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Before: Judge Joanna Korner, Presiding Judge
Judge Keebong Paek
Judge Nicolas Guillou

SITUATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

IN THE CASE OF THE PROSECUTOR v. RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE

Public

**Public Redacted Version of “Victims’ Trial Brief”
(No. ICC-01/21-01/25-515-Conf)**

Source: Common Legal Representatives of Victims

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“At the precinct, he was repeatedly coerced into confessing a crime he was accused of. “If you don’t admit, your life will be the price”, they threatened him. When he refused to confess, he was beaten with a gun and electrocuted. On the night of [REDACTED] 2018, between 9 and 10, I received a phone call from my [REDACTED] urging me to go in a certain location in Manila.

What I saw was a nightmare. My [REDACTED] had been discarded like an animal, his lifeless body lying on the boulevard, abandoned like a fish by the roadside. I rushed to the scene but I was blocked by the police. I was not even allowed to touch or embrace my [REDACTED] body. Even in death my [REDACTED] was not treated with dignity. It was like they just threw my [REDACTED] out like a pig. I finally found him at the funeral home where I had to pay to recover the body. I had nothing. I was bargaining as if I were buying fish. In the end, I paid approximately 45,000 PHP pesos to take my [REDACTED] body for burial. I wonder: Will justice ever be served?”

-Victim a/50002/25

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with the instruction of Trial Chamber III (the “Chamber”),¹ the Common Legal Representatives of Victims (the “CLRV”), submit their Trial Brief on behalf of the 539 victims participating in the case.

2. The quote opening this Brief captures the profound sentiment of the participating victims at the eve of the trial. Their participation gives human meaning to the crimes before the Court and brings into these proceedings the voices of those who have borne the consequences of the alleged crimes. Their accounts speak not only to the devastating loss of their loved ones, but also to the humiliation, uncertainty, and deep suffering that accompanied and followed those deaths. In confronting the loss of those closest to them - at times without being permitted even to touch, embrace, or recover their remains - they were left to grapple with fundamental questions: what happened to their loved ones, why were they killed, and who bears responsibility for their deaths?

3. These questions lie at the heart of the victims’ participation in these proceedings and of their legitimate interest in the establishment of the truth and the administration

¹ See the “Directions on the conduct of proceedings” (Trial Chamber III), [No. ICC-01/21-01/25-471](#), 19 June 2026, para. 17.

of justice. The victims and their families have an interest in the circumstances of these deaths being properly established, the responsibility of the accused determined in accordance with the law, and the dignity of those who were lost acknowledged and respected. Their participation thus serves as a reminder that these proceedings concern not only the determination of individual criminal responsibility, but also the victims whose lives have been irrevocably affected by the crimes alleged before the Court. At trial, their voices therefore underscore the enduring importance of truth, accountability, and justice.

4. Against this background, this Brief addresses the personal interests, views and concerns of the participating victims in the context of the present proceedings. It proceeds in parts. First, it presents the geographical, cultural and political context relevant to the events. Second, it places the victims' experiences within the relevant factual and contextual circumstances of the case and addresses the facts pertinent to the charges, insofar as they bear upon the victims' interests and the harm they suffered. Third, it sets out the profile of the participating victims, with particular attention to the children among them, how they experienced or were affected by the alleged crimes, and what they hope to see from these proceedings. Finally, the Brief examines the breadth and nature of the victimisation arising from the alleged crimes, including its different forms and consequences of harm on the participating victims and their families. In doing so, the Brief seeks to ensure that the victims' experiences, views and concerns are properly reflected in the record before the Chamber and that the full scope of their harm receives due consideration.

II. CONFIDENTIALITY

5. The present submission is filed confidential because it refers to confidential information. A public redacted version will be filed in due course.

III. GEOGRAPHICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

6. This section illustrates the geographical and cultural context of the case, situating the alleged events within the communities, traditions, and social dynamics of the areas concerned.

1. The Philippines

7. The Philippines is an archipelago in Southeast Asia composed of 7,641 islands grouped into Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao with a population exceeding 117 million in 2026, making it one of the most populous countries in Southeast Asia.²

8. Filipinos come from diverse language and ethno-linguistic groups, alongside indigenous communities across different parts of the archipelago.³ Being an archipelago, regional and linguistic identities play an important role in social and political life. Scholars have noted that loyalty to one's region or language group, often referred to as "*regionalism*" has influenced voting patterns in national elections, including the 2016 presidential election won by Mr Duterte. Regional and linguistic identities have also been factors influencing support for certain policy initiatives associated with Mr Duterte, including his anti-drug campaign.

9. A common language among the different Filipino language groups was facilitated by the "*adoption of the Tagalog as the basis of the national language of the Philippines*".⁴ Filipino - based on the Tagalog language spoken in Manila and its

² See Worldometer, Philippines Population (Live), September 2026, available on [Philippines Population \(2026\) - Worldometer](#).

³ See IVUSHKINA (T.) (2024) [Linguistic Diversity in the Philippines](#), Linguistics & Polyglot Studies, 10(3), pp. 111-121; p 113.

⁴ See the Executive Order No. 134, December 13, 1937, Proclaiming the National Language of the Philippines Based on the "Tagalog" Language.

surrounding provinces - is the national language.⁵ The other major language groups are Cebuano/Bisaya, Ilocano, Hiligaynon, and Bicolano. Cebuano/Bisaya is spoken in Eastern Visayas and Mindanao, including Mr Duterte's city of Davao. The Cebuano/Bisaya speaking regions are known bailiwicks of support for Mr Duterte and his family.

10. The Philippines has experienced almost four hundred years of colonial rule under Spain and the United States of America.⁶ Scholars have observed that this historical experience contributed to social norms emphasizing respect for authority, hierarchy, and official titles.⁷ In contemporary Filipino society, incumbent and former government officials are commonly addressed by reference to the title of their last government post.

11. The 1987 Philippine Constitution was ratified after the 1986 Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) People Power Revolution,⁸ which resulted in the removal of then President Ferdinand E. Marcos Sr. It provided for stronger checks and balances amongst the Legislative, Executive and Judicial Departments. Under the 1987 Constitution, "[t]he executive power shall be vested in the President of the Philippines".⁹ Presidential pronouncements, particularly when repeated and consistent, may serve as important indicators of government policy and priorities. In the Filipino cultural context, where significant respect is traditionally accorded to persons in government positions, especially the President as the Head of State and the Head of the Executive Department,¹⁰ statements made by the President carry considerable political and

⁵ Sec. 6, Article XIV, [Philippine Constitution](#).

⁶ See e.g., [Country Studies: Philippines](#): Library of the US Congress.

⁷ See MONTIEL (C.J.) and MACAPAGAL (E. J.), *Political Psychology in the Philippines*, Philippine Journal of Psychology, [Vol 33 No. 2 \(2000\). 1-32](#). See also, SCOTT (W.H.), [Barangay Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society](#), Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1994, pp. 127-145.

⁸ The 22-25 February 1986 EDSA People Power Revolution was a peaceful mass uprising in the Philippines that led to the end of Ferdinand Marcos Sr.'s 20-year rule and the restoration of democratic government. The uprising is called "People Power" because large numbers of civilians gathered peacefully around military installations and along EDSA in Manila, helping prevent a violent confrontation between opposing military forces.

⁹ Sec. 1, Article VII, [Philippine Constitution](#).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

practical influence within government institutions and among segments of the population.

12. To prevent the repeat of the gross human rights violations under the Marcos martial law period, the 1987 Constitution provides for a stronger Bill of Rights, a separate article on *“Social Justice and Human Rights”*,¹¹ and a stronger constitutional framework centred on human dignity and the rule of law.

13. Section 1 of Article I of the 1987 Constitution declares that “[n]o person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor shall any person be denied the equal protection of the laws”. The Constitution banned the death penalty, *“unless, for compelling reasons involving heinous crimes, the Congress hereafter provides for it”*.¹² In 2006, the Philippine Congress prohibited the *“imposition of the penalty of death”*.¹³ A punitive Republic Act No. 9165, the *“Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002”* remains in place and has not been revised as recommended in a Drug Policy and Law Reform Summit in 2024.¹⁴

14. In the Philippines, income inequality remains high, with the top 1% of earners capturing 17% of the national income, while the bottom 50% earns only 14%. This inequality is sustained by *“[u]nequal opportunities, lack of access to tertiary education and a scarcity of skills, coupled with inequality in returns to college education, gendered social norms and childcare, and spatial gaps”*.¹⁵ Between 2016 and 2019, informal employment constituted a substantial portion of total employment - about three quarters of all jobs - despite continued economic growth. Concerns regarding underemployment, job security, lack of formal contracts and limited access to social protection remained

¹¹ Article XIII, [Philippine Constitution](#).

¹² Sec. 19(1), Article III, [Philippine Constitution](#).

¹³ See [Republic Act No. 9346](#), *“An act prohibiting the imposition of death penalty in the Philippines,”* 24 June 2006.

¹⁴ See UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asian and the Pacific, *Philippines embarks on drug policy reform: multi-stakeholder summit launched in Manila*, 16 April 2024, available at <https://www.unodc.org/roseap/en/philippines/2024/04/drug-policy-summit/story.html>.

¹⁵ See World Bank Group, [Overcoming Poverty and Inequality in the Philippines: Past, Present, and Prospects for the Future](#), 2022.

serious challenges. Studies have identified the persistence of low-quality employment and wage stagnation as factors affecting the economic well-being of many Filipino workers.¹⁶

15. During the same period and until recently, daily minimum wages in many regions of the Philippines lagged far below the estimated family living wage, creating a wide and growing gap for households trying to meet basic needs. Current minimum wages across the Philippines fall short of the estimated living wage by non-government institutions and cover only a fraction of what a family really needs for daily essentials.¹⁷ During July 2016, the daily minimum wage in Metro Manila was 491 Philippine Pesos (PHP)¹⁸ *per day* - equivalent to approximately 8 Euros *per day*. By comparison, the estimated daily family living wage for a family of five was 900 PHP¹⁹ *per day* or about 14.66 Euros *per day*.

16. Lower income families frequently reside in densely populated urban areas and informal settlements due to high land costs and limited access to affordable housing.²⁰ More than half of all informal settlements are located in Quezon City, Manila City, and Davao City.²¹ According to available data, the highest incidence of makeshift housing made from tarpaulin and other make-shift material are most prevalent in Manila, Quezon City, Tacloban, Davao and Cebu.²² According to data published by the Philippine Statistics Authority a significant proportion of Filipino households experience multiple and overlapping forms of deprivation extending beyond low income, including inadequate housing, poor sanitation, limited access to essential

¹⁶ See World Bank Group, RUTKOWSKI (J. J.), [Employment and Poverty in the Philippines](#), Philippine Social Protection Note, December 2015, No. 9.

¹⁷ See Ibon Foundation, [Workers left behind in growing economy under Duterte administration](#), 29 April 2019.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ See Asian Development Bank, BERSE (K.), [Advancing Inclusive and Resilient Urban Development Targeted at the Urban Poor Philippines: Urbanization Trends, Hazard Exposure and Sectoral Realities: A Macro View of Philippine Cities \(Supplementary Report\)](#), February 2022.

²¹ *Ibid.*, para. 108.

²² *Ibid.*, paras. 110-112.

services, such as clean water, sanitation and healthcare.²³ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, (the “OECD”) found 66.6% of Filipinos pursuing informal employment, with only 33.4% of the population of working age employed in the formal sector.²⁴ At the same time, as of 2024, almost a fourth of Filipinos were earning less than the minimum wage on a national average with 40% of Filipinos outside the capital region earning less than the minimum wage.²⁵ A total of 12.8% of Filipinos were classified as being “*Multidimensionally Poor*” in 2024,²⁶ whereas more than 52% of Filipinos self-classified as poor, with 42% declaring themselves “*food poor*” in March 2026, with the Visayas demonstrably below the national average.²⁷ The primary program for social protection in the Philippines is the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (the “4Ps”). Started in the late 2000s, 4Ps now has more than four million household-beneficiaries.²⁸ The program seeks to improve health, nutrition, and education outcomes.²⁹

17. The *barangay* is the basic political unit,³⁰ the basic organization for justice and serves as the basic structure to resolve issues and conflicts. *Barangays* may be declared urban even if they are part of a municipality as long as they meet the constitutional criteria.³¹

²³ See the Philippine Statistics Authority, [Poverty Statistics, 12.8% of Filipinos are Multidimensionally Poor in 2024](#), 27 August 2026.

²⁴ See the OECD, [Economic Surveys: Philippines 2026](#), Volume 2026/6, February 2026, p. 81.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

²⁶ See the Philippine Statistics Authority, [12.8% of Filipinos are Multidimensionally Poor in 2024](#), 27 August 2026.

²⁷ See the SWS, [First Quarter 2026 Social Weather Survey \(24-31 March 2026\) National Survey](#), 7 May 2026.

²⁸ See Asian Development Bank, BERSE (K.), [Advancing Inclusive and Resilient Urban Development Targeted at the Urban Poor Philippines: Urbanization Trends, Hazard Exposure and Sectoral Realities: A Macro View of Philippine Cities \(Supplementary Report\)](#), February 2022, para. 53.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 54.

³⁰ See Sec. 1, Article X, [Philippine Constitution](#). See also, Britannica online: [Philippines – Culture](#)

³¹ Asian Development Bank, BERSE (K.), [Advancing Inclusive and Resilient Urban Development Targeted at the Urban Poor Philippines: Urbanization Trends, Hazard Exposure and Sectoral Realities: A Macro View of Philippine Cities \(Supplementary Report\)](#), February 2022, para. 11.

2. Filipino People

18. Before colonization, and even before the modern concept of human rights became part of the Filipino consciousness, early Filipinos were guided by the concept of *kapwa* - the recognition of others not as outsiders, but as an extension of the self and as part of a shared identity. This sense of interconnectedness was reflected in *bayanihan*, the spirit of mutual assistance and collective responsibility within communities. Inter-ethnic conflicts were often addressed through peace pacts, kinship arrangements, and community agreements rather than through formal courts. These practices reflected a strong regard for fellow members of the community, as well as respect for people from other communities and for the natural environment. Life was organized around communities in which cooperation, reciprocity, and responsibility toward others were essential to social cohesion. The concept of “*kapwa*” (“shared identity”) - described as “*at the heart of the structure of Filipino values*” – remains the *core value* of Filipino social psychology.³² The practical expression of this value is “*pakikipagkapwa-tao*” which refers to “treating the other person as *kapwa* or fellow human being”.³³ There are two categories of *kapwa*: the “*ibang-tao*” (“outsider”) and the “*hindi-ibang-tao*” (“one-of-us”).³⁴ The distinction reflects varying degrees of social closeness and familiarity that may influence interpersonal interactions and expectations within social relationships.³⁵

19. The Filipino struggle for justice against foreign domination and, later, against dictatorship further demonstrated a deeply rooted concern for human dignity, rights, justice, and the rule of law. During the Marcos dictatorship, solidarity with those whose rights had been violated and collective efforts to seek accountability were

³² Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino psychology): A legacy of Virgilio G. Enriquez, Rogelio Pe-Pua and Elizabeth Protacio-Marcelino, *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* (2000) 3:49-71, at 56. Sikolohiyang Pilipino is an indigenous psychology framework based on the actual experiences, culture, and language of Filipinos.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

expressed by various sectors of Philippine society. These forces ultimately contributed to the mass mobilization that led to the ouster of Ferdinand Marcos in 1986.

20. More recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the compassion, dedication, and sacrifice of Filipino health workers and caregivers received widespread recognition, both in the Philippines and internationally. Their work reflected a broader cultural tradition of caring for others and accepting responsibility for the well-being of the wider community.

21. Throughout the country's history, Filipinos have carried with them values of *kapwa*, care, shared humanity, mutual support, and social responsibility - values that have continued to be expressed not only by those living in the Philippines, but also by Filipinos working, living, and contributing to communities around the world. Today, however, some of these long-held values appear to stand at a crossroads. They are being challenged, reinterpreted, or, in some cases, distorted and questioned by significant segments of society. The resulting tensions have contributed to deepening divisions among Filipinos and raise important questions about how the principles of shared humanity, solidarity, dignity, and social responsibility can be preserved and renewed in the face of profound social and political change.

22. The Philippine State *"recognizes the sanctity of family life and shall protect and strengthen the family as a basic autonomous social institution"*.³⁶ The Filipino family shapes identity, values and responsibilities of individuals. Traditionally, the husband/father is the socially expected breadwinner, while the wife/mother is the homemaker, which is reflected in only 35% of married women in employment.³⁷ Especially within poorer families, responsibilities of childcare and caring for sick relatives present greater barriers to women taking up employment.³⁸ But in upper middle income to high

³⁶ See Sec. 12, Article II, [Philippine Constitution](#).

³⁷ See the World Bank, BELGHITH (N. B. H.) and FERNANDEZ (F. C.), [Policy Brief: Women, Childcare and Social Norms in the Philippines](#), December 2021.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

income households, this tradition has changed gradually with women having greater access to education and employment opportunities in the Philippines or abroad.

23. Extended families with multiple generations living together are common, especially in low-income communities. In cases where nuclear families live in separate physical homes, the family maintains daily mutual support. Higher income families tend to have fewer members and more working adults compared to dependents, while lower income families have more members, higher dependency ratios, with fewer working adults supporting more children and elderly relatives.³⁹ The lower income families spend most of their income in basic survival needs such as food, electricity and public transport while the higher income families spend a smaller share of their money on basic needs and have extra money to save, invest, travel and pay for private healthcare and higher education. The Filipino family serves as a system of social support. Grandparents help in caring for grandchildren while young, while the adult working children would later provide the social support for parents and elderly grandparents and relatives.

24. The top elites in Philippine society are a small group of wealthy political families and business tycoons that control the nation's wealth and key industries.⁴⁰ The laws passed and/or implementation of laws often bend to those with political and economic power and the patronage networks that keep them high in government and society. The lower income groups rely heavily on family and informal community networks to address economic and social difficulties following the value of "*hindi ibang tao*" ("one of us"). Social concepts such as "*utang na loob*" ("debt of gratitude") and reliance on local patrons work alongside formal government safety nets. They trust local community solutions and rarely resort to the official legal system. The middle class serves as the backbone of society being the primary workforce as professional and tax base for the country. Members of this group often place importance on stable

³⁹ See e.g. RAMOS (T. P.), BALLESTEROS (M. M.), and ANCHETA (J. A.), [*Determinants of the Formation of Extended and Multifamily Households in the Philippines*](#), Philippine Journal of Development, Volume 50 (2026), No. 1, 74-103, p. 75.

⁴⁰ See e.g., [Country Studies: Philippines](#): Library of the US Congress.

employment, legal certainty and predictable governance to protect their jobs and property. They face high living costs and heavy taxes, yet some often feel left out of government aid while watching the powerful bypass the rules easily for their family, friends and big business.

25. Filipinos are predominantly Christian. According to the 2020 Census of Population and Housing, Roman Catholics constituted the largest religious group, accounting for 78.8% of the household population. Other Christian denominations were also represented. Muslims accounted for 6.4%, with a substantial concentration in Mindanao.⁴¹ Religious beliefs and values play an important role in the lives of many Filipinos, although the degree of religious observance and the influence of religious teachings vary among individuals and communities. Most Filipinos consider the Ten Commandments as their guide in life.

IV. POLITICAL CONTEXT

26. This section illustrates the political context of the case, situating the alleged events within the broader governance structures, policies, and political developments relevant to the charges.

27. During the charged period, Mr Duterte was Vice Mayor of Davao City from 1 November 2011 to 30 June 2013 and Mayor of Davao City from 30 June 2013 to 30 June 2016.⁴² Davao City is the gateway to Mindanao, and hosts a major port and an international airport. It is the Philippines' largest city in terms of geographic size.⁴³ It

⁴¹ See the Philippine Statistics Authority, "[Religious Affiliation in the Philippines \(2020 Census of Population and Housing\)](#)", 22 February 2023, paras. 1 and 6.

⁴² See the "Decision on the confirmation of charges against Mr Rodrigo Roa Duterte" (Pre-Trial Chamber I), [No. ICC-01/21-01/25-417-Conf](#), 23 April 2026, p. 41. A public redacted version [No. ICC-01/21-01/25-417-Red](#), was filed the same day (the "Confirmation Decision").

⁴³ With a total land area of 2,444 square kilometres. See *The Official Website of the City Government of Davao* available at <https://davaocity.gov.ph/know-davao-city/socio-economic-profile/>.

is the capital city of the Davao region, but is also considered the economic capital of Mindanao.⁴⁴

28. Poverty and conflict have long been closely intertwined in the Philippines' southernmost island group Mindanao. The region has experienced a complex history of marginalization, massive land dispossession, armed rebellion, and local clan conflicts alongside persistent socioeconomic deprivation. These historical and structural conditions have contributed to the continuing vulnerability of communities in parts of Mindanao. In the 1970s and 1980s, Davao City was known to be the "*murder capital*" of the Philippines.⁴⁵ At the time, the city experienced significant violence arising from clashes involving communist insurgents, military forces, and criminal gangs, made worse by weak governance.

1. Mr Duterte's rise to power

29. Mr Duterte served as mayor of Davao City for approximately twenty-two years and four months before assuming the Philippine Presidency on 30 June 2016.⁴⁶ He is the son of Vicente Duterte, a lawyer and one-time governor of the then-province of Davao from 1958 until 1965, and Soledad Duterte, a teacher, businesswoman, and influential civic leader in Davao.⁴⁷ Following the ouster of Ferdinand Marcos Sr. in the February 1986 EDSA People Power Revolution, President Corazon Aquino reorganized local governments and appointed Mr Duterte as Officer-in-Charge ("OIC") Vice Mayor of Davao City. At the time, he was serving as a city prosecutor.

⁴⁴ See ALAMA (R.), *Economic managers look to Davao's crucial role in Mindanao, PH growth*, on the Philippine Information Agency Website, 26 August 2026, available at: <https://pia.gov.ph/news/economic-managers-look-to-davaos-crucial-role-in-mindanao-ph-growth/>.

⁴⁵ See e.g. BRANIGIN (W.), *Davao known as Philippines murder capital*, Washington Post, 7 August 1985, available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1985/08/08/davao-known-as-philippines-murder-capital/ce938055-0f5d-451c-9420-c2da95277dad/>.

⁴⁶ See Vera Files, *How long did Duterte serve as Davao City Mayor?*, 10 December 2016, available at: <https://verafiles.org/articles/vera-files-fact-check-how-long-did-duterte-serve-davao-city>.

⁴⁷ See GMA NEWS ONLINE, *Duterte's mom as the brave 'lola' who fought Marcos rule in Davao City*, 24 February 2017, available at: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/regions/600887/duterte-s-mom-as-the-brave-lola-who-fought-marcos-rule-in-davao-city/story/>.

He subsequently ran for Mayor and won the 1988 election. He was re-elected in 1992 and 1995.

30. In 1998, upon reaching the elective local official's constitutional limit of three consecutive terms,⁴⁸ Mr Duterte stood for and won a seat in the House of Representative, representing Davao City. After completing his congressional term in 2001, he was again elected Mayor of Davao City in 2001, 2004 and 2007. In 2010, having reached the term limit again, he ran for - and was elected - Vice Mayor, while his daughter, Sara Duterte, was elected as Mayor. He returned as Mayor in 2013, with his son, Paolo Duterte, serving as Vice Mayor.⁴⁹ Thus, Mr Duterte's political career was closely intertwined with the development of a broader Duterte family presence in Davao City. His political record as Mayor - particularly his emphasis on strict law enforcement and his informal and decisive style of governance - subsequently became an important part of his national political appeal.

31. Mr Duterte campaigned for the presidency in 2016 on a platform that prominently included the eradication of illegal drugs and criminal activity, including a pledge to accomplish this within six months.⁵⁰ He won the May 2016 presidential election with 16,601,997 votes,⁵¹ the largest plurality in the field. On 30 June 2016, he was inaugurated as President, becoming the first sitting mayor to ascend directly to the presidency. A nationwide Pulse Asia survey conducted from 2 to 8 July 2016 subsequently recorded a 91% "*big trust*" rating for Mr Duterte.⁵²

⁴⁸ See Sec. 8, Article X, [Philippine Constitution](#).

⁴⁹ See RAY (M.), *Rodrigo Duterte President of the Philippines*, 28 August 2026, in Britannica, available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Rodrigo-Duterte>.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ See CERDA (J.), *Duterte, Robredo win in final, official tally*, in PhilStar Global, 27 May 2026, available at: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/05/27/1587569/duterte-robredo-win-final-official-tally>.

