tech released a report entitled, “I Turned My Fear Into Courage: Red-tagging and State Violence Against Young Human Rights Defenders in the Philippines”. The report was launched through a press conference covered by various local and regional media outlets.

The report documents how the two successive governments of President Duterte and President Marcos Jr. have weaponized digital tools, misinformation and a flawed anti-terrorism law to create a climate of fear and intimidation amongst young human rights defenders in the Philippines. The central element in this coordinated campaign of state violence is the practice of “red-tagging”, through which leading political figures and state security actors have vilified human rights defenders, student activists, teachers, journalists and others as “Communist rebels” and “terrorists”, inciting hatred and violence.

REPORT FINDINGS

In March 2024, Amnesty International conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with 41 young human rights defenders across the Philippines, in addition to interviews with experts from the fields of human rights, journalism and local government conducted in February and March 2024. Through these, the report has determined these key findings:

1. Red-tagging surged under President Rodrigo Duterte. Facebook became the primary means amidst increased reliance on Facebook during the COVID-19 pandemic, and growing student protests at the time and after.
2. State-sponsored disinformation and human rights violations against young human right defenders have continued under President Marcos Jr. despite repeated international calls to cease the attacks and abolish the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC).
3. Meta’s consistent failures to enforce its community guidelines and to remove red-tagging content that incites hatred and violence and allowed state actors to legitimize further serious human rights violations against young activists, including arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances



I TURNED

MY FEAR INTO

COURAGE

CENTERING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF YOUTH ACTIVISTS

Most significant to the report findings are the students and youth organizations Amnesty engaged with throughout the course of the research. They allowed insight not only into how red-tagging works in online and offline spaces but how red-tagging affects the social realities of these young human rights defenders.

Three cases in particular, Hailey, Kessha, and Louise—women youth activists who have lived through red-tagging by state forces, bravely shared their stories as they search for recourse and justice. They’ve talked about the inadequate support and protection within their schools, adverse reactions of their families, fears for the loved ones, frustrations at the absence or inaccessibility of legal mechanisms, and the much needed relief from the solidarity and support of the activist communities they are a part of.

Other stories highlighted were those of Dexter and Bazoo, and Tacloban 5, for whom Amnesty has previously campaigned.

CALLING ON THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT AND META

Overall, the report adds fuel to the existing calls of Amnesty Philippines and local organizations and activists to put an end to state-sponsored red-tagging.

Among its recommendations, is a call to the Philippine Government to (1) Abolish the NTF-ELCAC, and carry out a prompt, independent, impartial and transparent investigation into the practices of the task force throughout the duration of its operations; (2) 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; and (3) Repeal the Anti-Terrorism Act and carry out an independent, impartial and transparent investigation into abuses in the application of this legislation and related laws.

To META, the report recommends the corporation to (1) mainstream human rights considerations throughout all Meta platforms’ operations; and (2) increase capacity to review and remove red-tagging content in a timely manner consistent with the threat of incitement to violence for human rights defenders’ security; and (3) ensure reporting and appeals mechanisms are accessible to all users, sufficiently clear, responsive and timely.

Both the Philippine Government and Meta have responded privately and publicly to Amnesty International’s report. The former have denied the report’s findings; while the latter opened specific spaces for further dialogue.

BILANG TIBAK

PROTECT THE PROTEST PHILIPPINE CAMPAIGN

The report is an advocacy moment, and a supplementing resource to reignite the Bilang Tibak (“As an activist”) campaign launched in April 2024, as a local project under the Global Protect the Protest Flagship Project.

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 Cyber-crime 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.

TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUNG HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS!

Sign the petition.

Sign the open letter*.



*Encourage youth organizations in your community to sign the open letter, “Lihang ng mga Kabataang Aktibista”.

GOOD NEWS!

WRITE
FOR
RIGHTS

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL

DORGELESSE NGUESSAN RELEASED AFTER MORE THAN FOUR YEARS OF ARBITRARY DETENTION FOR ATTENDING PEACEFUL PROTEST



A year ago, Dorgelesse Nguessan—a single mother and hairdresser from Cameroon—was being held in Douala Central Prison. She was arrested and charged with “insurrection” and “public demonstrations,” along with over 500 others after joining her first protest in 2020. Tried by a military court, Dorgelesse was sentenced to five years in prison in 2021.

