



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS, GENEVA



NV-CDS-48-2025

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Special Procedures Branch, and, with reference to the joint communication from Special Procedures (reference: AL PHL 4/2024) regarding the case of the farmers from Barangay Sumalo, Hermosa, province of Bataan, has the honor to convey the enclosed written response of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines.

The Permanent Mission requests that this response be published on the OHCHR website alongside the joint communication.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights renew, Special Procedures Branch, the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 23 January 2025

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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**Written Response of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines
to the Joint Communication from Special Procedures AL PHL 4/2024
dated 16 September 2024**

This is with reference to the Joint Communication from Special Procedures AL PHL 4/2024 dated 16 September 2024 on the alleged criminalization of members of land rights movements and peasants struggling for the recognition of their land rights and for the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) in the Philippines.

The Philippine Government informs that the criminal case for syndicated estafa lodged against the farmers from Barangay Sumalo has been dismissed due to insufficiency of evidence.

The Philippine Government wishes to underscore the measures being implemented by the Marcos administration to address land-related issues and support agrarian reform. These initiatives reflect a commitment to creating a more equitable agricultural landscape, ensuring that the rights of peasant communities are respected, protected, and fulfilled.

The Marcos administration is actively addressing land-related concerns by distributing Electronic Land Titles and Certificates of Land Ownership Award to agrarian reform beneficiaries. The enactment of the New Agrarian Reform Emancipation Act in July 2023 has further advanced this objective by cancelling amortization payments, including interest and penalties, on lands cultivated by farmers effectively freeing them from agrarian debt. This legislation has significantly accelerated land distribution, reaffirming the government's commitment in completing land title transfers to all agrarian reform beneficiaries.

In addition, several legislative measures are pending in the House of Representatives and the Senate to enhance land security and tenure. These include:

- **Extension of Authority for the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR):** A proposed bill seeks to extend the DAR's authority to issue Notices of Coverage for private agricultural land, thereby ensuring the continued implementation of the agrarian reform program and facilitating the distribution of land to beneficiaries;
- **Passage of the National Land Use Act:** This legislation aims to provide a comprehensive framework for land use planning, promoting sustainable and equitable land management across the nation; and
- **Transformation of the Land Registration Authority:** A proposed bill aims to expand the powers of the Land Registration Authority by transforming it into the Property Registration and Adjudication Commission. This new commission would possess quasi-judicial authority, enabling it to resolve land disputes more efficiently and effectively.

Finally, the Human Rights Defenders Bill is presently under consideration by Congress, where it is being reviewed and discussed, which is a crucial step in ensuring

that the rights and protections for human rights defenders are clearly defined and safeguarded. The ongoing discussions provide an opportunity for lawmakers to weigh the bill's provisions thoughtfully, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation that takes into account the various perspectives and concerns surrounding the matter. **END**