



ASA 35/8610/2024
8 October 2024

ORAL STATEMENT
Item 10:
General Debate on Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

UN Human Rights Council
57th Session
9 September – 11 October 2024

On behalf of Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), Amnesty International, Franciscans International and World Organization Against Torture (OMCT)

Mr. President,

Despite its inherent weaknesses and failures, the recently concluded UN Joint Programme for Human Rights in the Philippines has often been touted as a model to operationalise the Council's agenda item 10. An objective and independent review of the effectiveness of the Joint Programme is essential, not only to address serious concerns in the Philippines, but to ensure the Council does not repeat its mistakes in the Philippines elsewhere.

We are disappointed by the lack of progress achieved by the UN Joint Programme in supporting the advancement of accountability for drug related unlawful killings, including extrajudicial executions.

Apart from two cases that led to convictions during the three-year period of the Joint Programme, there has been no progress towards accountability for thousands of drug related killings during the previous Duterte Administration, despite its stated objective to strengthen domestic investigations and accountability mechanisms as part of its six key priority areas.

At least 800 drug-related killings reportedly took place since June 2022, under President Marcos Jr's administration, which has maintained a militaristic drug control policy.

Continued red-tagging, harassment of and attacks, including increasing reports of enforced disappearances, on human rights defenders, civil society organisations, lawyers, environmental rights defenders and community leaders, and the use of anti-terrorism rhetoric point to persisting concerns around civic space as well as a failure to reform counter terrorism legislation.

At the conclusion of the three year period, the Joint Programme only served to further entrench impunity, shield the government from scrutiny on key human rights concerns and cast a shadow on the Council's weak attempt to address the situation in the Philippines under agenda item 10.

Thank you.