

Online Kathmandu Democracy Forum (KMDF) 2020



A PRESENTATION BY THE PHILIPPINE ALLIANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES

NOVEMBER 5, 2020



**Philippine
Monitoring Report
on the SDG16+
During the Covid-
19 Pandemic**



COVID-19 IN THE PHILIPPINES

- The Philippines has now the 2nd highest number of confirmed Covid-19 cases and deaths in South East Asia
- As of November 2a total 385K and 7.9% are active cases 0r 29K
- 55% are male, with the most affected age group 20-29 years (27%) followed by 30-39 years (24%).
- In recent weeks there has been a downtrend in the number of cases
- Positivity rate has also gone down (6.0% on November 2)
- 92.1% are mild and asymptomatic
- Cases per million – 3,501 as of November 2
- Deaths per million – 66 as of November 2
- Data from the Department of Health



IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE LIVES OF FILIPINOS

- Concern for MENTAL HEALTH – seniors and children “will life ever return to normal, and how one will survive amid the pandemic?” World Vision study - 54% of children have expressed negative emotions such as sadness, fear and worry
- The majority of women (70 per cent) reported that their mental and emotional health had deteriorated, including by increased stress and anxiety related to the pandemic. Also access to health services made difficult.
- Schools closed and only begun in October 5 – using blended learning as 80% enrolled from last years student population. Around 400 private schools closed.
- The proportion of families experiencing *involuntary hunger* – hunger due to lack of food to eat – at least once in the past three months reached a new record-high of 30.7%
- National Food Coalition says, it was lack of income as unemployment rate ballooned to 17.7%: 7.3 million Filipinos were jobless. 12 million had jobs but were not able to work.
- DOLE - “no work no pay” policy applies to workers who have used up their leave credits.
- Angelo King Institute (AKI) released in April 2020 estimated, with a three-month lockdown, poverty incidence to increase to 21.799 percent; poverty severity, 2.117 percent; and Gini coefficient, 0.4534.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE LIVES OF FILIPINOS

- PCW - 804 incidents of GBV and VAWC March 15 to April 30, 2020. Police recorded from 15 March – 2 April, there were 391 cases of violence against women and 42 cases of rape
- Philippines generated 19,187.7 metric tons of infectious healthcare waste from April to July 2020.
- Many OFW families lose incomes DFA reported that 28,589 overseas Filipinos repatriated as of May 21, 2020. 300k more.
- Social minorities, movement is restricted going to hill farms became. Food relief did not reach their communities
- LGBTs publicly humiliated by ordering them to kiss, dance, and do push-ups on live video broadcast on social media. On June 26, police in Manila arrested at least 20 people at an LGBT Pride event protecting an anti-terrorism bill.
- High mortality rate of 40% from COVID-19 disproportionately affects the older Filipinos, healthy elderly also barred from going out.
- 200 percent increase in the number of posts on child sex abuse forums. INTERPOL reports live-streaming of child sexual exploitation for payment likely to further increase due to travel restrictions.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CIVIC SPACE AND DEMOCRACY IN THE PHILIPPINES

- Further shrinking of the civic space or limitations to actions by CSOs and human rights defenders in the time of Covid-19 began on 13 March 2020.
- Reports to PAHRA of human rights violations
- *The order: “shoot to kill” those violating the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ). Quoting, “Let this be a warning to all. Follow the government at this time because it is critical that we have order,” Then, Police shot a mentally-challenged man.*
- As Congress is now deliberating on the reinstatement of the death penalty posthaste



GOVERNMENT COVID-19 RESPONSE ON DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

