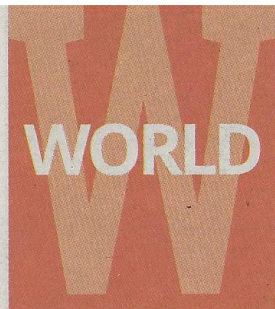


Duterte vows to use military in drug war

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Duterte vows to use military in drug war

MANILA — President Rodrigo Duterte announced yesterday the military would take a leading role in his deadly drug war, while vowing to kill more traffickers and addicts.

“I’m taking in the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) and raising the issue of drugs as a national security threat so that I will call on all the armed forces to assist,” Duterte said, while promising to kill more “son of a bitch” drug addicts.

His comments were the first following a report from Amnesty International that the killings in the drug war, in which more than 6,500 people have died in seven months, may amount to crimes

against humanity.

They were also the clearest signal of Duterte’s plans for the drug war, after he admitted this week the police force that had taken the leading role was “corrupt to the core” and said they would no longer be allowed to take part.

Duterte’s moves against the police he had entrusted as his frontline troops came after series of scandals emerged over the past month in which police were caught committing murder, kidnapping, extortion and robbery using the drug war as cover.

In one of the highest-profile cases, anti-drug officers kidnapped a South Korean businessman then murdered him inside the

national police headquarters as part of an extortion racket.

On Wednesday Amnesty accused police of systemic human rights abuses in the drug war, including shooting dead defenceless people, fabricating evidence, paying assassins to murder drug addicts and stealing from those they killed.

It also said police were being paid by their superiors to kill, and documented victims as young as eight years old.

“The police are behaving like the criminal underworld that they are supposed to be enforcing the law against,” Amnesty said as it warned of possible crimes against humanity and that the International

Criminal Court may need to investigate.

However Duterte was unrepentant yesterday as he launched a profanity-laced tirade against his critics and rejected charges of human rights abuses.

He gave a lengthy explanation of the problems for people who used the highly addictive methamphetamine known locally as shabu.

Duterte said roughly 3,000 had been killed so far. “I will kill more. If only to get rid of drugs.”

Police have reported killing 2,555 people in the drug war, while nearly 4,000 others have died in unexplained circumstances, according to official figures. — AFP