⁵² See PulseAsia Research Inc., *July 2016 Nationwide Survey on the Trust Ratings of the Top 3 Philippine Government Officials and Filipinos' Expectations of the New Administration*, 20 July 2016, available at: <https://pulseasia.ph/july-2016-nationwide-survey-on-the-trust-ratings-of-the-top-3-philippine-government-officials-and-filipinos-expectations-of-the-new-administration/>.

2. The Duterte Political Dynasty in Davao City

32. The Duterte family's political presence in Davao predates Mr Duterte's mayoralty. Vicente Duterte established the family's political roots in the region, serving as Governor of Davao from 1958 to 1965 and subsequently as Secretary of General Services under President Ferdinand Marcos Sr. After Vicente's death in 1968, Soledad Duterte became an influential figure in Davao through her civic activities and business interests.⁵³

33. Mr Duterte entered public service as a prosecutor in Davao City in 1977. He remained in the Davao City Prosecution Office until 1986, rising to the position of second assistant city prosecutor. His subsequent appointment as OIC Vice Mayor in 1986 provided the institutional entry point for his political career and preceded his election as Mayor in 1988.⁵⁴ As prosecutor, Mr Duterte admitted that he used underhanded ways in pursuing cases. He said: "[w]e planted evidence. We arrested persons but we released them, [then] telling him that it was this person who squealed on him. And then when he goes out for the killing, then we said that it was this fellow who really did it, who did you in".⁵⁵

34. The Duterte family's political presence subsequently expanded beyond Rodrigo Duterte. In 2007, his daughter Sara Duterte was elected Vice Mayor alongside him, while his son Paolo Duterte became a barangay chairman and subsequently entered the Davao City Council. In 2010, Mr Duterte and Sara Duterte exchanged positions, with Rodrigo serving as Vice Mayor while Sara served as Mayor. In 2013, Mr Duterte returned as Mayor, with Paolo Duterte as Vice Mayor. From 2007 onward, members

⁵³ See ARGUILLAS (C. O.), *Special Report: The Duterte Dynasty in 2025: expansion or collapse?*, MindaNews, 16 October 2024, available at: <https://mindanews.com/special-reports/2024/10/special-report-the-duterte-dynasty-in-2025-expansion-or-collapse/>.

⁵⁴ See PARREÑO (E. G.), *Beyond Will & Power: A Biography of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte*, Optima Typographics, 2019.

⁵⁵ See the Video of Mr Duterte's press conference, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte - Press Conference at DPWH Panacan Depot, Davao City, 21 August 2016, RTVMalacanang, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5WbqN-LR8>. See also PASION (P.), *As prosecutor, Duterte says they 'planted evidence'*, on Philippine News, 21 August 2016, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/philippines/143739-duterte-prosecutor-planted-evidence/>.

of the Duterte family therefore occupied the principal executive offices of Davao City across successive electoral cycles, with temporary changes resulting from statutory term limits and the resignation of Paolo Duterte in 2017.

35. The Duterte family's political presence in Davao continued into the 2025 local elections. Mr Duterte was elected Mayor of Davao City but did not assume the office; his son Sebastian Duterte subsequently became Mayor in January 2026. The Vice Mayor is Rodrigo Duterte II, the son of Paolo Duterte. As a result, the Duterte family's political involvement spans several generations, from Vicente Duterte's tenure as Governor of Davao in the late 1950s and early 1960s, through Mr Duterte's long tenure as Mayor and subsequent presidency, to the continued political careers of his children and grandchildren. The family's presence has extended from local government in Davao City to the national executive and legislative branches. Currently, three members of the Duterte family serve in the House of Representatives. In total, seven family members currently hold public office. The Duterte political family has also been described as an "*obese*" dynasty,⁵⁶ a term used to characterize the breadth of the family's representation across elected public offices.

3. Mr Duterte Allies in Philippine politics

36. The rise of the Duterte to political power was supported by alliances with established political families, national political figures, and loyal supporters. Philippine politics has often been characterized by fluid, personality-driven alliances rather than stable ideological parties. Mr Duterte's political career reflected this pattern, as he developed political relationships extending from Davao City to the national government. He maintained his political influence through strategic coalitions with trusted law-enforcement officials, legislative leaders, and influential political families.

⁵⁶ See MENDOZA(R. U.), JAMINOLA (L.) and YAP (J.), *From Fat to Obese: Political Dynasties after the 2019 Midterm Elections* (September 1, 2019), Ateneo School of Government Working Paper Series, September 2019, 19-013, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3449201>.

37. Mr Duterte's primary inner circle consisted of executive aides and key appointees who subsequently transitioned into legislative roles following his public endorsement. Senator Christopher "*Bong*" Go, his former personal assistant, served as a key liaison between the administration and the Congress. Similarly, Senator Ronald "*Bato*" dela Rosa, former Chief of the Philippine National Police (the "PNP"), became a prominent legislative defender of the administration's law-enforcement operations and anti-drug policies.

38. To secure legislative majorities, Mr Duterte forged tactical alliances with congressional leaders and major political dynasties. Former House Speakers Pantaleon Alvarez and Alan Peter Cayetano played important roles in consolidating legislative support within the House of Representatives. Crucially, the Duterte and Marcos families entered into a coalition agreement - known as the "*UniTeam*" electoral alliance - which successfully secured the election of Ferdinand Marcos Jr as President and Sara Duterte as Vice President in 2022.⁵⁷ Philippine political alliances, however, have historically been transactional and subject to dissolution. Following the breakdown of the *UniTeam* alliance, the governing coalition fragmented, giving rise to open political rivalries and legislative disputes. Several former coalition partners subsequently realigned themselves with the Marcos Jr administration, while core Duterte loyalists faced legal challenges, legislative inquiries, and political isolation.⁵⁸

39. In 1988, Duterte's campaign for mayor against his superior, the anti-Marcos candidate Respicio, received support by his uncle Almendras, former representative Manuel Garcia and former mayor Elias Lopez, and numerous other traditional pro-Marcos politicians. Almendras was a friend of Ferdinand Marcos Sr, with whom he had served as senator during the 1959-1965 congressional term.⁵⁹ Mr Duterte ran under

⁵⁷ See Politiko, Di Man Lang Umabot ng 2025! TIMELINE: *The Rise AND Fall of Marcos-Duterte Uniteam*, 19 June 2024, available at: <https://politiko.com.ph/2024/06/19/di-man-lang-umabot-ng-2025-timeline-the-rise-and-fall-of-marcos-duterte-uniteam/daily-feed/>.

⁵⁸ See Democratic Erosion Consortium, *Uniteam Division: Marco-Duterte Fallout and Its Democratic Ramifications*, 20 June 2024.

⁵⁹ See REYES (M. P. P.), *The Duterte-Marcos Connection*, on Marcos Regime Research, 29 September 2019, available at: <https://diktadura.upd.edu.ph/2022/09/18/the-duterte-marcos-connection/>.

Partido Demokratiko ng Pilipino-Laban (PDP-Laban). During the 1992 presidential elections, Duterte supported Eduardo Cojuangco of the Nacionalista Party, a Marcos ally who was also a relative of former president Corazon Aquino. Cojuangco was defeated by Fidel Ramos, the administration candidate. In the 1998 presidential elections, Duterte supported Joseph Estrada, who was also backed by Cojuangco. Estrada won but was removed from the presidency three years later amid allegations of corruption. His vice-president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, succeeded him and subsequently won the next presidential elections. In 2002, she brought Mr Duterte into the national political arena by appointing him as a presidential adviser on anti-crime efforts.⁶⁰

40. In the 2010 presidential elections, Duterte supported Benigno Aquino III and his running-mate Manuel Roxas III, citing the influence of Aquino's mother.⁶¹ Mr Duterte himself ran for vice-mayor under the Liberal party that year, having become the party's chairman in Davao City the year before.⁶² His daughter, Sara Duterte, ran for mayor under PDP-Laban. In 2015, Mr Duterte returned to the party PDP-Laban.⁶³ By that time, the party leadership was mainly from Mindanao, and had focused on securing Mr Duterte's candidacy for the presidency. At the deadline for the filing of candidacies in October 2015, the party's presidential candidate was Martin Diño, who was widely regarded as a placeholder or nuisance candidate.⁶⁴ On the deadline for the substitution of candidates, PDP-Laban formally installed Mr Duterte as its presidential candidate, with then-Senator Alan Peter Cayetano, as his running

⁶⁰ See Philstar Global, *Duterte heads task force vs drugs, kidnaps*, 5 July 2002, available at: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2002/07/05/167216/duterte-heads-task-force-vs-drugs-kidnaps>.

⁶¹ See Philstar Global, *Duterte throws support behind Noynoy, Mar*, 12 April 2010, available at: <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2010/04/12/565299/duterte-throws-support-behind-noynoy-mar>.

⁶² See UDDIN (G. S.), *Why Duterte endorses Aquino*, 18 April 2010, on Davaotoday.com, available at <https://davaotoday.com/davao-city/why-duterte-endorses-aquino/>. See also, ESPEJO (E. G.), *Could Duterte be the Liberal Party's wild card bet?*, 18 March 2015, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/philippines/87197-duterte-lp-wild-card-candidate-2016/>.

⁶³ See PATERNO (R. E. II), *Duterte 're-enters' PDP-Laban amid 2016 prospects*, 21 February 2015, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/philippines/84620-rodrido-duterte-pdp-laban/>.

⁶⁴ See RANADA (P.), *PDP-Laban fields presidential candidate*, 16 October 2015, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/philippines/elections/pdp-laban-presidential-candidate-martin-dino/>.

mate.⁶⁵ Cayetano subsequently lost the vice-presidential election to the Liberal Party's Ma. Leonor G. Robredo.

41. Following the 2016 election, PDP-Laban emerged as the ruling party despite having only four members in Congress. Within months, more than one hundred politicians had aligned themselves with the party, enabling PDP-Laban to establish a majority in the House of Representatives.⁶⁶ Mr Duterte enjoyed the support of numerous influential national political figures. These included former President Fidel Ramos, who had reportedly been among those who initially urged Mr Duterte to seek national office;⁶⁷ Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago, who had sought to recruit Duterte as her running-mate;⁶⁸ and businessman and politician Antonio "Tony Boy" R. Floirendo Jr, who reportedly contributed a total of PHP 100 million in cash to Duterte and his party.⁶⁹

42. Mr Duterte acknowledged the importance of support from political actors in the national arena, particularly in Metro Manila, but nevertheless favoured a close network of associates from Mindanao. He appointed and promoted several of his allies to key positions, including former Davao police Chief Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa whom he appointed Chief of the PNP,⁷⁰ and former Davao regional director, Dante Gierran, whom he appointed Director of the National Bureau of Investigation (the "NBI").⁷¹ In turn, these officials brought in "Davao boys" or Davao police officers to key

⁶⁵ See HEGINA (A. J.), PDP-Laban officially proclaims Duterte-Cayetano as its presidential, VP bets, 30 November 2015, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/743624/pdp-laban-officially-proclaims-duterte-cayetano-as-its-presidential-vp-bets>.

⁶⁶ See ROMERO (P.), PDP-Laban members in House to exceed 100, 29 May 2016, available at: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/05/29/1588094/pdp-laban-members-house-exceed-100>.

⁶⁷ See Inquirer.net, *FVR proud to be considered Duterte's mentor*, 1 July 2016, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/793771/fvr-proud-to-be-considered-dutertes-mentor>.

⁶⁸ See HEGINA (A. J.), *Duterte declines Miriam VP offer, endorses Teodoro instead*, 11 September 2014, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/637091/duterte-shies-away-from-miriam-vp-offer-endorses-teodoro-instead>.

⁶⁹ See ILAGAN (K.) MANGAHAS (M.), *P334M from only 13 donors funded Duterte's presidency*, 5 December 2016, available at: <https://pcij.org/2016/12/05/p334m-from-only-13-donors-funded-dutertes-presidency/>.

⁷⁰ See the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, p. 41.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

jurisdictions in Manila to conduct killings.⁷² A number of Mr Duterte's classmates and friends from San Beda Law School were likewise appointed to senior positions. Among them was his law-school classmate and fraternity brother Vitaliano Aguirre II whom Mr Duterte appointed Secretary of Justice.⁷³ The term "Davao boys" now is generally understood to refer to Mr Duterte's associates.

43. Mr Duterte's presidential term was characterized by a high turnover of senior officials, including controversial, recycled, and shortened appointments.⁷⁴ During his six-year term, he appointed six PNP Directors-General and ten Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). His presidency also coincided with a significant number of judicial appointments, including appointments to the Supreme Court. Currently, eleven out of the fifteen justices of the Supreme Court were appointed by Mr Duterte.⁷⁵

44. These relationships formed a broad political network through which Mr Duterte maintained support across the executive, legislative, law-enforcement, and judicial spheres. From the victims' perspective, the significance of these relationships does not rest merely on political affiliation or personal loyalty. Rather, their relevance lies in the concrete positions occupied by Mr Duterte's associates, the authority those positions conferred, the actions undertaken by officials occupying them, and the evidence connecting those actions to the anti-drug campaign. Against this background, Mr Duterte's political and institutional alliances are relevant to at least three interconnected aspects of the alleged criminality.

⁷² See REUTERS, *Davao Boys, How a secretive police squad racked up kills in Duterte's drug war*, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/philippines-drugs-squad/>

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ See ROA (A.), *In, out, in: Select Duterte execs get new lease on official life* | *Inquirer News*, 21 July 2018. See also, RANADA, (P.), *List Rodrigo Duterte controversial reappointees*, 11 June 2018, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/204626-list-rodrigo-duterte-controversial-reappointees/>.

⁷⁵ See CORRALES (N.), *No Marcos appointments to High Court until 2025*, 19 May 2022, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1599482/no-marcos-appointments-to-high-court-until-2025>.

45. First, the appointment and promotion of trusted associates to senior law-enforcement and security positions created channels through which presidential policy, directives, and public rhetoric could be translated into operational practice. The significance of these appointments therefore lies not simply in the identity of the individuals appointed, but in the authority they acquired and the decisions and conduct that followed from their exercise of that authority. Second, the movement and continued alignment of close associates across executive, police, legislative, and other influential positions created institutional continuity between those involved in implementing the campaign and those responsible for publicly defending, legitimising, or otherwise sustaining it. These overlapping relationships are relevant to assessing whether the campaign operated as a series of isolated acts or as a sustained policy implemented through interconnected state institutions and officials. Third, the broader political alliances surrounding the Duterte administration provide context for assessing how the campaign was maintained in the face of persistent allegations of unlawful killings, as well as how state institutions responded to those allegations. In particular, the relationships among political decision-makers, law-enforcement officials, legislators, and other state actors may assist in assessing the extent to which allegations were investigated, challenged, disregarded, or otherwise failed to result in effective accountability.

46. Viewed cumulatively, therefore, the political and institutional network surrounding Mr Duterte forms part of the evidentiary picture concerning the organisation, implementation, continuation, and institutional protection of the anti-drug campaign. The relevance of these relationships is not that association or political loyalty, by itself, establishes criminal responsibility. Rather, their significance lies in what the individuals involved were positioned to do, what they in fact did, how their actions related to the campaign, and whether the resulting pattern of conduct supports an inference concerning the way in which the campaign was organised and sustained and the extent to which effective accountability was impeded.

47. The continuing influence of this network is also relevant to the victims' present concerns. To the extent that individuals associated with the former administration continue to occupy, influence, or maintain relationships with positions of political, governmental, law-enforcement, or other institutional authority, victims may reasonably perceive that the structures and relationships that shaped the anti-drug campaign have not been entirely dismantled. For victims and their families, this creates an ongoing concern that those with political or institutional influence may still be capable of affecting investigations, accountability processes, access to information, or the willingness of institutions and individuals to cooperate with efforts to establish the truth. Their fear is therefore not necessarily based on political affiliation alone, but on the continuing existence of relationships and sources of influence that, viewed against the history of the campaign and the limited accountability that has followed, may contribute to a perception of continuing vulnerability. In this context, the persistence of the network is relevant not only to understanding how the campaign was previously sustained, but also to assessing the present circumstances in which victims seek truth, justice, and effective accountability.

V. FACTS RELEVANT TO THE CHARGES

48. This section focuses on the principal facts relevant to the charges that are of particular significance to the victims' interests. It examines how the alleged acts, policies, and rhetoric contributed to the victims' dehumanisation, undermining their dignity and equal worth, while seeking to normalise and justify the violence against them. These matters bear directly on victims' interests because the harm they suffered goes beyond the physical consequences and encompasses the denial of their status as rights-bearing individuals. Understanding how these narratives, policies, and practices operated helps to recognise the nature and full extent of the harm suffered by victims and their families and to explain the circumstances in which the alleged crimes occurred. It also ensures that victims' experiences are duly considered in assessing accountability. Identifying and addressing the institutional and societal

conditions that enabled or facilitated the alleged abuses further serves victims' interest in preventing similar violence from becoming normalised.

1. The growth and prevalence of the Davao Death Squad (the "DDS")

49. One of Mr Duterte's central political themes was law and order. In the 1980s, Davao City was a significant centre of communist insurgent activity.⁷⁶ The New People's Army (NPA) had expanded beyond rural guerilla areas into the city, particularly the urban district of Agdao.⁷⁷ The insurgency was accompanied by the development of parallel systems of authority and justice, including forms of "*revolutionary justice*" that were presented as swift responses to abuses allegedly committed by the military and police during the Martial Law period. At the same time, Davao City military and police authorities supported anti-communist groups, including the Alsa Masa.⁷⁸ This environment of conflict and competing armed groups subsequently provided a context in which vigilante organizations and urban armed groups operated.⁷⁹

50. During Mr Duterte's tenure as mayor of Davao City, allegations emerged concerning the existence of organized groups responsible for extrajudicial killings. Killings of alleged drug dealers, petty criminals, and street children started becoming noticeable in the 1990s, and the group that claimed to be responsible was called *Suluguon sa Katawhan* or "*Servants of the People*".⁸⁰ The media, subsequently,

⁷⁶ See RAIZZA (P. B.), *The Dutertes' 40-year reign: Forged from strongman and victim*, 25 August 2026, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/philippines/dutertes-years-reign-forged-from-strongman-victim/>.

⁷⁷ See REYES (D.), *The Evolution of Davao's Death Squads and the War on Drugs in the Philippines, Perspective*, ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, Issue no. 65, year 2025, available at: https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/ISEAS_Perspective_2025_65.pdf.

⁷⁸ See FINEMAN (M.), *Philippine Vigilantes Forming to Face Rebels: Aquino Government Appears to Endorse Action; Thousands Deputized as Movement Spreads*, 15 March 1987, on the Los Angeles Times, available at: <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1987-03-15-mn-10893-story.html>.

⁷⁹ See REYES (D.), *The Evolution of Davao's Death Squads and the War on Drugs in the Philippines, Perspective*, *supra* note 77.

⁸⁰ See HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, "*You Can Die Any Time*", *Death Squad Killings in Mindanao*, 6 April 2009, (the "HRW 2009 Report"), available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/04/07/you-can-die-any-time/death-squad-killings-mindanao>.

popularized the term “Davao Death Squad”(DDS).⁸¹ Mr Duterte has claimed several times that he maintained, operated, or supported the DDS. The DDS evolved as a non-ideological group beholden only to Mr Duterte. He personally instructed DDS members that their mission was to kill criminals – drug pushers, snatchers and hold-uppers.⁸² By mid-1997, local media already had attributed more than 60 unsolved murders to the group.⁸³

51. In 2009, the Commission on Human Rights (the “CHR”) launched a probe into the killings. During that inquiry, Mr Duterte appeared before the commission and denied the existence of the death squads but acknowledged some unsolved killings.⁸⁴ Three years after, in June 2012, the CHR concluded “*that in the period of 2005 to 2009, there was a systematic practice of extrajudicial killings, which can be attributed or attributable to a vigilante group or groups dubbed in the media as a Davao Death Squad*”.⁸⁵ The CHR, as a constitutional institution mandated to investigate human-rights violations, does not itself exercise prosecutorial authority. It therefore referred the matter for further investigation by the appropriate government agencies.⁸⁶

52. Separately, in March 2012 the Office of the Ombudsman acted on a letter-complaint of a person claiming that the death squad was “*responsible for the unsolved killings of more than 800 persons*”. The Ombudsman found that from 2005 to 2009, there had been 720 cases of killings in the city but less than half of them - or 321, to be exact - had been solved.⁸⁷ The Ombudsman’s resolution sanctioned 21 police officers for failing to stop and investigate killings attributed to the DDS, guilty for “*simple neglect*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² See the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, para. 87.

⁸³ See the HRW 2009 Report, *supra* note 80.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ See the “Philippine Government’s Observation on the Office of the Prosecutor’s Request” with Annexes A to T confidential EX PARTE, only available to the Office of the Prosecutor, [No. ICC-01/21-51](#), 9 September 2022, para. 103.

⁸⁶ See Article XIII, Section 17, [Philippine Constitution](#).

⁸⁷ See GMA NEWS ONLINE, 21 cops sanctioned over unsolved Davao killings, 29 March 2012, available at: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/regions/253237/21-cops-sanctioned-over-unsolved-davao-killings/story/>.

of duty".⁸⁸ The decision was later overturned in the Court of Appeals, citing reliance on mere statistics.⁸⁹ The Ombudsman's authority in this context was administrative rather than criminal, and it did not itself establish criminal liability for Mr Duterte or other alleged associates.⁹⁰

53. The issue resurfaced during Duterte's presidency. In 2016, the justice department halted an investigation, after a key witness left government protective custody.⁹¹ Former CHR chairperson and then-Senator Leila De Lima, argued that the witness withdrawal was connected to Mr Duterte's election as president. In September 2016, during a Senate inquiry, Edgar Matobato, who identified himself as a former hitman, testified that Duterte and his son, Paolo Duterte, had been involved in some of the killings.⁹²

54. In 2017, a former police officer Arturo Lascañas, publicly stated that the DDS had targeted suspected criminals, and that its activities had allegedly expanded to include political opponents and critics of Duterte. He also claimed having participated in the killing of Jun Pala, an outspoken critic, and having been personally rewarded by Mr Duterte with one million PHP.⁹³ Mr Duterte himself made several public statements admitting to extra-judicial killings. During the presidential campaign, he told reporters who confronted him about a statement from Amnesty International: *"700 daw ang pinatay ko? Nagkulang ho sila sa kuwenta": "I killed 700? They underestimated the figures"*. When pressed for the exact numbers, Duterte answered: *"Mga 1,700": "Around 1,700"*.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ See HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, *Philippines: Probe Mayor's Alleged 'Death Squad' Links Davao Mayor Duterte Epitomizes Impunity for Extrajudicial Killings*, 19 May 2015, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/19/philippines-probe-mayors-alleged-death-squad-links>.

⁹⁰ See [Philippine Constitution](#) and the [Ombudsman Act of 1989](#).

⁹¹ See GAVILAN (J.), *TIMELINE: Probing into the Davao Death Squad*, 30 June 2017, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/171312-timeline-davao-death-squad-probe-hearing-investigations-rodrido-duterte/>.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ See SANTOS (A. P.), *'Death squads' under Duterte?*, 6 March 2017, available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/alleged-hitman-links-duterte-to-death-squad-killings/a-37824168>.

⁹⁴ See PATERNO (R. E. II), *Duterte: I killed 700? No, make that 1,700*, 8 December 2015, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/philippines/elections/115315-duterte-killings-amnesty-international/>.

55. In 2024, facing a Senate inquiry into the extra-judicial killings, Mr Duterte said: *"I can make the confession now if you want. I had a death squad of seven, but they were not police, they were gangsters"*. He had initially identified Davao police chiefs, including Senator dela Rosa, as members of the death squad. He later backpedalled but confirmed instructions to kill: *"What I told them [police] was 'encourage the criminals to fight, encourage them to draw their guns'. That's my instruction...When they do, kill them to end the problem in my city. When I became president, that's what I said during the command conference in Malacañang. That's my order"*.⁹⁵ These statements constitute direct public statements by Mr Duterte about his approach to dealing with suspected criminals, although their legal significance and relationship to specific killings remain matters for the relevant investigative and judicial processes.

56. Despite sustained criticism of his administration, Mr Duterte retained substantial levels of public approval and trust during his presidency. According to PUBLiCUS Asia Inc., an independent pollster, he received an overall approval rating of 65% and a trust rating of 55% in a survey conducted in December 2020.⁹⁶ His continuing popularity was due to a combination of factors, including dissatisfaction with established political elites, his ability to present himself as politically authentic, and the strength of his committed political base.⁹⁷ This support basis is commonly associated with the *Diehard Duterte Supporters*. The term refers to Duterte's particularly committed supporters, who defended him and his administration even amid allegations of misconduct and controversy.⁹⁸

57. The movement can be understood within a broader context of Filipino populism, particularly the perception among some supporters that established

⁹⁵ See RAMOS (M.), Duterte tells Senate: I have a death squad, 29 October 2024, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1998659/duterte-tells-senate-i-have-a-death-squad>.

