

Hon. Rodrigo Roa Duterte
President
Republic of the Philippines

Via Silvestre H. Bello III
Secretary of Labour
Department of Labor and Employment
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Cc: Embassy of the Philippines, 1 Moonah Place, Yarralumla ACT 2600, Australia
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Dear Mr. President,

The **Independent Education Union of Australia WA Branch, representing 4500 workers in Western Australia** strongly condemns the recent raids and arrests of trade union leaders in the Philippines. The offensive by joint forces of the army and the police has once again targeted trade unions and labour organisations.

State-led stigmatisation of labour organisations for their ideologies has been going on for far too long in the Philippines, in contravention of the principle of freedom of association. Labour organisations are labelled as linked to the National People's Army and arrested activists are routinely alleged of possessing firearms and ammunitions implanted by state officers to justify fabricated charges. The recent raids and arrests worsen the existing coercive environment of extrajudicial killings with impunity and effectively prevent workers from forming and joining trade unions, and unions from pursuing legitimate activities.

It is the duty of all member states of the ILO to promote and ensure a climate free of violence, coercion and threats of any type aimed at trade union leaders and their families for the free exercise of the rights and freedoms set out in Conventions No.87 and No.98. This includes ensuring the right to be free from arbitrary arrest and detention, and the right to access fair and independent trials.

The recent arrests and raids further violate Section V, B (10) and (11) of the Guidelines on the Conduct of the DOLE, DILG, DND, DOJ, AFP and PNP Relative to the Exercise of Workers' Rights and Activities (the Guidelines) in the Philippines. Acts of the state and national security forces are clearly prohibited to label, intervene in labour relations and coerce people to renounce their trade union membership. Officials are required to respect the role of DOLE in labour disputes and always comply with human rights laws and standards.

We urge the government of the Philippines to:

1. stop the attacks and red-tagging of legitimate trade union organisations and labour activists;
2. implement the recommendations concluded by the Committee of Application of Standards of the ILO in June 2019; and
3. accept the High-Level Tripartite Mission of the ILO to visit the country at the soonest possible time.

We support the call of ITUC's affiliates in the Philippines to urge the intervention of Labour Secretary, Silvestre Bello of DOLE with the military and police forces for:

1. discussions and investigations at the national and regional Tripartite Monitoring Bodies on the recent arrests and raids, red-tagging of labour organisations;
2. expedition of the investigation of 43 cases of extra-judicial killings submitted by the trade unions;
3. enforcement of the Guidelines on the Conduct of the DOLE, DILG, DND, DOJ, AFP and PNP Relative to the Exercise of Workers' Rights.

The **Independent Education Union of Australia WA Branch** stands in solidarity with its affiliates in the Philippines and is closely monitoring the trade union and human rights situation in the country.

Your sincerely,

Member of the **Independent Education Union of Australia WA Branch**