Amnesty International denounced her arbitrary arrest and called for her immediate release in 2022, featuring her in the 2022 Write for Rights campaign. Thousands of Amnesty International members and supporters all over the world, including the Philippines, rallied together to write letters for Dorgelesse’s release. Thanks in large part to the efforts of the Write for Rights campaign, the Cameroonian Court of Appeal reduced Dorgelesse’s sentence and freed her in January 2025. Her freedom is a testament to the real power of letter writing.

Amnesty International Philippines adopted five cases in the 2024 Write for Rights Campaign:

- Joel Paredes from Argentina, who was blinded in one eye by a rubber bullet during a protest.
- The Wet’suwet’en Nation from Canada who are harassed and detained for defending their ancestral land from fossil fuel drilling.
- Manahel al-Otaibi who was sentenced to 11 years in prison for “terrorist offenses” in Saudi Arabia after advocating for women’s rights online.
- Kyung Seok Park, a wheelchair user and disability rights activist in South Korea who is vilified by the Seoul city government, and
- Dang Dinh Bach, an environmental lawyer from Vietnam who was imprisoned on trumped up tax evasion charges.

These cases were at the forefront of Human Rights Week celebrations across the Philippines.

Local Amnesty school-based groups—PHINMA University of Iloilo and Mindanao State University-Gen San City, organized Write for Rights 2024 signature campaigns on campus.

In Zamboanga City, the Western Mindanao State University (WMSU) organized a human rights awareness seminar attended by 104 participants which began with a learning session and open forum on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and concluded with a Write for Rights petition signing segment.

The Jimenez local group in Misamis Occidental kicked off their Human Rights Day celebrations with a Write for Rights learning session and petition signing, followed by a mass mobilization parade.



Ahead of Human Rights Day on December 8, the National Secretariat (NS) streamed the first-ever live broadcast of Ignite Conversations featuring Ignite Awardees from Seasons 1-3. The program opened with an introduction to the five cases and a Write for Rights petition signing segment. Artists for Amnesty MoroBeats performed live rap music with poignant social commentary.



Later, the NS joined other organizations at iDEFEND’s Human Rights Festival, setting up an advocacy booth on 10 December, where attendees were invited to sign Write for Rights petitions. Children were also encouraged to create nature-inspired artwork in solidarity with the Wet’suwet’en Nation Land Defenders.

HUMAN RIGHTS WEEK 2024

Scan to watch full ep:



OUR RIGHTS, OUR FUTURE RIGHT NOW

IGNITE CONVERSATIONS IS MORE THAN JUST A LIVESTREAM TALK SHOW. THE SHOW REPRESENTS A NEW ERA OF ADVOCACY IN AN EVER-CHANGING WORLD. THROUGH HYBRID EVENTS, LIVE STREAMING, AND CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES IS POISED TO KEEP IGNITING CHANGE AND EMPOWERING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND ADVOCATES ACROSS THE PHILIPPINES.

IGNITE CONVO AS A 'THIRD SPACE' WHERE OUR COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER IN A MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE, WHERE ART MEETS ACTIVISM.

For Human Rights Week 2024, Amnesty International Philippines hosted its first-ever live broadcast of Ignite Conversations at Open Space Katipunan.

Ignite Convo brought together human rights defenders, activists, artists, and supporters to celebrate and promote the fight for justice, freedom, and equality. It provided an inclusive space where Amnesty's featured 'Ignite Awards for Human Rights' recipients and Artists for Amnesty shared their experiences, discussed pressing issues, mobilized for change, and allowed for candid and free discussions.

Carrying three Amnesty priority projects, the show highlighted not just Write for Rights 2024 cases, encouraging participants to write letters in support of individuals facing human rights violations worldwide, it also brought to light the dangers that young human rights defenders face amid red-tagging and harassment.

Cheska Garcia, Ignite Awardee for Outstanding Young HRD Season 3, shared how young activists, especially women and girls, face multiple challenges when being vocal about serious human rights issues faced by many Filipinos. Sunshine Serrano of Dakila, organizational awardee for Most Distinguished HRD, also from Season 3, emphasized the importance of mental health and well-being among HRDs in the Philippines. She stressed the importance of community care as well.

Meanwhile MoroBeats, a socially conscious hip-hop collective, using music as a means of protest and storytelling, gave performances that added an artistic dimension to activism, demonstrating how cultural expression can be a powerful tool for advocacy. MoroBeats is Amnesty's partner in calling for an end to genocide in Palestine.

During their interview, members of MoroBeats shared their views on the importance of using

music as a tool for activism. They discussed their song "Gulo", which was released in support of Palestine, and how hip-hop provides a powerful platform to highlight social injustices globally.