⁹⁶ See GATUS (M. M.) and CAMBA (M. Z. O.), "Digital Politics: DDS and Political Propaganda in the Context of Baudrillard's Hyperreality", *Mabini Review*, vol. X (2021), pp. 21–52. Available at: [GATDPD.pdf](#).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, as cited in ANC 24/7, video available at: "[Political Science Prof: Duterte's High Approval Ratings Not Necessarily Due to Handling of Pandemic](#)".

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

political elites had failed to deliver on longstanding promises. Mr Duterte presented himself as an outsider to traditional political conventions and as a leader capable of confronting problems through decisive and unconventional methods.⁹⁹ One interpretation of Mr Duterte's appeal emphasizes the cultural significance of the paternal figure in Filipino society. Political scientist Aries Arugay has argued that Filipino conceptions of fatherhood can involve a comparatively strict and disciplinary model of authority. Within this framework, paternal authority is understood not merely as the exercise of power but as an obligation to protect and provide for the family.¹⁰⁰ Scholars have applied this framework to the way some Duterte's supporters understood his political leadership, portraying him as a protective and disciplinary father figure.

58. This interpretation is particularly relevant to Mr Duterte's anti-drug campaign. Resulting in over 6,000 acknowledged deaths during official operations, with independent human rights estimates suggesting a far higher toll - among Duterte's supporters, the campaign was framed as a severe manifestation of paternal discipline and national protection. Similarly, his public tirades against international figures and bodies, including former U.S. President Barack Obama, Pope Francis, and the European Union, are interpreted not as arbitrary aggression, but as the emotional outrage of a leader who has reached his limit regarding external interference with his administration.¹⁰¹

59. Mr Duterte's hypermasculine persona presents him as tough, fearless, and willing to fight, kill, or die. His rejection of formalities, use of profanity, regional accent, and openly admitted womanizing contributed to an image of authenticity that contrasted with the perceived hypocrisy of traditional "*refined*" politicians. This

⁹⁹ See PHAVISMINDA Journal, Volume 21 (2022 Issue) Pages: 155-183, Tatay Digong, Ka-DDS, and Sakop: Filipino Populism Under Duterte in the Light of Leonardo Mercado's Sakop, Anjon Fredrick C. Mamunta, available at [MAMTDK.pdf](#).

¹⁰⁰ See BORRES (M.), *Call me Daddy: An Analysis of Diehard Duterte Supporters*, 26 September 2021, in Spheres of Influence, available at: <https://spheresofinfluence.ca/call-me-daddy-an-analysis-of-diehard-duterte-supporters/>.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

populist persona resonated across social classes, particularly among citizens' longstanding frustrations and anxieties. Mr Duterte also mobilized these anxieties by cultivating an image of himself as a paternal figure or "*father of the nation*."¹⁰² His supporters, particularly the *Diehard* ones, often defended him from criticism and attacked his opponents online. Through Facebook and other social media platforms, the movement promoted government achievements, defended administrative policies, and challenged critical narratives, helping shape political discourse and public perceptions of Duterte.¹⁰³ This cultural dynamic is actively maintained through digital platforms, particularly Facebook using paid or fake accounts.¹⁰⁴ By streaming this messaging to millions of users, the movement effectively controls the online narrative, setting the boundaries for public debate and political discourse.

60. Ultimately, the DDS movement's influence rests on two interconnected forces: the cultural tradition of paternal deference and a coordinated digital media strategy. By portraying Mr Duterte as the strict but protective "*Tatay Digong*", supporters framed his controversial actions and shortcomings as acts of paternal care. Reinforced through platforms such as Facebook, this loyalty helped protect executive authority from criticism and accountability while reshaping political discourse.

2. The so-called "*Davao Model*"

61. Since becoming Mayor of Davao City in the late 1980s, Mr Duterte established what has been described as the "*Davao Model*" by recruiting police officers and civilian hitmen, whom he personally organized into a death squad later known as the DDS. Mr Duterte personally instructed¹⁰⁵ the members that their objective was to kill suspected drug pushers, snatchers, and thieves, and provided resources, including

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ See BRADSHAW (S.) and HOWARD (P.), "Troops, Trolls and Troublemakers: A Global Inventory of Organized Social Media Manipulation", Computational Propaganda Research Project, Oxford Internet Institute, 2017, pp. 1–37, available at: <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:cef7e8d9-27bf-4ea5-9fd6-855209b3e1f6>

¹⁰⁵ See the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, para. 87.

funding, weaponry, and vehicles. In October 2024, during a Senate inquiry,¹⁰⁶ Mr Duterte admitted to organizing a death squad in Davao City. As Mayor, and later as Vice-Mayor during his daughter's mayoral term, he exercised formal authority and operational supervision and control over the local police units.¹⁰⁷

62. The existence of the DDS received international attention in February 2007 when the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions Philip Alston, investigated extrajudicial killings in the Philippines. His report described the DDS as operating openly in Davao City and noted that the killings appeared to have an officially sanctioned character, citing the lack of efforts by perpetrators to conceal their identities:

"It is a commonplace that a death squad known as the 'Davao Death Squad' (DDS) operates in Davao City. However, it has become a polite euphemism to refer vaguely to 'vigilante groups' when accounting for the shocking predictability with which criminals, gang members, and street children are extrajudicially executed. One fact points very strongly to the officially-sanctioned character of these killings: No one involved covers his face".¹⁰⁸

63. The CHR, in its 28 June 2012 report concerning killings from 2005–2009, likewise concluded that there was a systematic practice of extrajudicial killings attributable to vigilante groups referred to as the DDS:

"In light of the foregoing, the Commission concludes that in the period of 2005-2009, there was a systematic practice of extrajudicial killings, which can be attributed or attributable to a vigilante group or groups dubbed in the media as the Davao Death Squad. And although there is dearth of evidence to support a finding of direct complicity on the part of the local police or local government officials, the Commission notes that there has been a systematic failure on the part of such local officials to conduct any meaningful investigation into said killings. The statistics of the PNP speak for themselves: according to P/Sr. Supt. Apolinario, in the brief period between January and August of 2009, there were 122 killings,¹⁷³ of which only 30 were allegedly solved, making for a 'success'

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 42. See also, para. 90 on the DDS being under Mr Duterte authority when holding the position of Vice Mayor of Davao City.

¹⁰⁸ See ALSTON (P.), Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions Philip Alston, Mission to Philippines, A/HRC/8/3/Add.2*, 16 April 2008, para. 39.

*rate of 24.59 % and leaving 75.04% of cases unsolved. [D]irect evidence, whether testimonial or documentary, is not the only type of evidence that may be legitimately considered ... circumstantial evidence, indicia, and presumptions may be considered, so long as they lead to conclusions consistent with the facts".*¹⁰⁹

64. Although the CHR found insufficient direct evidence of complicity by local police or government officials, it identified a systematic failure by local authorities to meaningfully investigate the killings. It also emphasized that circumstantial evidence, indicia, and presumptions may be considered where they lead to conclusions consistent with the established facts.

65. The confirmed charges identify nine emblematic DDS murder incidents during Mr Duterte's mayoral period.¹¹⁰ The accounts of the participating victims show the systematic and brazen method of murder of their loved ones in Davao City.

66. Prosecution's witnesses describe how Mr Duterte controlled the police, noting that *"everyone deferred to him"* as the ultimate authority in Davao City.¹¹¹ Similarly, evidence indicates that Mr Duterte constructed a hierarchy in the DDS and continued to wield his political power over the DDS at the top of the hierarchy as Mayor. Even when he acted as Vice Mayor he was still informed of the targets; if Mr Duterte had no objection, the target was considered *"approved"*.¹¹² Members of the DDS were rewarded with government positions in City Hall as ghost employees.¹¹³ Mr Duterte also had access to a source of funding he could use to support DDS operations. In the Philippines, mayors are often allocated special discretionary appropriations, commonly referred to as confidential or intelligence funds, within local government

¹⁰⁹ See Republic of the Philippines, Commission on Human Rights, *In Re: Extra-judicial killings attributed or attributable to the Davao Death Squad*, Commission on Human Rights Resolution, (28 June 2012) at IV. Conclusion, available at: [CHR - Davao Death Squad Resolution | PDF](#).

¹¹⁰ See the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, pp.45-46. See also, the Public redacted version of "Request for authorisation of an investigation pursuant to article 15(3)", [No. ICC-01/21-7-Red](#), 14 June 2021, para. 11. The OTP estimated that 1,000 victims were killed during the Mayoral Period of Duterte in Davao. Human Rights Watch estimated more killings: see, Human Rights Watch, ["Philippines: Probe Mayor's Alleged 'Death Squad' Links"](#), 19 May 2015.

¹¹¹ See the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, para. 90.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, para. 97.

budgets. These funds are intended to finance activities aimed at addressing perceived threats to local peace and order. Because intelligence and confidential funds are typically allocated on a lump-sum basis for purposes such as surveillance, intelligence gathering, and security-related operations, they are subject to more limited auditing and oversight than ordinary public expenditures, making it difficult to trace the specific use of such funds.

67. Under the relevant national regulatory frameworks, such as the Joint Circular of the Commission on Audit and Department of Budget and Management, - the COA-DBM-DILG-GCG DND Joint Circular No. 2015-01,¹¹⁴ issued in 2015, confidential funds constitute specific appropriations allocated to civilian government agencies - including the Office of the President and local chief executives – to support surveillance and other activities related to the performance of their mandates. These expenditures may include the acquisition of information, the distribution of rewards, the leasing of vehicles for clandestine operations, and the maintenance of safehouses. Owing to the nature of the activities they support, confidential funds are subject to reporting and audit arrangements that differ from those applicable to ordinary public expenditures. The use of confidential and intelligence funds has been the subject of public debate and scrutiny, with critics arguing that their discretionary character may create opportunities for misuse and reduce transparency in the management of public resources.

68. The confidential fund allocated to the Office of the Mayor of Davao city increased over the course of Mr Duterte's tenure as mayor. The allocation amounted to PHP¹¹⁵ 109 million in 2011 and 2012; PHP 113 million in 2013; PHP 120 million in

¹¹⁴ See the Republic of the Philippines, Commission on Audit and Department of Budget and Management, *Guidelines on the Entitlement, Release, Use, Reporting and Audit of Confidential and/or Intelligence Funds*, [Joint Circular 2015-01](#), (8 January 2015) Sections 3.7, 3.9 and 3.15.

¹¹⁵ As of 15 September 2026, the Peso-to-US Dollar exchange rate is approximately 62.75. The PHP 109 million confidential fund of Mayor Duterte in 2011 is approximately US\$ 1.7 million.

2014 and 2015; and PHP 144 million in 2016 the final year of his term as mayor.¹¹⁶ The intelligence and confidential fund of Mr Duterte, when he assumed the presidency in 2016, rose substantially reaching PHP 2.5 billion annually in 2017, 2018 and 2019. It further increased to PHP 4.5 billion - approximately US \$ 71.5 million - annually in 2020, 2021 and 2022 the final year of his presidential term.¹¹⁷ While the “*Davao Model*” used employment in City Hall to fund the DDS, supplemented by rewards through other funding sources such as the mayor’s confidential/intelligence funds, the nationwide implementation of said model was funded through the confidential/intelligence funds and other contributions exacted by Mr Duterte from gambling operators and other businesses.¹¹⁸

69. By virtue of their *de jure* and *de facto* authority, Mr Duterte and his subordinates operated within an organized structure of power encompassing local and national police forces and the DDS hierarchy; through this apparatus, they effectively controlled the will of the immediate physical perpetrators.¹¹⁹ The “*Davao Model*” could not have been fully implemented without the support of Mr Duterte’s associates,¹²⁰ including: (i) Ronald “*Bato*” dela Rosa, Chief of Davao City Police from January 2012 until October 2013; (ii) Vicente Danao, Chief of Davao City Police from October 2013 until June 2016; and (iii) Camilo Cascolan, Finance Chief of Davao Region Police Office between 2011 and 2012, and Chief of the directorial staff, of the Davao Region Police Office between 2014 and 2015.

70. The PNP was also supported by other public officials outside the police hierarchy, including: (i) Christopher Lawrence ‘Bong’ Go, Mr Duterte’s personal Aide

¹¹⁶ GOMEZ (H.), “Davao City had biggest confidential funds among region’s LGUs in 2023-2024” *Philippine Star*, 26 August 2026, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/philippines/davao-city-biggest-confidential-funds-region-2023-2024/>.

¹¹⁷ XAVE (G.), “Duterte spent entire P4.5 billion allocation for confidential, intel funds in 2021”, *Philippine Star*, 12 October 2022, available at: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2022/10/12/2216177/duterte-spent-entire-p45-billion-allocation-confidential-intel-funds-2021>.

¹¹⁸ CRISOSTOMO (S.), Cop confirms reward system in drug war, in *PhilStar Global*, 29 August 2024, available at: [Cop confirms reward system in drug war | Philstar.com](https://www.philstar.com/global/2024/08/29/2216177/cop-confirms-reward-system-in-drug-war).

¹¹⁹ See the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, para. 43.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, paras. 41-43.

and Special Assistant between 1998 and 2016; (ii) Dante Gierran, Davao Regional Director of the NB from 2013 until 2016; (iii) Vitaliano Aguirre II, Justice Secretary from July 2016 until April 2018.¹²¹ It must also be noted that Isidro Lapeña was Mr Duterte's Davao City Police Chief from 1996 to 1998 and the director Police Regional Office 11 (Davao Region) from 2002 to 2004.

3. The expansion of the “Davao Model” at the national level

71. Believing that the “Davao Model” had produced significant results in addressing local criminality, Mr Duterte advocated for its implementation at the national level. During his campaign for the 2016 presidential election, he made said model the centrepiece of his platform and openly relied on his association with the DDS and the summary executions attributed to it.¹²² This campaign rhetoric is corroborated by video recordings of public statements, in which he declared:

“If I become the president, I will order the military and the police to hunt down the drug lords, the big ones, and kill them”.¹²³

72. Mr Duterte did not conceal his intention to replicate the DDS model on a nationwide scale. During the presidential campaign, he openly indicated that the methods he had employed in Davao would be extended across the country if elected, declaring that: *“Forget the laws on human rights. If I make it to the presidential palace, I will do just what I did as mayor. You drug pushers, hold-up men and do-nothings, you better go out. Because I'd kill you”* - he said at his final campaign rally. *“I'll dump all of you into Manila Bay, and fatten all the fish there”*.¹²⁴ To justify his campaign to eliminate the country's drug problem, Mr Duterte repeatedly portrayed drug suspects as the

¹²¹ During the mayoral period, Vitaliano Aguirre II was the lawyer of Mr Duterte and other members of the DDS. He acted as lawyer for those investigated vis-à-vis the killings in Davao City such as the quarry killings investigated by the CHR. See also, PUNAY (E.) and ETOLLE (N.), “Judge quashes CHR Search Warrant” *Philippine Star*, 27 July 2009, available at:

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2009/07/27/490079/judge-quashes-chr-search-warrant>.

¹²² See the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, para. 88.

¹²³ See the Transcript of Confirmation of Charges Hearing held on 23 February 2026, [No. ICC-01/21-01/25-T-004-Red-ENG WT.](#), p. 10, lines 16-17.

¹²⁴ See BBC News, “Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte in quotes”, 30 September 6, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-36251094>.

principal cause of many of the Philippines' social and criminal challenges. This rhetoric reflects a form of political scapegoating whereby a particular group is blamed for broader societal problems in order to mobilize public support against it. The World History Encyclopaedia describes this tactic as follows:

"The leader of Nazi Germany Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) identified Jewish people as enemies of the state, presenting them through relentless propaganda as responsible for Germany's economic and cultural decline. Basing this propaganda on White supremacist race theory, Hitler was able to use it, along with other populist positions, to increase support for the Nazi Party. Much more significantly, after establishing a dictatorship, Hitler used Nazi anti-Semitism and race theory to present the Second World War (1939-45) as a struggle for Germany's survival against a global Jewish conspiracy and to justify, in his view, the extermination of millions of European Jews in the Holocaust genocide.

Hitler and the Nazis hated Jewish people because they thought Jews were responsible for Germany's defeat in WWI (1914-18), responsible for Germany's economic problems like high unemployment and responsible for the lack of morality in modern society. [...] In the 1920s, Adolf Hitler was the leader of the far-right National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP or Nazi Party for short). Neither socialist nor particularly concerned about workers, the party name was cynically chosen by Hitler simply to attract the maximum number of votes".¹²⁵

73. Mr Duterte capitalised on public concern over worsening criminality and the drug problem, issues that were exacerbated by widespread poverty in the country. In his public rhetoric, he identified drug suspects as the principal source of these social problems and portrayed them as a threat to national well-being. He further drew a controversial comparison to Adolf Hitler's treatment of the Jews during the Second World War, indicating that he would be willing to kill millions of alleged "drug addicts" in the Philippines.¹²⁶ Mr Duterte's campaign was characterized by rhetoric that stigmatized and marginalized individuals alleged to be involved in the drug trade or

¹²⁵ See CARTWRIGHT (M.), *Why Did Hitler Hate Jewish People?*, IN World History Encyclopedia, 15 September 2026, available at: <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/2646/why-did-hitler-hate-jewish-people/>.

¹²⁶ See the Transcript of Confirmation of Charges Hearing held on 23 February 2026, [No. ICC-01/21-01/25-T-004-Red-ENG WT 10/59 PT](#), p. 10, lines 16-17 and p. 23, lines 18-20.

drug use. By repeatedly depicting this group as a grave danger to society, he fostered public acceptance of increasingly severe measures directed against them, including killings.

74. Following his election in May 2016, the anti-crime methods associated with the “*Davao Model*” were expanded to the national level. Evidence regarding this transition was provided by retired Police Colonel Royina Garma in sworn testimony before the House of Representatives Quad Committee during its 11 October 2024 hearing on killings associated with the anti-drug campaign. According to her testimony, the operational framework previously employed in Davao was subsequently replicated on a nationwide scale.

75. Garma, who previously led the Davao City PNP anti-vice unit under then-Mayor Duterte and was later appointed head of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (the “PCSO”) in July 2019, testified that Mr Duterte sought her assistance in May 2016 in identifying a law enforcement officer to oversee the national implementation of the “*Davao Model*”:

“In May 2016, I received a call from then president, Rodrigo Duterte at approximately 5:00 a.m., instructing me to meet him at his residence in Dona Luisa, Davao. I was already acquainted with then Mayor Duterte having served a Station Commander in one of the police stations in Davao City during his tenure. During our meeting, he requested that I locate a Philippine National Police (PNP) officer or operative who is a member of the Iglesia Ni Cristo, indicating that he needed someone capable of implementing the War on Drugs on a national level replicating the Davao Model. The Davao Model referred to the system involving payment and rewards. The Davao Model involves three levels of payments or rewards. First is the reward if the suspect is killed. Second is the funding of planned operations (or COPLANS). Third is the refund of operational expenses. [...] I recalled my upperclassman Edilberto Leonardo, who was handling the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) and was also a member of the Iglesia Ni Cristo. I mentioned his name to the President. [...] A week later, I learned from Arthur Narsolis via phone call that Leonardo had been summoned by the President and was instructed to proceed to Mandaya Hotel in Davao for a meeting. Leonardo informed me that he stayed at the hotel for three days during which the President directed him to organize a task force

similar to the PAOCTF.¹²⁷ [...] Leonardo subsequently informed me that he had prepared a proposal, routed through Bong Go outlining the task force's operation which would encompass Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.¹²⁸ [...] During the initial three months of his assignment, I facilitated all meetings between Leonardo and Bong Go at Leonardo's request. Subsequently, they established direct communication".¹²⁹

76. During Mr Duterte's mayoral tenure, members of the Davao City police and the DDS allegedly executed at least 1,000 extrajudicial killings. The pattern of violence attributed to the DDS bears significant similarities to the anti-drug campaign later implemented at the national level, including the profiles of victims and perpetrators, the public stigmatization of targeted individuals, and the methods by which the killings were allegedly carried out.

77. The testimony of Garma provides evidence that the operational framework associated with the "*Davao Model*" was subsequently replicated on a nationwide scale following Mr Duterte's election to the presidency. According to Garma, efforts were undertaken to establish nationally the same system that had previously operated in Davao City. This evidence is consistent with Mr Duterte's own public statements concerning his conduct in Davao: "[i]n Davao I used to do it personally, just to show the guys that, 'If I can do it, why can't you?'"¹³⁰ Garma further testified before the House of Representatives Quad Committee on 11 October 2024 regarding the compilation of drug watchlists and the nationwide implementation of the "*Davao Model*", which she

¹²⁷ This was the term used for the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (the "PAOCTF").

¹²⁸ According to Col. Garma, Col. Edilberto Leonardo asked whether he and his classmates could arrange, through Bong Go, a courtesy call with Mr Duterte for photo opportunities. Royina Garma, affidavit reproduced in GMA News Online, "Affidavit of Royina Garma on Davao-style rewards in war on drugs", 11 October 2024, available at: [Affidavit of Royina Garma on Davao-style rewards in war on drugs | GMA News Online](https://www.gmanewsonline.com/2024/10/1074444).

¹²⁹ See the House of Representatives, Quad Committee, "8th Quad Committee Hearing on EJK" 19th Congress, 3rd Regular Session, 11 October 2024, Testimony of Witness Royina Garma, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBQ93Ju34aY>.

¹³⁰ See the Transcript of Confirmation of Charges Hearing held on 23 February 2026, [No. ICC-01/21-01/25-T-004-Red-ENG WT](#), p. 11, lines 21-22.

described as having originated in Davao City and later expanded under the Duterte administration.¹³¹

78. The nationwide implementation of the “*Davao Model*” required the issuance of an official directive from the national police command to police units across the country. On 1 July 2016, the PNP Command Memorandum Circular No. 16-2016 (the “CMC 16-2016”),¹³² which set out the framework for “*Project Double Barrel*”, was issued. The CMC 16-2016 provided the institutional mechanism through which anti-drug operations were to be carried out by PNP personnel nationwide. Interviews and documents emanating from the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (the “PDEA”) indicate that several associates expressed their intention to implement the anti-criminality and anti-drug frameworks previously employed in Davao City. These individuals understood the President’s objective to be the replication and expansion of the “*Davao Model*”, and in various public statements, made threats directed at persons alleged to be involved in criminal activity. Furthermore, evidence demonstrates that prior to 1 July 2016, these actors convened to strategize and design an anti-drug framework. This planning was ultimately codified in the “*PNP Anti-Illegal Drugs Campaign Plan – Project: Double Barrel*”. Issued by one of the Mr Duterte’s associates, this circular established operational guidelines supporting the government’s Barangay Drug Clearing Strategy. Crucially, it mandated the “*neutralization*” or “*negation*” of suspected drug personalities nationwide - terms widely interpreted as euphemisms for extrajudicial killings.¹³³

79. Section 5 of the Circular provided that the campaign shall “*equally address illegal drug problems in the barangays and at the same time pursue the neutralization of illegal drug personalities as well as the backbone of illegal drugs network operating in the country*”.¹³⁴

¹³¹ See the affidavit reproduced in GMA News Online, “[Affidavit of Royina Garma on Davao-style rewards in war on drugs](#)”, 11 October 2024.

¹³² See the Republic of the Philippines, Philippine National Police, PNP Anti-Illegal Drugs Campaign Plan (Double Barrel), [Command Memorandum Circular No. 16-2016](#), 1 July 2016 (the “CMC 16-2016”).

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2. See also the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, paras. 87-88.

¹³⁴ See the CMC 16-2016, *supra* note 132, p. 3.

Section 5 also introduced *Tokhang* (house-to-house visit of drug suspects),¹³⁵ an operational method previously utilized in Davao. In particular, paragraph (e) provided that *“any person suspected to be involved in illegal drug trafficking who denies or refuses the house-to-house visitation shall be referred to the Anti-Illegal Drug Units for immediate case build-up and negation”*.¹³⁶ The use of the terms *“neutralization”* and *“negation”* throughout the Circular is significant, as these concepts formed a central component of the operational framework governing anti-drug operations nationwide.

80. Section 5 of CMC 16-2016, page 5, specifically subsection (b)(23)(e) directed the conduct of intensified anti-illegal drug operations *“by focusing on the neutralization of street level drug personalities in the AOR”*, while subsection b(24)-(b) provided for *“Focus Teams”* to *“[n]eutralize High Value and street level targets to include their support systems (Drug Lords, their protectors, coddlers and supporters)”*. The Circular repeatedly employed the term *“neutralization”* in describing these operational objectives. Furthermore, subsection 13, assigned the PNP Intelligence Group (IG) the task of assisting in the *“neutralization of drug groups/personalities and PNP personnel who are involved in illegal drug activities”*. These provisions demonstrate that the implementation of *Project Double Barrel* contemplated the coordinated participation of multiple PNP units in the execution of anti-drug operations nationwide.

