

Good afternoon, your Excellencies.

On behalf of the **Philippine Coalition for the International Criminal Court**, I call on your Excellencies to reaffirm, in the strongest terms possible, in words and action, your commitment to the Rome Statute and the International Criminal Court.

More specifically, I challenge the State Parties to vocally speak for justice and condemn governments that undermine it.

Withdrawal of State Parties from the Rome Statute has no other intention but to interfere with the investigation of grave crimes and undermine the effectivity and credibility of the ICC. We believe and advocate that the principle of complementarity is the best way to address grave crimes at the domestic level. Thus, if a State Party really believes that its domestic justice system actually works, then there should be no fear in relying on the ICC processes, especially so, like in the case of the Philippines, when the matter is only under preliminary examination. To withdraw is to politicize the matter instead of pursue the rule of law.

The Philippine government admits that there are almost 5,000 persons killed by law enforcers due to its "War on Drugs." Last week, 2 police officers were convicted for murder of a minor, Kian delos Santos. The police report claimed that Kian fired shots at the police officers and the latter merely defended themselves. Only after a closed circuit television footage surfaced showing Kian being peacefully accosted by the 2 police officers and the public clamor afterwards did the government conduct a full investigation of the matter. How many more are like the case of Kian? Out of the thousands killed, only 5 cases are being prosecuted due to safety concerns by the victims or their families. Victims of grave crimes and atrocities look to the ICC for hope and justice.

We also questioned the withdrawal of the Philippines before our Supreme Court for not complying with constitutional requirements and await the decision. Despite this, we are still prepared to dialogue and work with the Philippine government in bringing perpetrators to justice. It is not yet late for the Philippines to reverse its withdrawal. But the withdrawal itself must be condemned as it is an act in support of impunity.

I, therefore, ask the State Parties to continuously support civil society organizations that assist these victims attain justice. There is a need to intensify the campaign towards universal jurisdiction of the ICC together with the principle of complementarity. I further call on State Parties to put more needed resources to build awareness on the ICC through constituency-building. Only through education can we combat attempts to undermine the effectivity and credibility of the ICC.

Now is an auspicious moment, as we commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the Rome Statute, for Member States to act boldly and decisively against impunity and work for justice.

Thank you, your Excellencies.