



STATEMENT - 25 September 2026

From Death Row to Freedom: Celebrating the Absolute Pardon of Mary Jane Veloso, a Human Trafficking Survivor Formerly on Death Row

We commend Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.'s decision to grant absolute pardon to Mary Jane Veloso, just days before the World Day Against the Death Penalty. ADPAN congratulates her lawyers and legal team, fellow civil society organisations and advocacy groups, including the National Union of Peoples Lawyers (NUPL), Migrante, Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (JBMI), Beranda Migran, Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Masyarakat (LBHM), other ADPAN members in Indonesia and Malaysia, and countless individuals, organisations, and the public for their perseverance and for standing with us in securing this victory. This is a testament to what sustained cross-border advocacy can achieve to protect human life, support affected families, and uplift local communities.

Mary Jane is a trafficking victim, former overseas Filipino worker and mother of two who spent over 14 years on death row in Indonesia for drug trafficking, an offence she maintains she did not knowingly commit.¹ We welcome the steps taken by the Philippine Government towards granting her freedom and hope that other governments take this case as a stellar example to save trafficking victims from executions.

Mary Jane's experience is not an isolated case. She represents countless migrant workers globally who fall prey to human trafficking syndicates and are subsequently criminalised by harsh drug enforcement policies. Her story underscores the urgent need for global death penalty abolition. Capital punishment disproportionately targets vulnerable and marginalised populations—including trafficking victims and migrant workers—whilst failing to address the root causes of crime or human exploitation.

As we celebrate this advocacy milestone, we continue to call on governments across the region and around the world to: (1) abolish the death penalty and implement humane, rights-based justice reforms; (2) strengthen protections for migrant workers and victims of human trafficking; and (3) ensure that survivors of trafficking are recognised as victims rather than criminalised.

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¹ Delgado, Punzalan, Domingo, ABS-CBN News, AFP. *Marcos grants Mary Jane Veloso absolute pardon.* <https://www.abs-cbn.com/news/nation/2026/9/25/marcos-grants-mary-jane-veloso-absolute-pardon-1108>

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