81. The central victims’ concern arising from the *“Davao Model”* is not merely the existence or structure of an organised group, but the treatment of human beings as disposable targets whose lives could be taken without judicial process.¹³⁷ The alleged victims were frequently characterised as *“drug pushers”*, *“snatchers”*, *“hold-uppers”*, gang members, or other perceived criminals. Such labels reduced individuals to their alleged conduct and, in practice, were capable of obscuring their individual identities, circumstances, and rights. In this context, allegations of criminality appear to have functioned not only as purported justification for the killings but also as a means of

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, at Section 5 (a), p.3.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, at Subsection 4 (b), p. 5.

¹³⁷ See also Section VI. 2.

depriving victims of the presumption of innocence and of presenting their deaths as socially acceptable or necessary.

82. Victims therefore should not be understood solely through the categories attributed to them by perpetrators, authorities, or public discourse. Each victim was an individual entitled to life, dignity, due process, and equal protection of the law. Whether or not an individual was in fact involved in criminal activity, that person remained entitled to have any allegation determined through lawful procedures rather than by an extrajudicial execution. The interests of victims consequently require that allegations concerning their conduct not obscure the separate question of the unlawfulness of taking their lives without judicial process.

83. The same consideration applies to the families of those killed. Relatives may themselves become victims where authorities fail to establish the circumstances of a death, identify those responsible, or provide an effective remedy. Their interests include the right to truth, accountability, recognition of the harm suffered, and appropriate reparation. In cases involving alleged systematic killings, these interests acquire a collective dimension: families require not only individual explanations but also acknowledgment of whether a broader pattern existed and whether public institutions contributed to, tolerated, or failed to prevent that pattern.

84. The "*Davao Model*" should therefore be assessed not only in terms of the command structures, resources, or political authority allegedly used to facilitate killings, but also in terms of its effect on the status of the victim. Its most consequential feature, from a human-rights perspective, was the alleged conversion of suspected criminality into a basis for treating certain persons as beyond the protection of the law. The resulting harm extended from the loss of individual lives to the degradation of the dignity of victims, the suffering of their families, and the erosion of the principle that every person is entitled to have allegations against them determined by law rather than by violence.

85. Even where a victim had committed, or was suspected of having committed, an offence, that fact would not extinguish the person's right to life or justify an extrajudicial killing. The relevant question for accountability is therefore not whether a victim was portrayed as undesirable or criminal, but whether public officials or persons acting with their support or acquiescence unlawfully caused, facilitated, encouraged, or failed to prevent the deprivation of life, and whether effective investigations and remedies were subsequently provided.

4. Implementing the Common Plan: the Drug List and Reward System

86. However, the actual implementation of the "*Davao Model*" entailed reproducing the hierarchy of police and non-police elements within the DDS that operated during Mr Duterte's mayoral tenure. The testimony of Garma detailed the establishment of a task force designated to coordinate both the execution of this model and a common plan to eliminate targeted drug personalities through extrajudicial killings in a national scale. Garma first exposed the structure and the compilation of the notorious drug list, as follows:

"Leonardo informed me that he had recalled several trusted personnel namely Lester Berganio, Rommel Bactat, Rodel Cerbo, Michael Palma, and Peter Parungo to serve as operatives for the task force. Notably Rommel Bactat, Rodel Cerbo and Michael Palma were discharged police officers. [...] Rommel Bactat, Rodel Cerbo, Michael Palm,a and Peter Parungo were charged with the task of collecting and verifying information provided by police officers in the field concerning arrests, and/or deaths of individuals named in the list of drug personalities, and creating a summary report. All of these reports would then be encoded and compiled by Lester Bergano. The compilation is thereafter elevated to Leonardo who will decide what "Level" the arrest and/or killing was and its corresponding reward. Rewards were only given for killings, while for arrests, only the funding of the COPLAN and a refund for the expenses was given .¹³⁸

¹³⁸ The quoted portions of Col. Garma are from her affidavit reproduced in GMA News Online, "[Affidavit of Royina Garma on Davao-style rewards in war on drugs](https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/923440/royina-garma-affidavit-davao-model-war-on-drugs/story/?utm)", 11 October 2024, available at: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/923440/royina-garma-affidavit-davao-model-war-on-drugs/story/?utm>. Mr Duterte admitted the reward system but asserted that this is a legitimate tool of government to prevent lawlessness. See, the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, para. 87.

87. The initial stage of replicating the “*Davao Model*” involved establishing a national structure and compiling a nationwide list of suspected drug personalities. This database was synthesized from reports generated by various PNP units across the country. The compilation was overseen by Colonel Edilberto Leonardo, whom Mr Duterte appointed to lead the task force mandated to nationalize the “*Davao Model*”. President Duterte first disclosed the existence of this list on 7 August 2016, during an address at a military camp in Davao; at that time, the roster documented approximately 150 individuals.¹³⁹ A corresponding reward system was then established and the drug campaign was then disseminated to responsible police officers as gleaned from Garma’s testimony:

*“Once the task force became operational, I later learned that all COPLAN funds, refunds for operational expenses, and rewards for agents were processed through the accounts of Peter Parungo..... Concurrently, Lester Berganio maintained a comprehensive list of drug personalities in the Philippines. Leonardo conducted briefings for all PDEA, IG, Regional Directors, and PNP Chiefs regarding operations. Additionally, if any individual died during police operations, Leonardo reported the incident to Bong Go for inclusion in his weekly report and requests for refunds of operational expenses. Leonardo had the final authority to determine who would be included on the list of drug personalities and to classify their threat levels, as well as the discretion to remove individuals from the list”.*¹⁴⁰

88. The reward system was not merely an operational mechanism for implementing the common plan; it also constituted a further manifestation of the dehumanization that permeated the anti-drug campaign.¹⁴¹ By attaching a monetary value to the killing of suspected drug offenders, the system reduced human lives to quantifiable targets whose elimination generated financial gain. Rather than treating suspects as individuals entitled to due process and the presumption of innocence, the

¹³⁹ See Republic of the Philippines, Presidential Communications Office, President Duterte bares names of narco-politicians, Press Release, 15 March 2019, available at:

https://pco.gov.ph/news_releases/president-duterte-bares-names-of-narco-politicians/.

¹⁴⁰ See the affidavit reproduced in GMA News Online, “[Affidavit of Royina Garma on Davao-style rewards in war on drugs](https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/923440/royina-garma-affidavit-davao-model-war-on-drugs/story/)”, 11 October 2024, available at: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/923440/royina-garma-affidavit-davao-model-war-on-drugs/story/>.

¹⁴¹ See Section VI d).

reward structure incentivized their destruction and transformed their deaths into a measure of operational success.

89. According to Garma, the cash rewards for drug-related killings ranged from 20,000 PHP to 1 million PHP, depending on the target, although, she deferred to Col. Leonardo regarding the exact amount per category on the drug list. This reward scheme encouraged the killing by providing a financial incentive that exceeded the benefits associated with their arrest. Consequently, it helped fuel the proliferation of of “*nanlaban*” (*fought back*) narratives,¹⁴² which purported to justify fatal police shootings even where victims had surrendered or pleaded for their lives.

90. The incentives embedded in the system reveal a clear preference for killing rather than apprehending suspects. A fatality generated a direct bounty, whereas an arrest merely entitled the officers to a reimbursement of operational expenses. Furthermore, while Ronald “*Bato*” dela Rosa described these payments as an “*allowance*” rather than a formal bounty, his account nonetheless confirms that monetary rewards were routinely distributed to police officers.¹⁴³ The practice of assigning a price to the death of a suspect stripped victims of their individuality and intrinsic worth, reducing them to objects of a transactional system in which their killing yielded tangible benefits.

91. Mr Duterte’s own public statements reinforced this dehumanizing approach. During his victory celebration of 4 June 2016, before the beginning of his presidential term he urged the public to shoot a drug dealer and declared: “*I will give you a medal*”.¹⁴⁴ Later, he publicly emphasised that a higher reward would be paid if a drug lord was

¹⁴² See Section VI.2 f).

¹⁴³ See RAMOS (M.), “Bato: Go gave cops cash as ‘allowance,’ not bounty”, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 17 October 2024, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1993342/bato-go-gave-cops-cash-as-allowance-not-bounty>. See also, INQToday video report, “Bato: Go gave cops cash as ‘allowance,’ not bounty” *Inquirer*, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhktgJfCmII>.

¹⁴⁴ See AP, “Kill drug dealers and I’ll give you a medal, says Philippines president”, *Associated Press*, 5 June 2016, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/05/kill-drug-dealers-medal-philippines-president-rodriego-duterte>.

killed rather than arrested alive.¹⁴⁵ These statements further reveal the dehumanizing logic that underpinned the reward system. During the House Quad Committee hearings of 13 November 2024, Mr Duterte explicitly justified his preference for killing over arrest, stating “[a]t ang order ko sa kanila, sir, nandito na lang rin tayo, ‘pag nahuli ninyo, patayin ninyo lahat. ‘Wag ninyong dalhin sa... pupunta ng presuhan, papakainin ko pa ‘yang mga yan’”: “And my order to them, sir, since we’re already talking about this, if you catch them, kill them all. Don’t take them to... prison, I will have to feed them”.¹⁴⁶

92. During the same hearing, Mr Duterte further acknowledged that excess funds from his 2016 presidential campaign were used to support anti-drug operations and the associated reward system. When questioned by Congressman Dan Fernandez, regarding reports that campaign contributions had been funnelled into rewards for anti-drug operations, Mr Duterte confirmed that surplus funds of his presidential campaign in the 2016 were used to fund police operations and rewards for his drug war to “protect public interest”.¹⁴⁷ He also admitted under oath that, during his tenure as mayor of Davao City, he had personally killed six or seven individuals who he described as “criminals”, stating:

“Ako? Marami. Mga 6 o 7. Hindi ko na-follow up sa hospital kung natuluyan (Me? Many. About 6 or 7. I didn’t follow up at the hospital if they died)”.¹⁴⁸

93. The same dehumanizing approach is reflected in Mr Duterte’s public encouragement of lethal outcomes through monetary incentives. In a separate public address, he promised to double the reward for the killing of targeted individuals, declaring that: “[i]f he is surrendered to me or his carcass, dead, then I double the prize”.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ See e.g., “Prosecution’s Trial Brief”, [No. ICC 01/21-01/25-490-Conf](#), 4 September 2026, para. 79 (the “Prosecution’s Trial Brief”). A public redacted version [No. ICC-01/21-01/25-490-Red](#) was filed on 14 September 2026.

¹⁴⁶ Not an official translation.

¹⁴⁷ CERVANTES (F. M.), “Duterte confirms existence of ‘reward system” *Philippine News Agency* 13 November 2024, available at <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1237749>. See also, the video House of Representatives, Quad Committee, “11th Quad Committee Hearing on EJK” 19th Congress, 3rd Regular Session, 13 November 2024, Testimony of Rodrigo Duterte, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCk8Vde3bw8>.

¹⁴⁸ Not an official translation.

¹⁴⁹ See the Prosecution’s Trial Brief, *supra* note 145, para. 120.

The reference to a suspect's "*carcass*", coupled with the promise of a higher reward for a dead target, further illustrates the extent to which human life was commodified and reduced to an object of transactional value within the anti-drug campaign.

94. The incidents charged further demonstrate that the common plan was not confined to the elimination of alleged drug traffickers or high-value drug personalities. Rather, consistent with the DDS pattern established in Davao City, the campaign expanded to encompass suspected drug users and even individuals with no identifiable connection to illegal drugs. An examination of the specific incidents charged by the Prosecution reveals that fourteen involved victims who were solely suspected drug users,¹⁵⁰ and eight victims who were alleged as either drug "*pushers*",¹⁵¹ "*suspects*",¹⁵² or "*personalities*"¹⁵³ based on a watchlist.¹⁵⁴ In addition, five separate incidents involved victims who were targeted as alleged thieves and bore no nexus to drugs.¹⁵⁵ The inclusion of alleged petty offenders and persons accused of ordinary criminality demonstrates that the logic of the campaign extended beyond drug suppression and evolved into a broader practice of eliminating individuals perceived as undesirable or burdensome to society. This expansion is consistent with the dehumanizing rhetoric and reward-driven system previously discussed, whereby victims were targeted not because of any proven criminal responsibility but because they had been categorized as persons whose lives were considered expendable.

5. Mr Duterte's speeches

95. Finally, Mr Duterte's speeches further demonstrate the dehumanization that underpinned the anti-drug campaign, portraying suspected drug offenders not as individuals entitled to legal protections and human dignity, but as expendable targets

¹⁵⁰ See the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, incidents 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 37, 39 46, and 48.

¹⁵¹ See the Prosecution's Trial Brief, *supra* note 149, incidents 50, 51, 53, and 54.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, incident 52.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, incidents 56 and 57.

¹⁵⁴ Referred as either "Illegal drug personality watchlist," the locality's "watchlist," or the "PRRD List" in the Prosecution's Trial Brief, *supra* note 149.

¹⁵⁵ See the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, incidents 31, 38, 40, 44 and 45.

whose killing was justified, encouraged, and publicly celebrated.¹⁵⁶ His speeches did not merely convey orders to kill drug suspects without due process; they normalized such killings and depicted the targets as persons whose lives were devoid of value. Mr Duterte considered the killings in Davao so successful that he presented them as his chief credential during the 2016 presidential campaign: *“Tell me what is my credentials to the presidency. Then I’ll say Davao is Exhibit A ... Either I get what I want or you perish. Let’s be straightforward. What does that mean? That means killings”*.¹⁵⁷ The brazenness and impunity reflected in these statements served to portray his targets as undeserving of dignity and protection, thereby reinforcing their dehumanization.

96. He reiterated the same intent in another speech:

“You should get out. If not, I will really kill you. So, I killed them. Let’s not play hide and seek anymore. Let’s just be frank ... I will tell the police and the military, go out and kill them. Period”.¹⁵⁸

97. This dehumanization was further exacerbated by the fact that the *“war on drugs”* disproportionately targeted poor and socially vulnerable individuals, exploiting their limited ability to seek redress or resist abuse.¹⁵⁹ In this regard, a Prosecution witness stated that *“the ones [that] we had to do the tokhang operation on had to be poor [...] those who do not have the means to file a complaint against the police”*.¹⁶⁰ Another admitted that *“the people who were killed or could be killed were the poor, people with no means, simple people who were not able to file charges against them”*.¹⁶¹

98. The facts set out above, considered together with the evidence concerning the specific incidents charged, provide the context necessary to understand the alleged violence not as a series of isolated acts, but within the broader environment in which

¹⁵⁶ See Section VI.2 a).

¹⁵⁷ See the Transcript of Confirmation of Charges Hearing held on 23 February 2026, [No. ICC-01/21-01/25-T-004-Red-ENG WT](#), p. 59, lines 1-5.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 59, lines 3-8.

¹⁵⁹ See the Transcript of Confirmation of Charges Hearing held on 24 February 2026, [No. ICC-01/21-01/25-T-005-ENG ET WT](#), p. 12, lines 2-3.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12, lines 3-7.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12, lines 5-7.

suspected criminals and drug personalities were repeatedly portrayed as legitimate targets of lethal force. The evidence concerning the alleged development of the “*Davao Model*”, its subsequent expansion to the national level, the establishment of drug lists and reward mechanisms, the use of operational directives employing terms such as “*neutralization*” and “*negation*”, and Mr Duterte’s repeated public statements concerning the killing of alleged criminals and drug suspects are relevant to assessing the circumstances in which the crimes occurred.

99. The evidence on the “*Davao Model*” is also relevant to understanding the particular vulnerability of the victims, coming from economically and socially vulnerable communities. These circumstances are relevant not because the social status or alleged conduct of a victim determines the unlawfulness of the deprivation of life, but because they illuminate the conditions in which certain individuals may have been rendered especially vulnerable to abuse and particularly unable to obtain protection or effective redress.

100. The significance of the facts presented in this section lies not only in their relevance to the alleged organisation, implementation, and expansion of the practices under examination, but also in what they reveal about the treatment of the victims within that system. The evidence, if established, may demonstrate a context in which suspected criminality was used to justify the removal of ordinary legal protections, while institutional structures, operational practices, financial incentives, and public rhetoric contributed to making lethal violence appear permissible or desirable. The crimes should therefore be assessed with due regard to both the individual harm suffered by each victim and the broader circumstances alleged to have enabled, facilitated, or normalised that harm.

101. Ultimately, recognition of victims’ interests requires that the assessment of accountability remain centred on the unlawfulness of the alleged deprivation of life and on the individual and collective harm resulting from it. It is within that framework that the facts concerning the “*Davao Model*”, its nationwide expansion, the reward

system, the drug lists, and the public rhetoric are relevant to understanding the full nature and extent of the harm alleged by the victims and their families.

VI. VICTIMS PARTICIPATING IN THE CASE

1. Overview of the participating victims

102. This section presents the demographic profile and circumstances of the participating victims, based on the information contained in their respective application forms for participation.¹⁶² The consultations conducted with the victims, considered together with an analysis of their application forms, indicate that those targeted by the drug war campaign of Mr Duterte were predominantly men from poor and marginalised communities, particularly those residing in urban informal settlements characterised by high levels of poverty and socio-economic vulnerability. These demographic characteristics provide important context for understanding the circumstances in which the victims were targeted and the particular forms of harm suffered by them and their families.

103. Based on the information provided by the 539 participating victims, 248 male family members and 14 female family members were reported to have been killed or to have survived attempted killings under Mr Duterte's "*war on drugs*", representing approximately 95% and 5% of those reported, respectively. Those reported included 239 adults and 24 children, representing approximately 91% and 9%, respectively, with ages ranging from [REDACTED], the age of the youngest, [REDACTED],¹⁶³ to 61 years.

¹⁶² The Brief refers to statements contained in the application forms of the participating victims represented by the CLRv solely to provide an overview of those victims, their experiences, and the harm they describe. Under the ABC approach, these forms are accessible only to the CLRv, the Registry and the Chamber. References to their contents are not intended, at this stage of the proceedings, to constitute a submission of those statements as evidence or an invitation to rely upon them as such. This clarification is without prejudice to the separate treatment of the account contained in the application forms of dual-status individuals, which the Prosecution will disclose in due course and whose evidentiary use will be subject to the applicable procedural requirements.

¹⁶³ See a/50084/25.

104. At least 190 of those killed or who survived attempted killings, approximately 73%, were identified as breadwinners for their households. This was the scenario even though, when employed, they earned as little as PHP 100,00 per day (approximately 1.40 Euros). Most of the people killed worked in the informal sector, as scavenger, tricycle driver, jeepney barker, vendor, *batilyo* (fish port workers), construction workers carpenter, student, delivery rider, *kargadors* (container van loaders), repair or laundry worker.

105. Data further indicate that 99% of the participating victims come from urban poor communities. A total of 523 lived - and still live - in an urban setting, residing in densely populated areas. Based on the 2015 census, some of these communities had population densities of approximately 71,263 persons per square kilometres.¹⁶⁴ The typical floor area of some victims' homes was approximately 6 square meters. In some cases, the entire home was even smaller - roughly the size of a table in the ICC Courtroom. The victims' houses were typically constructed from wood, used tarpaulin, plastic, light materials and broken hollow blocks - any material that families could scavenge and utilize.¹⁶⁵ The victims' homes were usually single-room dwelling in which the entire family slept, ate and carried out their daily activities. For many families, these were the same rooms in which their relatives were killed. With no realistic alternative housing available to them, the families were compelled to continue living in these spaces. They were therefore left to carry on their daily lives in homes that had also become the scenes of their relatives' deaths.

106. Participating victims are predominantly female – at about 70%. They are all Filipinos nationals and predominantly speak Filipino (Tagalog), Cebuano, Bisaya, and other local languages such as Ilokano, Hiligaynon, Bikolano. At the time of their respective incidents, at least 143 (27%) of the participating victims were children. Of

¹⁶⁴ See the Philippine Statistics Authority, *Philippine Population Density (Based on the 2015 Census of Population)*, available at: [Philippine Population Density \(Based on the 2015 Census of Population\) | Philippine Statistics Authority](#).

¹⁶⁵ See Asian Development Bank, BERSE (K.), *Advancing Inclusive and Resilient Urban Development Targeted at the Urban Poor Philippines: Urbanization Trends, Hazard Exposure and Sectoral Realities: A Macro View of Philippine Cities (Supplementary Report)*, February 2022, paras. 110-112.

these children, at least 57 are reported to have stopped attending school for at least one year following the killing of a family member. Currently, 89 (17%) of the participating victims are children.

107. Approximately 3 in 10 Filipino households live as extended families rather than in a ‘traditional-nuclear’ family arrangement consisting of the household head, spouse, and children. This household structure has been attributed to families’ adaptive responses to economic challenges, including rising costs, stagnant wages, and broader socio-economic changes.¹⁶⁶ This pattern is also reflected in the family structures of participating victims. While 155 chose to apply before the Court in their individual capacity, 96 also applied as households. These households range in size from as few as 2 members, to approximately 12-15 members. They further demonstrate that the relationship between a participating victim and the deceased is not confined to the immediate nuclear family. Participating victims include parents, children, and siblings, but also step-parents, uncles, nieces and nephews, grandparents and grandchildren, or even godparents from baptism rites. It is also common for victims to be the “*common-law*” spouses or unmarried partners of the deceased.

108. The affected communities include low-income and densely populated communities across the Philippines, including cities in the National Capital Region, such as Quezon City,¹⁶⁷ Caloocan,¹⁶⁸ Manila,¹⁶⁹ Navotas;¹⁷⁰ areas in Central Luzon Region, including Bulacan; areas in Central Visayas, including Cebu; and areas in Mindanao and in the Davao Region. The geographic distribution of the victims indicates that the impact was not confined to a single locality or region, but was

¹⁶⁶ See ANGELO (F. A. L.), 28% of Filipino Families Live in Extended Households, PIDS Says, 21 May 2025, available at: [28% of Filipino Families Live in Extended Households, PIDS Says | Daily Guardian](#). See also, the Philippines Institute for Development Studies, Demographic Trends and Housing Patterns in the Philippines, 10 December 2024, available at: [PIDS - Philippine Institute for Development Studies](#).

¹⁶⁷ Reaching 17,099 persons per square kilometres. See the Philippine Statistics Authority, *Philippine Population Density (Based on the 2015 Census of Population)*, available at: [Philippine Population Density \(Based on the 2015 Census of Population\) | Philippine Statistics Authority](#).

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, counting 28,387 persons per square kilometres.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, counting 71,263 persons per square kilometres.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, counting 27,904 persons per square kilometres.

experienced across urban and densely populated communities in different parts of the country.

109. Taken together, the information contained in the application forms indicates that the “*war on drug*” disproportionately affected marginalized and vulnerable communities, including low-income and densely populated communities. The consequences of the campaign may therefore be understood not only in light of its stated objective of combating drugs, but also in terms of its profound impact on poor and economically vulnerable communities. This dimension has contributed to its characterization as a “*war against the poor*”.

2. The victims’ experience of the events underlying the charges: dehumanisation

110. The different forms of dehumanisation experienced by victims and their deceased relatives, described *infra*, must be understood in the broader context in which Mr Duterte’s “*war on drugs*” was conceived, publicly promoted and implemented nationwide. The treatment of persons targeted by the campaign did not arise in isolation. It was preceded and accompanied by rhetoric that diminished their human worth and by an official operational framework directing the police nationwide to pursue the “*neutralization*” and “*negation*” of persons suspected of involvement with illegal drugs.¹⁷¹

111. Mr Duterte repeatedly portrayed persons suspected of involvement with drugs, including drug users, as lacking human worth and as persons whose deaths were an anticipated consequence of his anti-drug campaign. In an address to the PNP on 17 August 2016, he stated that prolonged users of *shabu* were “*no longer viable as human beings in this planet*”.¹⁷² In another official address, he questioned whether persons

¹⁷¹ See Section V.3; V.4 and V.5.