MoroBeat's message was clear — music transcends borders and language barriers. When they rap about Palestine, they're not just telling a story but also amplifying the voices of those who are silenced. They emphasized the responsibility as artists to stand against oppression, whether in their own country or abroad.

The group also highlighted the challenges of advocating for Palestine, including censorship and online repression. Despite these hurdles, they remain committed to spreading awareness and using their platform to call for humanitarian aid for Gaza and the end to genocide. Their music, infused with activism, continues to inspire and educate audiences, proving that freedom of expression is a critical tool in the fight against injustice.

The last guest of the night was Prof. Walden Bello, individual awardee for Most Distinguished HRD in Season 3. The professor emeritus of Sociology at the University of the Philippines and staunch advocate of human rights delivered a powerful and insightful discussion on the current human rights landscape in the Philippines. He addressed the persistence of human rights violations, comparing past and present administrations and stressing the importance of vigilance and resistance. Bello highlighted the need for legislative safeguards, such as the Human Rights Defenders Protection Bill, to ensure legal protection for activists. He also emphasized that young people must take a leading role in advocating for human rights, as human rights is only as strong as its defenders. His words served as a rallying call for continued activism and collective action that night.

Cheska Garcia

Sunshine Serrano for DAKILA

Walden Bello

Miss A

JMara

Fateeha

WRITE FOR RIGHTS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Ignite
CONVERSATIONS

Write for Rights Episode

WRITE A LETTER
CHANGE A LIFE

MORO BEATS



GROWING IN COMMUNITY PERSEVERING IN SOLIDARITY

ASSEMBLY OF YOUTH LEADERS 2024

Quincy Fajutrao, youth leader from Region 12, takes the lead in sharing about #AYL2024, and her experience as an Amnesty member, and an activist.

The AYL wasn't just another conference; it was a crucible forging stronger connections, empowering us with crucial knowledge, and reigniting our passion to be agents of change in our respective communities.

Day 1: Bridging Actions

Arriving at Hotel Elizabeth, I was immediately struck by the energy and diversity of the delegates. Representing regions from all corners of the Philippines, we came from different backgrounds, spoke different local languages, and faced unique challenges in our activism.

On the first day, our focus is on aligning our past efforts and initiatives at the regional, national, and global level. We talked about governance and campaigning and the different spaces we can access as young people. We shared our struggles, our setbacks, and our triumphs. We learned about the specific human rights issues plaguing different regions, from environmental degradation affecting indigenous communities to the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ activists. Hearing these stories, I realized I wasn't alone in my struggles.

Day 2: Growing in Solidarity

What united us was a shared vision of a more just and equitable

society, a world where human rights are respected and protected. On the second day, this is our starting point for learning and inspiration. We were joined by speakers from the Rights Click Project, Tara Kabataan and Young Bataños for Environmental Advocacy Network (Young BEAN). The facilitators, youth activists like us, were not just experts in their fields; they were passionate advocates.

AS A YOUTH FROM NORTHERN LUZON, THIS EXPERIENCE (AYL) PROVIDED ME WITH VALUABLE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AS A YOUTH ACTIVIST. MEETING OTHER DELEGATES FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE PHILIPPINES WAS EXCITING, AS IT ALLOWED ME TO SEE THE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES AND SITUATIONS OF YOUTH IN OTHER REGIONS. THEIR INSIGHTS ON VARIOUS ISSUES HAVE DEEPENED MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE CURRENT STRUCTURE OF THE YOUTH SECTOR.

JAIME QUIAMBAO

“

ATTENDING AYL WAS AN EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCE FOR ME. I CAME IN EXPECTING TO JUST PARTICIPATE, BUT I LEFT FEELING INSPIRED AND MOTIVATED. THE EVENT REMINDED ME THAT CHANGE STARTS WITH SMALL STEPS AND THAT BEING SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE WHO SHARE THE SAME PASSION MAKES THE JOURNEY EVEN MORE MEANINGFUL AND IMPACTFUL. I'M GRATEFUL FOR THIS EXPERIENCE AND EXCITED TO CARRY FORWARD WHAT I'VE LEARNED.

ANSHARI MUCADDAM

who had a lot to share about the work they do across stakeholders—corporations, adult-dominant communities, organizations, and fellow children and youth activists. We learned about strategic campaigning, digital security, media engagement, and effective advocacy strategies.

I particularly appreciated the emphasis on self-care and well-being not just on that day but throughout. Activism can be emotionally taxing, and it's easy to burn out. The AYL provided us with resources and strategies to prioritize our mental and emotional health, reminding us that we can't effectively fight for others if we don't take care of ourselves first.

