



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

Fifty-sixth session

18 June–12 July 2024

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by DRCNet Foundation, Inc., a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[27 May 2024]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



## **Unfinished Business: Ending Extrajudicial Drug War Killings in the Philippines**

On May 23 of this year the police chief of Davao City in the Philippines, Richard Bad-Ang, was relieved of duty, following an announcement by the Philippine National Police of an investigation into seven extrajudicial drug war killings which took place in the city from March 23-26. (1) These killings began a day after Sebastian Duterte, Mayor of Davao, promised to kill illegal drug sellers, during remarks made in a ceremony welcome Bad-Ang: "So this will be your chance to get out of this city. If not, sorry, I'm already telling you right now, get out of here [and] if you're not going to stop, I'll kill you." (2)

While the change of administration in the Philippines to that of Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has in some ways been seen as a relative breath of fresh air compared with that of former President of the Philippine Rodrigo Duterte, whose term expired on June 30, 2022, human rights abuses have continued. According to numbers compiled by Dahas, a program based at the University of the Philippines which tracks extrajudicial drug war killings based on media reports, the number has remained near the roughly one per day to which it had fallen by the end of the Duterte administration. (3)

During the past 12 months, the number of EJKs appear in fact to have increased. During the 12 months from May 2023 through April 2024, Dahas has tracked 372 EJKs, an 18 percent increase over the 314 Dahas tracked during the months May 2022 through April 2023. This number is nearly the same as the 368 Dahas tracked during the months May 2021-April 2022, a period that falls entirely within the Duterte presidency.

The PNP probe, while certainly welcome, underscores the overall lack of accountability for drug war killings in the Philippines. Of the more than 6,000 such killings acknowledged by the Philippine government, and the likely 30,000 NGOs believe the true number to be, only a few have faced investigation or prosecution.

Instead, the government has cited an interagency task force, and a soon-to-be concluded joint human rights program with the UN, to argue that the issue is being dealt with in-country. That argument is made to forestall new resolutions at the Human Rights Council for further investigation, and to claim that the International Criminal Court lacks jurisdiction over the matter under the principle of complementarity. The Marcos administration's position, while it has evolved during the past two years, still asserts an intention to not cooperate with the ICC's investigation in the Philippines.

We urge the Human Rights Council to continue to press for human rights in the Philippines, and as part of that to request a new report by OHCHR on extrajudicial drug war killings. We also urge that the UN express its support for the ICC's the Philippines investigation, as part of supporting that institution's global rule of law mission.

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1. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/mindanao/davao-police-chief-richard-bad-ang-relieved-probe-drug-war-killings-begins/>
  2. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/mindanao/davao-city-killings-rampant-even-before-baste-duterte-drug-war-declaration-march-2024/>
  3. <https://dahas.upd.edu.ph/sources/>