

5 March 2021

Philippines: Attempted killing of human rights defender Angelo Karlo Guillen

On 3 March 2021, two unidentified men stabbed human rights defender **Angelo Karlo Guillen** in Iloilo City, in what is believed to have been an attempt to kill him. The defender is currently being treated for the stab wounds he incurred at a hospital in the city.

[Angelo Karlo Guillen](#) is a human rights defender, a lawyer and the Assistant Vice President of the Visayas chapter of the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (NUPL). In his capacity as a member of the NUPL, the defender works on cases of human rights violations and on matters of public interest. He has provided legal defense for human rights defenders facing trumped up charges and has been a strong advocate against the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020.

On 3 March 2021, two unidentified men made an attempt to kill human rights defender Angelo Karlo Guillen, in Iloilo City. The assailants stabbed the defender with a screwdriver in his head and shoulder, before fleeing the scene, and taking with them the defender's backpack and sling bag. The defender was rushed to hospital shortly after the incident and is currently being treated for his wounds.

Human rights defenders on the ground firmly believe that Angelo Karlo Guillen was targeted in relation to his legal work on cases of human rights violations and on human rights issues more broadly. The defender previously filed a petition questioning the constitutionality of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020, and is also part of the legal defence team for several human rights defenders who have been arrested on trumped-up charges in connection to their human rights work.

On 1 May 2020, Angelo Karlo Guillen was arrested during a protest in Jaro, Iloilo City. The defender had been providing legal assistance to individuals who were arrested for their participation in the demonstration, which was organised to protest the killing of a human rights defender the previous month. Angelo Karlo Guillen was released the following day after posting bail.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned by the increasingly hostile environment for human rights defenders in the Philippines. It is concerned for the safety of human rights defender Angelo Karlo Guillen and it condemns the attack against him, which it believes is solely motivated by his peaceful and legitimate human rights work.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in the Philippines to:

1. Ensure that the ongoing investigation into the attempted killing and attack against Angelo Karlo Guillen and his family, be prompt, thorough and impartial, with a view to bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Angelo Karlo Guillen as well as of the members of his family;
3. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in the Philippines and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.