



STOP THE KILLINGS

STOP!

PRIMER

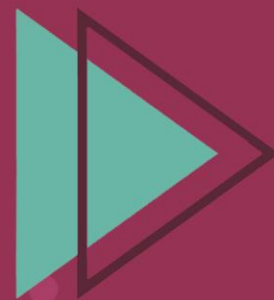


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ABOUT THIS PRIMER



This primer is designed to clarify the drug problem in the Philippines and to present an action plan. Read on to understand the unfolding narrative from the statistics down to the solutions.





UNDERSTANDING THE DRUG PROBLEM NARRATIVE IN THE PHILIPPINES

When President Rodrigo Duterte assumed office in 2016, he mainstreamed the narrative of drug abuse and the drug trade in the Filipino public imagination. He framed these as issues that can be solved by law enforcement. This became his justification for authorizing the Philippine National Police (PNP) to use whatever means and force necessary to put an end to the so-called Drug Problem brought about by — according to him — drug-users and drug-pushers in the Philippines.



STOP!





HERE ARE SOME QUICK FACTS ABOUT THE DRUG WAR CAMPAIGN:

The Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) says there are about 1.8 million current drug users in the Philippines, while 4.8 million Filipinos say they have used illegal drugs at least once in their lives.

Out of all drug users there are:

- more than three-quarters are adults (91%),
 - males (87%),
- have reached high school (80%)
- Over two-thirds (67%) are employed

The tally for "drug addicts" is way more than it actually is, as it is used to define even those who used drugs only once in their lifetime. This tells us that the term "drug addict" is being used very loosely as well as to justify thousands of deaths, including those who have sought drug-rehabilitation or other treatments.

The most common drug in the Philippines is "shabu" or "poor man's cocaine" which is a form of methamphetamine. According to a United Nations 2012 report, the Philippines had the highest use of methamphetamine in East Asia, wherein 2.2% of Filipinos ages 16-64 years were methamphetamine users.

PCol. Romeo Caramat, acting director of PNP Drug Enforcement Group, admitted in a 2019 Reuters interview that the 'drug supply is still rampant' in the country. In addition, Duterte even admitted publicly that the drug problem continues to worsen and he is unable to put a stop to it, a campaign promise he failed to fulfill. Ultimately, it is still ineffective in curbing drug use, drug addiction, and the drug trade. This has happened before in other countries like in the US and history is a testament that this approach does not address the root cause of the problem.

Sources:

<https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2019/3/26/duterte-drug-problem-worsened.html>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6634291/>

THE WAR ON DRUGS: A TIMELINE

2007 - 2015 **Pre-Duterte Philippines**

Then-Mayor Duterte of Davao City already had a suspicious human rights record. International organizations like the UN and Amnesty International have publicly expressed concern about the growing impunity associated with the Davao Death Squad killings that were present in the surrounding area (General Santos City, Digos City, Tagum City and Cebu City).

Then-Mayor Duterte denied the existence of the death squad at first but later on bragged about his record killings of 1,700.

2016 **The Philippines under President Duterte**

May 9, 2016

Mayor Duterte wins the Presidential Elections with 38% of the votes.

June 29, 2016

Reuters reports that in the seven weeks between election day and the president's inauguration day, a drug suspect is being killed daily, four times the average for the first four months of 2016.

July 7, 2016

In a televised speech, President Duterte releases a matrix allegedly containing the names and links of drug lords and high ranking police officers.

September 17, 2016

PNP claimed that 1,138 drug personalities have been killed nationwide under "Oplan Double Barrel" from July 1 to September 17, 2016.

September 30, 2016

Duterte compares himself to Hitler and his annihilation of three million Jews to his anti-drug campaign.

October 25, 2016

PNP expands Oplan Double Barrel to Oplan Double Barrel Alpha, including implementation of the tokhang in schools, factories and entertainment industries and wants to start a new count of those who are neutralized through the implementation of the project.

November 28, 2016

Duterte threatens to kill human rights advocates critical to his war on drugs if the drug problem worsens.

