Statement on Anti-Terrorism Act 2020 of Philippines
Asia-Pacific Global Union Federation (GUF)

Global Union Federations with affiliates across the Asia and Pacific regions condemn the adoption of the "Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020" by the government of the Philippines and urges legislators to revoke the law.

The new law is a thinly veiled strategy to give the President even greater powers to punish those who criticise the administration or seek to exercise rights to organise, to assemble and to draw attention to failures of the government.

Vaguely defined violations, sweeping powers to arrest and detain people without essential civil rights, combined with a dangerous record of impunity for violations by police and military in the Philippines, make this a dangerous and entirely unnecessary law. We join human rights organisations and global institutions who have declared the law a violation of both national constitutional rights and international civil and political rights.

The law allows suspects to be detained without a judicial warrant of arrest for 14 days and can be extended by 10 more days, and placed under surveillance for 60 days, that can also be extended by up to 30 days, by the police or military – not by a judge. These provisions violate the constitution.

The law was enacted just days after the UN Human Rights Council heard the report on the Philippines which found that at least 8,663 people have been killed and at least 248 human rights defenders, legal professionals, journalists and trade unionists have been killed in relation to their work. The report says that the measures taken to combat "terrorism" and drug use have come "at the expense of human rights, due process rights, the rule of law and accountability".

Trade unionists in the Philippines have repeatedly been portrayed by the Duterte administration as terrorists. Last year the Council of Global Unions collectively urged the government to cease the harassment and vilification of unionists and investigate the murders and other violations against trade unionists. The UN Human Rights Council report found that"

> *55. Red-tagging, harassment and killings of trade unionists continues. Intervention by State security forces in union meetings and affairs, threats and profiling of members –including of a national alliance of teachers–have been reported. The International Labour Organization Committee on Freedom of Association has also raised concerns about "blanket linkages of trade unions to an insurgency" placing unionists in situations of extreme insecurity.*

The biggest threat to security in the Philippines is the attack on the rule of law and extra-judicial killings, seemingly with the approval of the President. At least 43 trade unionists have been murdered since President Duterte has been in office. Not a single one of those murders has resulted in an arrest and trial, let along a conviction.

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown us that we need more accountability, more democracy, more solidarity to be in a position to deal with crisis. Workers need to be able to blow the whistle when governments hide information and workers need to collectively defend their rights when employers attempt to force them to work without

protection and in unsafe circumstances. The threat of criminal charges for anyone who criticises the government will make us all less safe.

We urge the Supreme Court to put the constitution, human rights and the rule of law ahead of allegiance to the President and rule the law unconstitutional. We stand in solidarity with those fighting unjust laws, feudalism and corporate power and we maintain our collective resolve to defend the rights of workers and their unions in the Philippines.

Represented by,
Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI)
Education International (EI)
International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF)
IndustriALL
The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)
Public Services International (PSI)
UNI Global Union (UNI)