

## **A Continuing Plea for Genuine Justice and Accountability**

**Statement of the Philippine Coalition for the International Criminal Court (PCICC), Amnesty International Philippines, CenterLaw and Network Against Killings in the Philippines (NAKPhil)**

**General Debate at the Assembly of States Parties (ASP)**

**December 3, 2024**

Madam President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Members of the Assembly of State Parties,

I stand before you today on behalf of the Philippine Coalition for the International Criminal Court (PCICC), alongside its members Amnesty International Philippines, CenterLaw and Network Against Killings in the Philippines (NAKPhil).

We are committed to the pursuit of justice for the thousands and thousands of victims of Crimes Against Humanity in our country, the Philippines. These gross crimes, stemming from a brutal campaign against drugs, dubbed as the “War on Drugs” has claimed thousands of lives, including children, are a profound affront to humanity, the rule of law and human rights.

A city mayor from Davao, Rodrigo Duterte who became President for 6 years in our country thinks people who are in anyway involved in drugs have to be killed, under the guise of curbing criminality and for peace and order in the Philippines. The impact on children and young people is among the most heart-wrenching aspect of these atrocities. In this grim chapter of the Philippines, children and young people were not merely bystanders—they have been direct victims. The youngest victim that our member organization has documented is a 5-month-old baby killed during a joint police-military operation that targeted the baby’s father. Both parents and the baby were killed.

Children have been killed in acts of violence, experienced gruesome torture, while others have been orphaned, traumatized, and left vulnerable to further abuse, exploitation and harm. There are instances when children-in-street-situations and children-in-conflict-with-the-law, and those dubbed as “recidivists” in petty and mostly survival crimes such as robbery and theft have been deliberately targeted and included in the Drug Watch List.

The torture and killings, including of children and young people, have not stopped. They continue. Crimes Against Humanity in the context of the “War on Drugs” still persist in the Philippines up to this day.

The ICC epitomizes their only hope—even their last resort for justice, as domestic mechanisms have failed to deliver effective remedies, genuine justice and accountability.

We urge this esteemed Assembly to ensure that the ICC fulfills its mandate by taking urgent decisive actions to hasten progress on the Philippine situation.

This call is rooted in three pressing imperatives:

**1. *The Children Can't Wait***

Justice delayed is justice denied. Children and young people who have been victims of crimes against humanity in the Philippines must be prioritized. Every day of inaction aggravates the harm, robbing survivors and families of closure, healing and peace. Every day of inaction further emboldens perpetrators and puts children, young people and the victims' families at risk and grave danger.

We urge the Assembly of States Parties to ensure that the ICC—which is so far away from these children—is not just a dream—but a reality, and that equitable justice will be a reality very soon.

**2. *Victims' Rights to Participate at the Center***

The Rome Statute enshrines victims' rights to participation and reparation. The prolonged process can marginalize the very people the ICC intends to serve. Victims' families, who are impoverished and live in constant fear and justice feels increasingly out of reach. Many of whom live in constant fear and poverty, look up to the ICC as their only path towards fair justice.

We call on the Assembly to ensure that the ICC will be allocated adequate resources and that the victims are the center in these ICC proceedings—they are able to participate, heard and their cries for justice are acted upon without delay.

**3. *End Impunity***

Crimes Against Humanity, especially Crimes Against and Affecting Children are among the gravest violations of international law. If those responsible are allowed to escape accountability, it sends a perilous message to the world—that the very human rights of children and peoples can be trampled upon with impunity.

Justice delayed at the ICC will reverberate far beyond borders. It will embolden perpetrators. It will weaken faith in the court of last resort and international justice mechanisms. It will diminish hope.

On behalf of the Victims of Crimes Against Humanity brought by a bloody “War on Drugs” in the Philippines, including the children and young people who are urgently yearning for justice, we call on the Assembly to act with urgency, act with compassion, and ensure that the International Criminal Court fulfills its mandate to the victims.

Support us turn our aspirations for justice and accountability into reality.

Thank you. *Padayon.*



**PHILIPPINE COALITION FOR THE  
INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT (PCICC)**

