

[Philippines | Defenders of economic, social and cultural rights need to be protected](#)

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The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights should call on the Philippines to address the heightened and specific risks facing defenders of economic, social and cultural rights.



In a joint submission ([available here](#)), the International Service for Human Rights, the Medical Action Group, the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates and the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact have highlighted the risks human rights defenders working on economic, social and cultural rights face in the Philippines.

Defenders are subject to threats, harassment, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances and murder; all within a deep-rooted culture of impunity. In fact, [Front Line Defenders](#) ranks the Philippines as the second most dangerous country in terms of the number of human rights defenders murdered, while [Global Witness](#) ranks the Philippines as one of the most dangerous to be a land and environmental defender.

The 59th session of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights will be held in Geneva from 19 September to 10 October 2016. The aim of the review will be to assess the Philippines' progress towards compliance with the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#).

The joint submission seeks to ensure that the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights' concluding observations in its review of the Philippines include concrete recommendations for the Philippines to improve the protection of human rights defenders.

In particular, the submission urges the Committee to make recommendations that the Philippine Government:

- take immediate measures to prevent attacks against defenders and end impunity for crimes against all them;
- develop and implement, in consultation with civil society, a specific national law on human rights defenders and establish, mandate and resource a mechanism for their protection;
- strengthen and increase communications and cooperation with the UN human rights mechanisms, including by accepting requests for country missions by Special Procedures mandate holders and by responding promptly and substantively to allegation letters and urgent appeals.

'The situation for defenders working on economic social and cultural rights in the Philippines is dire and is not improving', said ISHR's Asia Program Manager Sarah Brooks.

'The Committee should take this opportunity to urge the Philippines to take steps to guarantee the protection of defenders working on economic, social and cultural rights. Impunity for attacks against defenders must be addressed', said Brooks.

The joint submissions builds on a [joint briefing paper that was submitted on behalf of eight NGOs](#) this February which informed the issues examined by the Committee in its review of the Philippines.

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