



Philippine authorities should immediately release Senator Leila de Lima, who has been detained for more than five and one-half years, and drop the politically motivated charges against her, as requested by Amnesty International, FORUM-ASIA, and Human Rights Watch. The mistreatment of De Lima reflects broader attacks by the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte against human rights defenders, particularly women, that continues under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

De Lima, who has been detained at the headquarters of the Philippine National Police since her arrest on February 24, 2017, has been one of the staunchest critics of the government's abusive ["war on drugs."](#) The authorities arrested her after she sought to investigate extrajudicial executions committed in the context of the anti-drug campaign.

"Every day that Senator De Lima remains detained is another day of injustice, not only against her but against all Filipinos whose rights – to life, liberty, health, and due process – have been trampled on by a violent and repressive government," said Nicholas Bequelin, regional director for East and Southeast Asia and the Pacific at Amnesty International.

Since her detention, the DOJ has brought only one of the 3 three drug-related cases against her to court and that case was thrown out by the judge. These cases have been marked by undue delays after at least six judges decided to recuse themselves from hearing the cases or opted for early retirement. More recently three key witnesses declared that their testimonies against Senator De Lima were false and obtained by, "pressure, coercion, intimidation, and serious threats". Very recently her life was threatened in an escape attempted by prisoners who were held on terrorism charges.

De Lima's mistreatment reflects the [broader repressive conditions](#) that human rights defenders face in the country, the organizations said.

“Under the Duterte administration, women human rights defenders have repeatedly faced state-sanctioned intimidation and reprisals,” said Mukunda Kattel, executive director of FORUM-ASIA. “We have also observed the intensification of gender-based attacks, such as sexual harassment and the use of dehumanizing and misogynist language to silence women human rights defenders who continue to push for greater accountability.”

A case in point is the prominent [journalist, Maria Ressa](#), editor and CEO of the news website Rappler, and now a Nobel Peace Prize awardee. Rappler has been publishing investigative reports about the “war on drugs.” She is facing numerous lawsuits. They include attempts to shut the website down for alleged tax evasion and violation of the country’s restrictions on foreign ownership. Each of the charges carries heavy fines and sentences of up to 10 years in prison, which could lead to her imprisonment for decades

“The Philippines government has grossly mistreated Senator de Lima so that other whistleblowers and rights monitors will not dare expose the abuses and injustices of Duterte’s ‘drug war,’” said Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

Please send a card, or letter to Sen. De Lima to show your solidarity with her brave stances on behalf of human rights. Also send letters to go to the Secretary of Justice and Philippine Ambassador to the US on her behalf.

These may all be emailed, if you prefer.

## WRITE TO THE PHILIPPINE SECRETARY OF JUSTICE & AMBASSADOR TO THE US

Ask him to release Sen. De Lima **immediately and unconditionally:**

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Secretary of Justice Jesus Crispin Remulla  
Department of Justice  
Padre Faura Street, Ermita, Manila 10020  
Philippines  
(postage \$1.40)

Or sign letter and email to:  
[communications@doj.gov.ph](mailto:communications@doj.gov.ph)

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Also send your letter to:

H.E. Jose Manuel G. Romualdez, Embassy  
of the Republic of the Philippines, 1600  
Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington DC  
20036

Or email: [ambassador@phembassy-us.org](mailto:ambassador@phembassy-us.org)

And copy Amnesty-Philippines so they can  
distribute to other government offices

Email: [section@amnesty.org.ph](mailto:section@amnesty.org.ph)

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## HELP KEEP SENATOR DE LIMA'S SPIRIT STRONG

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Send your messages of support to Senator  
De Lima:

OFFICE OF SENATOR LEILA M. De LIMA  
Room 502, 5th Floor, GSIS Bldg., Financial  
Center  
Pasay City, Philippines  
1308  
(postage \$1.40)  
or email: [senleilamdelima@gmail.com](mailto:senleilamdelima@gmail.com)