



6 April 2018

Mr. Reed Hastings
Chief Executive Officer
Netflix.

Re: Serious Concern that Netflix series “AMO” promotes and endorses murder and violence in the Philippines.

We, the Asian Network of People who Use Drugs (ANPUD) and the International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD), are writing to urgently bring your attention to our concerns with relation to the Philippines drug war series “AMO”, which is set to be aired by Netflix on April 9th 2018. We believe this series actively promotes very real violence and killings of marginalized and vulnerable communities.

As organizations dedicated to defending the human rights of these communities, we find it extremely worrying that Netflix has made the decision to air “AMO” in spite of the fact that there is an ongoing human rights catastrophe in the Philippines that has seen tens of thousands murdered, all driven by President Duterte’s war on drugs.

Moreover, we find it breathtaking that Netflix’s vice-president of content acquisition, Mr. Robert Roy, has praised the series, referring to it as a “bold and suspenseful show that has the potential of capturing thrill-seeking audiences worldwide.”ⁱ To refer to mass killings, to 20,000 people who have been brutally murdered in the Filipino war on drugs, as **‘bold and suspenseful’** subject matter is, frankly, grotesque. *This is a humanitarian crisis, not entertainment fodder.* Duterte’s war on people who use drugs is often referred to as a ‘War on Poor’, where, further leading to more than 20,000 extra-judicial killings, it has brought destruction and destitution to hundreds of thousands more.

President Duterte has repeatedly incited the public and Philippine National Police (PNP) to murder any people suspected of drug offences,ⁱⁱ guaranteeing impunity to all would-be vigilantes and giving a clear ‘license to kill’ⁱⁱⁱ. In August 2016, his war on people who use drugs hit a new level of brutality in the killing of 32 people in just one night^{iv}, targeting impoverished people, young people and students. Furthermore, Duterte has issued an order to shoot human rights activists, expanding his war on people who use drugs to encompass a broader assault on human rights and those who seek to defend human rights^v.

Duterte’s war on people who use drugs in the Philippines has been condemned by United Nations^{vi,vii,viii}, the International Criminal Court (ICC)^{ix}, over 45 country governments^x and more than 375 community and civil society organizations globally^{xi}. In February 2018, following the filing of two cases,^{xii} the ICC launched an initial inquiry into the crimes against humanity



committed by Duterte.^{xiii} During the 36th session of the Human Rights Council, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights stated, *“In the Philippines, I continue to be gravely concerned by the President’s open support for a shoot-to-kill policy regarding suspects, as well as by the apparent absence of credible investigations into reports of thousands of extrajudicial killings, and the failure to prosecute any perpetrator.”*^{xiv}

The Director of “AMO”, Brillante Mendoza, is a well-known supporter of President Duterte and his horrifically violent war on drugs. Indeed, in September 2016, the Presidential Communications Office released a series of *anti-drug videos*, which Mendoza directed for the state. This director must be understood for what he is: a man who has actively encouraged, endorsed, and facilitated the mass killings of tens of thousands in the Philippines, a man who has made a series that risks doing the same. “AMO” actively promotes the state-sanctioned mass murder of people who use drugs in the Philippines.

Netflix should not be condoning human rights violations.

Supporters of Duterte and his war on drugs in the Philippines have developed mass media and social media tools, both to encourage the Filipino war on drugs, and to counter national and international criticism of these state-sanctioned extrajudicial killings. In 2017, Apple Inc.’s App Store featured numerous smartphone apps actively promoting murder, extrajudicial killings, violence, and the war on drugs in the Philippines, in which you could simulate murdering people who use drugs. These, as with this series, were developed by supporters of Duterte and of his promotion of violence. Following a global media outcry, and the submission of a petition by 131 human rights and drug policy organizations, led by ANPUD and INPUD, to Apple CEO Tim Cook, Apple Inc. rightly removed those appalling games from their store.^{xv} Smartphone apps, films, and television shows – shows like “AMO” – are the means through which Duterte asserts his public image and maintains support for these mass killings. Placed in the context of the realities of tens of thousands of Filipinos, what masquerades, as harmless entertainment does not seem so innocuous after all. Far from it, such so-called entertainment is nothing more than offensive, distasteful, and sadistic when considering the *real lives*, murders, and wanton and ongoing abuses of thousands of civilians with impunity. **This is *not* the stuff of fun and entertainment. These are real people, real lives. Real murders.**

We expect more of Netflix. As an organization that prioritizes social responsibility and accountability – and as a philanthropist yourself – Netflix cannot be seen to condone and promote the actions, policies and discourses of a President and nation that have resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent people. It is unacceptable and appalling to overtly profit from people’s suffering, from their deaths and misery.

In light of the continuing and catastrophic violations of human rights in the Philippines, the Asian Network of People who use Drugs and the International Network of People who use Drugs demand that plans to make the series “AMO” available through Netflix be immediately cancelled.



We look forward to receiving your positive response to this initial urgent correspondence.

The Asian Network of People who Use Drugs (ANPUD)

The International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD)

ⁱ Duterte's drug war is star of first Filipino drama on Netflix: <https://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/television/duterte-s-drug-war-is-star-of-first-filipino-drama-on-netflix-1.717895>

ⁱⁱ The Philippines' Duterte Incites Vigilante Violence: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/04/19/philippines-duterte-incites-vigilante-violence>

ⁱⁱⁱ "License to Kill" Philippine Police Killings in Duterte's "War on Drugs": <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/03/02/license-kill/philippine-police-killings-dutertes-war-drugs>

^{iv} Philippine police kill 32 in bloodiest night of Duterte's war on drugs: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/16/philippines-police-bloodiest-night-duterte-war-drugs>

^v Philippines: Duterte Threatens Human Rights Community: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/08/17/philippines-duterte-threatens-human-rights-community>

^{vi} Secretary-General's remarks at the UN Correspondents Association Reception: <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2016-06-08/secretary-generals-remarks-un-correspondents-association-reception>

^{vii} Statement by the UNODC Executive Director on the situation in the Philippines: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2016/August/statement-by-the-unodc-executive-director-on-the-situation-in-the-philippines.html>

^{viii} INCB expresses concern about reports of violence against persons suspected of drug-related crime and drug use in the Philippines: https://www.incb.org/incb/en/news/press-releases/2016/press_release030816.html

^{ix} Int'l Criminal Court chief prosecutor warns PH over drug killings: <http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2016/10/14/Intl-Criminal-Court-chief-prosecutor-warns-PH-over-drug-killings.html>

^x 45 UNHRC members call for end to killings: <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2017/05/12/1699064/45-unhrc-members-call-end-killings>

^{xi} Over 300 NGOs call on the United Nations to take immediate action on the hundreds of extrajudicial killings of suspected drug offenders in the Philippines: <http://idpc.net/media/press-releases/2016/08/over-300-ngos-call-on-the-united-nations-to-take-immediate-action-on-the-hundreds-of-extrajudicial-killings-of-suspected-drug-offenders-in-the-philippines>

^{xii} 'Mass murder' complaint filed against Philippines' President Duterte at ICC: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/25/mass-complaint-launched-against-philippines-president-duterte-at-icc>

^{xiii} ICC launches crimes against humanity inquiry into Duterte's war on drugs: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/08/icc-claims-crimes-against-humanity-duterte-philippines>

^{xiv} Darker and more dangerous: High Commissioner updates the Human Rights Council on human rights issues in 40 countries - Human Rights Council 36th session, Opening Statement by Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/Media.aspx?IsMediaPage=true>

^{xv} Apple removes Philippines leader Duterte execution games: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-42165328>