

War on Drug in the Philippines: President Duterte threatens to kill Human rights activists

Thursday 17 August 2017, by [CORRALES Nestor](#), [HOLMES Oliver](#) (Date first published: 17 August 2017).

Contents

- [Human rights group slams \(...\)](#)
- [Philippine police kill 32 \(...\)](#)
- [Duterte admits he was wrong on](#)
- [Duterte wants war on crime](#)

Human rights group slams Philippines president Duterte's threat to kill them

'If they are obstructing justice, you shoot them,' Rodrigo Duterte tells police officers of activists opposed to his drugs war.

Human Rights Watch has denounced a call by Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte for police to shoot rights activists who get in the way of his bloody drug war.

Duterte should immediately withdraw his statement or be investigated for possibly instigating or inciting violence against Philippine rights advocates, the New York-based advocacy group said.

The body's deputy Asia director, Phelim Kine, said the threat "is like painting a target on the backs of courageous people working to protect the rights and upholding the dignity of all Filipinos".

Duterte "should retract his reprehensible remarks immediately before there is more blood on his hands", he added.

Speaking following the bloodiest night of his one-year tenure in high office, Duterte said he would investigate human rights defenders criticising him, or order officers to kill them.

"One of these days, you human rights groups, I will also investigate you. That's the truth. For conspiracy," Duterte said.

"If they are obstructing justice, you shoot them," he said [1]. "So they can really see the kind of human rights."

Police in the Philippines killed 32 people in a series of raids near Manila on Monday night, part of an operation authorities said was aimed to "shock and awe" drug dealers.

Duterte later said he approved of the "massive raid" and called for more bloodshed: "Let's kill another 32 every day. Maybe we can reduce what ails this country."

The former prosecutor, who has repeatedly assured police he will pardon them for crimes, previously threatened to kill human rights defenders in December 2016 [2].

Nicknamed “the Punisher” for his lethal approach to policing, Duterte has also threatened to block an investigation by the national commission on human rights into alleged abuses by Philippine security forces [3], although he later said his threat was a “joke” [4].

Political opponents of Duterte have attempted to bring him to the international criminal court (ICC) in the Netherlands, accusing the president of crimes against humanity [5].

His call on Wednesday for police to consider human rights advocates legitimate drug war targets is a sinister escalation in his rhetoric, Human Rights Watch said.

“Duterte is on notice that his death threats against human rights advocates could pave the way for prosecution for crimes against humanity,” Kine said. “Duterte’s assault on accountability highlights the urgent need for a UN-led international investigation into his drug-war slaughter.”

Since the former mayor of Davao city became president last July, government figures show police have killed close to 3,500 “drug personalities”. More than 2,000 other people have been killed in drug-related crimes and thousands more murdered in unexplained circumstances, according to police data

[<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/01/philippines-president-rodrico-duterte-urges-people-to-kill-drug-addicts>]].

Oliver Holmes, Southeast Asia correspondent

* The Guardian. 17 August 2017 07.15 BST Last modified on Thursday 17 August 2017 07.16 BST: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/17/human-rights-watch-philippines-president-duterte-treat>

Philippine police kill 32 in bloodiest night of Duterte’s war on drugs

President urges officers to kill dozens of drug suspects every day after series of 67 **operations in province north of Manila.**

Police in the Philippines have killed 32 people in a series of raids near Manila, in the bloodiest night yet of President Rodrigo Duterte’s war on drugs.

Supt Romeo Caramat said 67 police operations in various parts of Bulacan, a province north of the capital, had left 32 “drug personalities” dead and more than 100 others in custody.

“We have conducted ‘one-time, big-time’ operations in the past. So far, the number of casualties and deaths, this is the highest,” Caramat said at a news conference to publicise the raids.

“We wanted to shock and awe these drug personalities,” he said. “Other drug personalities will think twice before continuing with their drug trade.”

Human rights groups have repeatedly warned that Duterte, nicknamed “the Punisher” by his

supporters for his approach to policing, may be overseeing crimes against humanity in his brutal anti-drugs campaign, which has left thousands dead.

Duterte praised the operation in Bulacan, which took place from Monday night until Tuesday afternoon, and urged police to kill dozens of drug suspects every day.

“The ones who died recently in Bulacan, 32, in a massive raid, that was good,” Duterte said in a speech to an anti-crime organisation that has backed the drugs war. “If we could kill another 32 every day, then maybe we can reduce what ails this country.”

Bulacan has been a major target in the drugs war, with 425 people killed and 4,000 offenders arrested, according to Caramat, making it the second-biggest hotspot in the crackdown outside the Manila area.

Duterte was elected president last year on a quick-fix, populist platform of wiping out crime and pledging to put drug pushers in funeral parlours, not prisons [6].

He has said he is “happy to slaughter” millions of drug users and dismissed the deaths of children as “collateral damage” [7].

The former prosecutor said he used to personally kill criminals when he was mayor of the southern city Davao [8] and once threw a suspect out of a helicopter [9].

Since Duterte became president last July, government figures show police have killed 3,451 “drug personalities”. More than 2,000 other people have been killed in drug-related crimes and thousands more murdered in unexplained circumstances, according to police data.

Duterte has admitted the police force was “corrupt to the core”, but has vowed to protect officers who kill drug suspects under suspicious circumstances.

At the press conference, Caramat defended the police action, saying the deaths occurred during shootouts, and were not executions as activists have often alleged.

“There are some sectors that will not believe us,” he said, “but we are open for any investigation. All we can say is that we don’t have any control of the situation. As much as possible, we don’t want this bloody encounter.”