- 21 protesters waiting for food distribution Samahan Ng Magkakapitbahay ng North Triangle Association (SAMANA) arrested PNP reports 156,000 while 15 were killed.
- There are several reports of physical torture during arrest and numerous cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment. A group of 5 teenagers were placed inside a dog cage.
- Marginalization & non-participation of peoples in combatting COVID-19 pandemic. Elderly had to raise their voices. Medical professionals clamored.
- During the Pandemic, the Anti Terror Law was passed and signed into law
- Killings, Continuous Red Tagging and Harassment of Human Rights Defenders - publication material in their Facebook account that featured several CSOs including human rights organizations PAHRA, Medical Action Group



Assessment: “D.O.M.” APPROACH

MILITARY APPROACH:

Lockdowns coupled with kill policies –directives under a state of public health emergency (PP# 922, s. 2020) and installed ex-military officers in the Command vs. COVID-19 to enforce community quarantine throughout the country

- Reports of human rights violations **67 incidents affecting about 180 victims** (inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, arbitrary arrest and detention, violent dispersal extra judicial killing, harassment, discrimination, forced eviction, violation against right to health, torture and rape)
- Bayanihan law also Cracks down on freedom of speech, in the guise of battling ‘fake news’; prior restraint through media ‘accreditation’
- SEC and DILG policies pressures and will suppress CSO and advocacies



Photo courtesy: Rappler

ASSESSMENT OF GOVERNMENT COVID-19 RESPONSE ON DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

The pandemic response brought the economy to a halt. Many poor and the poorest Filipino families were perilously out of work.

Granting of special powers to the Philippine President with the passage of RA 11469: Bayanihan to Heal as One Act (March 25, 2020) and Bayanihan 2. Local governments cascade the national directives on quarantines and lockdowns.

- Allows Duterte to use P275B public funds and more in Bayanihan 2, at risk of continuing corruption as PACC has so far received a total of 3,992 complaints
- Also, Corruption in the Philhealth or the National Health Insurance system



POST-COVID-19 FACTORS TO WATCH OUT FOR:

Enacted and signed the Anti-Terror Law: Legal experts, OHCHR warned that while using terrorism it will also suppress legitimate dissent and voices of people and will shrink democracy and civic space. Thirsty seven (37) groups including PAHRA filed petition to declare the "Terror Act" unconstitutional.

Increases the equity of incumbent for the 2022 elections, consolidation of power

ASSESSMENT OF PAHRA AND OTHER CSO'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

- **PAHRA adopted to lockdown and work from home the situation by maximizing the internet platform.** started in March 25 and had since broadcasted more than 50 sessions of different relevant issues including topics on public health, legal and Rule of Law issues, mental health, impact of lockdown on different sectors, freedom of expression, assessment of one-month lockdown.
- **Continued human rights defense and protection** despite quarantines; HR education and information, online protests, and monitoring human rights.
- NGOs, continued to **clamor for transparency** mainly through social media or Facebook and twitter.
- Policy advocacy continued on policies for zero hunger and against the death penalty and lowering of MACR
- CSOs forwarded through various channels recommendations for women, children, social minorities, education, and health of Covid-19 throughout the quarantines
- Opposition to the Anti-Terrorism Act approved during the time of this Covid-19 Pandemic.
- CSOs and human rights defenders are expecting to face this challenge as government is moving towards getting back to normal.



ASSESSMENT OF PAHRA - CSO'S RESPONSE TO THE IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSE ON DEMOCRACY AND CIVIC SPACE

- **Severely limited CSO response**, and in particular PAHRA's response to the government's performance to the Pandemic and its impact on human rights, democracy, civic space, and people's participation needed adjustments with adaptive innovations.
- **CSOs, NGOs, and PAHRA remain vulnerable.** Securities and Exchange Commission Memorandum Circular No. 25, March 2019 (amending SEC MC No. 15 in Nov. 2018) and DILG Memo on disclosure of activities
- **Work has continued to mount over the internet** for CSOs, NGOs, and PAHRA while battling ddos



- **PAHRA continues to adapt, network, and vigilant:** demand the government for 19 points proposal for a comprehensive rights-based response to CoVid19 (CoHRID19) and defend human rights, seek justice, and mainstream human rights in governance.

