

**WAN-IFRA is the World
Association of Newspapers
and News Publishers**

Its mission is to protect the rights of journalists across the world to operate free media, and provide its members with professional services to help their business prosper in a digital world and perform their crucial role in open societies.

With formal representative status at the United Nations, UNESCO and the Council of Europe, it derives its authority from its global network of leading news publishing companies and technology entrepreneurs, and its legitimacy from its 80 national association members representing 18,000 publications in 120 countries.

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His Excellency Rodrigo Duterte

President of the Philippines

Manila, Philippines

1 April, 2019

Your Excellency,

We are writing on behalf of the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) and the World Editors Forum, which represent 18,000 publications, 15,000 online sites and over 3,000 companies in more than 120 countries, to express our serious concern at the arrest of Maria Ressa, Executive Editor and co-founder of media company Rappler, and what appears to be a systematic campaign of intimidation by the authorities.

On 29 March, Ms Ressa was arrested when she landed at Manila airport from the US and charged with violating the anti-dummy law, legislation related to securities fraud. She posted bail and was later released. Ms Ressa's arrest follows that of Rappler's managing editor and five other former and current board members on similar charges last week.

The arrest of Rappler's Board members – members of the wider business and tech community – represents an escalation in what appears to be the systematic targeting of Ms Ressa and her media company. This is the seventh case brought against Ms Ressa in recent months and the 11th against her, Rappler directors and staff since 2018. Actions against them range from efforts by the Securities and Exchange Commission to revoke the website's licence, to bogus charges of tax evasion and multiple libel complaints. The targeting of Rappler appears to be a

politically motivated response to its reporting. Rappler has been highly critical of your presidency, in particular the extra-judicial killing of thousands of alleged drug dealers.


We respectfully call on you to ensure that charges against Ms Ressa, Rappler Board members and staff are dropped immediately. We ask you to call a halt to the persecution of Maria Ressa and her colleagues so that Rappler may continue to carry out its legitimate work as a watchdog of government.

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Golden
President
World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers



David Callaway
President
World Editors Forum

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