Beyond the formal sessions, the AYL fostered a strong sense of community. We spent evenings sharing stories, exchanging ideas, and building lasting friendships. We learned from each other's experiences and discovered innovative approaches to tackling human rights issues in our own spaces.

Day 3: Leading in Community

Our last day is all about bringing children and young people forward. This is our direction-setting day filled with consultations, resolutions, and elections. We had the opportunity to give our insights to the Climate Justice Strategy Youth Engagement Toolkits, and Safeguarding Policy. We also welcomed the new Youth Core Group for 2024-2026, and youth delegates to the Global Assembly and MeGA. This was also the day all of us worked hand-in-hand in creating a solidarity art work for Palestine.

The sessions were not just theoretical discussions; they were designed to equip us with the skills we needed to be more effective leaders and apply them then and there. What truly stood out was the genuine openness and inclusivity of Amnesty International Philippines. They actively sought our input, valued our opinions, and made us feel like integral parts of the organization. The organizers emphasized that AIPh is not a top-down organization but a collaborative movement built on the collective wisdom and dedication of its members.

Leaving Cebu, I felt a renewed sense of purpose and a solidified commitment to human rights. The AYL had not only equipped me with the knowledge and skills I needed but also connected me with a powerful network of fellow activists who share my vision. The Assembly of Youth Leaders 2024 was more than just a conference; it was an investment in the future of human rights in the Philippines. It empowered a new generation of activists, forged lasting connections, and ignited a passion for change that will continue to burn brightly for years to come. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of this transformative experience and look forward to working alongside my fellow delegates to create a more just and equitable world.



DURING THE 3-DAY ASSEMBLY, I GOT TO MEET PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT REGIONS. HERE, I WAS ABLE TO SHARE THE CLIMATE OF ACTIVISM, SPECIALLY IN CORDILLERA WHERE WE ENCOUNTER PRESSING ISSUES HIGHLY RELEVANT TO THE CAMPAIGNS OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, SUCH AS RED-TAGGING. BEING ABLE TO MAXIMIZE SPACES FOR YOUTH, I AM CONFIDENT THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO LARGELY CONTRIBUTE TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT. WITH THE UPCOMING 2025 MIDTERM ELECTIONS, WE CAN AMPLIFY OUR CONCERNS AND UPHOLD INTEGRITY AT A TIME WHEN THIS IS ULTIMATELY NEEDED.

MIGUEL LEINDEL MATA

”

FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES HAS BEEN WORKING WITH THE MANOBO PULANGIYON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES STRUCTURE (IPS) / INDIGENOUS CULTURAL COMMUNITY (ICC) IN LINE WITH THEIR STRUGGLE FOR ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL RIGHTS. THEY ARE SYMBOLICALLY CALLED MP1490 AFTER THE 1,490 MANOBO-PULANGIYON FAMILIES CURRENTLY DISPLACED FROM THEIR ANCESTRAL DOMAIN IN BUTONG, QUEZON, BUKIDNON SINCE BEING OCCUPIED BY A PRIVATE PINEAPPLE PLANTATION COMPANY. AS IS OFTEN THE CASE WITH DISPLACED COMMUNITIES, MEMBERS OF THE MANOBO PULANGIYON LIVE IN PRECARIOUS CONDITIONS, OFTEN CHARGED BY POWERS LARGER THAN THEMSELVES.

BUT UNFAZED BY SAFETY AND SECURITY THREATS, THE TRIBE THROUGH ITS DATUS AND BAES HAVE DILIGENTLY FOLLOWED LEGAL PROCESSES AND NAVIGATED INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH THEIR OWN THOUGH MEAGER RESOURCES. ALONGSIDE THEM, WE HAVE WRITTEN LETTERS, MET IN DIALOGUE, AND SAT ACROSS TABLES WITH PROVINCIAL TO NATIONAL AGENCIES - DAR, DENR, PNP, AFP, CHR, AND NCIP - MAKING SURE THEIR PLIGHTS ARE APPROPRIATELY REGISTERED, ON TOP OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION SESSIONS AND CAMPAIGN CONSULTATIONS WE INVESTED WITH THE COMMUNITY.

FINALLY IN 2023, THE TRIBE RECEIVED A COPY OF CERTIFICATE OF ANCESTRAL DOMAIN TITLE NO.261 ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (NCIP), LAWFULLY CERTIFYING THEIR OWNERSHIP OVER THE ANCESTRAL LAND.

