



13 March 2024

ATTY. RICHARD PALPAL-LATOC
CHAIRPERSON
PHILIPPINE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Dear Chairperson Palpal-latoc,

Warm greetings of peace!

In an article by Rappler published on March 9, 2024, Commission on Human Rights-Negros head Vincent Parra said that “they were denied access to documents that were essential to their cases, particularly those related to encounters where the victims are farmers and members of other vulnerable sectors, who had been labeled as communist rebels.”

Mr. Parra was also quoted in the vernacular when he stated that “the AFP and the PNP were not transparent with their reports about the deaths brought about by alleged encounters (as translated by Rappler).” He said that “even spot reports, battle reports, and investigation reports – considered public documents – were being denied to them.”

We share the questions raised by Mr. Parra, as we express our utmost concern on the lack of transparency by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police on the public documents needed by the CHR in pursuing investigations on these cases.

KARAPATAN has documented 35 extrajudicial killings in Negros since July 2022. From July 2016 to June 2023, we have documented 94 victims of extrajudicial killings in Negros. If records on EJKs are being denied the CHR, an independent human rights body mandated by Philippine laws to conduct investigations on these cases, serious questions then should be raised on how this mandate is being respected and upheld by State security forces.

We ask your office to uphold the CHR’s independent role under the 1987 Philippine Constitution, amid acts which we believe undermine the CHR’s mandate. Amid these challenges, we ask your office to pursue these independent investigations in the interest of justice and protection of human rights.

Maraming salamat po.

Respectfully,

Cristina Palabay
Secretary General
Karapatan