



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
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30 August 2018

Excellency,

I refer to your letter of 6 August 2018 containing information in response to the Committee's Decision of 8 May 2018.

In its decision, the Committee specifically raised concerns about the inclusion of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz and two former UN Experts as well as indigenous leaders and human rights defenders engaged in the fight against racial discrimination, in the list of persons accused of affiliation with "terrorist organisations". It also raised concerns about the alleged killings of over sixty human rights defenders in 2017 and the low level of investigation, prosecution and conviction of those responsible of killings.

The Committee welcomes the information brought to its attention by other sources regarding the decision of the Regional Trial Court of Manila, on 27 July 2018, to remove the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, from the above-mentioned list.

The Committee takes note of the State party's reply noted above, which provides additional explanations and expressed disagreement with the Committee's Decision.

In light of the above-mentioned, the Committee remains concerned that the former United Nations Experts, human rights defenders and indigenous leaders are maintained on the list of individuals accused of affiliation with the activities of "terrorist organizations". The Committee is further concerned that this may amount to intimidation and harassment of human rights defenders, and may create an environment that would prevent them from continuing their activities without fear of reprisals.

The Committee welcomes the information on the legal and institutional framework for the protection of indigenous peoples in the Philippines, but regrets that the State party has not provided replies on the investigations initiated, the prosecutions carried out and convictions of those responsible of the killings of indigenous leaders.

His Excellency Mr. Evan P. Garcia
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Therefore, the Committee urges the State party to carefully assess this situation and consider removing the names of the remainder of United Nations Experts, human rights defenders including indigenous leaders, from the list.

Allow me, Excellency, to reiterate the wish of the Committee to continue to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Philippines, with a view to assisting it to implement the Convention effectively.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nouredine Amir".

Nouredine Amir
Chair
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination