



Peace for the Philippines

November 2017

The Australian Government is providing military assistance to the Administration of President Duterte in the Philippines, despite President Duterte being behind a campaign of mass murder. In fact President Duterte has boasted of carrying out murders himself when he was mayor of the city of Davao, shooting people in the street and claiming to have murdered one man by throwing him out of a helicopter. President Duterte has compared himself to Adolf Hitler and has said he aims to be 50 times more brutal than Islamic terrorists.

On Saturday 18 February 2017 at 4:30am 20,000 people gathered for the "Walk for Life" in Manila, Philippines. The Catholic Church organised the largest rally in response to the Philippine Government's 'war on drugs', which over the past 15 months has seen over 9,000 people killed by police and masked gunmen. Archbishop Socrates Villegas, president of the bishops' conference, told the crowd, "Why dawn? It's because it is during these hours that we find bodies on the streets or near trash cans. Dawn, which is supposed to be the hour of a new start, is becoming an hour of tears and fears".

On 26 August 2017, a thousand people, nuns, priests and hundreds of children, joined the funeral procession for 17-year-old Kian Loyd delos Santos who was murdered by police. CCTV footage showed the teenager being dragged by plain-clothes policemen to a dark, trash-filled alley in northern Manila, before being shot in the head and his body left in the street. There have been no investigations or prosecutions for thousands of police and 'mystery' murders.

In another case the police kidnapped a Korean businessman, Jee Ick-joo, and demanded a ransom from the family. Before the ransom could be paid, the police strangled Jee Ick-joo to death.

Witnesses report that the Philippine National Police are often perpetrators of the murders and either approach a suspected drug user on the streets or forcefully enter

a residence and shoot the suspect, later placing empty drug packets, guns and spent ammunition with the body. It has been alleged that the Duterte Administration pays police officers \$200 for every murder they carry out, but they are paid nothing if they arrest someone alive.

In August 2017 President Duterte promised that fish in Manila bay would grow fat from the bodies of drug suspects. Fishermen in Manila report they have been forced to dump the bodies of people murdered by the police into the sea. One fisherman told *The Age* he personally had been required to dump 20 bodies in Manila Bay.

The murders rapidly increased in August 2017 when there were 81 deaths over five days. Victims have included people murdered by mistake when police got the identity of their intended victim wrong, bystanders, family members of people using drugs and children as young as three-years-old, all of whom have been deemed collateral damage by President Duterte. Duterte has praised the growing body count as proof of the success of the 'war on drugs'.

Duterte's 'war on drugs' has been internationally condemned and, in September 2017, 38 governments (including Australia) issued a joint statement calling for an end to the killings and urging the Philippines to take "all necessary measures to bring these killings to an end".

The Duterte Administration has slashed funding to the Commission on Human Rights in the Philippines by a third. The Administration has also announced a 75% decrease in the Department of Health managed rehabilitation facilities for people trying to get off drugs in 2018 from the 2017 allocation.

Despite the campaign of mass murder and the bizarre public statements of President Duterte, the Australian Government is providing military aid to the Duterte Administration at Australia's initiation, sending a mixed

signal regarding the Australian Government's opposition to the gross human rights abuses. The head of Australia's spy agency, Nick Warner, was photographed fist pumping with President Duterte. The military assistance has been provided in the context of an armed conflict with an Islamic extremist group in the Marawai region of the Philippines that has killed around 1,000 people, 800 of whom have been Islamic militants and 160 members of the Philippines security forces. President Duterte has told the army not to be concerned about killing civilians as they crush the Islamic militants.

Australian spy planes have been assisting the Philippines military in the offensive.

Human Rights Watch recommends to international donor countries to the Philippines should end all assistance to the Philippine National Police until the murders cease and meaningful investigations are undertaken, and they should consider redirecting that assistance to community-based harm reduction programs that are appropriate and effective.

What you can do

Write a polite and respectful letters or e-mails to:

<p>The Hon. Julie Bishop MP Minister for Foreign Affairs PO Box 6022 House of Representatives Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600</p> <p>E-mail: Julie.Bishop.MP@aph.gov.au</p> <p>Salutation: Dear Minister</p>	<p>Senator The Hon. Marise Payne Minister for Defence PO Box 6100 Senate Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600</p> <p>E-mail: minister@defence.gov.au</p> <p>Salutation: Dear Minister</p>
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Points to make in your letters or e-mails:

- Express deep concern that Australia is providing military support to the Duterte Administration despite the Administration being behind a campaign of mass murder that has claimed over 9,000 lives and the President himself has boasted of carrying out murders.
- Request that the government follow the advice of Human Rights Watch and end all military and security assistance until the extrajudicial executions cease and meaningful investigations are undertaken, and redirect assistance to human rights organisations and community-based programs.



The Christian Youth Fellowship of the United Church of Christ in the Phillipines expresses its deepest condolences to the Family of 17 year old Kian Delos Santos and to all families whose members have been killed in the war on drugs. *Source: <https://uccpchurch.com/>*