

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

REFERENCE: BN/follow-up/Philippines/93

3 August 2026

Excellency,

In my capacity as Rapporteur on follow-up on concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), I have the honor to refer to the examination of the ninth periodic report of the Philippines, at the Committee's 86th session, held in October 2023. At the end of that session, the Committee's concluding observations ([CEDAW/C/PHL/CO/9](#)) were transmitted to your Permanent Mission. You may recall that in paragraph 58 on follow-up to the concluding observations, the Committee requested the Philippines to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraph 14 (a) and (b), 36 (a) and (b) and 44 (c) of the concluding observations.

The Committee welcomes the follow-up report ([CEDAW/C/PHL/FCO/9](#)) received under the CEDAW follow-up procedure on 30 March 2026, four months after the two-year reporting period. The Committee examined the follow-up report during the intersessional period and adopted the following assessment on 31 July 2026.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 14 (a)** of the concluding observations that the State party “**accelerate the adoption of the Comprehensive Non-Discrimination Bill and ensure that it covers direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres, as well as intersecting forms of discrimination, in accordance with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, the Committee's general recommendation No. 28 (2010) on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention and target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere**”:

The Committee notes the steps taken by the State party in advancing the Comprehensive Non-Discrimination Bill, including its progression to the Second Reading in the Senate during the 19th Congress and its refiling in the 20th Congress.

The Committee notes, however, that the Bill remains pending and has not been adopted despite repeated legislative proposals across successive Congresses. The Committee further notes the absence of proactive and sustained measures to expedite its adoption. It further notes that the absence of this legislation results in fragmented and inconsistent protection against discrimination, particularly for women facing intersecting forms of discrimination.

H.E. Mr. Carlos D. Sorreta
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The Committee considers that the State party has taken some steps to implement the recommendation. It therefore considers that the recommendation has been **partially implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided by the State party relates to the recommendation but lacks detail on concrete measures taken to expedite the adoption of the bill. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **partially satisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 14 (a)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

Accelerate the adoption of the Comprehensive Non-Discrimination Bill and ensure that it covers direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres, as well as intersecting forms of discrimination, in accordance with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, the Committee's general recommendation No. 28 (2010) on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention and target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 14 (b)** of the concluding observations that the State party “**accelerate the adoption of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression Equality Bill**”:

The Committee notes the efforts undertaken by the State party during the 19th Congress to advance the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression Equality Bill under the Women's Priority Legislative Agenda, including the policy briefings held in this regard, as well as its refiling in the 20th Congress. The Committee also notes measures taken by the State party to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, including the creation of a Special Committee on LGBTQIA+ Affairs.

The Committee notes, however, that measures to accelerate the adoption of the bill have not been undertaken in a systematic and sustained manner, and that the bill has not been adopted and remains pending. The Committee further notes continuing reports of discrimination, harassment and violence against lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women and their limited access to remedies due to stigma and fear of retaliation.

The Committee considers that the State party has taken some steps to implement the recommendation. It therefore considers that the recommendation has been **partially implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided relates to the recommendation but fails to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures taken to accelerate the adoption of the bill and ensure prohibition of discrimination. It therefore considers that the quality of the information provided is **partially satisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 14 (b)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

Accelerate the adoption of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression Equality Bill.

In relation to the recommendation made in **paragraph 36 (a)** of the concluding observations to “ensure that women human rights defenders, women journalists and activists, including Maria Ressa and in particular those advocating for land rights, protection of the environment and the rights of Indigenous women, rural women, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women and Muslim women, can freely carry out their advocacy for women’s human rights and exercise their rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association free from harassment, surveillance or undue restrictions, including arbitrary arrest and arbitrary prosecution, and when they engage or seek to engage with the Committee”:

The Committee notes that several bills have been filed in Congress to protect human rights defenders, and the State party has adopted a 10-year National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security outlining actions to support women peacebuilders and human rights defenders.