Political opponents of Duterte have filed a complaint with the international criminal court (ICC), accusing the president and top aides of crimes against humanity, arguing they failed to address allegations of widespread police abuses that have been brought to their attention.

Duterte has welcomed the ICC complaint and said he is willing to rot in jail to protect Filipinos.

In February, after thousands of alleged drug users and suspected dealers had been killed, the president ordered a temporary halt in all operations, raising hopes that the bloodshed would end.

However, this week’s raids follow an attack in a southern city on 30 July in which officers killed 16 people, including a city mayor.

Police records said officers seized 21 firearms and about 100g (3.5 ounces) of shabu, a form of methamphetamine.

Duterte, 72, who remains popular domestically, has previously lashed out at any international

criticism of the killings.

He has warned the EU not to “fuck with us” after the European parliament passed a resolution expressing “grave concern over credible reports” that Philippine police were engaged in extrajudicial killings, a claim officers vehemently deny. Duterte also called the former US president Barack Obama a “son of a whore”.

Britain has been less vocal over the killings, and sent the international trade secretary, Liam Fox, to meet Duterte in April, part of a global tour to seek post-Brexit deals with countries outside the European Union.

The US president, Donald Trump, has also sought to boost ties with Duterte, praising him for an “unbelievable job” in his anti-narcotics campaign [10].

After the US secretary of state, Rex Tillerson, met Duterte last week, the Philippine president said Washington had “considerably toned down” criticism of human rights abuses [11].

Duterte has often complained about human rights groups criticising and undermining his campaign. On Wednesday he called for them to be investigated, or worse.

“If they are obstructing justice, shoot them,” he said.

Oliver Holmes and agencies in Manila

* The Guardian. 16 August 2017 15.48 BST First published on Wednesday 16 August 2017 02.50 BST:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/16/philippines-police-bloodiest-night-duterte-war-drugs>

Duterte admits he was wrong on 3-6 months drug war deadline

President Rodrigo Duterte admitted on Thursday he was wrong with his self-imposed three to six months deadline on ending the drug problem in the country.

“I feel so bad [about] all of these things. Kasi nalaman ko, paano ko makontrol in three to six months, ang mga generals na pulis nandiyan. Tapos ‘yung mga Bureau of Customs na inaasahan ko, p*****ina nasa droga. How will I succeed, e nasa droga,” Duterte said in a speech in Ozamis City.

“Alam ko na nagkamali ako. Nagkamali talaga ako,” he added.

During the campaign period, Duterte promised to end the drug problem in the Philippines within the first three to six months of his term. When the deadline lapsed, he asked for another six month extension.

“Give me another six months. That self-imposed time of three to six months, well, I did not realize how severe and how serious the problem of drug menace in this Republic until I became President,” he then said.

But Duterte again asked for an extension, and his deadly drug war would extend up to the last day of his term in 2022. **JE**

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* INQUIRER.net / 06:09 PM August 17, 2017:

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/923503/duterte-drug-war-deadline-drugs-war-on-drugs-campaign-extension#ixzz4q0SVyRCH>

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Duterte wants war on crime, drugs extended for 6 more months

DAVAO CITY, Philippines - "Give me another six months."

President Duterte on Sunday admitted that he could not stop crime and illegal drugs in three to six months.

"That self-imposed time of three to six months, well, I did not realize how severe and how serious the problem of drug menace in this Republic until I became President," he said.

The President made the admission during the presentation to the media of freed Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad in Davao City.

Since Duterte's assumption to office, over 700,000 had surrendered while over 3,000 drug suspects were killed in police anti-drug operation or by assassins of drug gangs.

"But the problem is, it was a headline, I can't kill them all," he said referring to the Inquirer headline on Saturday quoting his earlier statement in a military camp in Isabela.

"Even if I want it to, I cannot kill them all because the last report would be this thick," referring the third batch of public officials allegedly linked to illegal drug trade.

Duterte then asked for an extension to his "self-imposed" timeline.

"Just give me a little extension of maybe of another six months. Because I never have that idea of hundreds of thousands of people in the drug business. And what makes it worst is, they are now operated by people in government, especially those elected officials," he said.

Stopping crime and criminality in three to six months was Duterte's major campaign promise last May.

Duterte said the Philippines is plagued with the problems of drugs, crime and terrorism.

"We are [rotting] with so many problems—kidnapping in the south, terrorism drugs, which is really pulling us down and I can say we would need time to put things in order," he said.

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* INQUIRER.net / 08:59 PM September 18, 2016:

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/816443/duterte-asks-for-another-6-months-to-stop-crime-drugs#ixzz4q0T82Niu>

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Footnotes

[1] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ys2t34m9IaM>

[2] <http://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/154217-2016-chr-human-rights-duterte-drugs-war>

[3] <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/917250/duterte-threatens-to-abolish-chr>

[4] <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/919855/duterte-on-statement-to-abolish-chr-it-was-a-joke>

[5] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/25/mass-complaint-launched-against-philippines-president-duterte-at-icc>

[6] <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2015/11/27/1526317/duterte-if-i-win-better-put-more-funeral-parlors>

[7] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/30/rodrigo-duterte-vows-to-kill-3-million-drug-addicts-and-likens-himself-to-hitler>

[8] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/14/philippines-president-rodrigo-duterte-personally-killed-criminals>

[9] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/29/philippines-rodrigo-duterte-says--threw-suspect-from-helicopter>

[10] <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/may/24/trump-duterte-us-philippines-drugs-crackdown>

[11] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/08/philippines-president-us-australia-toned-down-human-rights-criticism>