



PHILIPPINES

Human Rights Council
39th Regular Session
Interactive Dialogue: Item 5
Assistant Secretary General for Human Rights on the
UN Secretary General's Report on Reprisals (A/HRC/39/41)
Salle XX, Palais des Nations
12 September 2018

SPEAKING TIME: 2 minutes

Thank you Mr. President,

I thank the ASG, Mr. Andrew Gilmour, for his presentation.

At the outset I would like to express my delegation's full support for the work of the ASG on addressing intimidation and reprisals by developing a system that deals with the problem more effectively, improving engagement on reprisals, and increasing cooperation with key players.

We wish to cite in particular the section of the report underlining ASG's efforts in dealing with Member States through "quiet diplomacy." This form of engagement builds confidence and is a clear way forward in dealing with sensitive issues.

However, my delegation objects to the sweeping allegations contained in the report on the Philippines. We regret that it fails to take account of the domestic political context, which should explain that the "human rights defenders" named therein are not being dealt with on account of their identity and work as human rights defenders or engagement with the United Nations.

Senator Leila de Lima is detained on account of charges related to her alleged involvement in the illegal drug trade while she was serving as Secretary of Justice. Our courts presume that Sen. de Lima is innocent until proven guilty. She is fully able to avail herself of all legal recourse provided by our laws and continues to function as a Senator and as a vocal critic of the government.

On a related matter, the inclusion of UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, in the terrorist list - along with over 600 other people - stems from her past association with political groups that the EU and US themselves have labeled as terrorists. Recently, the Manila Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 19 cleared the names of a few individuals as

“non-parties” in the petition of the Department of Justice, including Ms. Tauli-Corpuz. These have not in any way prevented Ms. Tauli from fulfilling her functions as a leader in the Philippine NGO community and as a Special Mandate Holder.

We underscore that the two personalities were not, in any way, subject to actions for their involvement in the promotion and protection of human rights. Or egangeemnt wit the UN

The Philippines is a democratic state that is firmly committed to ensure that fundamental freedoms are respected.

I thank you Mr. President.