

# Philippine Human Rights Act

One-Pager

## BLOODY SUNDAY

On March 7, 2021, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP) carried out a series of joint operations across Calabarzon. The operations led to the murder of [nine activists](#) and the arrest of six others.

The victims were members of progressive organizations that advocated around issues of labor, land and indigenous rights, environmental protections, and housing rights for the urban poor.

The Philippine government claims that it carried out the raids in Calabarzon to execute valid search warrants for weapons and that the killings only resulted from the victims resisting arrest. This claim has been met with extreme skepticism due to the government's [history of fabricating evidence](#) and ["red-tagging"](#) progressive groups and activists. Further suspicion was cast on the allegations of resisting arrest when family members of the victims [were prohibited by the PNP and AFP from collecting the victim's bodies](#).

Just two days before the events of Bloody Sunday, President Duterte urged his own security forces, and the public at large, to ["kill kill kill," communist rebels and disregard human rights](#). Duterte's order to directly ignore human rights came just days after the [Pentagon sent a list of proposed US military aid](#) it intends to provide the Duterte regime to modernize security forces.

Following the attacks in Calabarzon, [Duterte's spokesperson endorsed the killings of the activists](#) and security forces began to [surveil and harass human rights groups](#) that are investigating the killings.

## Responses to Bloody Sunday

- [The UN human rights office \(OHCHR\)](#) condemned the "simultaneous arbitrary killings of nine activists" and called for a "prompt, transparent, and effective" investigation.
- [Human Rights Watch](#) condemned the killings and urged the UN OHCHR to consider deploying a rapid response unit to investigate.
- [Philippines based church groups](#) condemned the attacks and other "tokhang operations" as "not only criminal, but an affront to the democratic rights of every Filipino."
- [The European Union](#) voiced concerns about the attack and reminded the Philippines government that both the EU and the Duterte administration "agreed on the need to acknowledge and protect human rights defenders."
- [The Armed Forces of the Philippines](#) attempted to distance themselves from the massacre by stating, "it was an operation spearheaded by the Philippine National Police...we are playing a supporting role and the Philippine National Police led that operation."
- [Dandy Miguel](#), a high profile labor organizer who had filed human rights complaints in response to the Bloody Sunday attacks with the Philippines Commission on Human Rights was murdered on March 28.
- On March 30, [security forces raided and arrested activists](#) who have been red-tagged by The National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) in an action that is eerily similar to the events of Bloody Sunday.

## Why We Need the PHRA

[The PHRA](#) would suspend all US security aid to the AFP and PNP until basic improvements to the human rights situation in the Philippines are demonstrated.

Suspending military aid to the PNP and AFP will assure that no more US training or weapons are used against the political targets of the Duterte regime.

Passage of the PHRA will ultimately signal that human rights are a true priority of US foreign policy and will not be sacrificed for the momentary favor of a regime.