

His Excellency Ferdinand Marcos Jr.
President, Republic of the Philippines
Malacañang Palace, JP Laurel Street
Manila, Republic of the Philippines

Dear President Marcos,

I am writing to you concerning the continued and prolonged arbitrary detention of journalist Frenchie Mae Cumpio, community worker Marielle Domequil and human rights defender Alexander Philip “Chakoy” Abinguna. Part of the so-called “Tacloban 5” arrested in allegedly illegal raids of their offices in Tacloban City in February 2020, Alexander Philip “Chakoy” Abinguna, Frenchie Mae Cumpio and Marielle Domequil have been detained ever since. On 22 January, Frenchie Mae Cumpio and Marielle Domequil were convicted on trumped-up terrorism financing charges and sentenced from 12 to 18 years in prison but were acquitted in the charge of illegal possession of firearms and explosives. Pending their appeal of their conviction, the two applied for bail but this was denied on 16 February. There has not been any significant progress in the case against Alexander Philip “Chakoy” Abinguna concerning charges of illegal possession of firearms and explosives.

Six years in arbitrary detention is a travesty of justice, but the “Tacloban 5” should not have been jailed in the first place. There were allegations of irregularities during the 2020 police raids that resulted in their arrest, including the absence of witnesses when their rooms were searched and the planting of evidence such as firearms and explosives against them. There have not been any effective investigations into these allegations that I am aware of.

Moreover, in nullifying the forfeiture case against Frenchie Mae Cumpio and Marielle Domequil in November 2025, the Philippine Court of Appeals said there is insufficient evidence that they are members of the armed group New People’s Army, as the police had alleged as part of their dangerous “red-tagging” practice. The court even described the case as a “hasty labelling of human rights advocates as terrorists”.

I therefore urge you, as the President of the Philippines, and your government to:

- ***End the persecution of the “Tacloban 5” by immediately dropping the charges against the Tacloban 5 and ensuring that Abinguna, Cumpio and Domequil are immediately and unconditionally released***
- ***End the dangerous and at times deadly practice of “red-tagging” and ensure a safe and enabling environment for journalists, activists, and humanitarian and human rights workers to carry out their important work without fear of harassment, intimidation and criminalization.***

Yours sincerely,