

Australia, Philippines & Human Rights Abuses - Canberra should stop backing Duterte: Catholic Nun Patricia Fox

Wednesday 12 December 2018, by [AAP](#) (Date first published: 7 December 2018).

An Australian nun kicked out of the Philippines has called on Canberra to cease supporting the country's military which is accused of human rights breaches.

An Australian nun booted out of the Philippines has demanded Canberra cease its support of the country's military which she says is committing "massive human rights violations".

Catholic nun Patricia Fox was expelled from the Philippines a month ago but the 71-year-old remains committed to fighting human rights abuses there.

Sister Fox this week met with federal MPs from the human rights sub-committee in Canberra to tell them about the unlawful killings she saw during her 28 years as a missionary in the Philippines.

She's now demanding the Australian government reconsider its military partnership with Manila.

Australian Defence Force soldiers are training Filipino troops in urban warfare as part of Operation Augury.

"The military in the Philippines are massive human rights abusers and we are training them ... it's just supporting massive human rights violations," Sr Fox told AAP.

"We have to start taking responsibility. Are we going to continue propping up a government that is totally corrupt?"

The outspoken nun says that during her three decades in the southeast Asian country she became aware of murders, land confiscations and the jailing of protesters.

The nation's hard-line president, Rodrigo Duterte, is accused of sanctioning thousands of extra-judicial killings. He has created a culture of fear, Sr Fox said.

She's now on the Philippine Bureau of Immigration's blacklist along with four other Australians, meaning she can't return to the country while Mr Duterte remains in power.

"My body is here (in Australia) but my heart is still there," she said.

The Philippines president accused her of meddling in internal politics through her involvement in human rights campaigns.

Sr Fox was first detained in April and subsequently had her missionary visa downgraded to a temporary visitor's visa which expired on November 3. She flew into Melbourne the next day.

The nun says the support she received from locals helped her to stand up to the president and campaign to stay in the country.

"It seemed to be important that I didn't just allow him to tell me I had to go when there was no legal grounds for it," she said.

Australian Defence Minister Christopher Pyne has been contacted for comment.

Source AAP

P.S.

- "Aust should stop backing Duterte: Fox". SBS News:
<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/aust-should-stop-backing-duterte-fox?cid=news:socialshare:twitter&fbclid=IwAR3qSaOVRIUbTNGb7CK5aMRWcpqt-cmlov58niYELuzYPD5XtkJTQ8v6OzI>