

# PRESS RELEASE

## DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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### **MEDIA STATEMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS** *(as delivered)*

22 August 2016

Ladies and gentlemen,

I wish to refer to today's reports about the joint media statement issued by the Special Rapporteur for Extrajudicial, Summary and Arbitrary Executions and the Special Rapporteur for the Right to Health, with regard to the Philippine government's war on illegal drugs.

There are 4 points I wish to make very clear to you:

The Duterte administration's war on drugs, a very urgent and critical domestic matter, is being waged with firm adherence to our established human rights principles.

The President has, time and again, declared his avowed purpose to pursue this war on drugs in accordance with the rule of law and full respect for human rights and has, in fact, urged civil rights organizations to immediately provide evidence of extrajudicial killings.

The PNP, on the President's orders, are continually investigating every report, and has warned the immediate prosecution of all those found to have acted illegally and unlawfully. The special rapporteurs are allegedly quoting from media reports that are making assumptions that these are true and accurate. We do not discredit media reports, but these rapporteurs are mandated to make proper inquiries and there are protocols to conduct such probes.

Media reports may serve as their lead, but such reports do not constitute prima facie evidence of fact. It is highly irresponsible on their part to solely rely on such allegations based on "information" from unnamed sources without proper substantiation. Furthermore, they are not acting in accordance with existing procedures in engaging and cooperating with member states.

It must be made clear that these special rapporteurs are independent human experts and are acting in their personal capacity.

We do not begrudge their right to do their job, and so they must also not begrudge our country's right and our people's right to govern ourselves and to solve the urgent problems at hand.

The President is understandably extremely disappointed and frustrated with this action of the special rapporteurs in arbitrarily concluding that these drug-related killings were done by, or at the instance of, law enforcers. But I can assure you that he remains committed to the United Nations, of which the Philippines is one of the founding members, and to the purposes and objectives of which this august body stands for. We therefore also call on the global community to support us, not to simply provide lip

service in eradicating this urgent international problem towards uplifting the quality of life of the community and families and assure a bright future for their children.

The Duterte administration has enunciated a clear and firm policy in dealing decisively with the drug menace in the country. In a larger sense, President Duterte is dealing with the drug menace because it is a clear violation of every citizen's right to live in peace without drug pushers and to have a drug-free country.

Thank you. END