¹⁷² See the Speech of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte during the 115th Police Service Anniversary, Presidential Communication Office, 17 August 2016, available at: <https://pco.gov.ph/aug-17-2016-speech-of-president-rodrigo-roa-duterte-during-the-115th-police-service-anniversary/>.

targeted in the campaign were human at all: “[i]n the first place, I’d like to be frank with you: are they humans?”.¹⁷³ His rhetoric also expressly anticipated large numbers of deaths. During the presidential campaign, Mr Duterte publicly encouraged the establishment of funeral parlours in anticipation of the killings, stating on one occasion: “[t]he funeral parlors will be packed ... I’ll supply the dead bodies”.¹⁷⁴

112. This rhetoric was followed by the nationwide operationalization of the anti-drug campaign through the CMC 16-2016. Significantly, CMC 16-2016 itself identified the drug problem as one affecting “mostly the underprivileged and impoverished sector of the society” and emphasized the need to address it at the “grassroots level”.¹⁷⁵

113. As already discussed in Section V, the CMC 16-2016 repeatedly employed the terminology of “neutralization”, “negation” and “neutralize” in relation to persons targeted by the campaign. Its stated purpose included the “neutralization of illegal drug personalities nationwide”; its implementation provisions directed the PNP to pursue the “neutralization of illegal drug personalities”; persons suspected of drug trafficking who refused a *Tokhang* house-to-house visitation were to be referred for “immediate case build-up and negation”; and designated Focus Teams were instructed to “[n]eutralize High value and street level targets” and their support systems.¹⁷⁶ The significance of this terminology cannot be assessed in isolation from the manner in which the campaign was implemented. As described in the following sections, the accounts of participating victims provide concrete examples of what the “war on drugs” meant for the persons and communities affected by it. They describe not only the killing of their family members, but different and interconnected forms of dehumanising treatment before, during and after those killings, as well as the continuing consequences for the surviving families.

¹⁷³ See ‘Drug users aren’t human, says Duterte’, GMA News Online, 28 August 2016, available at: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/579277/drug-users-aren-t-human-says-duterte/story/>.

¹⁷⁴ See *Undertaker misery on frontlines of PH drug war*, Inquirer.net, 9 December 2016, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/852123/undertaker-misery-on-frontlines-of-ph-drug-war>.

¹⁷⁵ See the CMC 16-2016, *supra* note 132, p. 2.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-5.

114. It is against this broader context - Mr Duterte's public portrayal of persons associated with drugs as lacking human worth, the subsequent nationwide operationalization of the anti-drug campaign through *Project Double Barrel*, and the manner in which that campaign was implemented - that the different forms of dehumanisation described by victims should be understood. The three confirmed counts of crimes against humanity against Mr Duterte concern acts that strike at the humanity of their victims. Such acts are often preceded by the marginalization and dehumanisation of those targeted, processes that can serve to justify or facilitate violence against them.¹⁷⁷ In this case, the alleged use of State power and resources against a defenceless population, adds a further dimension to the gravity of the conduct: the power and resources of the State are derived, and entrusted to serve, the very people against whom they were deployed.

115. Said dehumanisation caused profound and enduring harm to the victims, their families and their communities. One participating victim expressed this experience in the following words:

"My loved one was not perfect - none of us are - but he was a human being. He was someone's child, someone's parent, someone's partner. He deserved dignity, due process, and the chance to defend himself. Instead, his life ended without warning, without explanation, and without accountability. For many of us, the moment we learned of our loved one's death was the moment our own lives changed forever. We were left with questions that no one in authority would answer. We were left with fear that speaking out would put us in danger. And we were left with the painful knowledge that the institutions meant to protect us had failed us".

116. Specifically, victims recall how their murdered loved ones experienced the *"widespread and systematic attack"* perpetrated in the course of Mr Duterte's anti-drug campaign. They describe: (i) public statements by Mr Duterte and his co-perpetrators that dehumanised the people targeted by his *"war on drugs"*; (ii) the degrading and violent manner in which their loved ones were killed; (iii) the treatment of their bodies

¹⁷⁷ STAHN (C.), *A Critical Introduction to International Criminal Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 53.

as “*objects*” to be claimed from funeral parlours associated with the police; (iv) the labels “*na-tokhang*” and “*addict*” applied both to those killed and to their families, including participating victims; and (v) the false portrayal of those killed as “*nanlaban*” (fight back) against the police, despite the victims’ accounts that their loved ones were defenceless.

a) *Dehumanisation of the victims through public statements*

117. Atrocity crimes, such as crimes against humanity, “are often preceded by processes of marginalizing or dehumanizing the identities of others (‘othering’) in order to justify crimes”.¹⁷⁸ In numerous public speeches, Mr Duterte portrayed people suspected of drug offences and people living with addiction as less than human and deserving of death. On 30 June 2016, during the inaugural address as President, he announced the “relentless” method of his “war on drugs” and specifically addressed Congress and the CHR:

*“I know that there are those who do not approve of my methods of fighting criminality, the sale and use of illegal drugs and corruption. They say that my methods are unorthodox and verge on the illegal. In response let me say this: [...] Look at this from that perspective and tell me that I am wrong. In this fight, I ask Congress and the Commission on Human Rights and all others who are similarly situated to allow us a level of governance that is consistent to our mandate. The fight will be relentless and it will be sustained”.*¹⁷⁹

118. On 25 July 2016, during his first State of the Nation Address before the Philippine Congress, Mr Duterte declared that “[...] human rights cannot be used as a shield or an excuse to destroy the country, your country and my country”.¹⁸⁰ This portion of Mr Duterte’s speech received the strongest applause from members of the Philippine Congress and those present in the public gallery. On 17 August 2016, in a speech delivered at the headquarters of the PNP – the institution tasked with enforcing his

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ See the Presidential Communications Office, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte’s Speech during his Inauguration as the 16th President of the Republic of the Philippines, 30 June 2016, available at: <https://pco.gov.ph/june-30-2016-president-rodrigo-roa-dutertes-inaugural-address/>.

¹⁸⁰ See Rodrigo Roa Duterte, *First State of the Nation Address*, 25 July 2016, official transcript, Presidential Communications Office, starts at 13:16 until 13:38, available at: [July 25, 2016 – President Rodrigo Roa Duterte’s State of the National Address \(SONA\) during the Opening Ceremony of the First Regular Session of the 17th Congress of the Republic of the Philippines – Presidential Communications Office](#).

“war on drugs” - Mr Duterte declared that individuals who use illicit drugs, specifically methamphetamine - commonly known as *“shabu”* - cease to be regarded as human:

*“And it has not only affected millions, but a lot of them are no longer viable as human beings in this planet. [...] [A] year or more of shabu use would shrink the brain of a person, and therefore he is no longer viable for rehabilitation”.*¹⁸¹

119. On 26 August 2016, speaking to members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (the “AFP”) at a military camp, Mr Duterte questioned the humanity of people targeted by his anti-drug campaign: *“Crime against humanity? In the first place, I’d like to be frank with you: are they humans? What is your definition of a human being?”*.¹⁸²

On 30 September 2016, he invoked Hitler’s mass murder of Jews when referring to people he described as drug addicts, stating: *“Hitler massacred 3 million Jews. Now there is 3 million, what is it, 3 million drug addicts, there are. I’d be happy to slaughter them”*.¹⁸³

120. Mr Duterte’s public statements dehumanising persons targeted by the *“war on drugs”* contributed to a discourse in which those persons were portrayed as undeserving sympathy or protection and in which violence against them was normalised, paving the way for the public acceptance of their murders. Senior officials in his administration reinforced this rhetoric. On 25 August 2016, PNP Chief dela Rosa urged drug users and pushers who had surrendered to the authorities to kill drug lords.¹⁸⁴ On 1 February 2017, Vitaliano Aguirre II¹⁸⁵ - responding to Amnesty

¹⁸¹ See the Speech of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte during the 115th Police Service Anniversary, Presidential Communication Office, 17 August 2016, available at:

<https://pco.gov.ph/aug-17-2016-speech-of-president-rodrigo-roa-duterte-during-the-115th-police-service-anniversary/>.

¹⁸² See ‘Drug users aren’t human, says Duterte’, GMA News Online, 28 August 2016, available at: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/579277/drug-users-aren-t-human-says-duterte/story/>.

¹⁸³ MCKIRDY (E.), “Philippines President likens himself to Hitler”, CNN, 30 September 2016, available at: [Philippines President likens himself to Hitler | CNN](https://www.cnn.com/2016/09/30/asia/philippines-president-hitler/index.html).

¹⁸⁴ “Kilala n’yo sino ang drug lord dito. Gusto niyong patayin, patayin niyo. Puwede kayong pumatay dahil kayo ang biktima nila”: You know who are the drug lord here. If you want to kill them, kill them. You are allowed to kill because you are the victim here. See LEGASPI (A. O.), *Bato to drug users, pushers: Go after drug lords, kill them if you want*, on GMA News Online 25 August 2016, available at: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/578892/bato-to-drug-users-pushers-go-after-drug-lords-kill-them-if-you-want/story/>.

¹⁸⁵ See the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, p. 42.

International and other human rights organizations that had warned that the mass extrajudicial killings associated with the anti-drug campaign could constitute “*crimes against humanity*”- declared: “*The criminals, the drug lords, drug pushers, they are not humanity. They are not humanity*”.¹⁸⁶ He further stated: “*In other words, how can that be when your war is only against those drug lords, drug addicts, drug pushers. You consider them humanity? I do not*”.¹⁸⁷

121. In November 2018, after assuming command of the Manila Police District (the “MPD”), Vincent Danao¹⁸⁸ publicly threatened persons involved in illegal drugs: “*If I discover anyone involved in drugs, especially those who distribute or just throw them around, son of a bitch, I will go after you, god damn. I will kill you. Blatantly I am saying that. Sons of bitches*”.¹⁸⁹ Danao is among the police officers commonly referred to the “*Davao boys*” – officers who served in the Davao Region, gained Mr Duterte’s trust and favour and subsequently rose through the ranks of the police force.¹⁹⁰ These statements made by Mr Duterte and senior officials in his administration contributed to normalise violence against people targeted by the anti-drug campaign. In this context, such statements dehumanise those targeted and offered a justification for their killings and for the brazen, degrading manner in which their killings were carried out.

¹⁸⁶ See Inquirer.Net, *Criminals are not human* - Aguirre, Agence France-Presse, 1 February 2017, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/867331/criminals-are-not-human-aguirre>.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ Danao was appointed by Mr Duterte as Counterintelligence Chief of the PNP Directorate for Intelligence in PNP National Headquarters (July 2016-February 2017) and Chief of Directorial Staff and then Deputy Director for Operations of the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (February 2017-November 2018) and Manila Police District Director (November 2018-October 2019). During Mr Duterte’s Mayoral period, Danao was Chief of Davao City Police (October 2013-June 2016). See the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, pp. 41-42.

¹⁸⁹ See CHI (C.), *In their own words: How Duterte’s men vowed to kill, according to ICC prosecution*, PhilStar Global, 24 February 2026, available at: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2026/02/24/2510179/their-own-words-how-dutertes-men-vowed-kill-according-icc-prosecution>.

¹⁹⁰ See TALABONG (R.), *Davao boy Danao is next Metro Manila police chief*, Rambo Talabong, on Rappler, 10 November 2020, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/philippines/davao-boy-vicente-danao-jr-next-metro-manila-police-chief/>.

b) Dehumanisation of the victims through the modus operandi of the perpetrators

122. As set out in the confirmed charges, the “*attack [against the civilian population] was also systematic in that it was planned, organized and executed in a coordinated fashion, with the acts perpetrated in a clear pattern of violence directed at the targeted population*”.¹⁹¹ A discernible *modus operandi* characterised the violent manner in which persons targeted by Mr Duterte’s “*war on drugs*” were killed, further evidencing the systematic nature of the attack. The killings - whether carried out by police personnel during operations or by unidentified assailants or vigilantes - displayed recurring features and patterns that are consistent with, and support the allegation of, executions carried out pursuant to a common plan or policy involving State actors. Victims consistently recount that the attackers entered their homes and rooms by force, without identifying themselves or presenting warrants.

123. At least 95 (18%) of participating victims reported that the armed attack took place inside their homes. Among the 539 participating victims, at least 89 of them recall that their family members were murdered inside their homes. Even where the killings did not occur in the victims’ own homes, the bodies of their murdered relatives were found in friends’ or relatives’ houses. In addition, at least 234 participating victims stated that their relatives were murdered within their own communities. As the victims lived in high-density communities, they were generally known to the people within their communities. The traumatic events experienced by victims and their families in these low-income communities therefore did not remain confined to the immediate households, but became known and circulated throughout the wider community.

124. The armed persons typically operated in groups of two or four and wore either police uniforms or civilian clothes - often all black. Their faces were commonly concealed by balaclavas-style headgear, or masks, baseball caps or helmets. They were

¹⁹¹ See the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, page 45.

armed with handguns. At least 95 participating victims reported that armed persons entered their homes; while at least 114 reported that police entered their home or attacked their relatives; and at least 90 reported that masked assailants entered their homes and/or attacked their family members.

125. The direct perpetrators showed no regard for the inviolability and sanctity of the victims' homes. As recounted by a/50214/25, whose [REDACTED] was murdered inside their home on the morning [REDACTED] 2016:

"[...] My [REDACTED] [...] was killed.... at around two in the morning. [...] Soon, our [REDACTED] woke up crying incessantly. [REDACTED] also woke up. When I peeked out the window, I saw masked police officers. I had a gut feeling they were police because tokhang operations had been happening in our area, and my friends said the ones conducting them wore civilian clothes. After a while, we heard them pass outside our room. I also heard my [REDACTED] speak. My [REDACTED] said, "Sir, I will take off my clothes, I will not fight back!" He said that to show that he was unarmed. Moments later, we heard gunshots. My [REDACTED] told me to go downstairs because he was afraid he might be targeted since he was a man".

126. As recounted by a/50295/25, the victim's [REDACTED] was murdered inside their home while preparing for [REDACTED] in the morning [REDACTED] 2016:

"At around 7 a.m. that day, I had just woken up and saw my [REDACTED] preparing to [REDACTED]. He asked [REDACTED] ... to go out and buy more ingredients for spaghetti; [...] While I was drinking coffee, the door to our home was closed. Suddenly, six to eight men forced their way in. They were not in uniform, had no IDs, were carrying guns, and their faces were not covered. They went straight to my [REDACTED], who was cooking in the kitchen and visibly startled, and shouted at him to lie face down. [...] As I was being taken toward the door, they suddenly shot my [REDACTED] in the head".

127. Another victim described how her [REDACTED] was murdered inside their home:

"A barangay official told my [REDACTED], to surrender to the police because he was on the "watch list" as a drug user. He had given up drug use months earlier, so did not go. Two weeks later three armed masked men wearing bulletproof vests arrived at our home in Manila and handcuffed him. I could hear my [REDACTED] begging for his life from outside the room. We were

crying and the other armed man threatened to kill us as well. Moments later, my [REDACTED] was shot dead”.

128. Thus, homes which should have provided shelter and security became crime scenes where loved ones were brazenly killed, reflecting the apparent impunity enjoyed by the direct perpetrators – who acted without fear of arrest or accountability. Where police officers were the direct perpetrators, their entry into these houses without an arrest warrant also violated the victim’s constitutional protection against unreasonable search and seizures, and more fundamentally, their constitutional right to life.¹⁹²

129. As [REDACTED] [REDACTED] recounted :

“[REDACTED]”.

130. A number of victims attempted to physically protect their family members from the perpetrators but were forcefully separated from them. Data from the participating victims indicate that at least 123 were physically separated from the deceased by the direct perpetrators. This occurred to a/50227/25 in the early hours [REDACTED] 2017. At that time, victim a/50227/25, her [REDACTED] and her [REDACTED], were preparing to go to the hospital:

“In the early hours [REDACTED], my [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had a [REDACTED] dispute. I lived nearby, at the back of their home, while they occupied the front. The house was divided into rooms, and theirs was in front. I went there because they were fighting. [...] At that time, [REDACTED] was [REDACTED]. They had nothing. They had no money, so I broke open my piggy bank and gave them what I had—just about fifty pesos in coins. A little later, while we were at their house [...] preparing things to bring to the hospital, people arrived. They were looking for [...] - six or seven of them dressed in black. They had guns but no bonnets. One was wearing a police uniform, though it was covered by a jacket and hard to notice. My [REDACTED] kept repeating, ‘[REDACTED], don’t leave me’. So, I blocked the way. He pleaded again, saying ‘I will come with you, just don’t kill me. [REDACTED], don’t leave me’. Four officers were inside. One shouted at me, ‘Get out of the way!’ They pulled me down the stairs and yanked my hair. They had guns. My

¹⁹² See Sec. 2, Art. III, [Philippines Constitution](#).

[REDACTED] *pleaded again, '[REDACTED], don't leave me. He was hugging [REDACTED]. They dragged me out into the street and put me on a motorcycle'.*

131. The same experience is recalled by a/50295/25:

"Worried for my [REDACTED], I hugged him. One of the men, a heavyset one, pulled me away from him. I nearly slipped, but thankfully my [REDACTED] caught me [...]".

132. The forcible separation of the victims from their family members - even when they attempted to protect them from the perpetrators - further illustrate the apparent impunity with which the perpetrators acted. Their conduct suggests that they did not fear of being arrested by law enforcement authorities. Those murdered inside their homes were often killed in the presence of their family members, including, their spouse, children and parents, particularly their mothers. In at least 26 cases, victims reported that their kin were murdered in front of them. As recounted by a/50262/25, whose [REDACTED] were both killed [REDACTED] 2016:

"[...] at around 1:00 AM, [...] was sleeping inside [REDACTED] with my [REDACTED] [...] and my [REDACTED], [...] I was outside our house waiting for my [REDACTED], [...] to return from work. I saw about twenty-five armed men arriving in our area, riding about a dozen motorcycles. The men wore masks and civilian clothing, with only their eyes visible. [...] I saw some of the armed men trying to force their way into our house. [...] One of the armed men looked inside our [REDACTED] where my [REDACTED], [...] were sleeping. When the armed men saw my [REDACTED] dressed in briefs, a police officer asked, 'ARE YOU [...]?' My [REDACTED] replied, 'YES SIR! WHY?' The police officer said, 'PUT ON SHORTS, YOU'RE BEING INVITED TO THE PRECINCT'. After my [REDACTED] put on shorts, they suddenly shot him. My [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] witnessed how they mercilessly killed my [REDACTED]".

133. As a/50018/25 also witnessed the murder of her [REDACTED]:

"[REDACTED] 2017, at about 9.45 in the evening, I was at home with my [REDACTED] and our [REDACTED] who were sleeping upstairs. Four unidentified men wearing helmets and bonnets arrived at home, looking for my [REDACTED]. They broke down the front door. I started begging them to spare the life of my [REDACTED]. The men pushed me away. My [REDACTED] was shot in the chest and fell face down. While lying face down he was shot 5

more times in the nape and head. The children woke up terrified because of the gunshots”.

134. The recurring attack inside the victims’ homes must also be considered in light of the CMC No 16-2016. As already indicated, the Circular expressly contemplated house-to-house visits as a central component of “*Project Tokhang*”. The relevant provision states, *inter alia*:

*“3) House to House Visitation Stage: The actual house to house visitations of suspected drug personalities shall be the highlight of PROJECT TOKHANG. It shall be conducted simultaneously nationwide on the first day of the Office of the CPNP [...]”.*¹⁹³

135. “*Project Tokhang*” formed part of Mr Duterte’s anti-drug campaign and involved barangay-level operations directed at persons identified as suspected “*drug users*” or “*drug pushers*”. The identification of said individuals was facilitated by the barangay “*watch/target list*” contemplated under the CMC 16-2016:

*“23) PROs/PPOs/CPOs/CPS/MPS: [...] f) Maintain updated watch/target list, wanted list on drug groups/personalities and most wanted drug traffickers;”*¹⁹⁴

136. The Circular, therefore, provides important context for the recurring practice, described by the participating victims, of entering homes to identify and target individuals before their subsequent murder

137. Attacks against the victims also occurred on the streets. As recounted by [REDACTED], [REDACTED] 2016:

*“[REDACTED]”.*¹⁹⁵

138. Across attacks carried out both inside homes and in public places, participating victims identified police officers as the perpetrators in at least 113 cases and masked assailants in at least 91 cases.

¹⁹³ See the CMC 16-2016, *supra* note 132, p. 4.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁹⁵ See the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED].

c) Dehumanisation through the violent manner of the killings, including of victims who surrendered or begged for their lives

139. The information provided by participating victims reveals the particularly violent manner in which their family members were killed. The violence extended beyond the use of lethal force itself to the circumstances immediately preceding and surrounding the killings. Family members describe persons killed after they had surrendered, while kneeling or otherwise manifesting submission, or while begging for their lives. In other case, their relatives removed their clothes to demonstrate that they were unarmed and carried no drugs, but were nevertheless killed. Accounts further describe persons being beaten or tortured before their deaths, shot multiple times, and bodies found with severe injuries or being abandoned in public places.

140. Of the 539 participating victims, at least 65 reported that their family member pleaded for their life before being killed. In one account, police officers entered the house looking for the victim's [REDACTED]:

*"On [REDACTED] 2016, [...] four police officers forcibly entered the house looking for my [REDACTED]. My [REDACTED] tried to run away towards the back exit of the house. Policemen chased him and dragged him outside the house where there were many policemen in uniform carrying firearms waiting outside the house. I followed them and I saw the policemen shouting at my [REDACTED] telling him to run and before my [REDACTED] could run, the policemen shot him around nine(9) times [...]"*¹⁹⁶

141. Another participating victim similarly described how her [REDACTED] continued to beg for his life after he had already been shot and had collapsed to the floor. The perpetrator nevertheless continued shooting him:

*"[REDACTED]"*¹⁹⁷

142. In another incident, police officers apprehended several men who had been playing billiards and handcuffed them. According to the participating victim, the

¹⁹⁶ See a/50023/25

¹⁹⁷ [REDACTED].

officers searched the men but found no evidence against them. They were subsequently taken behind a house and shot. The victim's [REDACTED] was the last to be shot. Immediately before his death, he was *"kneeling, begging, and embracing the police"*.¹⁹⁸

143. Other accounts indicate that persons targeted during operations attempted to demonstrate explicitly that they posed no threat. At least three victims removed, or offered to remove, their clothes during the attack to show that they were unarmed. One participating victim recalled that, when masked police officers entered their home, her [REDACTED] told them: *"Sir, I will take off my clothes, I will not fight back!"* He did so to demonstrate that he was unarmed. He was nevertheless killed inside the house.¹⁹⁹ These accounts of persons being killed despite visibly surrendering, pleading for mercy or demonstrating that they were unarmed form part of a broader pattern concerning the violent manner in which the killings were carried out.

144. The manner in which the family members of participating victims were killed, and the condition in which their bodies were subsequently treated, was in many instances particularly violent and dehumanizing. The condition of some bodies upon recovery illustrates the severity of the violence inflicted upon them. As one participating victim described the lifeless body of a relative:

"The body seemed like it was just thrown out. The nails were removed. One eyeball was missing, stuffed by cotton".²⁰⁰

145. One participating victim recalled seeing police officers intercept his [REDACTED] as he returned from work. The officers struck his [REDACTED] head against a wall and accused him of selling *shabu*. After he denied the accusation, he was taken towards the family home, where he called out, *"[REDACTED], help me!"*. A police officer then shot him twice, once in the head and once in the chest. The victim

¹⁹⁸ See a/50263/25.

¹⁹⁹ See a/50214/25.

²⁰⁰ See a/50051/25.

further reported seeing an officer subsequently place four packets of shabu and a gun beside his [REDACTED] body.²⁰¹

146. Another victim reported that her [REDACTED] was detained at a police precinct, repeatedly pressured to confess to a crime and threatened him that, if he refused, *“your life will be the price”*. According to her account, he was beaten with a gun and electrocuted. She later found his body abandoned on a boulevard: *“[w]hat I saw was a nightmare. My [REDACTED] had been discarded like an animal, his lifeless body lying on the boulevard, abandoned like a fish by the roadside”*.²⁰² Other accounts similarly describe bodies bearing signs of particularly severe violence.

147. Another participating victim described recognizing her [REDACTED] body at the funeral home from his feet. When the body was uncovered, she observed that *“his mouth was shattered, his left eye was nearly popping out, his genitals were bleeding, and there was a gunshot wound on the side of his head”*.²⁰³ In another account, a participating victim reported that her [REDACTED] was abducted by four armed men and subsequently found dead. According to the police report, he had been beaten, subjected to burning and sustained six gunshot wounds before his body was dumped in an empty lot along [REDACTED].²⁰⁴

148. Taken together, the accounts of participating victims concerning persons killed while surrendering or begging for their lives, the continuation of violence despite manifestations of non-resistance, the infliction of violence before death, repeated shootings, and the condition and disposal of bodies reveal recurring features in the manner in which the killings were carried out. These accounts are relevant to the pattern of violence underlying the confirmed charges and to the Pre-Trial Chamber’s finding that the alleged attack was *“systematic in that it was planned, organized and*

²⁰¹ See a/50005/25.

²⁰² See a/50002/25.

²⁰³ See a/50262/25.

²⁰⁴ See a/50264/25.

