



SUMMARY

On Sunday, July 19, Rights Corridor has partnered with OFW Watch Italy, a huge network of Filipino migrant workers based in Milan, in *RC Discussions* episode on the highly opposed **Philippine Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020**. The virtual platform, aimed for Filipino viewers to have a better and deeper understanding of the much debated law with the expertise of guest lawyers Atty. Mel Sta. Maria Jr., law professor at the Ateneo School of Law and dean of Far Eastern University's law school since 2013 and Atty. Neri Colmenares, human rights lawyer and activist. He is currently a party-list representative at the House of Congress, under the political party Bayan Muna (Nation First).

The two-hour forum was streamed live on Rights Corridor Facebook page.

Video link:

<https://www.facebook.com/chrstncabral/videos/10217679383118621/UzpfSTewNTQyOTk3MTA5OTcwMjoxNjI3NzgwNTUzNjQ4OTM/>

The episode has garnered 1,319 views, 17 shares, 156 people reached and 30 engagements as of July 23 (4 days after live streaming).

KEY ISSUES:

- The intent of the government in crafting the law. Unchecked powers might use the law as a weapon to crackdown on government critics and dissenters.
- The issue that some sections of the law are overbroad and ambiguous, including its definition of (Section 04) terrorism, the acts it considers as "terrorism", the process by which individuals and groups are labeled and officially declared as terrorists, and the warrantless detention of suspected terrorists.
- The issue of warrantless arrest (Section 29) that can be enforced by any law enforcement agent or military personnel duly authorized by the anti-terrorism council (ATC).
- The appointment of a special anti-terrorism council (ATC), composed of department secretaries or cabinet members.
- The issue of the law's constitutionality and the filing of more than 10 petitions to the Supreme court to overturn the law despite the fact that majority of the justices are allies of President Duterte.

CONCLUSION

There is a growing concern among Filipino migrant workers to voice their opposition against the anti-terror law as they fear of being "red-tagged", a term used for communist sympathizers, and labeled as terror suspects and might face arrest when they go home to the Philippines. Meanwhile, human rights activists and campaigners are concerned on how implementers (police and military) of the law would carry out orders by the ATC as the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Philippine Armed Forces (AFP) are ill reputed for committing human rights violations against civilians in the past such as extra-judicial killing (EJK) during the Duterte administration's war on drugs. Rights Corridor and OFW Watch Italy will produce more virtual forums on this and other topics in the future.

