



Philippine authorities should immediately release Senator Leila de Lima, who has been detained for more than three 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.

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 authorities have made no substantial progress in court proceedings for the three drug-related cases eventually brought against her. 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.

Currently, the prosecution is presenting witnesses, most of whom have been convicted of drug-related charges. De Lima has been prevented from participating in hearings and proceedings at the Philippine Senate and faces restrictions on communications with outsiders. 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, which 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 sign the prepared letter to Sen. De Lima to show your solidarity with her brave stances on behalf of human rights. We also have prepared letters to go to the Secretary of Justice and U.S. Ambassador on her behalf.

These may all be emailed, if you prefer, with a BCC copy of the letters to Philippine officials sent to the Manila Amnesty office:
section@amnesty.org.ph

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

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

Secretary of Justice Menardo Guevarra
Dept. Of Justice
Padre Faura Street, Ermita, Manila 10020
Philippines
(postage \$1.20)

Or sign letter and email to:
communications@doj.gov.ph

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**

And copy Amnesty-Philippines so they can
distribute to other government offices
Email: **section@amnesty.org.ph**

HELP KEEP SENATOR DE LIMA'S SPIRIT STRONG

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 \$1.20)
or email: **senleilamdelima@gmail.com**