MP1490's quality of life remained unchanged if not worsened more than a year after the issuance of their CADT. Determined to ensure the fulfillment of their human dignity will no longer be delayed any further, the tribe had independently decided to mount a reinstallation action in October 2024. Prior to this, the tribe hand-in-hand with late Amnesty Section Director Butch Olano, yet again engaged with relevant provincial, regional, and national offices in preparation for the IP-led reinstallation.

It was on its D-Day, 21 October, when Amnesty's Human Rights Observers (HROs) Project was piloted. HROs are Amnesty representatives deployed to attend public actions where there is significant risk of human rights violation or abuse. Their sole purpose is to observe protesters', duty bearers', and other relevant stakeholders' actions, and to document any incidence of human rights abuse, violation, or any other irregularities. While HROs are bound by impartiality during protest, their presence as witnesses can indirectly provide protection to or offset violence from happening against the public. The HRO Project is part of our flagship project Bilang Tibak under the Protect the Protest Global Campaign.

MP1490's action was participated by around 200 tribe members including Datus, Baes, pregnant women, youth, and children who peacefully mobilized in calling government agencies to facilitate their peaceful reinstatement to the ancestral land. However, around 400-600 individuals, including supporters

from the Catholic Church, were denied entry at the checkpoints—among them, essential provisions like food and water.

The action still pushed through starting with a prayer ritual in their makeshift community center followed by another ritual by the gates of the plantation company located within ancestral zone. In the middle of the action, the tribe, especially the leaders, expressed that their members are hungry and thirsty and negotiated for the inflow of water at the checkpoints but to no avail. Because of this, community members were forced to drink unsafe water. It was only after the action, through Amnesty's negotiation that they finally allowed access to these essentials. Representatives from the media and Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and NCIP Regional Offices were present at the action site while Philippine National Police (PNP) held steady at the checkpoints. Other relevant and expected agencies failed to even make an appearance.

Post-action, the tribe had reported checkpoint irregularities with the NCIP such as the forcible confiscation of tribal weapon in violation of their customary rights, and food and water blockade by the PNP.

No concrete plans were developed nor committed by the government agencies, once again leaving the tribe along the margins of social justice. Amnesty sustains an ongoing campaign for the peaceful return of MP1490 to their ancestral lands.

MANOBO PULANGIYON ACTION



COERCION AND ABUSE **DISGUISED** AS ‘**REHABILITATION**’ AT DRUG DETENTION CENTRES

PHILIPPINE AUTHORITIES ARE ARBITRARILY DETAINING THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE IN SO-CALLED “DRUG TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION CENTRES” WHERE THEY ARE HELD AGAINST THEIR WILL AND SUBJECTED TO A RANGE OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SAID TODAY IN A NEW REPORT ON THE COUNTRY’S ONGOING “WAR ON DRUGS”.

Submit and surrender: The harms of arbitrary drug detention in the Philippines documents how people who use drugs are being sent to government-run facilities where they are forced to go through programmes that are not evidence-based. People in “rehabilitation” are punished for using drugs and coerced into abstinence, forced to undergo mandatory drug testing in violation of their right to privacy, and subjected to severe punishments for rule violations, including weeks or months in isolation.

Drug detention centres are disguised as facilities offering treatment and rehabilitation. In reality, they are places of arbitrary detention where people suffer serious human rights violations that continue even after their release. The report comes amid renewed scrutiny of violations committed under former President Rodrigo Duterte in the “war on drugs.”

While lawmakers rightly examine the role of President Duterte and others in suspected crimes against humanity, these ongoing and largely hidden violations taking place within drug detention centres must also be urgently addressed. The administration of President Marcos Jr. pledged a new approach to the country’s drugs problems focused on public health and human rights. Instead, people who use drugs continue to be criminalized and stigmatized through punitive policies and practices despite the end of the Duterte era.

The ongoing “war on drugs” continues to disproportionately affect people living in poverty and on low incomes.

Torture during arrest and forced admission of guilt

People who use drugs in the Philippines are often targeted in violent police operations that frequently involve torture and other ill-treatment, arbitrary detention and forced or otherwise unreliable confessions.

One interviewee, Michael (not his real name), described how police tortured him to admit he used drugs by beating him on the feet with a wooden stick, squeezing his hands with bullets in between his fingers and burning his eyes and face with chilli juice. He said the police then took staged photos of him “using” drugs as evidence. He was sent to a drug detention centre three days later.