*executed in a coordinated fashion, with the acts perpetrated in a clear pattern of violence directed at the targeted population”.*²⁰⁵

d) Dehumanization of victims driven by institutionalized systems of reward, quotas, promotions and disincentives

149. The individuals targeted were dehumanized when they were reduced to commercialized units targeted for liquidation within a state-sanctioned operational architecture created by Mr Duterte.²⁰⁶ Under the façade of a “*war on drugs*”, civilians - from vulnerable, impoverished urban communities - were systematically stripped of their human dignity and rights, processed not as citizens entitled to due process, but as numerical metrics required to satisfy quotas, claim bounties, and secure career advancement. Rather than conducting legitimate law enforcement operations aimed at public safety, law enforcement personnel, local government units (the “LGUs”) and external contractors (vigilante hitmen) functioned within a commercialized hierarchy of violence where human targets were commodified, monetized, and liquidated to meet administrative requirements imposed by directives such as the CMC 16-2016.

150. The mechanics of this dehumanization were anchored in explicit tier systems and neutralization quotas that attached direct monetary values to human lives,²⁰⁷ ranging from low-level street sellers valued at PHP 10,000 - PHP 20,000 (190 to

²⁰⁵ See the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, p. 45.

²⁰⁶ See the Prosecution’s Trial Brief, *supra* note 149, the 6 of the 9 incidents charged under Count 1 all feature the payment of a monetary reward (2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9). Rewards during the mayoral period often averaged around 30,000 pesos (\$480 USD) per head. DDS members report knowing and expecting that they would receive monetary rewards. Of those charged under Count 2 (“*high value targets*”), 4 out of 6 incidents featured monetary rewards (11, 12, 56, 57). For HVTs, commensurate with their status within the operational tiers of CMC 16-2016, the rewards were much higher than those paid to DDS or for regular barangay clearance operations of low-level sellers, often reaching millions of pesos (around \$16,000 USD and above). Rewards were also frequently given in the crimes alleged under Court 3, in 12 incidents (15, 18, 19, 20, 23, 42, 48, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54). A reward was expected for the killing alleged in Incident 24 but the insider witness did not receive one. Rewards for these groups of victims were much lower, averaging only a few thousand pesos (around \$30-80 USD).

²⁰⁷ See e.g., promotions of Chito Bersaluna from police chief of Caloocan to police chief of Bulacan province in 2018, and promotion of Roberto Fajardo from chief of Northern Police District to chief of PNP Highway Patrol.

381 Euro)²⁰⁸ to higher-level figures valued at PHP 2,000,000 (38,138 Euro).²⁰⁹ By placing explicit price tags on human beings, Mr Duterte incentivized officers and hitmen to view civilians not as human, but as financial commodities or targets necessary to fulfil performance quotas.²¹⁰ Police districts operated under strict expectations ranging from five killings per month to ten per week, turning human body counts into standardized metrics of “*success*” within the “*war on drugs*”.²¹¹

151. This system enforced compliance through severe career and operational disincentives, ensuring that non-lethal law enforcement was actively discouraged. Station commanders and officers who met or exceeded “*neutralization*” quotas received accelerated promotions, formal awards, and access to discretionary “*confidential funds*”.²¹² Conversely, officers who hesitated or refused to hit their killing quotas faced administrative demotion, reassignment to remote or dangerous posts, or being branded as drug sympathizers - a label that carried a direct threat of death.²¹³ [REDACTED], police officers committed extrajudicial killings not out of genuine ideological conviction, but because the system forced a choice between hunting fellow humans for reward and career advancement, or facing professional destruction and physical elimination themselves.²¹⁴

152. Institutional organization under CMC 16-2016 systematically erased legal protections and oversight, embedding dehumanization into state policy. LGUs were forced to generate rosters of alleged drug users and pushers, transforming community

²⁰⁸ Average PHP=Euro Exchange rate in December 2016 was PHP 1.00 = 52,44 Euro; <https://www.exchangerates.org.uk/EUR-PHP-spot-exchange-rates-history-2016.html>.

²⁰⁹ See Philippines House of Representatives [EIGHTH JOINT PUBLIC HEARING OF THE HOUSE QUAD-COMMITTEE \(PART 2\)](#) (at time stamp 1:11:03), 11 October 2024. See also PHL-OTP-00249903, pp. 263-264.

²¹⁰ See the Prosecution’s Trial Brief, *supra* note 149, [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

²¹¹ For example, Quezon City Police District Police Station 6 (QCPD PS-6) was one of the hotspots of the war on drugs, and was presented with an award of “Best Unit with Highest Accomplishment in Project Double Barrel” by dela Rosa and Albayalde in 2017. PNP officers in the Province of Bulacan were awarded for “*most number of died drug personalities during police operations*”. See, the Prosecution’s Trial Brief, *supra* note 149, paras. 230 and 257.

²¹² See the CMC 16-2016, *supra* note 132.

²¹³ See the Prosecution’s Trial Brief, *supra* note 149, [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

²¹⁴ See e.g., as described in the Prosecution’s Trial Brief, *supra* note 149, [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

“watchlists” into targeting lists for state-sanctioned murder.²¹⁵ To ensure the uninterrupted operation of this machinery, blanket immunity was guaranteed to those who carried out the killings. Public assurances of pardons and total protection by Mr Duterte,²¹⁶ paired with a PNP Internal Affairs Service (the “IAS”) that exonerated 99.17% of officers involved in operational deaths,²¹⁷ stripped victims of any legal recourse and signalled to perpetrators that civilian lives could be taken with total impunity.²¹⁸

153. The absolute degradation of victims, under executive rhetoric encouraging the delivery of drug suspects as “carcasses”,²¹⁹ in exchange for financial incentives, amounted to one of the most serious forms of dehumanization in this case. Human bodies were treated as commodities to be compensated if they were turned into cadavers.

e) Dehumanisation through treating the bodies of the victims as “objects”

154. The manner in which the bodies of the deceased family members were treated - including as objects to be “redeemed” from the funeral parlours to which they had been brought - was itself dehumanising. The apparent treatment of their deaths and remains as a source of commercial gain further reduced the deceased to objects of financial value, compounding the dehumanising treatment to which they and their families had already been subjected. Mr Duterte even publicly spoke about assuring

²¹⁵ See PNP Office of the Chief, Command Memorandum Circular: Guidelines in the Placement and Relief of Unit Commanders and Other Key Officers in the Implementation of the PNP Anti-Illegal Drugs Campaign Plan 16-2016 Project “Double Barrel” - an unsigned, not publicly released CMC reported in an Amnesty International Report: “[If you are poor, you are killed](#)”, 2017.

²¹⁶ See the Prosecution’s Trial Brief, *supra* note 149, para. 83 (quoting Duterte saying ‘*whenever there are police officers involved in an operation, there’s no need to investigate anymore. That is my order.*’ and “*If you massacre 100...you will all be pardoned...plus a promotion to boot*”).

²¹⁷ See QUSING (J. D.), [The Rodrigo Roa Duterte Case: An Explainer](#), 7 April 2025, referring to Philippines House of Representatives Joint Committee: Committee on Dangerous Drugs, Public Order & Safety, Human Rights, and Public Accounts, Progress Report (from 16 August 2024 to 12 December 2024).

²¹⁸ See the Prosecution’s Trial Brief, *supra* note 149, para. 84.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 79, quoting Mr Duterte saying: “[w]hat I pay now, if it’s a drug lord [...] 5 million, especially if dead. If alive, only 4,999,000”.

funeral homes that if their business declines, he will *“tell the police hurry up a little so people can make money from their business”*.²²⁰

155. The harms of the victims go beyond the murder of their family members. It also involves the stigma of vilification and dehumanisation, both on the victims and their families, brought about by the extreme ignominy of grieving poor families negotiating with funeral parlours for the bodies of their murdered family members. Data from the 539 participating victims indicate that at least 56 reported that the bodies of their deceased family members were brought to funeral parlours which they describe as *“police-friendly”*. According to the accounts, certain funeral parlours were perceived as having close links with the police, including because they were reportedly owned by police officers or were known within local communities as places to which bodies of persons killed in connection with the *“war on drugs”* were routinely brought. The accounts further indicate that police officers or other authorities would facilitate or coordinate the transfer of bodies to particular funeral parlours, from which family members subsequently had to recover them.

156. Several participating victims describe the significant sums they were required to pay before recovering or burying their family members. One recounted that, after finding her [REDACTED] body abandoned on a boulevard, the police prevented her from approaching or touching him. She later located his body at a funeral home, where she was required to pay approximately PHP 45,000 to recover it for burial. Describing her efforts to negotiate the amount despite having no money, she recalled: *“I was bargaining as if I were buying fish”*.²²¹ Others report comparable financial burdens. One victim incurred funeral expenses of approximately PHP 40,000.²²² Another located the bodies of two relatives at a funeral parlour which requested a PHP 25,000 down payment. Unable to pay that amount, the family transferred one of the bodies to

²²⁰ See the Transcript of Confirmation of Charges Hearing held on 24 February 2026, [No. ICC-01/21-01/25-T-005-ENG ET WT](#), p. 17, lines 3-5.

²²¹ See a/50002/25.

²²² See a/50212/25.

another funeral service. The family ultimately paid PHP 41,000 for burial and funeral services, in addition to 8,000 PHP for an autopsy.²²³

157. These accounts indicate that, for some participating victims, the suffering caused by the killing of their family members was compounded by the manner in which their bodies were subsequently handled and recovered. Families describe being separated from their relatives' bodies, having the bodies transferred to particular funeral parlours without their knowledge, and then being required to pay substantial sums to recover and bury them. In this context, requiring families to pay for the release and recovery of their loved ones' bodies reduced the deceased, in the eyes of their surviving relatives, to objects that had to be "redeemed", further compounding their loss of dignity and the trauma and financial hardship suffered by their families.

f) Dehumanisation by using the labels "na-tokhang" and "addict" against the people targeted and their families or portraying of the persons killed as "nanlaban"

158. The persons targeted were accused of being "drug users" or "drug pushers", without an arrest warrant or prior judicial determination. At least 98 participating victims reported that their loved ones had been accused of drug use, selling drugs or addiction. According to the data, such accusations had been made before a court in at least eight cases and by a prosecutor in at least two; at least 44 were attributed to the police, at least 26 to barangay officials, and at least 19 appeared on a drug watchlist. Others were labelled as drug users, sellers or addicts within their communities. These figures describe sources of accusations and may overlap.

159. Separately, 157 of the participating victims stated that their kin had not been charged with any non-drug related offence before their death. At least 33 reported that

²²³ See a/50232/25. In another account, a participating victim described witnessing police officers shoot her [REDACTED] outside the family home. According to her account, Scene of the Crime Operatives (SOCO) subsequently removed his body and initially demanded PHP 45,000 for its release. After she appealed for the amount to be reduced, she ultimately paid PHP 13,000. See also a/50005/25.

their loved ones had been formally charged with a crime, including eight who had faced a non-drug related charge. Only seven reported that their loved ones had been convicted for any offence before death. The available information therefore indicates that, in many cases, accusations of involvement in drugs preceded the killings without any judicial determination of guilt. These findings are illustrated by the account of one victim: “[REDACTED].”²²⁴

160. The harm experienced by participating victims was further compounded by the stigma attached to persons killed in the context of the “war on drugs”. Within their communities, those killed could become known as having been “*na-tokhang*” and labelled as drug users, pushers or otherwise involved in drugs, irrespective of whether any such involvement had been judicially established. Victims reported that this stigma extended to surviving family members, affecting their relationships within their communities and, in some instances, exposing them and their children to mistreatment and bullying. One participating victim described the emotional and psychological impact on her family following her son’s death and reported that neighbours repeatedly referred to him as an “*addict*”.²²⁵ The stigma was not confined to statements within local communities.

161. Other accounts illustrate how the association of deceased family members with drugs affected surviving relatives. One victim, whose [REDACTED] were killed, reported that news coverage linking the family to drugs resulted in mistreatment by neighbours and classmates. According to her account, the family also suffered severe financial consequences following the killings: funeral expenses left them in debt, they were forced to sell the family’s [REDACTED], and the children stopped attending school in order to work and support themselves.²²⁶

²²⁴ [REDACTED]. See also, the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, [REDACTED]. See also, [REDACTED].

²²⁵ See a/50002/25.

²²⁶ See a/50262/25.

162. Another victim reported that, following the killing of her [REDACTED], she was shown a report listing persons allegedly killed because they were drug pushers, in which her [REDACTED] was described as a “*drug lord*”.²²⁷ The stigma could also have concrete consequences for the children of those killed. One participating victim reported that her [REDACTED], who worked [REDACTED], had no known criminal record and was not included on the barangay list of persons allegedly involved in drug use, possession or sale. Following his killing, however, his death was reportedly presented [REDACTED] as part of the death toll of the “*war on drugs*”. His children were subsequently bullied by classmates, who asked them: “*Your [REDACTED] was killed in the ‘war on drugs’, wasn’t he a drug addict?*”. As a result, their [REDACTED] knew about their [REDACTED] death.²²⁸

163. The accounts illustrate that the consequences of the killings extended beyond the loss of a family member. The association of those killed with the “*war on drugs*”, and their resulting characterization as drug users, pushers or other persons involved in drugs, generated stigma that could attach to both the deceased and their surviving families. For participating victims, this compounded the harm resulting from the killings through humiliation, social exclusion and bullying, and, in some instances, contributed to disruption of their children’s education and family life.

164. Victims further describe how, following the killings, their deceased family members were portrayed as having *nanlaban* (“fought back”) against the police. According to these accounts, this portrayal was in some instances accompanied by the alleged planting of illegal drugs and/or *paltik* (makeshift firearms) at the scene, creating the appearance that the persons killed had been armed or had resisted the police. Data from participating victims indicate that, in at least 76 cases, family members reported that evidence had been planted at the scene. These accounts are relevant not only to the stigma experienced by the deceased and their families, but also to the alleged *modus operandi* of the campaign.

²²⁷ See a/50246/25.

²²⁸ See a/50095/25.

165. One account illustrates the alleged connection between the killings, the planting of evidence and the subsequent claim that those killed had fought back. A participating victim [REDACTED] were killed while, kneeling and defenceless, recalled hearing an officer say: *“Let’s say they fought back and let’s leave the evidence”*.²²⁹ Other victims similarly describe finding weapons or drugs placed beside their family members’ bodies. Another, whose [REDACTED] had been killed inside the family home, reported seeing *“a gun, a plastic sachet that looked like alum, and some money placed on the floor”*, which the authorities claimed belonged to his [REDACTED]. He denied that his [REDACTED] had owned any of those items. The family subsequently saw [REDACTED] that his [REDACTED] had *“fought back”*. The participating victim rejected that account, stating: *“I witnessed what really happened”*.²³⁰ Another victim reported that, after her [REDACTED] was killed, the police placed an handgun on his right hand – not knowing that he was left handed.²³¹

166. Another family member described witnessing a police officer arrive at the scene carrying an aluminium briefcase, from which he allegedly removed a firearm and sachets of *shabu* and placed them beside the body. In another account, a victim described witnessing an armed man check her [REDACTED]’s pulse and, upon realizing that he remained alive, shoot him again in the head. According to her account, the man then immediately shouted: *“He fought back! He fought back! And we found drugs on the suspect’s body!”*.²³²

167. These accounts indicate that the *‘nanlaban’* narrative was experienced by victims as a further indignity following the killing of their loved ones. Persons whom family members describe as unarmed, defenceless or already incapacitated were subsequently portrayed as having resisted the police, in some instances alongside allegations that weapons or drugs had been planted at the scene. This portrayal

²²⁹ See a/50266/25. See also, the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, para. 49, and the Prosecution’s Trial Brief, *supra* note 149, para. 124.

²³⁰ [REDACTED].

²³¹ See a/50027/25. See also a/50005/25 and a/50014/25.

²³² See a/50262/25.

compounded the stigma attached to those killed and their surviving families. To the extent that these accounts concern the alleged staging of crime scenes and purported justification of killings on the basis that the persons targeted had “*fought back*”, they are also relevant to the alleged *modus operandi* underlying the confirmed charges.

g) Dehumanisation through the treatment experienced by victims and their families

168. In some cases, surviving relatives themselves reported having been arrested, detained or charged with fabricated drug-related offences, including in the immediate aftermath of the killing. Others describe intimidation or pressure by police authorities, demands for money, loss of property and other forms of interference. Among the 539 participating victims, at least 20 reported having been arrested in connection with these events and at least 10 having been criminally charged.

169. In one such case, the victim described being forcibly separated from her [REDACTED] while he repeatedly pleaded her not to leave him. Police officers dragged her from the house by her hair and subsequently detained both her [REDACTED]. At the police station, officers allegedly photographed them with foil and rocks that had been handed to them. It was only while in detention that a police officer informed them that her [REDACTED] had been killed. The victim remained detained for approximately [REDACTED] before being transferred to [REDACTED] City Jail and was not permitted to see her [REDACTED] before his burial. She was ultimately detained for more [REDACTED].²³³

170. Another victim reported being arrested inside her home [REDACTED] was killed. Police officers [REDACTED]. While she [REDACTED]. [REDACTED].²³⁴

171. Arrests and criminal charges against family members were also reported in the immediate aftermath of killings. One participating victim described having been taken

²³³ See a/50227/25.

²³⁴ [REDACTED].

to the police station together with the deceased's [REDACTED], detained and subsequently charged. Some of them had not even been present at the scene of the killing. She understood these measures as exerting pressure on the family in connection with her brother's death.²³⁵

172. Other victims described intimidation and pressure that affected their ability or willingness to challenge the circumstances surrounding their family members' deaths. At least 14 participating victims reported that police authorities asked them to sign waivers or documents stating that they would not pursue complaints concerning the killing of their relatives. These accounts illustrate the obstacles faced by families seeking accountability for the deaths of their loved ones. Victims also reported financial demands by police officers in connection with arrests, release from detention or the recovery of their family members' bodies. In at least six cases, participating victims recalled that police officers demanded or attempted to obtain money from family members, with amounts ranging from approximately PHP 5,000 to PHP 200,000. Such demands arose, *inter alia*, in connection with release from detention or bail following arrest. As described above,²³⁶ other participating victims reported substantial payments required to recover the bodies of the deceased from funeral parlours.

173. The material consequences extended further. Data from the 539 participating victims indicate that at least 33 reported that property belonging to them or their family members had been taken by persons allegedly involved in the relevant events. The killing of a family member could also affect participating victims' ability to remain within their communities and maintain their livelihoods. One victim described becoming increasingly fearful as police repeatedly returned to his neighbourhood following his [REDACTED] killing. He reported experiencing acute fear whenever he heard motorcycles and losing his employment because his employer did not want to

²³⁵ See a/50214/25.

²³⁶ See e.g., Subsection e) para. 156.

become involved with the “*tokhang*” issue. He eventually left the area [REDACTED], although financial difficulties subsequently forced them to return.²³⁷

174. Taken together, these accounts illustrate that in some cases, the killing was accompanied or followed by measures directed against the surviving family themselves, further exacerbating their psychological, social and economic harm and, in certain instances, impairing their ability to challenge the circumstances of or seek accountability for the death of their relatives.

3. Violence against children

175. This section examines the extent and nature of the violence experienced by children in the context of the “*war on drugs*”, and the particular forms of harm suffered, whether as victims of the alleged crimes or as children who lost a parent or other close family member. The experiences of children warrant particular consideration, given their distinct vulnerability and the profound and enduring consequences that exposure to, or victimisation by, violence may have on their lives and development.

176. The victimisation of children in the context of the “*war on drugs*” may be considered in two principal categories: (i) children who were themselves directly subjected to the alleged crimes committed in the course of the campaign; and (ii) children who suffered harm as a consequence of the killing of a parent or other close family member. The latter category is particularly significant to understanding the broader consequences of the campaign, as the killing of a caregiver fundamentally alter a child’s circumstances, security, family life, and material and emotional well-being.

177. Children under the age of 18 were among those targeted and killed in the context of the anti-drug campaign from June 2016 onwards. The charges include incidents involving children, specifically incidents 30, 38 and 45.²³⁸ Data concerning

²³⁷ See a/50287/25.

²³⁸ See the Confirmation Decision, *supra* note 42, p. 48.

the 539 participating victims identify at least 23 children who were killed, representing 8.78% of the deceased. The youngest child killed was [REDACTED].²³⁹ Separately, it has been reported that *“from July 2016 to December 2019, at least 122 children were killed in the context of the so-called ‘war on drugs’”*.²⁴⁰

178. In 2001, while serving as mayor of Davao City, Mr Duterte was interviewed concerning a list of approximately 500 persons, which reportedly included at least four minors allegedly killed by suspected vigilantes.²⁴¹ During that interview, he was asked about the inclusion of minors on the list and expressed the following view regarding children killed in the context of his anti-drug campaign:

“Q. But the list, it is said, spared the rich, that most of those on the list are poor, a number of them minors...”

*A. It’s not a matter of minor or a person of age. That’s what I was trying to explain to ‘The Probe Team.’ Because [...] that guy who shot and killed that girl (whose cellphone was snatched inside a taxi), he was only 17. When the mind is devastated by drugs, the age doesn’t really make a difference, whether you are 17, 50 or 70. When you go crazy, you go crazy. (Age) does not count anymore. Most of these are aged 18, 19, either sinasaksak nila yung mga estudyante dyan ... or binababil...”*²⁴²

179. In another interview concerning minors caught up in violence, Mr Duterte, in seeking to justify the civilian deaths in the context of anti-drug operations, compared casualties in the Philippines with those resulting from United States military operations in Vietnam and Afghanistan. He stated: *“When you bomb a village you intend*

²³⁹ See a/50084/25.

²⁴⁰ See OMCT and Children’s legal Rights and Development Center, Inc., *“How could they do this to my child?”: Extrajudicial killings of children during the “war on drugs” in the Philippines*, 2020, p. 9, available at: <https://pcij.org/2016/06/30/duterte-revisited-what-he-said-in-2001-on-drugs-vigilante-killings/>.

²⁴¹ See ARGUILLAS (C. O.), *Duterte Revisited: What he said in 2001 on drugs, vigilante killings*, on PCIJ, 30 June 2016, available at: <https://pcij.org/2016/06/30/duterte-revisited-what-he-said-in-2001-on-drugs-vigilante-killings/>.

²⁴² *Ibid.* *“Students are either stabbed or shot”*.

*to kill the militants but you kill the children there ... Why do you say it is collateral damage to the west and to us it is murder?"*²⁴³

180. The accounts of the participating victims describe recurrent features that are consistent with the *modus operandi* described in the previous section and in the Prosecution trial brief.²⁴⁴ In particular, the accounts reveal recurring patterns in the manner in which children were targeted, abducted, assaulted, and killed. Although the circumstances of the individual incidents differ, victims repeatedly describe: (i) the exposure of children in poor and marginalized communities to armed lethal violence; (ii) the forcible removal of children from their families, homes and public spaces before being killed; (iii) violence was inflicted in the presence of family members or other children; (iv) the methods of killing were particularly brutal, including repeated gunshots, stabbing, beating, torture and children were killed while begging for their lives; (v) children were subsequently portrayed as criminals or drug offenders, and the circumstances of their death were often concealed or distorted; and (vi) the pattern extended across different circumstances and locations.

a) Children exposed to lethal violence in their homes and communities

181. Several accounts demonstrate that children were not merely incidental victims of violence occurring elsewhere in their communities. They were themselves directly targeted or caught up in armed attacks occurring in and around their homes or community. On [REDACTED] 2016, [REDACTED] year-old was working [REDACTED] when gunfire erupted on the street. Although the shooting was reportedly directed at two women, he was struck under the armpit. He managed to reach [REDACTED], but later died at the hospital. His [REDACTED] recalled: "[REDACTED]"²⁴⁵

²⁴³ See, The Guardian, *Duterte says children killed in Philippines drug war are 'collateral damage'*, 17 October 2016 available at: [Duterte says children killed in Philippines drug war are 'collateral damage' | Philippines | The Guardian](#).

²⁴⁴ See *supra* paras. 110-174, and the Prosecution's Trial Brief, *supra* note 149, e.g. incidents 30; 38; 45.

²⁴⁵ [REDACTED].