2017

January 31, 2017

Amnesty International releases a report on drug related killings and how it disproportionately targeted the poor.

May 2, 2017

Government launches "RealNumberSPH, to release "real figures" on the anti-drug campaign.

August 16, 2017

Kian Delos Santos, a 17-year-old student, was killed in an alleged shootout with three police officers in Caloocan. CCTV footage and testimonies belied the claim of the PNP.

August 18, 2017

Carl Angelo Arnaiz, 19-year-old former student of the University of the Philippines is killed in alleged shoot out with the PNP in Caloocan. His body was found ten days later in a morgue.

August 15 - 18, 2017

More than 90 people were killed from coordinated police operations in Bulacan and Metro Manila, for multiple nights of "one time, big time".

2018

February 20, 2018

20,322 extrajudicial killings related to the drug war based on the president's accomplishment report for 2017.

July 18, 2018

6 Killed in "one-time, big time" operation in Cebu

October 2018

16 men killed in Metro Cebu for drug-related shooting within 24 hours.

December 9, 2018

PNP official death toll on the War on Drugs reached 5,050 persons killed in drug operations.

2019

July 18, 2019

Government tally on drug war EJKs from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2019, now at 5,526, while rights groups claim that it is at around 27,000 death.

2020

January 12, 2020

Survey results show that 72% of Filipinos believe that there are "many" human rights abuses committed in Duterte's anti-illegal drugs campaign.

September 8, 2020

Duterte's drug war worsened based on the government's own statistics. Analysis of the PDEA's official numbers, the death toll on the drug war is 5,810 as of July 2020. Based on Human Rights Watch analysis of the data, around 155 persons are said to have been killed between April to July 2020, with a 50% rise compared to the 26 deaths counted by PDEA from July to November, 2019.

2021

May 24, 2021

DOJ and PNP to forge agreement on probe of EJKs, deaths in illegal drug operations



THE WAR ON DRUGS AND ITS HUMAN COST

The data clearly shows that most of the victims were poor based on where they lived and their occupation. Most of them worked as tricycle drivers, construction workers, street vendors, farmers, etc.

- Majority of victims were males (94%) between 20 and 50 years old (30%) where almost all of them died of gunshot wounds.

- According to various estimates, between 4,000 and 20,000 people were killed in the first 18 months. The PNP admits that 4,270 deaths were a result of police operations from July 1, 2016 and May 21, 2018. Additionally there were almost 23,000 possibly drug-related deaths under investigation during this period.

- The victims' ages is known out of only 1,764 cases were the average age is 37.

22 victims were below 18
228 were between 18 and 25 years old
225 were at least 50 years old
33 were 60 years and older



Worldwide the war on drugs has left a trail of human rights violations. It undermines human rights and it normalizes violence without due process reinforcing the belief that addicts are less than human.

- Early in the pandemic, the drug war killings increased by more than 50 percent. Almost 8,000 suspected illegal drug suspects were killed during police operations. On the other hand, domestic human rights groups and the Commission on Human Rights believe that the actual figure is triple.

- According to a 2019 report by the UN Systems Coordination Task Team, repressive and abusive anti-drug policies are counterproductive while also wasting public resources, violating human rights, and undermining public health.



WAR ON DRUGS MECHANISMS

Duterte's war on drugs operated through PNP's Oplan Double Barrel, with its Project HVT and the more infamous Project Tokhang.

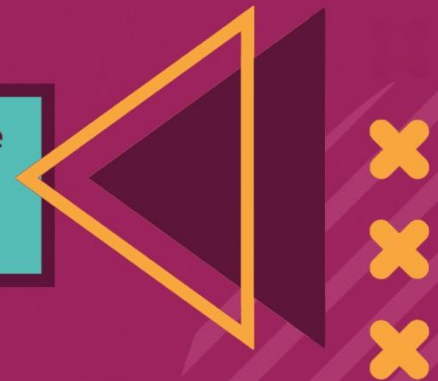
PROJECT TOKHANG

involves members of the PNP going door-to-door to convince “suspected illegal drug personalities” in the communities to stop their illegal drug activities based on anonymous tips or dropboxes. However, the stark reality shows that tokhang activities are marked differently between polite and neighborly conduct in gated communities versus blood-soaked operations in slums and other poor communities, which Amnesty International reports as being riddled with planted evidence and orchestrated crime scenes.