Drug detention centres are usually located close to or even inside police or military bases, emphasizing their punitive nature. Like Michael, many of those interviewed by Amnesty International were sent to these centres after entering into plea-bargain deals with

courts, which do not have the medical expertise to order or supervise any kind of drug treatment. Under this arrangement, in exchange for pleading guilty to using drugs, individuals are spared imprisonment but instead must undergo mandatory “rehabilitation”.

Under the terms of such plea bargains, individuals are compelled to stay inside the centres throughout the duration of their sentence, which usually lasts from six months to a year.

Mandatory drug testing and corporal punishment for rule violations

The conditions within drug detention centres are also often in contravention of international human rights law and standards. Prior to and during their detention, people are required to undergo repeated compulsory drug testing.

Random or mandatory drug tests without due justification are an arbitrary interference with an individual’s privacy and are counter-productive from a right to health perspective, as they are usually used by the authorities to retain leverage over people who use drugs.

Rule violations often result in corporal punishment, including being forced to do strenuous physical exercises, weeks or months of isolation, and degrading acts such as being forced to “walk like a duck” or “face the wall” for hours.

The most serious rule breaches, like attempting to escape or engaging in sexual relations, can result in a person’s detention being extended for months, with no medical justification.

Children as young as 15 years old have also been arrested, subjected to various forms of torture and other ill-treatment and sometimes to arbitrary drug detention in centres unsuitable for their needs, exposing them to long-term and even life-long trauma.

Tol (not his real name), who was 16 years old when he was arrested, was arbitrarily detained at a drug detention centre from June 2022 to December 2023. According to him, four months were added to his detention for violating the ‘no sex’ rule. He said of his additional punishment: “I’d face the wall from 8am to 8pm, on the stage at the gym where it was so hot even if there was a roof, every day from Monday to Sunday.”

Invasive “aftercare” programmes

Even after release, people are subject to an invasive “aftercare” programme that requires them to regularly report to authorities for 18 months and submit to further unannounced and mandatory drug tests. Those undergoing “aftercare” were told that a refusal to take a drug test would be taken as evidence of relapse, which would be followed by threats of re-arrest or readmission to a drug detention centre. There is also little government support to assist with re-integration into society, resulting in additional stigmatization.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FOUND THAT THE CRIMINALIZATION OF THE USE AND POSSESSION OF DRUGS FOR PERSONAL USE HAS ENABLED THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE IMPLEMENTING HARSH ANTI-DRUG MEASURES.

Amnesty’s report, based on interviews with 56 people, 26 of whom were accused of using and/or selling drugs, shows that these measures are intended to force people to stop using drugs where the use of drugs is not only stigmatized but also severely punished. This approach has resulted in numerous human rights violations – people are targeted in violent police operations that often involve torture and other ill-treatment, arbitrary detention, forced or otherwise unreliable confessions and multiple violations of the right to health, including mandatory “treatment and rehabilitation”. The prosecution of drug-related offences has also failed to protect people’s right to a fair trial, forcing them to choose between going to drug detention centres for compulsory “treatment” or pursuing a protracted trial. It has also resulted in children being arrested and detained and sometimes subject to various forms of torture and other ill-treatment, exposing them possibly life-long trauma.

The Philippine government must move away from punitive and harmful responses. Instead, it must explore evidenced-based initiatives that respect the dignity of all people and have been demonstrated to be beneficial to public health and human rights. The compulsory and punitive nature of the current model should be discontinued and the government should work to ensure that drug-related services are evidence-based, voluntary, and age- and gender-appropriate. The government must also work towards addressing the stigma and discrimination around the use of drugs.

SUBMIT AND SURRENDER



Amnesty reiterates that drug policies in the Philippines must move away from punitive and harmful responses and towards evidenced-based initiatives that respect the dignity of all people and address the root causes of drug use. Drug treatment must always be voluntary, medically indicated, based on scientific evidence and safeguarded by free and informed consent. Drug detention is not and will never be the solution.

The report emphasizes that facilities failing to comply with international standards must be immediately shut down. The government must also urgently fulfil its pledge to review RA1965, the punitive anti-drug law which lies at the heart of ongoing violations in the ‘war on drugs’, and replace it with one that emphasizes harm reduction, treatment and social support.

NEW HUMAN RIGHTS RANKING OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE INDUSTRY EXPOSES LAGGARDS



Electric vehicle giants BYD, Mitsubishi and Hyundai have scored the worst in a new human rights ranking of the industry conducted by Amnesty International. The study reveals how the world's leading electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers are not adequately demonstrating how they address human rights risks in their mineral supply chains, potentially leaving communities exposed to exploitation, health risks and environmental harm caused by the rapid expansion of mines required for the metals used in batteries.

