



14 March 2025

ASIA JUSTICE COALITION WELCOMES THE ARREST OF THE FORMER PHILIPPINES PRESIDENT RODRIGO DUTERTE

Asia Justice Coalition (“AJC”) welcomes the arrest and surrender of the former Philippines President Rodrigo Roa Duterte by the Philippine National Police to the International Criminal Court (“ICC”/”Court”).

The Office of the Prosecutor has been investigating the situation in the Republic of the Philippines since 2021, on the authorisation of a Pre-Trial Chamber (“PTC”), in the context of the so-called “war on drugs” campaign in the Philippines, which has claimed thousands of lives.

In approving the application for an arrest warrant, PTC I found reasonable grounds to believe that Mr. Duterte is individually responsible as an indirect co-perpetrator for the crime against humanity of murder, allegedly committed in the Philippines between 1 November 2011 and 16 March 2019, a time frame prior to the withdrawal from the Rome Statute by the Philippines. The ICC has already held that it retains jurisdiction over the situation in the Philippines for this period.

In light of the recent attacks against the Court and limited engagement of Asian States with the ICC, this development has revitalised regional attention towards the international justice ecosystem. Further, as Asia continues to be the site of conflict and mass atrocities, with widespread and systematic attacks against civilians, it serves as a timely reminder of the power of international justice processes and that no one is above the law.

Duterte’s arrest marks a watershed moment in the pursuit of international justice and accountability in Asia as he becomes the first head of state from the region and second globally to stand trial at the ICC. Today, the former President will be brought before PTC I for identity confirmation, and he will be duly informed of the charges against him and rights available as an ICC suspect, followed by a confirmation of charges hearing at a later stage and subsequent trial.

While the execution of this arrest warrant is the first for the Philippines situation and any in Asia before the ICC, we hope this will be the first of many such actions. The Asia Justice Coalition would also like to acknowledge the determination, resolve, and tireless efforts by survivors, victim groups, and their representatives in their fight against impunity.