OPLAN HVT

or Oplan High Value Target is concerned with the bigger drug trade involving illegal drug personalities and drug syndicates who have control over a network of street pushers.



KILLINGS OF MINORS

The drug war is hurting and killing children. Not only are they becoming orphans, but they are also a part of the thousands killed in the past three years.

Key cases in recent memory are the killings of teenagers Kian de los Santos, Reynaldo de Guzman, and Carl Arnaiz allegedly by the members of the Caloocan PNP. This became a flash point for outrage against the drug war EJKs and even more so when the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) awarded the Caloocan City Police station for being the best police station in Metro Manila for their services to the drug war campaign.

The youngest victim was three-year-old Myca Ulpina who was shot during a police raid targeting her father, Renato Dolofrina. The police say that Dolofrina used his child as a “shield” when the raid happened; However, police accounts like this are not reliable given that the hallmark of this brutal campaign is deceit and manufactured evidence,

WHAT CAN WE DO TO SEEK JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY?



- Demand accountability and support petitions like this one from Amnesty International
- Share this primer and start conversations with your immediate community
- Call for an end to the killings and culture of violence
- Join organizations, groups, and initiatives that fight for human rights and call out injustices.
- Vote for government candidates who prioritize human rights.
- Speak out online and on-ground against the policies and normalization of violence.
- Ask your local government to support the CHR case against PNP
- Ask your local government to support the ICC petition to investigate the drug war killings

WHAT IS THE ICC?

The ICC or International Criminal Court investigates and tries individuals who committed the most severe crimes where the international community is concerned such as genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. The ICC intervenes where a State cannot genuinely carry out the investigation and prosecute the perpetrators. It's main mission is to end impunity on an international level.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR?

In March 16, 2019, the Philippines officially withdrew from the ICC a month after an announcement of the preliminary examination into the alleged mass murder and crime against humanity by President Duterte and other Philippine officials. Even if the Philippines is no longer a "party to the court's Rome Statute", the Philippines can still be tried for its crimes because they were committed during its membership (From November 1, 2011 until March 16, 2019).

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT TO THE CASE?

We can expect a final decision in the first half of 2021 from the ICC's formal investigation. The ICC states that there is a "reasonable basis to believe" the Philippines has committed crimes against humanity associated with Duterte's War on Drugs.

Sources:

<https://www.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/pids/publications/uicceng.pdf> | <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/17/world/asia/philippines-international-criminal-court.html> | <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/03/18/philippines-pullout-icc-wont-block-justice-drug-war>



CHECK OUT THESE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Violence, Human Rights, and Democracy in the Philippines

<https://dahas.upd.edu.ph/resources/publications/>

Looking back: Day One, Year One of the Antidrug Campaign

<https://drugarchive.ph/post/174-day-one-year-one-of-the-antidrug-campaign>

Antidrug Campaign Timeline

<https://drugarchive.ph/interactive/51-anti-drug-campaign-timeline>

Count the Costs: 50 Years of the War on Drugs

<https://transformdrugs.org/assets/files/PDFs/count-the-costs-human-rights.pdf>

The Case of the Philippine Drug War: When the State Securitizes an Existential Threat to Public Safety

<https://theasiadialogue.com/2017/06/01/the-case-of-the-philippine-drug-war-when-the-state-securitizes-an-existential-threat-to-public-safety/>

Philippine drug war families file ICC case against Duterte

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/philippine-drug-war-families-file-icc-case-against-duterte/83184>

ICC prosecutor sees 'crimes against humanity' in Philippines

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/15/icc-reasonable-basis-of-crimes-against-humanity-under-duterte>

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