

**Human Rights Watch statement****Item 6 - Adoption of the outcome of the UPR of the Philippines****20 September 2012**

Human Rights Watch welcomes the adoption of the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of the Philippines, which reflects recommendations that could enhance human rights education, labor and migrant workers' rights, and women's rights, among others.

We note that the Philippine government has committed to intensify its efforts to curb extrajudicial killings, torture and enforced disappearances as well as "mainstreaming" human rights.

We regret, however, that the Philippine government's expressed commitment to eliminate extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearance by members of the state security forces – as reflected in the first UPR -- has not resulted in the successful prosecution of perpetrators. While there has been a decrease in the number of cases since President Benigno S. Aquino III took office in 2010, no one has been convicted in any case of extrajudicial killing under his administration. Hundreds of cases from the past decade have for various reasons gone unprosecuted even as new killings targeting suspected leftist activists, journalists, environmentalists and tribal leaders are being committed.

We call on the Aquino administration to prosecute these cases to break the longstanding impunity in the country. Particularly important are the cases involving high-profile suspects, such as former Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, one of the accused in the 2006 kidnapping and alleged torture of two university activists, and former Palawan governor Joel Reyes, accused of masterminding the 2011 murder of journalist and environmentalist Gerry Ortega. Palparan and Reyes have so far eluded arrest.

A serious concern is the recent targeting of anti-mining activists, particularly tribal leaders. While the Aquino government has spoken out on the need to uphold the rights of marginalized Filipinos, including indigenous peoples, members and leaders of tribal communities have been attacked and killed with impunity. Cases that Human Rights Watch has documented in Mindanao, such as the murders of Italian priest and anti-mining advocate Father Fausto Tentorio, and Jimmy Liguyon, a tribal leader opposing the entry of big mining companies in San Fernando, Bukidnon, have not resulted in any arrests, let alone prosecutions. The suspects in the Liguyon case, members of a paramilitary group who are facing warrants, continue to harass tribal communities and Liguyon's family and relatives.

While the Philippines accepted the recommendation by the United States for the Philippine military to exercise full control over the paramilitary Citizen Armed Force Geographical Units (CAFGUs) and the police over Civilian Volunteer Organizations (CVOs), the government unfortunately rejected the recommendation by other countries to disband these forces, which over the years have perpetrated many serious abuses. The government's refusal or failure to take action against them is alarming, particularly in light of the president's announcement that these paramilitary forces would provide security for the country's expanding mining operations.

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