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Philippines: Poor progress on human rights under Aquino

President should establish a Presidential Accountability Commission on political killings, enforced disappearances and torture, Amnesty International said today.

Nearly one year after Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III became President of the Philippines, his administration has shown little progress in addressing serious human rights problems affecting Filipinos.

Amnesty International today released *Progress, Stagnation, Regression? The State of Human Rights in the Philippines under Aquino*. The 18-page briefing examines the Aquino administration’s progress on 26 key human rights recommendations, which the organization put forward to candidates in the presidential election in February 2010 and again to newly-elected President Aquino in June 2010.

“Aquino has shown that human rights are still not a priority for his administration,” said Aurora Parong, Director of Amnesty International Philippines. “For the past year Aquino has been saying that he inherited these human rights problems from his predecessor. But after a full year in charge, it is time for him to take responsibility for protecting the human rights of Filipinos.”

Amnesty International assessed the Aquino administration’s performance on curbing political killings, enforced disappearances and torture. It found that Aquino has failed to establish accountability over the state security forces including paramilitary groups. It also found that the administration has not made enough progress in disbanding and disarming private armies, and in ensuring justice for victims of human rights violations. The organization monitored the Aquino administration’s progress in protecting the reproductive health rights of Filipinos, particularly through the Reproductive Health Bill.

Amnesty International also said that Aquino should use the occasion of his next State of the Nation Address to announce that he will create a Presidential Accountability Commission to ensure the investigation and expedient prosecution of cases of political killings, enforced disappearances and torture.

“An entire year has passed, but the Aquino administration still does not have a national action plan for human rights,” said Aurora Parong. “The administration needs to start taking concerted action against human rights violations.”

Based on Amnesty International’s assessment, out of the 26 human rights action points, this is how the Aquino administration has fared:

- Significant improvement – 0
- Some progress – 2
- Little change – 8
- Stagnant – 8
- Failed – 7
- Regressed – 1