In the new report, Recharge for Rights: Ranking the Human Rights Due Diligence Reporting of Leading Electric Vehicle Makers, Amnesty International uses criteria based on international standards to comprehensively assess human rights due diligence policies and self-reported practices of 13 major EV manufacturers, issuing each one with a scorecard. The scorecard breaks down whether these car brands are meeting their human rights responsibilities and highlights which of them are failing to show that they are addressing human rights concerns.

As global demand for battery minerals soars, the report calls for car makers to identify and mitigate human rights risks in their supply chains such as forced evictions, health harms from environmental pollution, and abuse of Indigenous Peoples' rights in countries where minerals are extracted such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Philippines.

The huge rise in demand for the metals needed to make electric vehicle batteries is putting immense pressures on mining-affected communities. The human rights abuses tied to the extraction of energy transition minerals are alarming and pervasive and the industry's response is sorely lacking. Communities are suffering from forced evictions, health issues caused by pollution and difficulties accessing water. As demand for electric vehicles increases, manufacturers must ensure people's human rights are respected.

Mixed scores across the board

Amnesty's scorecard, which is marked out of 90, assesses companies' performance on criteria including commitment to human rights policies, risk identification process, supply chain mapping and reporting and remediation.

None of the companies scored higher than 51 on Amnesty International's human rights due diligence assessment. At the bottom of the list was Chinese company BYD, which scored a dire 11/90. German company Mercedes-Benz scored highest with 51/90.

The human rights abuses tied to the extraction of energy transition minerals are alarming and pervasive and the industry's response is sorely lacking. Communities are suffering from forced evictions, health issues caused by pollution and difficulties accessing water. As demand for electric vehicles increases, manufacturers must ensure people's human rights are respected.

While some progress was made, across the board, the scores were a massive disappointment. BYD, one of the largest and fastest growing electric vehicle companies, ranked at the bottom of our assessment. Its disclosures show a serious lack of transparency on human rights diligence in its battery supply chains.

Other low-scoring firms, such as Hyundai and Mitsubishi, lack the necessary depth and information about implementation across key human rights due diligence areas. The commitments these companies report on are often vague and provide little evidence of meaningful action, showing they have a long way to go to meet international standards.

While companies like Renault and General Motors have stated commitments to human rights due diligence and rank higher than some of the lowest scoring companies, they still provide limited evidence of fully integrating these commitments into their supply chain operations, with limited information about their risk assessments and stakeholder engagement and lack of transparency when it comes to the supply chain.

The lack of transparency around supply chains demonstrated by these companies is a serious problem considering the likelihood that they may be sourcing batteries made with minerals such as cobalt or nickel mined in conditions that could harm people's human rights.

Impact on Indigenous communities

Although a rapid transition from fossil fuel powered to electric vehicles is urgently needed to accelerate decarbonization and help slow the rate of global temperature rise, it comes with a hidden cost.

Mining for the minerals used in electric vehicles can entail huge risks for people and the environment. Amnesty International's previous research has shown how industrial cobalt is linked to forced evictions in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Car companies need to use their massive leverage as global minerals buyers to influence upstream mining companies and smelters to mitigate these human rights risks.

In terms of supply chain mapping disclosures, companies like BYD, Geely Auto, Hyundai, General Motors, and Mitsubishi Motors scored the lowest, failing to provide detailed information about their supply chains. Furthermore, BYD does not disclose smelter, refiner, or mine site names. Geely Auto provided only general supplier locations without specifying mineral extraction sites.

Hyundai and Mitsubishi Motors demonstrated a similar lack of transparency, with no evidence of comprehensive supply chain mapping or mine site identification for cobalt, copper, lithium, and nickel, making it difficult for stakeholders to verify how these operations affect nearby communities.

Moving forward

All companies, including those involved in the EV battery supply chain, have a responsibility to respect all human rights wherever they operate. To meet their responsibility to respect human rights, as outlined in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), companies must implement a human rights due diligence process to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for how they address adverse human rights impacts that they may cause, contribute to, or be directly linked to through their operations, products, or services.

While some of the companies assessed have taken positive steps to acknowledge their human rights responsibilities and align corporate policies with international human rights standards, a lot more needs to be done. For example, BMW, Ford, Mercedes-Benz, Stellantis, Tesla and VW Group were among the higher scorers, yet they could still do more to show how they're actually implementing their policies through addressing human rights risks and providing effective remedy to affected people.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

calls on EV automakers to step up their human rights due diligence efforts and bring them in line with international human rights standards.



