

## The Philippines: Drop perjury charges against Philippines Civil Society Organisations

(Bangkok/Jakarta, 20 June 2022) FORUM-ASIA is deeply concerned by the ongoing court trial on perjury charges filed by Hermogenes Esperon Jr., the former National Security Adviser in the Cabinet of Rodrigo Duterte, against civil societies, Karapatan the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines (RMP) and GABRIELA as well as the systematic vilification and smear campaigns against them.

In July 2019, Hermogenes Esperon Jr. filed a Complaint-Affidavit for perjury with the Quezon City Office of the city prosecutor (QC OCP) against Karapatan National Council members, GABRIELA Chairperson and Secretary-General, and RMP National Coordinator and Northern Mindanao Region Coordinator. The former National Security Adviser claimed that the respondents committed perjury when they petitioned the Supreme Court for the Writ of Amparo and the Writ of Habeas Data.

"We call on the Philippine authorities to immediately and unconditionally drop the malicious and retaliatory charges of perjury filed by Hermogenes Esperon Jr. against Karapatan's national officers as well as that of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines and GABRIELA and to ensure in all circumstances that human rights defenders in the Philippines can carry out their legitimate activities without any hindrance and fear of reprisals," said FORUM-ASIA.

Despite the petitioners reiterating the fact that the petition to the Supreme Court was filed in good faith and that the corporate status of a petitioner organisation is irrelevant, Cristina Palabay, Secretary General of Karapatan, and the other National Council members named in the case will testify beginning on the 20th of June 2022 and ending on the 1st of August 2022.

FORUM-ASIA condemns the ongoing harassment, both online and offline, of human rights organisations in the Philippines, which has serious consequences for activists and dissenters, including extrajudicial killings, illegal arrests, trumped-up charges, illegal surveillance, vilification, and the banning or blacklisting of organizations, as highlighted in the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (CHRP)' July 2020 Report. The "[Report on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders in the Philippines](#)" is the result of an investigation launched by the Commission to ascertain the current situation affecting the work, safety, and security of HRDs in the country in response to letters received from individuals and organisations, including Karapatan and RMP, alleging human rights violations attributed to State officials.

Details about the [Perjury Case](#).

### The harassed human rights organisations:

About [Karapatan Coalition Philippines Inc](#)

About [Rural Missionaries of the Philippines](#)

About [GABRIELA](#)

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### About FORUM-ASIA:

The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) is a network of 85 member organisations across 23 countries, mainly in Asia. Founded in 1991, FORUM-ASIA works to strengthen movements for human rights and sustainable development through research, advocacy, capacity development and solidarity actions in Asia and beyond. It has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and consultative relationship with the ASEAN Intergovernmental

Commission on Human Rights. The FORUM-ASIA Secretariat is based in Bangkok, with offices in Jakarta, Geneva and Kathmandu. [www.forum-asia.org](http://www.forum-asia.org)

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