PROPOSALS TO GOVERNMENT

- Recognize that the Covid-19 is primarily a health crisis and improve the capacity to care and fulfill the highest attainable state of health: STOP D.O.M.
- Ensure that in the General Appropriations Act of 2021 (National budget) there is sufficient funds for a Covid-19 vaccine for the poor
- Involve and continue participation of CSOs in working towards the achievement of the SDGs
- Comply and effectively implement recent Human Rights Council Resolution on Technical Cooperation (A/HRC/45/L.38)
- To members of Congress, the district and party list representatives and Senators: reject Death Bills and enact Human Rights Protection Bill
- To local governments: Adopt the human rights-based approach to governance and democracy (HRBA2G&D)
- To the Commission on Human Rights: Work with human rights organizations and networks on rolling out adaptive education initiatives on SDGs and Human rights



PROPOSALS TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (E.G. UN HLPF, UNESCAP, UNDP, ASEAN, G20, ETC)



- United National organizations to continue to work with Philippine CSOs and government and other stakeholders on achieving the SDGs by 2030.
 - Develop the HRC Technical Cooperation Resolution (A/45/HRC/L.38) program
 - Extend assistance and technical support to CSOs in contributing to the HRC Technical Cooperation Reso A/HRC/45/L.38 as an opportunity for CSO participation in the next two years.
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- Support the European Union stand on media freedom and the resolution withdrawing preferential treatment under the GSP+
 - Continue with nurturing close relations between the OHCHR, to assist Philippine CSOs like PAHRA on participating in the roll out of technical cooperation support to the Philippine government.
 - Continue support to the implementation of the ASEAN Covid-19 Recovery Plan in the Philippines.
 - Support adaptive education initiatives on SDGs and and Rights-Based Approach to Governance and Development and CoVID19/pandemic
 - ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights to develop mechanism for monitoring and responding to massive human rights violations in members States

RECOMMENDATIONS ON WORKING TOGETHER IN THE PHILIPPINES

- Continue open communications among CSOs across all sectors and rights and the SDGs as they work with communities at the grassroots. Discuss and find common ground on PAHRA's calls to government as proposed in the COHRID 19.
 - At the minimum, agree and cooperate in launching campaigns on democracy, civic space, justice, and people's participation and sharing of Limited resources to support victims
 - Sustained campaign against enforcement of the Anti-Terror Law and E.O. 70
 - Develop "Security and Protection Protocols" for defenseless against red tagging and in claiming justice for killings among ranks.
 - Pursue efforts at mainstreaming human rights to governance and democracy (HRBA2G&D)
 - Use adaptive education initiatives on SDGs and Human rights
- Continue and strengthen advocacy against the death bills
 - Continue to question and demand against regulations limiting CSOs
 - Determine human rights champions as viable candidates for the 2022 elections parallel to educating the electorate
 - Continuous development of expertise with Internet Technology
 - Demand a freer and responsible media to report facts and the truth on the state of human rights, democracy, and civic space



RECOMMENDATIONS ON WORKING TOGETHER REGIONALLY, GLOBALLY

- KMDF generates a manifesto reflecting a summary of all papers and positions on rights-based COVID response for advocates take stock of the lessons
- Lead a ***Recovery and Resiliency Plan*** for country level human rights and democracy organizations
- Continue efforts at coordinating national reports on human rights violation and its consolidation and submission to OHCHR and Special Mandates and continue solidarity actions to demand accountability on the thousands of people affected by human rights violations everywhere, including the War on Drugs in the Philippines.
- Contribute to human rights defenders “Security and Protection Protocols” and strengthen mechanisms to assist HRDs at risks.
- Share successes that may be used to duplicate, although calibrated, the human rights-based approach to governance and democracy (HRBA2G&D)

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**DEFEND HUMAN
RIGHTS**

**JUSTICE
CIVIC SPACE
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