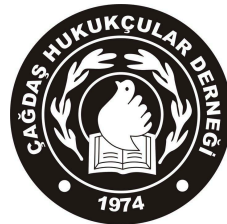




The Law Society  
of England and Wales



**Joint statement: concern over the harassment and threats targeting human rights lawyer Maria Kristina Conti in the Philippines.**

The undersigned organisations express grave concern over the escalating campaign of red-tagging, harassment, and threats targeting human rights lawyer Maria Kristina Conti in the Philippines.

Atty. Maria Kristina Conti is a prominent human rights lawyer, Secretary-General of the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers-National Capital Region (NUPL-NCR), and Treasurer of the Confederation of Lawyers of Asia and the Pacific (COLAP). She has played a central role in providing legal assistance to victims of grave human rights violations, particularly those committed in the context of former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's so-called 'war on drugs'. Atty. Conti is also registered as Assistant to Counsel at the International Criminal Court (ICC) with a potential role in the proceedings related to former President Duterte.

Since Duterte's arrest on an ICC warrant in March 2025, Atty. Conti has faced an alarming escalation of threats. She has been subjected to red-tagging, vilification, malicious online attacks, and anonymous threats directed at both herself and her family. This concerted campaign appears to be a direct reprisal for her legitimate work as a lawyer and her engagement with international accountability mechanisms. These acts not only endanger Atty. Conti but are clearly intended to silence her and deter others from carrying out human rights-related legal work in the Philippines.

We are gravely concerned that the targeting of Atty. Conti forms part of a broader pattern of harassment and intimidation against lawyers who take on politically sensitive or human rights-related cases in the Philippines. Such a climate of fear severely undermines the independence of the legal profession and the rights of victims to seek redress through the

courts. It also creates a chilling effect, discouraging other lawyers from engaging in human rights work out of fear for their own safety and professional security.

Under the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, States must ensure that lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference (Principle 16), and where lawyers are threatened as a result of their work, authorities must provide adequate protection (Principle 17).

In light of the above, the undersigned organisations urgently call on the Philippine authorities to:

- Thoroughly and impartially investigate the acts of harassment, red-tagging, and threats against Atty. Conti and ensure the safety of her and her family;
- Hold those responsible for these attacks accountable in proceedings that meet international due process standards;
- Publicly reaffirm the right of all lawyers in the Philippines to carry out their professional duties free from reprisals and interference, in accordance with international law;
- Cease all forms of harassment, intimidation, and red-tagging of lawyers, particularly those engaged in human rights and public interest work;
- Ensure compliance with the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers and uphold the independence and security of the legal profession.

The undersigned organisations will continue to closely monitor the situation of Atty. Maria Kristina Conti, as well as the broader environment for lawyers and human rights defenders in the Philippines.

Signed:

Lawyers for Lawyers

Law Society of England and Wales

Association Democratic Jurists, Italy

International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute

The Defence Commission of the Barcelona Bar Association

European Association of Lawyers for Democracy and World Human Rights (ELDH)

Progressive Lawyers' Association, (ÇHD), Turkey

International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL)

Al-Haq, Law in the Service of Man

Al Mezan Center for Human Rights

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR)

Democratic Lawyers Association of Bangladesh (DLAB)

Portuguese Association Democrática Juristas

Indian Association of Lawyers

National Lawyers Guild International (US)

The Center of Research and Elaboration on Democracy/ Legal international Intervention Group (CRED, GIGI)

International Observatory of Lawyers (OIAD)

Asociación Americana de Juristas

Swiss Democratic Lawyers

Foundation Day of the Endangered Lawyer