

Police General Oscar Albayalde
Chief, Philippine National Police
National Headquarters Building
Camp Gen Rafael Crame, Quezon City
1111 Philippines
Fax: +632 724 8749
Email: pnp.adm1n@gmail.com
Dear General Albayalde,

I am writing to express my concern over death threats received by prominent human rights defender in the Philippines, Cristina Palabay. Cristina is the secretary general of Karapatan, a coalition of several human rights groups and individuals.

On 6 May, Karapatan, along with women's rights group Gabriela and religious group Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, filed a petition to seek legal protection from threats to life, liberty, privacy and security. On 30 May, the Supreme Court ruled in favour of these groups and issued a writ of amparo and habeas data – protection and access to information, respectively, and named a Philippine National Police directorate as one of the respondents. The groups noted in their petition that they have been threatened, harassed, and intimidated after government authorities accused them of being “communist fronts.”

On 22 April, Cristina Palabay received a text message from an unidentified person sent to her personal number, warning her and several other human rights defenders that they are targeted to be killed this year. The threats were all the more alarming as they came just a few hours after another human rights defender, Bernardino Patigas, was gunned down in broad daylight in Escalante City, Negros Occidental province. The killing of Patigas and the threats against Palabay and other human rights defenders come amid what appears to be an increasingly deadlier campaign against human rights defenders and political activists.

I urge your office to act swiftly to promote and protect the rights of human rights defenders in the country. Specifically, I call on you to:

- Open a prompt, thorough, independent, impartial and effective investigation into the allegations of death threats against Cristina Palabay and other human rights defenders in the country, and bring those responsible to justice in fair trials;
- Put in place effective mechanisms to protect human rights defenders at risk in consultation with them, and ensure they are able to carry out their work without fear of reprisals; and
- Launch a thorough, independent, impartial and effective investigation into the allegations of killings of human rights defenders and bring all those responsible to justice in fair trials.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,