The Committee notes, however, that the efforts to adopt these bills remain limited. The Committee notes with grave concern consistent reports indicating that women human rights defenders, unionists, journalists and activists, in particular those advocating for land rights, protection of the environment and the rights of Indigenous women, rural women continue to face serious human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, surveillance, intimidation, harassment, and “red-tagging”. The Committee also notes that such practices are reportedly carried out or facilitated by State actors, and that the Anti-Terror Act (2020) continues to be used to legitimize such acts, thereby contributing to a climate of fear and impunity.

The Committee considers that the State party has not taken steps to implement the recommendation. It therefore considers that the recommendation has **not been implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided by the State party does not demonstrate concrete measures to implement the recommendation. It therefore considers that the quality of the information provided is **unsatisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 36 (a)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

Ensure that women human rights defenders, women journalists and activists, including Maria Ressa and in particular those advocating for land rights, protection of the environment and the rights of Indigenous women, rural women, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women and Muslim women, can freely carry out their advocacy for women’s human rights and exercise their rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association free from harassment, surveillance or undue restrictions, including arbitrary arrest and arbitrary prosecution, and when they engage or seek to engage with the Committee.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 36 (b)** of the concluding observations to “investigate and prosecute all acts of harassment, gender-based violence and discrimination, and

intimidation and reprisals against women human rights defenders, including online, and ensure their constitutional right (under article 3.1 of the Constitution) to due process of law and the equal protection of the laws; provide remedies and reparations to victims; and establish a specific registry of such incidents, with disaggregated data and publicly available statistics”:

The Committee notes the State party’s reference to its accountability mechanisms and multi-disciplinary referral pathways for survivors and/or witnesses of gender-based violence.

However, the Committee notes with concern the reports of widespread impunity and the lack of effective investigations into human rights violations against women human rights defenders. The Committee notes persistent barriers to justice, including fear of retaliation, lack of trust in institutions and limited access to remedies. It also notes with concern the limited documentation of violations targeting women human rights defenders and the lack of disaggregated data and publicly available statistics, which render women’s experiences invisible and undermine the development of evidence-based policies and accountability mechanisms.

The Committee considers that the State party has not taken concrete steps to implement the recommendation. It therefore considers that the recommendation has **not been implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided fails to address the recommendation. It therefore considers that the quality of the information provided is **unsatisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 36 (b)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

Investigate and prosecute all acts of harassment, gender-based violence and discrimination, and intimidation and reprisals against women human rights defenders, including online, and ensure their constitutional right (under article 3.1 of the Constitution) to due process of law and the equal protection of the laws; provide remedies and reparations to victims; and establish a specific registry of such incidents, with disaggregated data and publicly available statistics.

In relation to the recommendation made in **paragraph 44 (c)** of the concluding observations to “**amend articles 256–259 of the Revised Penal Code to legalize abortion in cases of risk to the life or health of the pregnant woman, rape, incest or severe fetal impairment and decriminalize it in all other cases**”:

The Committee notes the information provided by the State party on reproductive health policies and post-abortion care under the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law.

However, the Committee notes with concern that abortion remains criminalized under articles 256–259 of the Revised Penal Code, which contributes to a high incidence of unsafe abortion, and that legislative efforts to reform these provisions have faced strong opposition. The Committee further notes significant barriers to accessing post-abortion care due to stigma, fear of prosecution, denial of services, and inadequate health system capacity.



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The Committee considers that the State party has not taken concrete steps to implement the recommendation. It therefore considers that the recommendation has **not been implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided fails to address the recommendation. It therefore considers that the quality of the information provided is **unsatisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 44 (c)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

Amend articles 256–259 of the Revised Penal Code to legalize abortion in cases of risk to the life or health of the pregnant woman, rape, incest or severe fetal impairment and decriminalize it in all other cases.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jelena Pia-Comella". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "J".

Jelena Pia-Comella

Rapporteur on follow-up

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women