

# PRESS RELEASE

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

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### **HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS ARE PARTNERS FOR DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND JUSTICE – PH TELLS SPECIAL RAPPOORTEUR AT UN DIALOGUE IN GENEVA**



*First Secretary Luningning Camoying Valdez of the Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nations in Geneva delivers the Philippine Statement at the Interactive Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders held on 15 March 2023 at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Regular Session of the Human Rights Council.*

Defenders National Assembly in which 119 human rights defenders and Ms. Mary Lawlor, UN Special Rapporteur, participated.

The Philippine Mission further emphasized that the judiciary affords everyone, including human rights defenders, judicial remedies to uphold and protect fundamental rights and freedoms. These include the Writ of Amparo, Writ of Kalikasan, Writ of Habeas Data and the Writ of Habeas Corpus.

**GENEVA, SWITZERLAND** – The Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva participated in the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders held on 15 March 2023 during the ongoing 52<sup>nd</sup> Regular Session of the Human Rights Council.

The Philippine Mission in Geneva underscored that the government values the role of human rights defenders as partners in building just and humane societies where the rights and dignity of everyone are protected and guaranteed, and that part of their advocacy work is “*speaking truth to power and holding duty-bearers accountable for excesses and lapses*”.

The Philippines has a thriving and highly participative democratic space, with over 100,000 registered non-profit organizations, 60,000 of which are engaged in socio-political advocacy work domestically and in the UN.

On 14 December 2021, the Philippines organized its first ever Human Rights

Stressing that “*the Philippines deeply values its vibrant civic space with its long tradition of inspired activism for democracy, justice and human rights*”, the Philippine Mission sought the Special Rapporteur’s views on how UN human rights mechanisms can help prevent the instrumentalization of human rights by certain non-state actors that deliberately blur the lines between activism and armed struggle to advance violent agendas.

At this Interactive Dialogue, Ms. Lawlor presented her report on the accomplishments of human rights defenders worldwide 25 years after the adoption of the *Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*. The report noted the support of members of the Philippine Congress advocating for a law on human rights defenders. **END**