

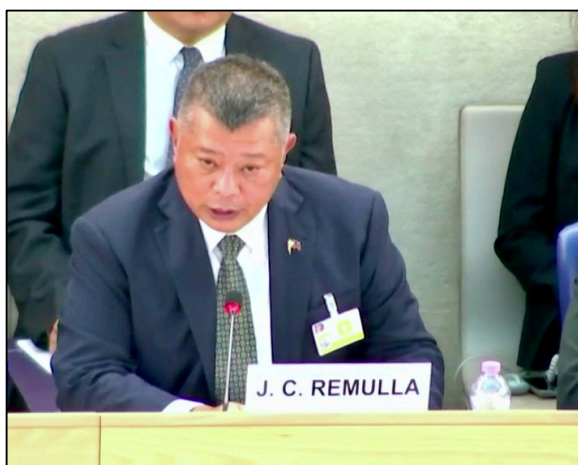
PRESS RELEASE

Philippine Mission to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva

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“REAL JUSTICE IN REAL TIME” IS AIM OF REFORM - DOJ SECRETARY REMULLA TO UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL



Secretary of Justice Jesus Crispin Remulla speaks at the Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner's Report on the Philippines during the 51st Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland

05 October 2022, Geneva, Switzerland – Heading the Philippine Government delegation at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), Department of Justice (DOJ) Secretary Jesus Crispin C. Remulla emphasized that *“real justice in real time”* is what should be delivered to strengthen human rights protection in the country.

Secretary Remulla highlighted gains made by the Marcos Administration within its first 100 days to address human rights issues at a dialogue on the Philippines at the 51st session of the UN HRC.

“The Philippines, through the unifying leadership of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. is undertaking transformational reform of its justice and law enforcement sectors,” he said in his opening remarks.

He underlined recent policy directives of the President to refocus the anti-illegal drug campaign to apprehension of criminal masterminds, as well as rehabilitation, prevention, and assistance to victims and their families.

He shared DOJ-led initiatives on improving access to justice and accountability mechanisms, re-training of law enforcement personnel, and decongestion of prison facilities.

In particular, he informed of the release of 371 persons deprived of their liberty from prisons last month.

“We aim to have 5,000 persons released by June next year,” he announced.

He likewise gave updates on the work of the Review Panel created by DOJ to re-examine cases related to the anti-illegal drug campaign. A total of 302 cases have thus far been referred by the Panel to the National Bureau of Investigation for case buildup.

He invited civil society organizations to work with the government to provide information for the filing of cases. He assured that the DOJ would bolster the witness protection program so that *“fear will not impede justice.”*

UN Member States that took the floor acknowledged the Philippines’ constructive engagement with the international community on human rights.

They cited the progress by the government in strengthening domestic accountability mechanisms and institutions. The important role of the Philippines’ independent Commission on Human Rights was widely noted.

They especially welcomed the justice sector reform agenda presented by Secretary Remulla.

They also pledged continuing support to the UN Joint Program on Human Rights (UNJP), a three-year technical cooperation program that provides capacity-building to national institutions in six areas: strengthening domestic investigation and accountability mechanisms; data gathering on alleged police violations; civic space and engagement with civil society and the Commission on Human Rights; national mechanism for reporting and follow-up; counter-terrorism legislation; and human rights-based approaches to drug control.

Secretary Remulla stressed that the Philippine Government’s commitments and programs on human rights will continue and be expanded, even as the UNJP will eventually conclude its work in 2024.

Addressing concerns on how to enhance domestic accountability mechanisms, Secretary Remulla assured that the Department of Justice *“will work tirelessly under my watch and do all it can with other government agencies and partners to raise our standards, decongest our prisons, protect witnesses, hold perpetrators accountable, and most of all – inject human rights into the DNA of all processes of law enforcement and delivery of justice.”*

“There is no turning back...it is a responsibility which the Administration of President Marcos takes on with utmost seriousness, professionalism, and vigor,” Secretary Remulla stated. *“Understand the context of our challenges...on the ground...Trust... and work with us to realize the vision of human rights and justice for all.”*

Next week, on 10-11 October 2022, Secretary Remulla will lead the Philippine delegation in a dialogue on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights with the UN Human Rights Committee, as well as the 73rd Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme, organized by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). **END**