

H.E. Mr Antonio Manuel Lagdameo
Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines
6-11 Suffolk Street
SW1Y 4HG

07 June 2019

Dear Ambassador

Justice for the extrajudicial killing of Filipino activist Leonides Dennis Sequeña

On behalf of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) representing over 5.5 million workers, I write to strongly condemn the assassination on 2 June of Leonides "Dennis" Sequeña, a labour organiser and the vice-chair of the Labor Party in Cavite (Partido Manggagawa).

Mr Sequeña was shot in Barangay Bunga in Tanza, Cavite, by men riding a motorcycle while he was attending a workers' meeting. He died after arriving at the hospital. Mr Sequeña was an active member in the Freedom of Association (FOA) Committee of the Nagkaisa Labor Coalition and the DOLE-Nagkaisa Technical Working Group on FOA since 2018. He actively supported trade unions in the Cavite Export Processing Zone in Rosario, and he was a party-list nominee of the Labor Party in the mid-term elections that ended last month. His assassination is a clear case of extrajudicial killing.

According to Nagkaisa, this is the 43rd case on record of assassinated labour rights defenders under the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte. Up to now, 68 extrajudicial killings cases were filed by the National Tripartite Industrial Peace Council under the previous administrations, and the cases are still pending. This does not include numerous cases misclassified as non-labour related and stuck in the tedious criminal procedure that lacks due diligence and independence.

We deplore the ongoing violence and assassinations targeting labour and human rights defenders in the Philippines. According to the International Trade Union Confederation, Philippines is amongst the worst countries for trade unionists where no rule of law and personal security is guaranteed for organised workers. Extrajudicial killings must be stopped and the environment of impunity must come to an end. It is the responsibility of the government of the Philippines to ensure that the lives and personal security of workers and activists are guaranteed and that they are able to exercise their basic rights without threats and fear.

We urge you to call upon your government to immediately call an emergency meeting of the Monitoring Body of the National Tripartite Industrial Peace Council (NTIPC) to discuss this case. The Regional Tripartite Monitoring Body should convene for an extrajudicial killing investigation that is independent, thorough and inclusive of the relevant labour and trade union organisations that Leonides "Dennis" Sequeña worked with. We also support the call upon the Congress to probe the alleged extrajudicial killings of labour leaders and activists and to hold the responsible state agencies accountable.

We would be grateful if you could convey our concerns to your government and inform us of their response.

Yours sincerely

Frances O'Grady

General Secretary