

8 November 2019

Philippines: Human rights defender Honey Mae Suazo reported missing

As of 8 November 2019, human rights defender, **Honey Mae Suazo** has been missing for six days. She was last seen on 2 November 2019 while travelling from Panabo to Davao City.

[Honey May Suazo](#) is the former Secretary General of the Southern Mindanao Regional Chapter of the Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights (**Karapatan**). [Karapatan](#) was formed in 1995 as an alliance of individuals, groups and organisations for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Philippines. It is committed to the defence of people's rights and civil liberties through education, training, advocacy, research and network building. Honey May Suazo has undertaken several fact-finding missions, predominantly in highly militarised communities, where, on several occasions, she has openly denounced human rights violations committed by military troops in the Southern Mindanao Region.

On 2 November 2019, Honey Mae Suazo was reported missing while on her way back to Davao City from Panabo where she was with her friends and partner to visit the graves of her relatives. The human rights defender had left their company and was on her way back home, when she called her partner. She asked him to pick her up near the Panabo City Hall as she noticed that she was being tailed by a white pick-up vehicle. However, when her partner reached the location, he could not find her and her calls remained unanswered.

Honey Mae Suazo has been frequently attacked for her peaceful work in defence of human rights. In April 2019, she was accused by Brigadier General Antonio Parlade Jr and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) of providing money and bail funds for an arrested rebel leader, via Karapatan. The organization denied the allegations and Suazo released a statement calling for an end to the constant threats and harassment she has been subjected to by the AFP. She encouraged her fellow human rights defenders to continue their work in the fight for justice.

In 2015, Honey Mae Suazo and fifteen other human rights defenders faced trumped up charges of trafficking. These accusations were a form of retaliation for their support for the displaced indigenous people from Talaingod, Davao del Norte. The case was later dropped after the supposed complainant withdrew the charges.

Also in 2015, Honey Mae Suazo, along with staff and members of Karapatan, were attacked by unidentified men who [broke into](#) their office in Davao City.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned by the disappearance of Honey Mae Suazo. It urges the authorities to take all necessary steps to investigate Honey Mae Suazo's missing persons case and ensure she returns safely to her family. Furthermore, it condemns the lack of a safe and enabling environment in the Philippines for human rights defenders to carry out their valuable work.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in the Philippines to:

1. Take urgent measures to identify the whereabouts of Honey Mae Suazo;

2. In accordance with the Philippines and international law, refrain from all harassment and surveillance activities against Honey Mae Suazo;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in the Philippines are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

Front Line Defenders respectfully reminds you that the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognises the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, their right to freedom of association and to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. We would particularly draw your attention to Article 9 (1): *“In the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the promotion and protection of human rights as referred to in the present Declaration, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to benefit from an effective remedy and to be protected in the event of the violation of those rights”*, and to Article 12 (2): *“The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration.”*

Please inform us of any actions that may be taken with regard to the above case.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Anderson".

Andrew Anderson

Executive Director