

ICC Member States Told, 'Do not accept Duterte'

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*Human rights group Karapatan called on International Criminal Court (ICC) member states not to accept **former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte** who has been charged with crimes against humanity.*

Cristina Palabay, Karapatan secretary general, issued the appeal following Vice President Sara Duterte's statement claiming that the family has already found a country willing to host her father.

"Do not let yourselves be used by this fascist and his daughter if you call yourselves as rights-respecting governments," Palabay said during a press conference organized by Duterte Panagutin Europe, Sept. 22 in the Hague, the Netherlands.

Palabay said that signatories to the Rome Statute should refuse to take custody of Duterte.

"This is both a plea and a stark reminder. We will be watching you."

One of the counsels for the victims, **Krissy Conti**, reiterated their opposition to the request for interim release. Conti said that the Office of the Prosecutor has found no basis to agree to the temporary release. She said that there are no guarantees that "Duterte will appear in court, that he will not obstruct the proceedings and that he will not continue to commit crimes."

"He (Duterte) is a danger to the victims and to potential witnesses," Conti said, adding that the Dutertes continue to have influence.

Another lawyer, **Enzo Recto** of Bunyog, noted that Duterte supporters took to the streets yesterday and tried to instigate protests. Recto said that the incident showed Duterte's power and influence.

Recto condemned Duterte's lawyer's dilatory tactics.

"They know that the evidence is strong and they cannot get away with it. So all they do is delay [the proceedings]," Recto said in Filipino.

The ICC Pre-Trial Chamber 1 has postponed the confirmation of charges hearing which was originally scheduled on Sept. 23 to give time for the judges to decide on the request filed by Duterte's camp.

Protests to Continue

Filipinos and their supporters announced that they will continue with the protest despite the postponement of the confirmation of charges hearing.

“If the Duterte camp thinks that the people will be demoralized because of this postponement, they are wrong. The Filipino people demonstrated yesterday both here in Europe and in the Philippines our collective anger,” said **Gary Martinez**, Migrante Europe chairperson.

Kim Berry, chairperson of Anakbayan United Kingdom, said that Duterte is only “playing sick,” and that his lawyer’s claim that he is unfit to stand trial is but “pure hypocrisy.”

Filipinos and international groups expressed solidarity with the families of victims of extrajudicial killings.

“This trial happened because of the constant organizing of families and organizations supporting them,” Berry said.

For Sadia Khan of the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), “Repression in one country is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Khan underscored that across the region, the same tactics of supposed “counter-terrorist” laws, red-tagging of activists, silencing of journalists are used where women are disproportionately targeted.

“Solidarity gives protection to those at risk,” Khan said, adding that the case against Duterte is also a warning to other authoritarian leaders.

Drew Miller, secretary general of the International Coalition on Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP), said that the international community will continue to stand in solidarity with the victims.

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Featured image: Leaders of Duterte Panagutin hold a press conference in the Hague, the Netherlands, Sept. 22. (Source: Bulatlat)

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