The time is now to make sure the shift to EVs doesn't leave behind a legacy of human rights abuses. Instead, EVs could drive a just energy future that leaves no one behind.



As the global transition to electric vehicles gains momentum, drives global competition and allows for huge profit, Amnesty International is calling on all car makers to improve their human rights due diligence efforts and bring them in line with international human rights standards. Amnesty is also calling on governments to strengthen their own human rights due diligence regulation over the companies incorporated on their territories or their exports and import licenses.

Those lagging behind need to work harder and faster to show that human rights isn't just a fluff phrase, but an issue they take seriously. It's time to shift gears and ensure electric vehicles don't leave behind a legacy of human rights abuses – instead, the industry must drive a just energy future that leaves no one behind.



In February 2022, Amnesty International released a report concluding that Israel is enforcing a system of apartheid against all Palestinians, whether they live in Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territories or in other countries as refugees. Despite reports from various organizations and numerous resolutions against Israel, no accountability followed. Then on 7 October 2023, a full military offensive of devastating magnitude against the occupied Gaza Strip was unleashed by Israel and lasted more than 15 months before a ceasefire was agreed upon. Israel's military indiscriminately carried out aerial and ground attacks causing massive destruction of homes, communities, hospitals, schools, cultural and religious sites, agricultural land, women, children, and multigenerational families. No one and nothing were spared of the genocide streaming live on televisions and handheld devices across the world.

Amnesty International gathered evidence from interviews with more than 200 people including Palestinian victims and witnesses of air strikes, displacement, detention, destruction of civilian property and infrastructure and individuals, local authorities in Gaza, Palestinian healthcare workers and humanitarian workers. Amnesty did fieldwork on the ground in Gaza, analysis of visual and digital evidence, and analysis of 102 statements made by Israeli government officials, high-ranking military officers and Knesset members. After close examination and extensive analysis of the said evidence, Amnesty released 'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman: Israel's Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza' on 5 December 2024, a report of its findings that Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians.

Amnesty considered the decades of apartheid and unlawful military occupation by Israel in which the acts have been committed against Palestinians. It also accounted for the recurrence and simultaneous occurrence, the immediate impact and cumulative reinforcing consequences, the scale and severity of deaths and destruction and public statements by Israeli officials announcing or calling for acts prohibited against the Genocide Convention. Based on the said convention, Amnesty found evidence that Israel is committing three out of the five prohibited acts –

“ MY BODY SURVIVED BUT MY SPIRIT DIED WITH MY CHILDREN, IT WAS CRUSHED UNDER THE RUBBLE...

Ahmad Nasman,
whose parents, sister, wife and three children were killed
in an Israeli air strike on 14 December 2023.

(1) Killing members of the group, (2) causing seriously bodily or mental harm to members of the group and (3) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.

Amnesty calls on governments to stop pretending they are powerless to end the genocide against Palestinians as this has enabled decades of impunity for Israel's violations of international law. Governments must show their respect for the International Criminal Court's (ICC) decision by arresting and handing over those wanted by the ICC for war crimes and crimes against humanity - Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. Amnesty is also calling on the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC to add genocide to the crimes it is investigating. And for the UN Security Council to impose targeted sanctions against Israeli and Hamas officials implicated in crimes under international law.

Amnesty Philippines has been joining mobilizations and conducting activities to raise awareness and take action to end the genocide in Gaza. We had learning sessions with members and staff on Palestine and Israel, film screenings and discussions of Where Olive Trees Weep and activism by collaborating with visual artist, Bry Barrios, to create and put up wheat paste arts in public spaces and Mindanao-raised hip-hop collective, MoroBeats to perform and speak about their support for a free Palestine.

Together with Amnesty and humanity, let's put pressure on governments to make Israel end its genocide, apartheid, occupation, and blockade of Gaza. Together for a #FreePalestine.

SCAN TO SIGN THE PETITION

ACT NOW AND CALL ON ISRAEL TO IMMEDIATELY STOP COMMITTING GENOCIDE AGAINST PALESTINIANS IN GAZA.



As the world watches, Israel's relentless attacks are continuing with impunity, causing incessant loss of Palestinian lives while the desperate humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza grows worse and worse.



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



PHILIPPINE SECTION

Perseveranda Townhomes II
6C Maningning corner Maamo Streets,
Sikatuna Village, 1101 Quezon City

+63 2 7744 4108 
section@amnesty.org.ph 
www.amnesty.org.ph 

FOLLOW US!

