

To Ms. Maria Antonina M. Mendoza-Oblena
Head of Mission to Denmark

Lyngbyvej 20, 1.
2100 Copenhagen
Denmark

February 14th 2019

Open letter from the Danish Media Association and the Danish Union of Journalists

Dear Ms. Mendoza-Oblena

First, we would like to welcome the coming ambassador of the Philippines to Denmark. We hope that the new embassy in Denmark will increase the dialogue between our two nations. As a first attempt of this, we hereby write to you about our concerns of the state of the free press in the Philippines.

Over the years, we have watched how the Philippines has taken a path towards authoritarianism as the conditions of the free press have worsened and the harassment of journalists critical to the government has escalated. It is a strong concern of ours to see journalists prosecuted simply for doing their job and holding the power to account. The recent imprisonment of Maria Ressa and the politically motivated legal charges against her news organization, Rappler, is a clear case of this. We as representatives of the free press in Denmark condemn these actions.

The work of journalists and a free press are vital in civilized societies. Journalism ensures a free exchange of views, it holds power to account, no matter party affiliation, and it prevents corruption in both businesses and authorities alike. The existence of the free press is therefore a safety net for the rights of the Philippine people.

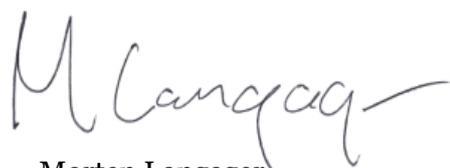
We ask your president to drop the politically motivated charges against Maria Ressa and Rappler, and to ensure the safety of journalists and the freedom of the press in the Philippines. We call for your government to change the course before it takes the Philippines down a road from where there is no turning back.

We look forward to welcome your new ambassador to our land. The land of the free press. We hope that you as an embassy can inspire your government to see the benefits of living in a land with open minded people, freedom of speech and a free and critical press.

Best regards



Lars Werge
President of the Danish Union
of Journalists



Morten Langager
CEO of the Danish Media
Association