182. Similarly, on [REDACTED] 2016, a 16-year-old was killed when armed men entered a nearby house during a gathering and opened fire on those inside. His [REDACTED] learned of the shooting from neighbours and subsequently discovered that her brother was among those killed.²⁴⁶ On [REDACTED] 2017, a 15-year-old boy was outside his home [REDACTED] when armed men suddenly appeared and shot both of them.²⁴⁷ On [REDACTED] 2018, a 15-year-old boy was shot at a [REDACTED] in his barangay. His [REDACTED] arrived shortly afterward and found him lying in his own blood.²⁴⁸

183. These accounts illustrate how children were exposed to lethal violence in ordinary community settings: outside their homes, on neighbourhood streets, in markets, and in other places where children would ordinarily be expected to be safe.

b) Children forcibly taken from their families and homes before being killed

184. A second recurring feature is the forcible removal of children from places where they were with family members, friends, or other members of the community. In several accounts, the killing followed a sequence of armed men arriving, taking the child away, and subsequently killing the child elsewhere. The account of a/50060/25 concerning her 16-year-old [REDACTED] is particularly illustrative. Police officers entered the family home, pulled him from a chair by his hair, and dragged him outside and forced him to knee. While he was handcuffed, he was beaten and struck with a helmet and a firearm. His [REDACTED] watched from inside the house as he was beaten and assaulted before being shot.

185. A similar pattern appears in the account concerning the 16-year-old [REDACTED] of a/50021/25. According to eyewitnesses, the girl and [REDACTED] were stopped by four armed men in civilian clothing while walking along a highway

²⁴⁶ See a/50022/25.

²⁴⁷ See a/50063/25

²⁴⁸ See a/50019/25.

[REDACTED] City. They were forcibly taken to another location, where they were shot repeatedly. In another account, witnesses reportedly saw three men in civilian clothing take the 16-year-old [REDACTED] of a/50075/25 to a house in [REDACTED]. According to those witnesses, the men subsequently stabbed him repeatedly and disposed of his body in a creek. The account of [REDACTED] of a 15-year-old boy describes his forcible removal from a [REDACTED] to be placed in a van with other children. According to a/50342/25, unidentified men forced the child into a van together with other children. The family later learned that he was being detained at the City Jail, then taken to the hospital where he subsequently died. He believe that his [REDACTED] had been tortured while in police custody.

186. These accounts reveal a recurring sequence: a child is identified or seized by armed men, physically separated from family members or companions, and then killed or later found dead. The separation itself appears significant because it removed the child from the immediate protection of relatives or other witnesses and, in some instances, placed the child entirely under the control of the perpetrators.

c) Violence inflicted in the presence of family members and other children

187. The accounts further show that family members - including other children - were sometimes present during the violence or witnessed its immediate aftermath. In the case of a/50060/25, his [REDACTED] watched through a gap in the door as he was beaten while handcuffed. She then witnessed the shooting and immediately went to him, attempting to stop the bleeding. The victim remained alive in the family's arms before being taken to the hospital. In the case of a/50341/25, his [REDACTED] - herself a minor - was present when armed men entered the house. She embraced the victim and pleaded with the men not to kill him before being forcibly removed. According to the account of his [REDACTED], he was then made to kneel, pleaded to be taken to jail instead of being killed, and was subsequently shot.

188. The accounts therefore describe not only the killing of children but the exposure of other children and family members to the violence surrounding those killings.

d) Brutal methods of killing including where children begged for their lives

189. The manner of killing described in several accounts was particularly violent. A/50060/25's [REDACTED] case is among the most detailed:

"The police officers saw [REDACTED] lying on the chair because he came from the sea and they suddenly pulled his hair and dragged him outside. My [REDACTED] was forced to kneel and he was asked if he was [...] and he said 'Yes sir. The police officers dragged him out of the house. [...] When they went outside our house with my [REDACTED], I closed the door but I saw from the gap in the door how they beat up my brother while he was handcuffed. Aside from the three police officers that entered our house there were three police officers in civilian clothing outside our house that acted as lookouts. Aside from the beating, the police officers also hit my [REDACTED] with a helmet. They also hit him with a gun on the mouth and nape [...] While I was on the way to where my parents were sleeping, I heard three gunshots so I hurried downstairs and from the gap in the door I saw a police officer put a 45 gun inside the mouth of my [REDACTED] and fired the gun. He was also shot on the chest. I hurried outside after my [REDACTED] was shot because the police officers were already leaving. When I reached my [REDACTED], I embraced him and tried to cover the gunshot wounds in his body. [...] While everything was happening, I was holding my [REDACTED] in my arms even though he was bathed in his own blood. It was around 11:30 PM that my [REDACTED] was still trying to breathe. That is why my [REDACTED] and our male neighbours brought him to the hospital because no police officers or Barangay officials arrived. We got news around [REDACTED] that my [REDACTED] died and that is when we cried in our house".

190. The 16-year-old [REDACTED] of a/50075/25 was stabbed repeatedly by three men who allegedly took turns attacking him. His body was then placed in a plastic garbage bag and thrown into a creek, where it was recovered approximately two weeks later. A boy aged 16, was shot five times, including twice in the head, according to his [REDACTED].²⁴⁹ Another boy aged 16, was forced to kneel before being shot in the head.²⁵⁰ Another boy, aged 15, and [REDACTED] were both shot while standing outside their home.²⁵¹ The account of a/50342/25 about the death of his [REDACTED]

²⁴⁹ See a/50344/25.

²⁵⁰ See a/50341/25.

²⁵¹ See a/50063/25.

is even more severe. His [REDACTED] believed that the child was tortured while in police custody before his death. The [REDACTED] also alleged that police officers subsequently offered him material benefits if he would sign documents and refrain from reporting the death or filing a complaint.

191. Taken together, these accounts indicate that the violence against children was not limited to a single method or circumstance. Rather, they describe a range of lethal and physically abusive conduct, including close-range shooting, repeated shooting, stabbing, beating, and alleged torture. On occasion, victims have attached to their application medical, forensic, custodial, and other records.

192. Several accounts also describe children being killed after being placed in situations where they were visibly vulnerable and, in at least some cases, while begging for their lives. In the case of a/50060/25, her [REDACTED] was dragged from his home, handcuffed, beaten, and ultimately shot. The [REDACTED] of a/50342/25 was forced to kneel and pleaded that he not be killed but instead be taken to jail. His [REDACTED], herself a minor, also begged the armed men not to kill him before she was removed from the scene.

193. These accounts are significant not only because they describe the killing of minors, but because they indicate that the perpetrators allegedly proceeded with the killings despite the victims' submission, pleas, or lack of effective means of resistance.

e) Children were subsequently portrayed as criminals or drug offenders and the circumstances of death were distorted or concealed

194. Another recurring feature is the attribution of criminal or drug-related conduct to children after their deaths. In several accounts, the alleged characterization of the child as a drug offender, thief, robber, or other criminal became part of the official or public narrative surrounding the killing. Sometimes, police publicly accused the deceased of being a drug pusher.²⁵² Other times, television reports described the

²⁵² See a/50007/25.

victims as alleged robbers involved in a gunfight with police and reported that drugs and firearms had been recovered.²⁵³ The family of a 17-year-old victim reported that community members described him as a thief after his death, while the family stated that the killing was actually a case of mistaken identity and that drugs were not mentioned in the allegations made against him.²⁵⁴ The [REDACTED] of a/50341/25, who had previously come into contact with the justice system in connection with an alleged theft, was reportedly described [REDACTED] as having resisted arrest, notwithstanding the family's account that he had been forced to kneel and had pleaded to be taken to jail rather than killed.

195. These accounts suggest a recurring post-killing narrative in which children were characterized as criminals or drug offenders. Such characterizations are particularly significant where they appear alongside allegations of police involvement, disputed police reports, discrepancies concerning the victim's age or cause of death, or other circumstances that the families contest.

196. Several accounts contain allegations concerning the subsequent handling or documentation of the children's deaths. In relation to a/50084/25's [REDACTED], the family identified a shooting as the cause of death when completing the relevant form, but the death certificate subsequently recorded "[REDACTED]". Victim [REDACTED] The police report concerning a/50020/25 misstated their age by approximately a decade. Finally, a/50342/25 alleged that police officers offered him a motorcycle and a house if he would sign documents and refrain from reporting or pursuing a complaint concerning his [REDACTED] death.

h) The pattern extended across different circumstances and locations

197. The incidents occurred in different settings and involved children of different ages. The youngest killed was [REDACTED] years old and was killed by gunfire

²⁵³ See a/50020/25.

²⁵⁴ See a/50293/25.

[REDACTED]. Other victims were 15, 16, or 17 years old and were killed in or near their homes, on roads and streets, in markets, after leaving entertainment venues, or following alleged detention or forcible removal. The perpetrators were likewise described variously as police officers, men believed to be police officers, armed men in civilian clothing, riding-in-tandem assailants, or unidentified armed men. In some incidents, the account identifies police involvement; in others, the attribution is based on information received from eyewitnesses; and in still others, the identity of the perpetrators remains unresolved.

198. This variation is important. It indicates that the accounts should not be treated as identical incidents or assumed to establish the same perpetrator in every case. Rather, their significance lies in the recurring features they describe across multiple incidents: the vulnerability of children in marginalized communities; armed intervention in homes and public spaces; forcible removal; allegations of criminal or drug involvement; extreme violence; killings witnessed by relatives or other children; and, in some cases, subsequent attempts to characterize the victims as criminals or to obscure disputed aspects of their deaths.

199. Taken together, the accounts therefore corroborate the evidence of a recurring pattern in which children were exposed to lethal violence in circumstances bearing several of the same characteristics described elsewhere in relation to the *“war on drugs”*. What emerges from the accounts is not simply that children were among those who died. Rather, the accounts describe children being subjected to a sequence of violence that, in several incidents, began with their identification or seizure by armed men, continued through forcible removal, assault, or interrogation, and culminated in their killing. In several cases, the children were killed while begging for their lives, with family members or other children witnessing the violence or its immediate aftermath. In others, the deaths were followed by allegations that the victims were drug offenders, thieves, or robbers, notwithstanding the families’ accounts disputing those characterizations. These recurring features are relevant to assessing the broader pattern emerging from the victims’ narratives, including the manner in which children

and other vulnerable persons were selected, treated, killed, and subsequently represented as criminal or drug-related victims.

4. Motivation and expectations of the Victims

200. Victims express a number of reasons justifying their involvement in the proceedings concerning Mr Duterte, as well as diverse expectations regarding their involvement in the judicial process, their search for truth and the pursuit of justice. From the testimonies and the application forms, it appears that victims want to tell their story, to enable the Judges to understand what happened to them, their relatives and their communities. Their accounts may provide information concerning the circumstances surrounding particular killings, the events preceding and following those killings, the consequences for surviving family members, and the longer-term social and economic effects experienced by affected households.

201. For families who lost a parent, child, spouse, sibling or other relative, participation may also provide an opportunity to preserve the memory of the deceased and to explain the person behind the case file. In circumstances where victims or their relatives have alleged that killings were associated with anti-drug operations or with broader patterns of violence, their participation may allow the Chamber to hear how those events were experienced at the individual and community levels. Victims may therefore regard their participation not merely as a procedural act, but as a means of placing their experiences within the true historical record of the period under examination. This is particularly significant in the Philippine context, where public narratives concerning the *“war on drugs”* have included sharply different accounts of the nature, causes and consequences of the killings.

202. Victims further expect that the Chamber will listen to their views and concerns; acknowledge the harm they and their families have suffered, and take their experiences into account. They live the experience of the trial as cathartic. For some victims, being heard by an independent judicial institution may itself constitute an important element of the process. Participation may provide an opportunity to

articulate grief, loss, fear, insecurity and other consequences of the alleged crimes, while allowing victims to seek recognition through a formal legal process rather than through private or retaliatory responses. In participating in the criminal process, they can move forward in a more peaceful manner and generally without feelings of revenge. Although, it is worthy to mention that some victims also validly and understandably feel anger, vulnerability, and the need for retribution.

203. In the Philippine context, the consequences of an alleged killing may extend well beyond the death of the immediate victim. Families may have lost a breadwinner, incurred funeral and legal expenses, experienced disruption to children's education, or suffered stigma and social isolation. Some families may also continue to experience uncertainty concerning the circumstances of the death or the responsibility of those involved. For these victims, participation may therefore encompass both an individual search for truth and a broader desire for recognition of the consequences experienced by their families and communities. In particular, victims wish to:

- Contribute to the establishment of the truth by presenting their personal experiences and information concerning the circumstances of the killings of their loved ones and the suffering associated with the commission of the charged crimes;
- Tell the stories of deceased family members and preserve their memory by explaining who they were, how their deaths affected their families, and what their absence has meant for those left behind;
- Ensure that the experiences of affected communities are heard, particularly where multiple killings or alleged abuses occurred within the same neighbourhood or locality and generated collective experiences of fear, insecurity or social disruption;
- Have individual and, where legally recognised, collective dimensions of harm acknowledged, including loss of life, emotional suffering, economic

hardship, disruption of family life, educational consequences and other lasting effects allegedly resulting from the crimes;

- Contribute to the judicial process by providing information, views and concerns that may assist the Chamber in understanding the human consequences of the alleged crimes;
- Seek recognition and dignity for those who died, particularly where surviving relatives believe that the circumstances of the death have not been adequately investigated or acknowledged through domestic mechanisms;
- Help preserve the historical record of the period covered by the ICC's jurisdiction by ensuring that the experiences of affected individuals and families are not reduced solely to statistics or case files; and
- Contribute, where possible, to rebuilding trust and social relationships affected by violence and insecurity, including through a justice process that provides victims with an opportunity to be heard and recognised without requiring them to pursue personal retaliation; and
- Obtain reparations for the harms suffered as a result of the crimes.

VII. IMPACT OF THE CRIMES ON THE VICTIMS

204. The Chamber's duty to determine the truth is not limited to establishing the guilt or innocence of the Accused. Part of the truth to be determined by the Chamber is the victimisation, the suffering and harm caused to those who were directly affected by the alleged crimes. During the trial, the Chamber will hear evidence about the crimes committed, as well as factual and emotional accounts of the agony suffered by victims, their relatives, and their communities. In its evaluation of the evidence, the Chamber should therefore give due consideration to the accounts of victims and the harms they suffered.

205. While the extent of the victimisation is an issue that will be developed further for the purpose of sentencing if the Accused is declared guilty – and subsequently for reparations - this final section of the Brief intends to summarise the main harms suffered by victims as a consequence of the crimes alleged against Mr Duterte. The extent of the prejudice suffered by the victim is both widespread and profound. Among the 539 participating victims, at least 19 expressly reported physical injuries; at least 322 suffered other forms of harm, 91 experienced loss of or damage to property, and all endured psychological harm. However, the true scope of victimization cannot be reduced to statistics alone. The consequences of the crimes continue to affect victims long after the underlying events occurred. Many continue to suffer physical, psychological, social, and economic repercussions, which in turn shape the lives of their families and communities. The enduring impact of the Duterte regime is therefore intergenerational, with the effects of victimization being transmitted to victims' children and grandchildren, perpetuating cycles of trauma and disadvantage.

1. Psychological Harm

206. The crimes had a profound and enduring psychological impact on the victims. Victims reported suffering severe emotional and psychological harm arising from the loss of family members, separation from the loved ones, witnessing the killing of relatives or friends; the cruel and inhumane treatments inflicted upon them and their deceased loved ones; the breakdown of social cohesion in their communities. Victims describe experiencing anguish, anxiety, anger, sadness, fear, low self-esteem feelings of vulnerability and helplessness, shame, social isolation, nightmares, aggression or distance from relatives, sleep and eating disorders, alcohol or drug dependence, difficulties with concentration.

207. All participating victims in this case have suffered psychological harm as a result of the killing of their relatives and loved ones. For example, one victim whose [REDACTED] was killed in Mindanao, recounted that, during periods of extreme hardship and food insecurity following his death, she repeatedly contemplated

suicide. She further considered taking her own life together with those of her children and grandchildren by mixing pesticide (“lanit”) into their food. Although those suicidal thoughts eventually subsided, the victim explained that the trauma remains unresolved, stating that “[t]he suicidal thoughts have passed but now, when I recall what happened to my [REDACTED], my asthma would be triggered”.²⁵⁵

208. Another victim shared:

“I was personally affected psychologically. I think I was going crazy because I would end up in the most random places. Even at midnight, I would go the cemetery where my [REDACTED] was buried. I had to consult psychiatrist. I had no appetite and had difficulty eating. So, my doctor prescribed medicines to calm my nerves. My children were also affected by the incident. This caused friction between their relationships with their friends. One of my children attacked one of my child’s friends, blaming them for what happened because they made her sing karaoke instead of bringing her home. One of my children has no motivation for school, now. At first, he wanted to pursue a degree in criminology, but because of what happened to her [REDACTED], he decided to stop school and became a security guard instead”.²⁵⁶

209. These accounts illustrate the long-lasting psychological consequences of the crimes and the profound suffering that victims continue to endure years after the events.

2. Physical Harm

210. Victims suffered physical harm and injuries, including chronical and long-lasting health ailments, impairments and handicaps. The crimes have affected individuals of all ages and genders, with women and children most affected by the events. Some victims suffered injuries which have never properly healed for lack of means. Their difficult living conditions as described *supra* exposed them to diseases and deteriorated their physical health, with effects still felt nowadays.

²⁵⁵ See a/50353/25.

²⁵⁶ See a/50237/25.

211. The physical harm suffered by victims encompasses a broad spectrum of injuries and consequences. Victims include individuals who were killed or injured in cases of mistaken identity, as well as so-called “*collateral*” victims who were killed or wounded during shooting incidents. The harm was, in some cases, particularly severe. One victim, who was [REDACTED] at the time of the incident, suffered a [REDACTED] and required hospitalization as a consequence.²⁵⁷ In another instance, the victim was tortured and even subjected to extortion by police officers.²⁵⁸ These accounts illustrate that the physical consequences of the alleged crimes extended beyond the direct targets of anti-drug operations and affected a broader range of individuals.

3. Material Harm

212. The material harm suffered by the victims is closely associated with violent police operations that preceded or accompanied the killings. At least 91 of the participating victims reported the loss of or damage to their property. Victims consistently described how police officers forcibly entered their homes, often in the middle of the night. In the course of these operations, household property was frequently damaged or destroyed, including furniture, fences, gates, doors, windows, and walls. For many victims, the family home represented their principal asset and source of security. The destruction of property therefore not only imposed an economic burden but also deepened the sense of vulnerability and insecurity experienced by survivors in the aftermath of the crimes.

213. Beyond the physical damage caused during the operations, victims frequently reported that personal belongings disappeared following the killing of their loved ones. Missing items include: money, mobile phones, watches, jewellery, shoes, and small household appliances. In some instances, although the monetary value of the missing items was modest, they carried significant sentimental value because they

²⁵⁷ See a/50080/25.

²⁵⁸ See a/50023/25.

were associated with the deceased family member or represented important family possessions. Victims were often left without any means of recovering these items or seeking accountability for their disappearance.

214. The loss of property also had direct economic consequences. Many victims belonged to economically vulnerable households and lacked the resources necessary to replace damaged or missing belongings. The disappearance of cash, communication devices, and other essential items further strained families that were already struggling with the sudden loss of a breadwinner. In some cases, the effects were particularly severe where the direct victim was last seen using a motorcycle or tricycle that was never returned to the family, most possibly taken by police. These vehicles often served not merely as personal property but as a source of livelihood, enabling victims to earn income through transport services or other economic activities. Their disappearance therefore deprived surviving family members of an important means of financial support and further exacerbated the hardship caused by the killing.

215. Significantly, victims reported that the disappearance of property was generally not reflected in official police documentation. The absence of any record of the missing items left victims without an avenue to challenge or verify what had occurred and contributed to a broader perception of impunity. The material harm suffered by victims must therefore be understood not only in terms of the market value of the property lost or damaged, but also in light of its practical, economic, and emotional significance. For many families, the destruction and disappearance of property compounded the trauma of losing a loved one and became another enduring consequence of the crimes.

4. Socio-economic Harm

216. The majority of the deceased were men (85%) in early adulthood (between 30 and 32 years) who served as the primary financial providers for their households. As breadwinners, they supported not only their spouse and children, but also the extended family members, with some households relying on a single income to sustain

five to seven immediate dependants. Their deaths therefore deprived families of their principal source of financial support and abruptly altered household structures and livelihood strategies.

217. The burden of sustaining the family often shifted to women, including widows, mothers, and grandmothers, who generally had fewer employment opportunities and lower earning capacity. Many surviving family members reported seeking work in the informal economy, where employment is frequently precarious, poorly remunerated, and devoid of social protections. As household incomes declined, families struggled to meet their basic needs, including food, housing, healthcare, and education. In many instances, children were forced to discontinue their studies temporarily or permanently in order to contribute to household income, thereby undermining their future opportunities and perpetuating cycles of poverty.

218. The consequences were particularly acute for single-parent households. Surviving parents were often required to assume simultaneously the roles of sole income earner, caregiver, and household manager. The emotional burden of bereavement was compounded by employment obligations, child-rearing responsibilities, and limited access to effective social support. Although Philippine law recognizes the vulnerabilities faced by solo parents and provides for specific assistance measures,²⁵⁹ victims frequently reported significant practical obstacles in accessing available benefits. Bureaucratic requirements, limited awareness, administrative delays and the scarcity of public resources reduced the effectiveness of such measures. As a result, many families reported being left to cope with the aftermath of the killings largely on their own and experiencing a substantial decline in their standard of living.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁹ See the Expanded Solo Parents Welfare Act, Republic Act No. 11861, 04 June 2022, available at: <https://elibrary.judiciary.gov.ph/thebookshelf/showdocs/2/95472>. See also, Solo Parents Welfare Act, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8972, 07 November 2000, available at: <https://elibrary.judiciary.gov.ph/thebookshelf/showdocs/2/3532>.

²⁶⁰ See HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, *Our Happy Family Is Gone* "Impact of the "War on Drugs" on Children in the Philippines", 27 May 2020, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/05/27/our-happy-family-gone/impact-war-drugs-children-philippines>.

219. The death of the relative also generated immediate and often overwhelming financial obligations. Families were required to bear funeral and burial expenses at a time when they had simultaneously lost their principal source of income. Victims reported that funeral costs could amount to as much as PHP 150,000, covering embalming, caskets, transportation and other related services. Additional expenses arose from customary mourning practices, including food for visitors during a 24/7 wake, local traditions, and nightly prayers with the local church ladies at the house extending up to nine days following the death. Many families also lacked ownership of cemetery plots and were required to rent space at the public cemetery at the rate of at least PHP 3,000 every five years. For households already living in conditions of economic vulnerability, these expenses frequently necessitated borrowing money, incurring debt, selling possessions, or relying on charitable contributions from relatives and neighbours.

220. Victims further described circumstances suggesting a close relationship between police operations and the funeral homes that received the bodies of the deceased. Numerous victims reported that the funeral home personnel appeared at the crime scene shortly after, and in some accounts even before, the completion of police operations. Families also reported that a particular funeral home had automatically assigned to take the bodies from the crime scene, upon the cue of the police. Funeral homes have to be accredited by the police to receive bodies, and perform autopsies if necessary.²⁶¹ Victims also reported difficulties in retrieving the bodies of their loved ones unless substantial fees were paid to the funeral homes concerned.

221. The financial burden imposed by these arrangements could be significant. Fees varied according to the services provided and the length of time that the body in the

²⁶¹ See the PNP Memorandum Circular Number 2014-006, 19 February 2014, available at: <https://elibrary.judiciary.gov.ph/thebookshelf/showdocs/10/76479>. See also, GAVILAN (J.) and TOMACRUZ (S.), *Police and Funeral homes: the business of picking up the dead*, on Rappler, 10 December 2017, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/190811-police-funeral-homes-business-dead-war-drugs/>.

facility.²⁶² For example, one victim reported that she was initially charged PHP 112,000²⁶³ - about 1,550 Euro - to recover the bodies of her [REDACTED] who were missing and finally located in a [REDACTED] City funeral home. Following negotiations over several days, the amount was reduced to PHP 75,000.²⁶⁴ Her experience illustrates the acute financial pressures faced by families seeking to recover and bury their loved ones with dignity in the immediate aftermath of the killings.

222. Some victims also expressed concerns regarding alleged financial arrangements between police officers and funeral homes. A victim, whose [REDACTED] was killed and who [REDACTED], stated that the police officers received commissions for each body referred to funeral homes. Whether perceived or actual, such accounts reinforced among victims a sense that the deaths of their relatives had become intertwined with commercial interests, thereby exacerbating feelings of injustice, exploitation, and mistrust toward public institutions.

223. Taken together, these economic consequences extended far beyond the immediate loss of life. The killings deprived families of income, generated substantial and unforeseen expenses, disrupted children's education, deepened household indebtedness, and placed surviving relatives, particularly women, in situations of prolonged economic precarity. The resulting hardship continues to affect victims and their families years after the deaths occurred, demonstrating the enduring material consequences of the crimes.

