Menardo I. Guevarra

Secretary Department of Justice

DOJ Building

Padre Faura Street

Ermita Manila 1000

Philippines

Dear Secretary Guevarra,

I am writing with dismay at the arrest of Maria Ressa, executive editor of Rappler, over alleged violations of the Philippines’s Anti-Dummy Law.

Rappler is a consistent critic of President Duterte and his administration, publishing detailed investigations into extrajudicial executions committed by police and armed vigilantes. The recent arrest of Maria Ressa is the latest attack against her and Rappler and follows her February 2019 arrest on likely politically-motivated charges of cyber-libel. Last year, tax evasion charges were also brought against Ressa and Rappler Holdings Corp. Amnesty International believes these, too, are trumped-up charges designed to stifle criticism of the President’s ‘war on drugs.’

I urge you to act to uphold and protect the freedom of the press, to drop the charges against Maria Ressa and Rappler, to end the harassment of the media, journalists, and critics of the Duterte administration, and to guarantee their right to freedom of expression and assembly.

Sincerely,