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Federica Mogherini

High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission

Brussels, 22 November 2018

Dear Federica,

I would like to bring to your attention the case of Ms. Leila de Lima, a Philippine Senator who has been in prison since 24 February 2017.

As you know, the European Parliament has been following this case closely, namely the Subcommittee on Human Rights. However, Ms. de Lima's situation has not improved since her imprisonment.

Everything points out to Ms. de Lima's case being purely politically motivated. In fact, as a Secretary of Justice, two of her major cases were arresting former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and cracking down on a drug scheme conducted by drug lords in prison. These cases are relevant because the charges filed against Ms. de Lima were based on testimonies of these same drug lords, and those who voted against the appeal questioning the legality of her detention were appointees of former President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Moreover, the current President, Mr. Rodrigo Duterte, stated several times in public prior to Ms. de Lima's arrest that he would destroy her, accusing her of facts she was not charged with yet. The next month, his Secretary of Justice started a hearing that posed as a non-official trial, where Ms. de Lima's was ridiculed, her reputation destroyed, and her personal details were revealed to the public, putting her life in danger.

The charges against Ms. de Lima have also been changed to suit Philippine laws, since there were no proofs to the initial charges - namely illegal drug trading.

Finally, Ms. de Lima has been subject to ill treatment in prison, having no access to air conditioning despite her physician's recommendation, or to basic appliances such as radio. Contraband items have been planted in her cell; she is denied foreign visits; she has been denied

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requests that have been granted to other high-profile detainees, namely personal furlough; and she is under strict security measures during court hearings.

This case has several other problems, such as prosecution witnesses who are serving sentences for crimes involving moral turpitude, which should make them ineligible to testify according to Philippine law, for example.

I therefore urge you and the EEAS to analyse all the elements of this case closely, and to engage with local authorities, namely through the EU delegation in Manila, to free Ms. de Lima on bail and ascertain that the case proceeds according to the law and that the trial is fair and impartial. Ms. de Lima has been unjustly imprisoned for almost two years and it is crucial that the European Union does everything in its power to help this human rights defender.

*Best regards,
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