5. Community Harm

224. Community harm refer to the prejudice suffered by individual as members of a family, group, neighbourhood, or broader community.²⁶⁵ The impact of the crimes therefore extends beyond individual losses and affects the social fabric of entire

²⁶² See Funeral homes prey on Tokhang victims, Philstar, 1 November 2019, available at: <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2019/11/01/1964984/funeral-homes-prey-tokhang-victims>

²⁶³ About 1,550 Euro.

²⁶⁴ About 1,040 Euro. See a/50097/25.

²⁶⁵ See the "Reparations Order" (Trial Chamber IX), [No. ICC-02/04-01/15-2074 28-02-2024](#), para. 168.

communities. The destruction of family structures, the loss of community members and the breakdown of neighbourhood relations collectively undermine social cohesion and erode the networks of support upon which many communities depend. Victims reported that relationships between neighbours became characterized by suspicion, fear, and mistrust rather than solidarity and mutual assistance.

225. Participating victims described how certain practices associated with the anti-drug campaign fostered distrust within communities. The “*palit-ulo*” (exchange heads) scheme, where one’s life could be bargained for another, was a system for survival and a mechanism for co-optation of “*surrenderers*” or police “*assets*”. It encouraged individuals to identify other persons in exchange for protection or favourable treatment. Citizens were actually encouraged to submit names of alleged drug users or dealers through drop boxes.²⁶⁶ These practices created incentives for individuals to accuse others, whether out of fear, coercion, personal disputes, or the prospect of receiving benefits. As a result, community ties that had traditionally served as important sources of security and resilience became increasingly fragile.

226. The deterioration of trust within affected communities had particularly profound consequences in economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In such communities, survival often depends on strong social networks, mutual assistance, and collective forms of support. The anti-drug campaign and the practice of informing on neighbours weakened these forms of communal solidarity and transformed everyday social relations.²⁶⁷ Victims described living in an atmosphere where neighbours became reluctant to speak openly, to offer assistance, or even to associate

²⁶⁶ See ENANO (J. O.), Coming to QC: The blue boxes of ‘Tokhang’, 9 October 2017, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/936509/coming-to-qc-the-blue-boxes-of-tokhang>.

²⁶⁷ See Dignity, *Duterte’s War on Drugs led to lasting changes in one of Manila’s poorer districts*, 3 August 2022, available at: <https://dignity.dk/en/news/philippines/dutertes-war-on-drugs-led-to-lasting-changes-in-one-of-manilas-poorer-districts/>. See also, JENSEN (S. B.) and HAPAL (K.), *Communal Intimacy and the Violence of Politics - Understanding the War on Drugs in Bagong Silang, Philippines*. Published by Cornell University Press, available at: [Communal Intimacy and the Violence of Politics: Understanding the War on Drugs in Bagong Silang, Philippines | Cornell Scholarship Online | Oxford Academic](https://www.cornell.edu/scholarship/online/communal-intimacy-and-the-violence-of-politics-understanding-the-war-on-drugs-in-bagong-silang-philippines/).

with families perceived to be connected to drugs. The resulting environment fostered isolation and weakened collective responses to hardship.

227. Scholars have described this phenomenon as a climate of “*ambiguous fear*”, in which uncertainty regarding the source and consequences of risk fundamentally alters social and moral relations within communities.²⁶⁸ Victims reported that fear was not limited to the possibility of violence itself, but extended to the unpredictability of who might be accused, targeted, reported, or implicated. This uncertainty disrupted established patterns of interaction and contributed to the reconfiguration of social life in affected areas.

228. The impact of these dynamics often extended to forced or voluntary displacement. Many victims altered their daily routines, avoided social gatherings, restricted their movements, or sought refuge elsewhere to reduce the risk of harm. Some families temporarily abandoned their homes and sought safety with relatives or in public spaces. Victims from [REDACTED], [REDACTED], for example, described sleeping [REDACTED] to avoid nightly raids and police operations in the residential areas. Others permanently relocated to their provinces of origin, where they perceived greater safety and stronger family support networks. Such displacement further weakened community bonds and disrupted longstanding social relationships.

229. Community harm was also reinforced by the stigma associated with allegations of drug use or involvement in the drug trade. Drug use has long been heavily stigmatized in the Philippines, and those associated, whether accurately or inaccurately, with drugs often face social exclusion, discrimination, and public condemnation. Even the Philippine Supreme Court is unequivocal: “*Drug addiction is one of the most pernicious evils that has ever crept into our society [...]. It is of common knowledge that drug addicts become useless if not dangerous members of society and in some*

²⁶⁸ See WARBURG (A. B.) and JENSEN (S.), “Ambiguous Fear in the War on Drugs: A Reconfiguration of Social and Moral Orders in the Philippines”, in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 51, no. 1/2, 2020, pp. 5–24. JSTOR, available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27175276>.

instances turn up to be among the living dead".²⁶⁹ Families of persons killed during anti-drug operations frequently reported being treated as though they shared responsibility for the alleged conduct of the deceased. Consequently, the stigma attached not only to the direct victims but also to their relatives, including spouses, parents, and children.

230. Public discourse surrounding the anti-drug campaign intensified this stigmatization. Statements portraying drug users and alleged drug offenders as beyond rehabilitation or unworthy of protection reinforced negative perceptions and contributed to the social exclusion of affected families.²⁷⁰ Victims reported experiencing humiliation, discrimination, and reputational harm long after the death of their relatives. In many instances, the official portrayal of the deceased as criminals compounded the suffering experienced by surviving family members. The experience of the family of one victim killed in Manila in [REDACTED] 2017, illustrates these dynamics. Despite his death, criminal proceedings were reportedly initiated and summonses were addressed to his heirs. His [REDACTED] were compelled to confront the same police officers alleged to have been involved in his killing while those officers presented themselves as the aggrieved parties before prosecutorial authorities. Although the proceedings were ultimately dismissed, the family's experience illustrates how official actions may perpetuate stigma, reinforce narratives of criminality, and inflict additional humiliation and distress upon surviving relatives.

231. The effects of stigma are particularly acute for children.²⁷¹ Numerous victims reported that children of those killed were subjected to bullying, exclusion, or ridicule when the circumstances surrounding their parent's death became known. Some

²⁶⁹ See the Supreme Court of the Philippines, *People v. Policarpio*, G.R. No. L-69844, 23 February 1988, available at: [G.R. No. L-69844](#).

²⁷⁰ See the Presidential Communications Office, Aug. 17, 2016 – Speech of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte during the 115th Police Service Anniversary, 17 August 2016, available at: <https://pco.gov.ph/aug-17-2016-speech-of-president-rodrigo-roa-duterte-during-the-115th-police-service-anniversary/>.

²⁷¹ See CUNANAN (A. L. P.) and YABUT (H. J.), Lived Experiences of Stigma Among Filipino Former Drug Dependents: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 2019, 52(1), 127-154, available at: [lived-experiences-of-stigma-among-filipino-former-drug-dependents-an-interpretative-phenomenologica.pdf](#).

children reportedly sought to conceal their family history, deny the circumstances of the death, or distance themselves from the deceased relative in an effort to avoid discrimination. While such coping mechanisms may provide temporary protection against social exclusion, they often reflect deeper experiences of shame, loss of identity, and unresolved trauma.

232. The crimes disrupted family units, eroded trust among neighbours, fractured longstanding social relationships, contributed to displacement, and generated enduring stigma affecting entire families and communities. These consequences continue to shape the social environment in which victims live, demonstrating that the harm suffered is collective, enduring, and intergenerational in nature.

6. Societal Harm

233. The harm caused by the alleged crimes extends beyond individual victims, families, and communities, and has affected Philippine society as a whole. The anti-drug campaign initiated during the Duterte administration has had wide-ranging social consequences, contributing to the erosion of fundamental values and institutions that underpin democratic governance and social cohesion. Victims consistently describe the campaign as having weakened respect for the right to life, human dignity, due process, accountability, and the rule of law. The widespread and systematic nature of the killings, as alleged, undermined confidence in public institutions and generated profound divisions within society regarding the acceptable limits of state power.

234. The societal harm must be understood against the backdrop of values deeply embedded in Philippine society.²⁷² Concepts such as *pakikipagkapwa-tao* (respecting our shared humanity), *bayanihan* (community solidarity and mutual assistance), and *katarungan* (justice) have historically played an important role in shaping social relations and collective identity. These values emphasize the recognition of others as

²⁷² See Section III.2.

fellow human beings deserving of respect, dignity, and support. Throughout Philippine history, social movements advocating justice, democracy, and accountability have drawn strength from these principles and have contributed to the development of a strong commitment to human rights and the rule of law.

235. The anti-drug campaign challenged or distorted these values by encouraging public acceptance of violence as a means of addressing criminality. The rule of law was so eroded that led to repeated and widespread violations of the Philippine Constitution, domestic and international law, and institutional processes and regulations of the Office of the President, Department of Justice and the PNP resulting in the crimes against humanity with widespread and systematic murder and attempted murder in all the three major islands of the country.

236. Thousands of persons suspected of involvement in drugs were killed without the benefit of judicial determination of guilt. In the eyes of many victims, the campaign fostered a perception that certain categories of persons were less deserving of legal protection and societal concern. This perception contributed to the dehumanization of those targeted, weakening societal commitment to the equal value of every human life. The thousands killed became "*hindi-tao*" (non-human) who do not have the right to live and therefore must be killed "*in order to save lives*" of the "*tao*" (humans). The societal consequences were further magnified by public rhetoric that portrayed alleged drug offenders as irredeemable or beyond rehabilitation. Such narratives reinforced stigma directed both at those accused of drug-related activities and at their family members. Victims reported that many individuals became reluctant to express sympathy for affected families for fear of being associated with persons labelled as criminals. The resulting social environment diminished empathy, normalized exclusion, and deepened existing social divisions.

237. The campaign also had significant implications for public institutions, particularly law enforcement. Victims consistently reported a perception that unlawful conduct by police officers was tolerated or insufficiently investigated. Narratives

commonly invoked following killings, including assertions that victims had resisted arrest or posed an immediate threat, were frequently accepted without meaningful scrutiny. Police reports were either fabricated or absent while some death certificates were falsified to bury the summary executions, and planting of firearms and drugs were used to justify the killings. The perceived absence of effective accountability mechanisms contributed to a loss of public confidence in law enforcement agencies and in the ability of the justice system to provide redress for violations of fundamental rights.

238. More broadly, the alleged failure to conduct prompt, thorough, and impartial investigations into thousands of deaths contributed to a perception of institutionalized impunity. Victims and their families frequently encountered significant obstacles in obtaining information, seeking accountability, or challenging official narratives concerning the deaths of their relatives. The resulting lack of trust in state institutions constitutes a societal harm that extends well beyond the individual incidents themselves. The anti-drug campaign also generated significant harm to public institutions and public policy. The public health system was increasingly oriented toward coercive and punitive responses to drug use rather than evidence-based health interventions. Rehabilitation initiatives were, in many instances, perceived and experienced as mechanisms of social control rather than voluntary health services aimed at treatment, recovery, and reintegration. As a result, an opportunity to address drug dependence as a public health issue was overshadowed by approaches centred on punishment and enforcement.

239. At the same time, substantial public resources, including personnel, infrastructure, and financial resources, were directed toward the implementation of the anti-drug campaign. These resources could otherwise have been allocated to health care, education, social protection, poverty reduction, and community-based interventions designed to address the structural causes of drug dependency and social vulnerability. The societal cost of the campaign therefore extended beyond the direct

victims and included the diversion of public resources away from programs intended to improve the welfare and development of the population.

240. The harm continues to the present day. The legislative and institutional framework that facilitated the implementation of highly punitive anti-drug policies has not undergone substantial reform. In the victims' view, aspects of the existing legal framework remain inconsistent with principles of human dignity, proportionality, due process, and international human rights standards. The absence of meaningful reform contributes to concerns that the underlying conditions that enabled the commission of the alleged crimes have not been fully addressed. Inadequate documentation, investigation, and prosecution of alleged violations have perpetuated a climate of impunity. The limited accountability measures undertaken by relevant state institutions, including law enforcement, prosecutorial, and oversight bodies, have left many victims and affected communities without effective remedies. This lack of accountability not only compounds the harm already suffered but also undermines confidence in the capacity of institutions to prevent future violations.

241. The continuing absence of comprehensive truth-seeking, effective investigations, and meaningful accountability has heightened fears among victims that similar practices could recur in the future. Many victims remain concerned that, without institutional reforms and accountability for those responsible, communities affected by the anti-drug campaign may once again be vulnerable to targeting under future anti-crime or anti-drug initiatives. In this regard, accountability serves not only a retributive function but also an important preventive one. The investigation and prosecution of those responsible for the alleged crimes, whether direct perpetrators or those who contributed to their planning, authorization, or implementation, are viewed by victims as essential measures to prevent recurrence, restore public confidence in state institutions, and reaffirm the fundamental principles of human dignity, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. The prevention of future violations is therefore intrinsically linked to acknowledgment of the harm suffered and the effective pursuit of justice for victims and affected communities.

7. Harm resulting from denial of truth, accountability and effective remedies

242. Beyond the physical, psychological, material, community, and societal harms described, participating victims suffered harm arising from the denial of truth, accountability, and effective remedies. The anti-drug campaign did not end with the killing, attempted killing, arrest, or intimidation of victims. Rather, many victims experienced continuing prejudice through institutional practices that obstructed access to justice, concealed the circumstances of crimes, and deprived families of the ability to establish the truth regarding what had happened to their loved ones. Many victims suffered additional harm as a result of difficulties in obtaining official documentation concerning the deaths of their relatives. Only a small number of families were able to secure complete police and investigative records relating to the killings. The absence or delayed disclosure of such records impeded victims' ability to establish the circumstances surrounding the deaths, identify all individuals involved, and pursue legal remedies against those responsible.

243. The experience of one victim²⁷³ illustrates these challenges. Following the [REDACTED] 2016 killing of her [REDACTED], she was provided only with a photocopy of the police spot report when she sought access to official records concerning the incident. Despite these limitations, she succeeded in filing a criminal complaint before the [REDACTED] against eight named police officers and one civilian asset. However, records relevant to the operation were only submitted by respondent police officers to the [REDACTED] several months later, approximately [REDACTED] after the killings had occurred. Subsequent review of pre-operation and coordination reports revealed the participation of an additional twelve police officers in the operation, requiring the victim to amend their complaint accordingly. This example demonstrates how limited access to documentation can substantially prejudice victims seeking justice.

²⁷³ See a/50092/25.

244. In the vast majority of the cases, victims were unable to obtain official documentation concerning the death of their relatives - police reports, investigative files, autopsy records, forensic evidence, or other documentation necessary to understand the circumstances surrounding the death or injury of family members. Requests for such records were frequently delayed, denied, or made subject to restrictive disclosure practices. As a result, victims were prevented from pursuing legal remedies, challenging official accounts, or identifying those responsible for the harm they suffered.

245. In some cases, the lack of official records had particularly serious consequences. Because police documentation was unavailable, incomplete, or inaccessible, certain victims were compelled to accept death certificates that falsely reflected disease or natural causes as the cause of death.²⁷⁴ Many other admitted victims suffer from the debased practice of falsified death certificates. Police instituted a case-to-case basis of disclosure for drug war documents.²⁷⁵ The Philippine Supreme Court would later compel the police to disclose records of drug-related incidents.²⁷⁶

246. The absence of documentation had practical and emotional consequences. Families were unable to establish accurate causes of death, secure corrections to official records, or pursue complaints before investigative bodies. In some cases, victims were compelled to accept death certificates containing incorrect causes of death, thereby institutionalizing false narratives regarding the circumstances of the killings. Such practices deprived victims of recognition of their suffering and prolonged their uncertainty and distress. Victims also reported intimidation, surveillance, harassment, and threats by police officers and other actors following the deaths of their relatives. The continued monitoring of families and perceived risks associated with seeking

²⁷⁴ See [REDACTED].

²⁷⁵ See MAYOL (A. V.) and AVENDAÑO (C. O.), *Supreme Court Order PNP to release drug war files only on 'case-to-case basis'*, 6 April 2018, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/980545/pnp-to-release-drug-war-files-only-on-case-to-case-basis>.

²⁷⁶ See the Supreme Court of the Philippines, *Almora et al. v. Dela Rosa and Daño et al. v. Philippine National Police*, G.R. Nos. 234359 and 234484, Resolution, 2 April 2019, available at: [Almora v. Dela Rosa | Legaldex AI](#).

information or filing complaints created a climate of fear that discouraged victims from exercising their rights. Consequently, many victims abandoned efforts to pursue accountability, not because they lacked interest in justice, but because they feared further harm to themselves or their families.

247. Allegations of police extortion emerged repeatedly in the victims' accounts. The widely publicized killing of South Korean businessman Jee Ick Joo while in police custody exposed broader concerns regarding corruption and extortion within law enforcement structures.²⁷⁷ A police officer involved in the incident described the case as one of "*hulidap*", referring to the practice of arresting individuals for the purpose of extorting money from them or their families.²⁷⁸ Victims reported similar fears that police powers could be used not only to arrest or target individuals but also to extract financial gain from vulnerable families. Such practices contributed to a pervasive sense of insecurity and mistrust toward law enforcement authorities.

248. The lack of effective investigations compounded victims' psychological suffering. The inability to identify perpetrators, obtain official acknowledgment of wrongdoing, or secure accountability left many victims without closure and contributed to continuing feelings of helplessness, frustration, anger, and mistrust of public institutions. For families of victims killed in vigilante-style attacks, the absence of meaningful investigative efforts meant that years later they still do not know who killed their loved ones or why.

249. The limited number of investigations and prosecutions into killings associated with the anti-drug campaign reinforced perceptions of impunity and generated continuing fear among affected communities. Victims reported concerns that, absent meaningful accountability, similar abuses could recur in the future. This apprehension

²⁷⁷ See TORRES-TUPAS (T.), [Why court acquitted the 'brains' behind Korean businessman's slay | Inquirer News](#), on the *Inquirer.net*, 8 June 2023. See also, RANADA (P.), [Duterte rejects Dela Rosa's resignation: What good will it do?](#), 30 January 2017.

²⁷⁸ See the Straits Times, [Philippine ex-policeman arrested over S. Korean's death in notorious drug war killing | The Straits Times](#), 9 January 2026.

itself constitutes a continuing form of harm, as victims remain uncertain whether they or their families may again be exposed to violence, intimidation, or targeting. Accordingly, the prejudice suffered by participating victims encompasses the harm resulting from the subsequent denial of truth, justice, reparations, and guarantees of non-repetition. The prolonged absence of effective accountability has deepened victims' suffering, impeded recovery, and prevented many from obtaining acknowledgment of the violations committed against them and their families.

8. Continuing harm

250. The harm suffered by the participating victims is not confined to the period during which the crimes were committed. All 539 admitted victims continue to experience the consequences of the killings in a social and political environment where support for the anti-drug campaign and its principal architects remains significant, and where accountability for the crimes has yet to be fully realized. As a result, victims continue to endure psychological, social, economic, and institutional harms that have persisted for many years after the deaths of their relatives

251. The murders attributed to Mr Duterte constitute irreversible violations of the right to life. However, the prejudice suffered by victims extends far beyond the immediate loss of a loved one. The destruction of family life, the fragmentation of communities, and the weakening of social trust continue to affect victims on a daily basis. The death of a parent, spouse, child, or sibling permanently alters family relationships and places lasting emotional and practical burdens on surviving relatives. Many victims remain responsible for raising children, caring for elderly family members, or providing for households that lost their primary source of income as a result of the killings.

252. The consequences are particularly pronounced for children. Victims reported that children who lost one or both parents often experienced withdrawal, grief, anxiety, behavioural difficulties, and declining educational performance. Some were compelled to interrupt their studies or assume economic responsibilities at an early

age. Many continue to struggle with the emotional consequences of losing a parent under violent and stigmatizing circumstances. Their suffering is often compounded by the absence of accountability for the deaths and the feeling that justice remains beyond their reach.

253. Victims continue to experience varying degrees of psychological and social distress. They report persistent fear for their own safety and that of their families. Such fears are reinforced by the enduring stigma attached to allegations of drug use or involvement in the drug trade, regardless of whether such allegations have any factual basis. Many victims continue to perceive that association with persons targeted during the anti-drug campaign exposes them to suspicion, discrimination, or possible retaliation. These fears have not entirely subsided with the passage of time. Victims note that anti-drug operations and drug-related killings have continued,²⁷⁹ albeit at a reduced scale, under subsequent administrations. Moreover, many of the police officers allegedly involved in the killings remain in active service and, in some instances, reportedly continue to serve within the same localities where the crimes occurred. Public declarations calling for renewed anti-drug campaigns have further heightened victims' anxieties and reinforced fears that similar abuses may recur. For many victims, these circumstances create a continuing sense of vulnerability and insecurity. In March 2024, in Davao, a new “*war on drugs*” was declared by Sebastian Duterte. Seven persons were killed within a week.²⁸⁰

254. Victims also report that they remain unable to speak openly about their experiences without fear of criticism, stigmatization, or retaliation. Those who came forward publicly, and particularly those who attended events organized after

²⁷⁹ See the Presidential Communications Office, *3 years into PBBM's peaceful drug war: More drugs seized, fewer suspects killed*, 25 June 2025, available at: https://pco.gov.ph/news_releases/3-years-into-pbbms-peaceful-drug-war-more-drugs-seized-fewer-suspects-killed/.

²⁸⁰ See COLINA (A. L. IV), *7 dead after Davao City Mayor Duterte declares war vs. drugs*, 26 March 2024, available at: <https://mindanews.com/top-stories/2024/03/7-dead-after-davao-city-mayor-duterte-declares-war-vs-drugs/>.

Mr Duterte was arrested in March 2025, have been targeted online.²⁸¹ The widespread circulation of disinformation concerning the anti-drug campaign and the ongoing proceedings has compounded these harms.²⁸² Social acceptance of violence and strong tolerance of the extra-legal,²⁸³ which strongly implies a significant disregard for due process and the rule of law, give rise to inhibition and even self-loathing by victims. Victims who regularly engage with social media are frequently exposed to narratives that justify the killings, glorify those responsible, or question the legitimacy of accountability efforts. The distortion of information favouring Mr Duterte²⁸⁴ especially affects victims. They feel anxious over attacks on the court and personnel, and on the pace, process, and integrity of the proceedings. Such narratives have the effect of minimizing victims' suffering, undermining recognition of the harm they endured, and intensifying feelings of frustration and anxiety. Many victims report concern about misinformation directed against the Court, its officials, and those participating in proceedings, creating additional uncertainty regarding the prospects for justice.

255. Finally, victims continue to suffer from the social normalization of violence and the enduring public acceptance of extra-legal methods of crime control. The perception that the deaths of their relatives were necessary, justified, or beneficial to society has left many victims feeling marginalized and misunderstood. These enduring consequences demonstrate that the impact of the crimes is not limited to past events

²⁸¹ See the Straits Times, *After Duterte's arrest, Philippine drug war victims face abuse and online falsehoods*, 31 March 2025, available at: <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/after-dutertes-arrest-philippine-drug-war-victims-face-abuse-and-online-falsehoods>. See also, UMIL (A. M.), *Victims' families, counsel face online harassment following Duterte's arrest*, 18 March 2025, available at: <https://www.bulatlat.com/2025/03/18/victims-families-counsel-face-online-harassment-following-dutertes-arrest/>

²⁸² See the Philippine Information Agency, *Digital disinformation campaign backs Duterte following ICC arrest*, 15 April 2025, available at: <https://pia.gov.ph/cybereadi/digital-disinformation-campaign-backs-duterte-following-icc-arrest/>.

²⁸³ See KREUZER (P.), *Rodrigo Duterte: The Legacy of a Widely Popular Strongman-President*, Report by the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, 2023, available at: https://www.prif.org/fileadmin/Daten/Publikationen/Prif_Reports/2023/prif2307_barrierefrei.pdf.

²⁸⁴ See CHUA (Y.), *Philippines: Duterte arrest sparks disinformation surge – in his favour*, 25 March 2025, available at: <https://www.reportingasean.net/philippines-duterte-arrest-sparks-disinformation-surge-in-his-favour/>.

but continues to shape the lives of victims, their families, and their communities to this day.

VIII. CONCLUSION

256. For the victims, the proceedings before this Court constitute a rare and indispensable source of hope: hope that the truth will finally be established, that those responsible will be held accountable, that their sufferings will be acknowledged, and that future generations will be spared the recurrence of the violence and impunity that have marked their lives for nearly a decade. With this hope, victims have chosen to engage in these proceedings despite the personal risks, emotional burdens, and social pressures they continue to face. Their participation reflects not only a profound desire for justice and accountability, but also a belief that this Court can help restore their dignity and the one of those killed, and contribute to the prevention of similar crimes in the future.

Respectfully submitted,



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Dated this 13th day of October 2026

At The Hague (The Netherlands), and Manila (The Philippines)